



# Cheshire & Warrington Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP)

Progress Report June 2024





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## 01. Who Is This Publication For?

We are utilising this opportunity to update employers, providers and stakeholders on the progress being made in relation to the delivery of our Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP).

By way of background, LSIPs focus on putting employers at the heart of the skills system. They were developed to ensure that employers' most pressing skills needs are reflected within the local skills system. The Cheshire & Warrington LSIP aims to support employers in articulating their skills needs whilst brokering links with Post 16 technical education providers and shaping current and future provisions.

The Cheshire & Warrington LSIP was approved by the Secretary of State for Education in August 2023 following employer feedback, and this report provides an update on what has been achieved so far, what key activities have taken place and how we continue to bring employers together with post-16 providers and key stakeholders to support sub regional skills ambitions.

This progress report has been prepared in accordance with Local Skills Improvement Plans: Stage 2 Guidance (dated November 2023) and is intended to review progress

against the local skills improvement plan published in August 2023. This report was produced in June 2024, but publication was delayed due to the pre-election period.

**In our LSIP report, we highlighted our commitment to ensuring:**

- A focus on collaboration with enabling partners.
- Meaningful opportunities for all.
- Development of essential new skills, whilst upskilling the existing workforce.
- Best practice examples are shared.
- Opportunities for knowledge transfer of skills-sets, including preventing loss of skills due to retirement.
- Further development of partnerships between providers and employers for the long-term benefit of our people and economy.
- Support for employers in articulating their skills needs.
- Employer needs are matched with available provisions.
- Ongoing facilitation, discussions and collaboration between employers and providers.

- Actions built upon the success of other skills projects.
- Provisions of further opportunities for partner collaboration.

Therefore, the focus of this report is on the local priorities and actions needed to better align the skills system with employer and local labour market needs.

**We aim to ensure that this report:**

- Provides an update on progress made against key priorities set out in the LSIP Roadmap.
- Highlights good practice case studies.
- Avoids unnecessary jargon and is accessible to a wide range of interested readers.
- Recognises the positive collaboration between employers, post 16 technical education providers and other key stakeholders.
- Demonstrates how employers can still get involved with the delivery of the LSIP.

## 02. Summary of the LSIP.

The Cheshire & Warrington LSIP was developed to support employers in articulating their skills needs whilst brokering links with post 16 technical education providers and shaping current and future provisions. Our LSIP has put employers at the heart of the skills system in our sub-region.

Engagement with employers was key to the development of the LSIP, and it led to employers:

- Providing specific details of occupations relevant to their businesses.
- Highlighting what skills matter for their businesses.

The key aim of the LSIP has been to ensure the current and future workforce have the necessary skills and access to local opportunities, as well as being able to upskill or reskill employees to meet changes within industry.

Based on our activities, the Cheshire & Warrington LSIP was broken down into five key theme areas.



### Theme 1 – Technical Skills

Split between the LSIP priority sectors of **Manufacturing, Life Sciences and Health & Social Care, whilst also looking at the cross-cutting themes of Digital and Low Carbon (including Green Skills)**. These key sectors were determined through use of Labour Market Information (LMI) and information provided by the former Cheshire & Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP).

The key objectives of the LSIP are to ensure the supply of and demand for technical skills matches the needs of employers, supporting increased productivity and sustainability.

The primary challenge we have seen around this theme is that when discussing skills, employers tend to focus more on behaviours and attitudes as they believe technical skills can be developed if an employee has the right employability and behavioural attributes.



### Theme 2 – Accessibility

Accessibility is a broad theme, but for the purpose of the LSIP, was broken down into four key threads: **accessibility of information; accessibility of training, provisions and funding; accessibility for those considered to be at a disadvantage; and accessibility of support in assessing future skills needs.**

As we have continued to gain employer feedback around this agenda, we have found that our dedicated website requires additional work to respond to this theme in its entirety. We also note the importance of data as a means of better understanding the full extent of provisions availability locally. Further specialist support has been sourced to address this. A provision mapping project has been established, however due to the complexities and the broadness of this theme, it is agreed that it will take some time to fully address all aspects of this agenda.



### Theme 3 – Employment Competencies

Looking beyond technical skills, during the development of our LSIP, employers focused on employability skills and ensuring job applicants are work ready. Again, employability skills cover a broad range of skills attributes such as **communication, work ethic, numeracy, MS office, leadership and managerial and emotional resilience.**

A key challenge we have identified within this theme is ensuring employers think about the long-term requirements and not just about those that can be addressed quickly. Skills such as emotional intelligence and self-awareness need to be explored further to better prepare individuals when they enter the world of work, as well as for in-work progression.



### Theme 4 – Careers Education Information Advice & Guidance

Linked to themes 3 and 5, the range of aims this theme covers, includes:

- Building a future **talent pipeline through career exploration activities, showcasing the opportunities available within Cheshire and Warrington.**
- Link with theme 5 and ensure **Educational Professionals have the required knowledge** of what opportunities are available so that they can better advise the future workforce.
- Facilitate **careers guidance** for those that wish to have a change of career.
- **Acknowledge interests** in certain areas among young people, such as climate change, to establish targeted careers inspiration activities.
- **Identify inequality situations** within industry and aim to address them through CEIAG.

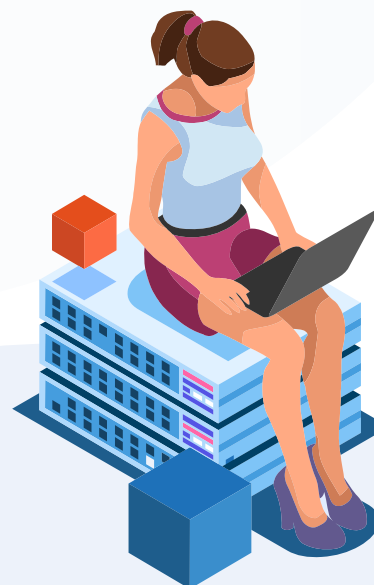


### Theme 5 – Educational Professionals

For our LSIP to respond to the needs of employers, we need to:

- Ensure there is sufficient capacity within the skills system to deliver the training we need to support employers, i.e. **ensuring there are enough educational professionals to deliver the courses.**
- Ensuring that all educational professionals have the up-to-date **knowledge and understanding of the priority sectors and can apply this to develop the skills of the workforce.**

As we know, this theme is broad and we must take into consideration the pressures on the private sector to support this, with requests from different educational settings being vast and extensive. For the academic year 24/25, we propose to have an events calendar in place, collaborating on a golden thread of messaging, where partners, providers and employers can become proactive in engagement activities from the earliest opportunity.



We understand there is no 'quick fix' to resolve these issues, and time is required to embed thinking with employers and providers. There is a need to look beyond recruitment activity. To support us in addressing this theme we are considering outcomes of the Northern Skills Network project, as well as utilising alternative talent pools such as veterans and DWP's retro recruitment activities. We are also considering Northern Skills Network evidence where the lack of educational professionals is having a negative impact on curriculum design and thus pathways being offered are based on the expertise of tutors rather than the needs of employers.

### 03. Strategic and Economic Context Update.

The LSIP Report published in [August 2023](#) drew upon data from June 2022, with around **437,400 people employed in Cheshire and Warrington**, representing **75.7% of residents aged 16-64 in the area**.

Following the LSIP report in August 2023, **job postings have decreased by 20.9%**. We have key data that is relevant to the LSIP in terms of recruitment by sector and by key occupations within the region and which skills are most in demand during the period 01 September 2023 – 31 March 2024. (Data source: Adzuna):

For January 2023 – December 2023, the Labour Market Profile for Cheshire & Warrington is as follows:

	Cheshire & Warrington (%)	North West (%)	Great Britain (%)
<b>Economically Active</b>	<b>82.3</b>	<b>76.7</b>	<b>78.8</b>
In Employment	80.1	73.8	75.8
Unemployed	2.6	3.8	3.7
<b>Economically Inactive</b>	<b>17.7</b>	<b>23.3</b>	<b>21.1</b>
<b>Claimant Count</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>3.9</b>

[source: Labour Market Profile - Nomis - Official Census and Labour Market Statistics (nomisweb.co.uk)]



Job postings have decreased by **20.9%**



## For the period 01/09/2023 - 31/03/2024

### The Top Ten Industries Recruiting

- Wholesale & Retail Trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles
- Human Health & Social Work
- Professional, Scientific & Technical
- Accommodation & Food Services
- Construction
- Financial & Insurance
- Transportation & Storage
- Administrative & Support Services
- Information & Communication
- Manufacturing

[Source: Adzuna]

### The Top In-Demand Occupations

- Manager
- Engineer
- Social Care Worker
- Teaching Assistant
- General Nurse
- Healthcare Support Worker
- Assistant
- Project Manager
- Chef
- Warehouse Worker

### The Top Ten Sectors Hiring

- Engineering
- Hospitality & Catering
- Teaching
- Accounting & Finance
- Healthcare & Nursing
- IT Jobs
- Retail Jobs
- Sales Jobs
- Social Work Jobs
- Trade & Construction

### In-Demand Skills Most Requested

- Communication
- Management
- Clients
- Assertiveness
- Customer Service
- Engineering
- Wellbeing
- Solutions
- Food
- Sales

**We are considering several changes to the strategic and economic landscape as we move forward with the delivery of our LSIP and the potential impact on our local economy:**

- Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) ceased to exist as of 31st March 2024. However, for Cheshire & Warrington, the LEP has transitioned to become a new organisation, wholly owned by the three Local Authorities in Cheshire & Warrington. The organisation, Enterprise Cheshire & Warrington (ECW), aims to lead on the growth of the Cheshire and Warrington economy, to help achieve the ambition to be the UK's healthiest, most sustainable, inclusive and growing economy. ECW brings together several organisations with industry and community partners, all working to make Cheshire and Warrington a better place to live, work and visit; from economic strategy, tourism and place marketing to skills training, business growth and support. With LSIP having the statutory responsibility for skills in Cheshire & Warrington, we aim to continue to work collaboratively to avoid duplication of activities and ensure the skills landscape is transparent to all.
- When LSIP was approved, there was the expectation of HS2 extending into the sub-region. Thousands of jobs and homes were expected from planned regeneration projects. However, the leg from Birmingham to Manchester was cancelled, meaning a loss of expected jobs and income for the region.
- The People and Skills priorities within Cheshire West and Chester Council's UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) Investment Plan continue to be addressed through year 3 programme delivery (2024-25):
  - Providing support to those residents facing barriers to employment and training to achieve their potential.
  - Raising aspirations of young people through learning and volunteering opportunities to support their future careers.
  - Delivering in-work skills and training to support staff recruitment, retention and progression, and improve business productivity and growth.
- Warrington Council's Investment Plan, as part of UKSPF, is committed to:
  - Create jobs and boost community cohesion.
  - Promote networking and collaboration to share knowledge, expertise and resources, and stimulate innovation and growth.
  - Reduce levels of economic inactivity.
  - Support people furthest from the labour market to overcome barriers to work.
  - Support local areas to fund gaps in local skills provision to support people to progress in work, and supplement local adult skills provisions.
- Cheshire East Council, through UKSPF activities aims to: 'Build Pride in Place and increase life chances' across the following areas:
  - Boost productivity, pay, jobs and living standards by growing the private sector, especially in those places where they are lagging.
  - Spread opportunities and improve public services, especially in those places where they are weakest.
  - Restore a sense of community, local pride and belonging, especially in those places where they have been lost.
  - Empower local leaders and communities, especially in those places lacking local agency.
- An important action for the sub-region is to reduce carbon dioxide emissions with a target of achieving net zero by 2040. At the forefront of this is a £30bn plan for the North West and North Wales to be home to the UK's first net zero carbon industrial cluster by 2040. The HyNet project (led by Progressive Energy) is made up of several different elements, bringing together partner organisations and local manufacturers, providing the infrastructure to produce, transport and store low carbon hydrogen across the North West and North Wales. In addition, the infrastructure will be created to capture, transport and lock away carbon dioxide emissions from industry.

- HyNet will both upgrade existing infrastructure, as well as develop new infrastructure. This includes underground pipelines, hydrogen production plants and storage facilities. In 2023, HyNet expected to enable the region to retain high value roles, secure approximately 4,000 new jobs during construction, attract inward investment and cultivate a supply chain across the region. As part of HyNet, earlier this year, North West, Cheshire West & Chester Council has given the green light to develop the UK's first-ever low carbon Hydrogen Production Plant (HPP). This project has the potential to unlock substantial investments, forecasted to be in the billions.
- There is also consideration to "ORIGIN", powering the UK's race to net zero with a vision for Ellesmere Port to become the world's first Net Zero Carbon Industrial cluster. The aim is to connect global talent and local people with pioneering, green sector businesses at their waterfront location, they anticipate 3.3m Sq. ft. of potential floorspace, 30,000 new jobs forecast and £2billion worth of investment.



## 04. Priorities and Actions.

### Actionable Priority – Technical Skills (Theme 1)

Activities	Partners involved	Monitoring	Method of implementation & expected outcomes	Timescales	Progress Status
<b>Actionable Priority – Technical Skills (Theme 1)</b>					
Establish sector specific working groups to take forward the priorities within each individual sector.	Chambers of Commerce Employer & Sector Representative Bodies Enterprise Cheshire & Warrington	Quarterly progress reports. Changes to curriculum. Action notes used to inform meetings with Providers / C&WLP Network agendas.	Conduct deeper dives into specific issues of importance, with focus on technical skills. Group changes: Merge low carbon and manufacturing groups; Launch Health & Social Care Strategic Board; and Life Sciences group to be reinstated.	Quarterly meetings from January 2024 onwards	On track to deliver.
Map supply of all types of local training provision by qualifications and competencies.	Local Authorities FE/HE Providers C&W Learning Provider Network	Weekly review meetings with data provider, moving to quarterly meetings following publication.	Engagement with all providers to gain details of courses available. Production of an online prospectus tool detailing all provision available.	Power BI available to LSIP team from May 2024 (expected publication July 2024).	On track to deliver.
Increase apprenticeship uptake and levy transfer promotion via: Exploring potential for shared apprenticeship schemes. Increasing PR and social media activity regarding the benefits of apprenticeships. Increasing careers activity relating to apprenticeships. Encouraging employers to raise awareness of their own businesses and opportunities available.	Pledge Partnership / Careers Hub DWP IOT	Apprenticeship uptake, particularly at Level 3 and above. Increase in Employers engaged in apprenticeships. Website & social media analytics. Review via new Power BI Dashboard October 2024 and March 2025.	UTC Warrington, LSIP and LSIF Conferences to provide key information and case studies from employers and learners on T Levels and Apprenticeships. The Pledge / Careers Hub activity (detailed within 'What we have achieved so far'). Open discussion with the IOT and exploring potential partnership opportunities moving forward to support delivery of these activities.	Ongoing as per Events Calendar.	On track to deliver.
Build relationships between providers and employers to support the high level of recruitment intent over the forthcoming 12months utilising (for example) Career Days, Industry Placements; Cheshire & Warrington Opportunities Portal; and Forums to bring everyone together.		Number of unfilled vacancies reducing. Technical Education & Course uptake increasing.	The Pledge / Careers Hub activity (detailed within What we have achieved so far). Additional relationships formed via our Working Groups and networking opportunities, and direct referrals from us to providers.	Ongoing as per Events Calendar.	On track to deliver.
Work with providers to identify how provision can be more responsive to employer need.		Technical Education course uptake Changes to curriculum, considering small modular courses, flexible training and direct training into business (for example).	LSIF related projects. Working Groups to focus on key aspects of technical skills requirements. Activities of Providers' Employer Skills Boards.	Ongoing until August 2026.	On track to deliver.

## 04. Priorities and Actions.

### Actionable Priority – Accessibility (Theme 2)

Activities	Partners involved	Monitoring	Method of implementation & expected outcomes	Timescales	Progress Status
<b>Actionable Priority – Accessibility (Theme 2)</b>					
<p>Raise awareness of LSIPs with stakeholders and their purpose to support understanding of skill requirements.</p> <p>Raise awareness amongst employers of the value of different types of recruitment strategies and training programmes.</p> <p>Address barriers to investing in skills and training.</p> <p>Increase awareness of the ability for levy transfer.</p> <p>Provision of business support advice and guidance to diagnose digital skill needs &amp; signpost digital training provision.</p> <p>Provision of support for those considered to be at a disadvantage.</p>	<p>Employers</p> <p>Chamber of Commerce Network</p> <p>Employer Representative Bodies</p> <p>Enterprise Cheshire &amp; Warrington</p> <p>Sector Representative Bodies</p> <p>FE/HE Providers</p> <p>Independent Training Providers</p> <p>Cheshire &amp; Warrington Learning Provider Network</p> <p>Cheshire &amp; Warrington Pledge Partnership (inc. Careers Hub)</p> <p>Local Authorities</p> <p>DWP</p>	<p>PR and social media activity and analytics.</p> <p>Numbers of attendees at engagement events, including individual employer meetings.</p> <p>Website analytics monthly reports.</p> <p>Monthly review of inbound enquiries via LSIP website, enquiry forms completed and stakeholder referrals to us as a broker.</p>	<p>Quarterly Chamber magazine adverts to raise LSIP profile.</p> <p>Annual LSIP Conference (first took place in November 2023 and the next to take place in November 2024).</p> <p>LinkedIn profile launched November 2023.</p> <p>Website launch, November 2023.</p> <p>Invitations to present LSIP at various forums including HMPPS Thorn Cross (Feb 2024), CWAC Origin Meeting (Feb 2024), Warrington UTC Stakeholder event (April 2024) and SCCCI Networking (Dec 2023).</p> <p>Invitations to be part of CCSW, Reaseheath and Priestley College Employer Skills Boards.</p> <p>Launch of Sector Working Groups, January 2024.</p> <p>LSIF College Collaboration event, March 2024.</p> <p>Employer meetings.</p>	<p>Monthly LSIP / DFE review meetings.</p> <p>Social Media presence by Nov 2023.</p> <p>Website launch November 2023, Relaunch August 2024.</p> <p>Termly individual College Review Meetings from May 2024.</p> <p>Sector Working Groups collaboration from January 2024</p>	<p>On track to deliver.</p> <p>Website analytics (Feb 24- May 24) 420 users. People accessed the website 671 times and viewed 1,211 pages.</p> <p>No of enquiries via website 30.</p> <p>LSIP Conference 110 attendees.</p> <p>LinkedIn 280 followers to date (May 2024).</p> <p>Employer meetings - 215 undertaken between August 2023 – April 2024.</p> <p>LSIF colleges collaboration event over 60 attendees.</p> <p>20 direct requests for further information and support as a result of engagement events.</p> <p>Ongoing provision of informal Levy and course matching service.</p> <p>Evidence of further activity as a direct result of connections we have made</p>

## 04. Priorities and Actions.

### Actionable Priority – Technical Skills (Theme 3)

Activities	Partners involved	Monitoring	Method of implementation & expected outcomes	Timescales	Progress Status
<b>Actionable Priority – Employability Competencies (Theme 3)</b>					
Embed Microsoft applications and social media into school and college curriculum.	<p>Secondary Schools FE/HE Providers</p> <p>Cheshire &amp; Warrington Learning Provider Network</p> <p>The Cheshire &amp; Warrington Pledge Partnership (inc. Careers Hub)</p>	<p>Changes to curriculum – 16-18.</p> <p>Termly college review meetings.</p> <p>ITP provision</p>	<p>Map what is already taking place within curriculum, noting mandatory and elective options.</p> <p>Work with Secondary education and FE/HE providers to make changes to curriculum or provide additional courses to tackle this issue.</p> <p>Work with other LSIPs to address the national concerns that there is a need to reboot the digital skills system.</p>	<p>College Review meetings held May 2024.</p> <p>Termly College Review meetings</p>	<p>On track to deliver.</p>
Understand that employability competencies are applicable to both the existing and future workforce.	<p>FE/HE Providers Secondary Education</p> <p>Cheshire &amp; Warrington Learning Provider Network</p> <p>Local Authorities</p> <p>VCS organisations</p> <p>Warrington Skills Commission</p> <p>National Careers Service (Seetec)</p> <p>Institute of Employability Professionals (IEP)</p> <p>DWP</p> <p>Chambers of Commerce</p>	<p>Changes to curriculum.</p> <p>Increased provision for those already in work.</p> <p>Increased provision for those preparing for or seeking employment.</p> <p>Course uptake.</p>	<p>Changes to curriculum to demonstrate the application of what is taught.</p> <p>Careers in the curriculum activity, i.e., employers’ contribution in the classroom.</p> <p>Increased provision for those already in work &amp; promotion of existing provision to employers.</p> <p>Formation of partnerships between education leads and employers to support demonstration on how key skills are applied and transferable within employment.</p> <p>West Cheshire &amp; North Wales Chamber developed and delivered an upskilling course with NatWest for NHS staff on personal budgeting and excel via Multiply funding.</p> <p>Bootcamps – Microsoft Power Platform and Process Automation Skills Bootcamp is now live.</p>	<p>Cheshire &amp; Warrington Learning Provider Network event in June 2024</p>	<p>On track to deliver.</p> <p>3 courses delivered to NHS.</p>

## 04. Priorities and Actions.

### Actionable Priority – CEIAG (Theme 4)

Activities	Partners involved	Monitoring	Method of implementation & expected outcomes	Timescales	Progress Status
<b>Actionable Priority – CEIAG (Theme 4)</b>					
Career inspiration activity and progression pathways that inspire and support young people, ensuring collaboration between partners and providers regarding key messaging.	Careers & Enterprise Company Chambers of Commerce Networks Employers FE/HE Providers Independent Training Providers (ITPs)	Types & volume of career inspiration activity that has taken place. Number of employers engaged that work within the relevant sectors. Industry placement days.	Conduct deeper dives into specific issues of importance, with focus on technical skills.  Group changes: Merge low carbon and manufacturing groups; Launch Health & Social Care Strategic Board; and Life Sciences group to be reinstated.	Ongoing as per Events Calendar.	On track to deliver.  Events calendar to be established for the start of the next academic year.
Facilitate opportunities for the future workforce to access opportunities available locally, as well as supporting those seeking a change of career, incorporating experience of the workplace activities and promotion of the Cheshire & Warrington Opportunities Portal.	JCP/DWP Recruitment Agencies Secondary Schools Sector Representative Bodies The Cheshire & Warrington Pledge Partnership	Industry Placement Days. Career Events. Statistics relating to work experience activities. Website analytics.	Establish a working group for this theme to develop activity programmes.  Career inspiration activities and events. Employer/Industry open days.	Ongoing as per Events Calendar.	On track to deliver.  Events calendar to be established for the start of the next academic year.
Expanding existing partnerships between providers and businesses to enhance opportunities, share resource and expertise.		Employers engaged. Volunteers recruited.	Standard ways of working to be agreed across colleges, to better enable employer engagement.  Brokerage service between providers and employers.  Social media and PR campaigns to encourage employers to volunteer time.	Standards agreed by November 2024.  Ongoing until August 2026.	On track to deliver.  20 new direct introductions made to providers to engage in the skills system.

## 04. Priorities and Actions.

### Actionable Priority – Educational Professionals (Theme 5)

Activities	Partners involved	Monitoring	Method of implementation & expected outcomes	Timescales	Progress Status
<b>Actionable Priority – Educational Professionals (Theme 5)</b>					
Establish partnerships between employers and departmental leads (link with Theme 4).	Chamber of Commerce Network FE/HE Providers Cheshire & Warrington Learning Provider Network The Cheshire & Warrington Pledge Partnership (inc. Careers Hub)	Employers engaged. Partnerships formed.	Social media and PR campaigns to support attendance at Sector Working Groups. Employer engagement activities. Sector Working Groups, requesting Departmental Leads to be present, leading to new and improved relationships between employers and colleges.	By March 2025.	On track to deliver.
Establish a system for employees who are seconded into education to gain sufficient support and training	Sector Representative Bodies Northern Skills Network Local Authorities	Employers engaged. Number of staff seconded.	Appoint a provider to lead on upskilling of industry professionals into learning assessors and teachers. Engagement with employers to support the process. Social media and PR activity.	Ongoing until August 2026. (Subject to funding).	On track to deliver.
Identify solutions to increase capacity within the existing skills system, ensuring there are sufficient educational professionals to enable course delivery.	Careers & Enterprise Company DWP / JCP Recruitment Agencies Association of Colleges	LMI. Feedback from FE/HE Providers and Independent Training Providers.	Work with other LSIPs, where this is also considered a priority, to establish solutions. Identify a provider that can lead on increased training. Social media and PR campaigns. Raise awareness of the benefits of this career path, particularly targeting industry professionals considering retirement/change of career leading up to retirement. Employers to second employees to assist with course design and delivery. Prioritise sectors based on vacancy gaps / engagement with providers to understand their shortages. Increase awareness of funding streams available to support this.	By March 2025.	On track to deliver.





## 05. What Has Been Achieved So Far?

### 5.1 Introduction

This section provides a summary of what the Cheshire & Warrington LSIP has achieved so far.

From the LSIP's perspective, our remit extends beyond technical skills; we take a holistic approach to resourcing, for new and existing employees, looking at all available talent pools with a long-term view, which extends beyond August 2026.

### 5.2 Barriers we have faced and what we have overcome

Creating the LSIP Report was the beginning of the process. We knew there would be challenges and barriers in the delivery phase of our LSIP. This section highlights some of these points:

- We established working groups aligned with our priority sectors. We note that Life Sciences has proven to be a more challenging sector to engage with and thus we are now working with Cogent Skills, who are also represented on our Board, to re-establish their local employer group.

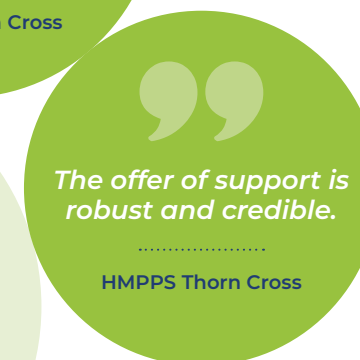
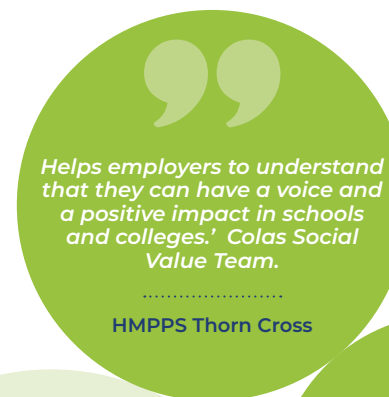
- There are already a sizeable number of sector based working groups that aim to respond to the skills agenda. As such, rather than create duplication, we have joined forces with providers and partners to ensure LSIP engagement, for example working towards a Health & Social, Care Strategic Board.
- Monitoring changes to the skills agenda and other matters of importance to business.
- We are working with employer expectations alongside college ability to respond, ensuring college business engagement teams are able to react to meet expectations.
- We continue to encourage all partners to meet their statutory responsibilities.

### 5.3 Emerging Benefits

#### Building Relationships

Through our working groups and networking, we have facilitated approximately 50 new relationships between businesses, Independent Training Providers (ITPs), Colleges and Local Authority contacts. These new relationships have been used to enhance College Employer Boards, as well as collaboration activity between ITPs and colleges.

We are proud to have received recognition for the support services we offer:



We have been working with DWP in our Working Groups and networking activities, and as a result we have been able to extend their knowledge on local priorities and how sectors really operate. DWP Partnership Managers have been able to take this knowledge to share with their teams, to consider alternative and more innovative methods of support to local business, including discussions around SWAPs and sector-based activities. This has also included a more informed awareness between NHS and social care vacancies and how these might be aligned.

Our relationship with the local authorities has continued to grow, ensuring where roles have been established that could duplicate LSIP activities, that we have created further collaboration, and joined-up working, to ensure employers receive the best possible service.

We have developed positive relationships with Cheshire West and Chester Economic Growth Team, becoming a key influencer in the ORIGIN Project (Ellesmere Port Net Zero Carbon Industrial Cluster). As such, we are now looking to replicate this support in other towns across the region, e.g. Crewe.

Our positive relationship with the Cheshire East Business Team, has led to us brokering training and recruitment support for a number of businesses in the area.

We have also supported building relationships between providers and the 3 Local Authorities.

Workforce development is being supported through National Careers Service being linked into the provider base.

There has been an increase in collaborative working between providers across the region and increased learner referrals to alternative providers, enabling access to provisions which most closely matches their needs. We have built significant relationships, beyond our priority sectors, with providers, stakeholders and employers, therefore establishing our reputation as a trusted skills broker. For example, providing signposting to enable access to specific provisions or for funding support.

The LSIP has also supported the relaunch of the previously lapsed Cheshire & Warrington Learning Provider Network, which aims to increase collaboration between Independent Training Providers (ITPs), FE colleges and HEIs,

delivering skills training, education and work-based learning to young people and adults across the Cheshire and Warrington Local Authority areas. The network provides: signposting of employers to member organisations; a collaborative approach to bids/tenders and local/national funding opportunities; direct contact with local stakeholder and local government agencies; and peer support on aspects of work within our sectors.

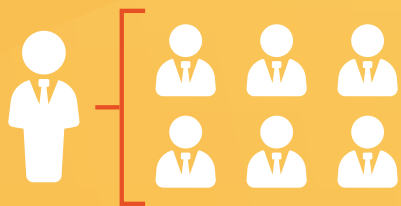
We successfully hosted a sub-regional Skills Conference, showcasing apprenticeships, T-Levels and Bootcamps. This gave employers an opportunity to hear from training providers and enabling employers and learners to share experiences. The conference covered the apprenticeship levy, support from DWP, and inclusion activities.

At the conference we launched our Working Groups, providing opportunities to discuss the most pressing matters for each of our priority sectors. This also facilitated employer and provider engagement.



Publicly available Department for Education data demonstrates that:

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The percentage of 19+ delivery providers delivering in line with the LSIP overall priorities has increased from

**20.66%**

in the academic year 2022/23

to **27.84%**

in the academic year 2023/24



The percentage of Apprenticeship providers delivering in line with the LSIP overall priorities has increased from .....

**56.45%**

in the academic year 2022/23

to **58.72%**

in the academic year 2023/24

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*We will continue to monitor this data on an annual basis for the duration of this LSIP.*

## Responding To Theme 1

### Technical Skills

**Our local colleges have responded positively to the LSIP and are providing new provisions in line with identified technical skills needs:**

- At least 36 staff have already been upskilled on new equipment.
- Employer boards to allow employer engagement into the business planning process and influencing the curriculum in their relevant subject areas.
- Green baccalaureate and developing green leaders for a green economy.
- Student sustainability groups and looking at hosting a green sustainability conference.
- Curriculum plans aligned with the LSIP.
- Widened Health & Social Care offer.
- Pilots with NHS England for non-clinical skills for nurses.
- Expected launch of Clinical Skills Hub.
- Digital skills for local workforces including Microsoft Office, Excel and cloud-based working. In addition, course enhancement is being reviewed across current courses, including T Levels.
- Partnership working between colleges to develop a Green Technologies Hub.
- Upskilling college staff with digital literacy.
- Cross-college opportunities to share equipment and projects.
- Creating roles for Industry Placement Offices with the prime focus of sourcing apprenticeship and industry placements with local employers.
- 74% of delivery in line with LSIP priorities.
- Restructuring of work placement teams to support increased employer engagement.
- Young Enterprise style challenges.
- Short courses in preference to lengthy provisions.

The influence of the LSIP can further be evidenced through introducing HMPPS Thorn Cross to ITPs, colleges and partners, widening their understanding of the local priorities and how prisoners might directly benefit. As a result, they are now tailoring their course provisions to meet employer needs.

Our positive relationship with Progressive Energy, leading HyNet, has enabled us to directly challenge resourcing and training plans within their supply chain, as well as ensure our local providers are able to support.

### The Impact of the Local Skills Improvement Fund (LSIF)

The LSIF provides funding for providers to respond to LSIP priorities by investing in new facilities, curriculum development and improving teaching expertise to enable delivery against the skills priorities set out in Local Skills Improvement Plans.

#### The overarching aims of our colleges' collaboration:

- Increase skills provisions, creating new level 3-5 LSIP aligned courses in: manufacturing, health & social care, life sciences with cross cutting digital and low carbon themes.
- Support employer engagement and innovation, particularly in conjunction with SMEs.
- Improve quality in skills provisions by upskilling teaching staff.
- Increase collaborative, inclusive activity, improving regional coordination and efficiency.
- Provide long term sustainability, establishing funding routes beyond LSIF funding.

We have already begun to see the positive impacts LSIF is making through:

- Increased collaboration with a joint event between the LSIP and the colleges delivering LSIF projects. Over 60 employer/partner attendees, aimed at raising awareness of the LSIF, partnership working, reducing costs and duplication.
  - The Cheshire & Warrington IoT intends to extend planned works to fulfil requirements of the LSIP.
  - The Pledge Partnership are providing support in engaging employers in careers advice in schools.
  - Increased collaboration between colleges delivering LSIF projects and employers supporting curriculum development, ensuring learning facilities are reflective of employer needs.
- In direct response to priorities outlined in the LSIP we have seen (but not limited to):**
- 8 staff have undertaken phlebotomy training, mental health first aid training and paediatric first aid.
  - Development of Health Higher Technical Qualification underway focusing on health care management.
  - In collaboration with the NHS, Work Zones and DWP, a new Health Skills Bootcamp, delivery due in May.
  - 12 staff have undertaken CNC and additive manufacturing training across FDM and SLA 3D printing.
  - Recruitment video for promotion of engineering programmes aimed at schools and employers.
  - Employer and stakeholder advisory board established for LSIF development and curriculum design.
  - Development of a Bootcamp focusing on developing skills required for positions with HyNet's supply chain.
  - Internal/external workshops to analyse LMI information purchased via project feedback used to direct curriculum development.
  - 30 staff attended Microsoft 365 practitioner training.
  - Marketing materials created promoting manufacturing programmes to schools, employers and HE partners.
  - Purchase of new equipment such as tenstar simulators and laser curtains. Surface hub training with staff to follow in preparation for curriculum delivery.

- Staff CPD is underway focusing on Computer Aided Design (CAD).
- Delivering bespoke engineering training to staff at a local chemical company.
- New provision such as L4 HTQ Engineering.
- Colleges are working with employers to develop new low carbon provisions for launch in autumn 2024.
- A 'Girls in Construction' school engagement event was held in the Spring term and included promotion of green skills and the upcoming Green Technology Hub at the college.

LSIF activities are funded until 31st March 2025 and are reported against KPIs to the Department for Education. We will work closely with the LSIF Collaboration to ensure effective communication of their successes.

### Other activities to increase technical education uptake

- We have raised the profile of levy transfer, supporting levy paying businesses to use the <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/transferring-your-apprenticeship-levy-to-another-business> pledge site. We have supported non-levy paying businesses to access the site to request levy funding.
- We have used the Chamber network, Local Authorities Economic Growth Teams, our website and LinkedIn profile to promote opportunities, and supported businesses on an individual basis to better understand their options. This has included the benefits of Levy Transfer for businesses.
- The Careers hub funded The Pledge activity for 4 sub-regional Mock Assessment Centres which included Teacher Encounters for 36 educators who were up-skilled by employers/apprentices/ Further Education colleagues in apprenticeship & technical education pathway recruitment and application practices. These sessions were directly supported by the LSIP team. A further 250 educators received training from those teacher ambassadors. The Pledge ran this programme last year with over 500 educators receiving current and relevant information, advice and guidance about the apprenticeship pathway.
- To launch the Employment Readiness Programme, the Pledge ran whole year assemblies with Year 12-13 students to explain the apprenticeship route and invite students to apply for the programme. For example, in the Macclesfield Pledge area, year 12 students from every sixth form received the launch assembly.
- The Pledge ran three apprenticeships and jobs fairs for employers actively recruiting, across each Local Authority in February 2024. There was a total attendance of 1746 attendees.



## Responding To Theme 2 Accessibility

### We talk about this theme in 2 parts:

1. Our website - offering support to employers to better understand how to engage with educational pathways, how to benefit from this and where to get further information.
2. Inclusion and diversity - including disadvantaged and under-represented groups as additional talent pools. This includes work we have undertaken with HMPPS Thorn Cross (an open prison), working with our local authorities on promoting supported internships and care leaver recruitment, and working with DWP colleagues to support veterans, retro recruitment (over 50s) and job seekers with disabilities.

A key tool to support in addressing this theme is the Cheshire & Warrington LSIP website. The website's purpose is to provide information to employers. It offers a one-stop shop, targeted at SMEs, to support them access skills pathways and providers.

### Further work is still required; however a website has been launched to support employers in:

- Understanding the key objectives and delivery of the LSIP.
- Providing news on what is happening locally to support the skills agenda.
- Event notifications.
- Accessing support to navigate the skills system, sourcing funding to support technical education uptake.
- Building links and developing relationships.
- Encouraging business to get involved with the LSIP.
- Supporting the development of Training Needs Analyses.
- Accessing diverse, inclusive talent pools which may not have previously been considered, including veterans, ex-offenders and care leavers.

### The Pledge Partnership greatly contribute to this, as agreed with The Careers Hub.

#### Examples include:

- Priority 5 - Connect careers provisions in schools and colleges to the needs of local economies (as articulated through (LSIPs).
- LSIP colleagues and key messages are connected and shared across our network of 86 Schools/Colleges and over 500+ employers.
- Rolling out the CEC Employer Standards across their network.
- Completion of employer insight CPD sessions delivered to employers including: The Teenage Brain; supporting young people with Social, Emotional and Mental Health Difficulties (SEMH) barriers; Supporting care experienced young people; Inclusive recruitment and accessible employment; Autism at work and young people with physical disabilities.

- Engaging with the three Local Authorities, raising awareness of careers education and employer encounters and advocating for those most disadvantaged, focussing on School Improvement, Inclusion, SEND and those at risk of NEET.

Connected and shared across  
**86 Schools/Colleges**

 **500+**  
**Employers**

.....





## Responding To Theme 3

### Employability Competencies

DWP have reported that being able to understand skills gaps identified by employers, has enabled them to respond strategically. As a result, they have observed changes to their purchasing of skills provision which better supports individuals and addresses gaps that employers have highlighted. This has particularly related to employability skills and digital skills.

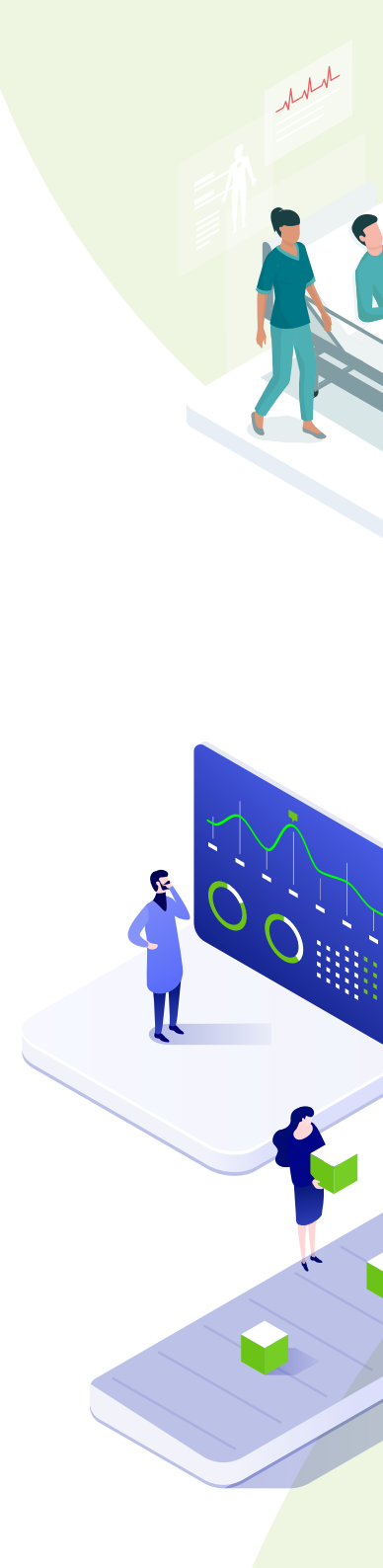
Enterprise Cheshire & Warrington (previously the Cheshire & Warrington LEP) have highlighted that gaining the viewpoints of employers has further evidenced their activities are progressing in a relevant direction, and cements what they have observed from data analysis.

**The Pledge Partnership have completed activities to support LSIP in addressing this theme. These include:**

- 20 cohorts of an Employment Readiness Programme with school sixth forms and colleges, supporting 1,000 young people looking for an apprenticeship. Sessions led by employers/ apprentices enabled young people to understand and prepare for applications to apprenticeships.
- Explore programmes with schools, a series of between 3 and 5 visits to employers, training providers, further education and/or higher education providers. Targeted to inspire young people about progression routes and careers and to develop their employability skills.
- 18 National Citizen Service (NCS) programmes delivered to students from mainstream schools and sixth forms/colleges and special schools. These have focused on developing their employability skills.
- A monthly employer meeting sharing practice, topics including apprenticeships recruitment and supporting young people with basic employability traits and habits in the early stages of apprenticeships.

## Responding To Theme 4 CEIAG

- In January 2024, the Careers Hub held their first Careers Leaders conference, covering updates about careers education and employer engagement, with a focus on green skills and ITP engagement.
- Careers leaders meet termly, discussing pathway opportunities, specifically the skills required for apprenticeship & technical education pathways, with presentations given by employers and sector leaders.
- Parental engagement newsletters and on-line forums for all pathway options, including Apprenticeship & Technical Education, were delivered on behalf of the Careers Hub.
- Work is underway to roll out the Skills Builder accelerator programme.
- Curriculum resources were designed for Years 9-12 covering growth sectors, with a specific focus on Apprenticeship & Technical Education.
- The Careers Hub supports schools and providers to meet and evidence their requirements around Provider Access Legislation.
- The LSIP presented at the Cheshire and Warrington Pledge Annual Conference in June 2023. This was attended by over 220 employers, schools, colleges, youth and community groups and local authority staff, with a focus on the importance of technical skills.
- The Pledge Partnership Leads have presented to each of the three secondary Headteacher forums (based on Local Authority Area), updating them on Information, Advice & Guidance, especially technical skills and routes.
- The Pledge Partnership ran 6 town wide Careers Fairs, with 336 exhibitors and 7,389 attendees.
- Additional opportunities have been facilitated to help the future workforce better understand careers within the sub-region. These include Climate Change and Digital Careers events, Industry Open Days, Experience of the Workplace activities, careers fairs, mock assessment centres, teacher encounters, Girls in Bentley, Jobs & Apprenticeship Fairs, Digital experiences of the workplace, Key Stage 3 Experiences of the Workplace Projects; and NHS/Social Care activity.







## Responding To Theme 5

### Educational Professionals

- Curriculum leads attending Sector Working Groups and networking with business professionals to support establishing partnerships between employers and providers.
- Macclesfield College are delivering FE Tutor L5 from September 2024, the LSIP team will aid promotion.
- Promotion of the DFE initiative “Taking Teaching Further (TTF)” via LSIP website and LinkedIn.
- Raising awareness at Colleges Collaboration Event in March 2024, and Warrington UTC event in April 2024, asking employers to consider how they can get involved and support this theme.
- Building relationships with DWP to investigate alternative methods in building capacity within the skills system, such as focus on veterans, retro recruitment and VSO support.

#### 1.4 Monitoring Progress

As we respond to our LSIP’s key themes, we will remain committed to monitoring and supporting progress.

- **For Theme 1 – Technical Skills**, we will be checking progress against LSIF KPIs; monitoring technical education uptake; utilising LMI data; and monitoring and reporting on changes to curriculum.
- **For Theme 2 – Accessibility**, we will be recording employer engagement; brokerage support (including with regard to the apprenticeship levy); and monitoring website and social media analytics.
- **For Theme 3 – Employability competencies**, we will be monitoring: changes to curriculum to incorporate these skills; changes to provisions for those already in work or seeking employment; and course uptake.
- **For Theme 4 – CEIAG**, we will be recording career inspiration activity; monitoring employer engagement; and delivery of our events calendar.
- **For Theme 5 – Educational Professionals**, we will be monitoring: LMI data; partnerships formed; recording employer engagement to support capacity; and partnerships formed between providers and business.



## 06. What Still Needs To Be Achieved?

The work of our LSIP is gaining momentum, our Roadmap and the progress update, demonstrate LSIP achievements to date. It is worth noting that the LSIP will run up until August 2026, as it was approved as a three-year plan, although we believe this is the start of a longer-term process.

We will now highlight activities that have begun, but which are not yet completed, as well as objectives that we intend to take forward.

### Theme 1 – Technical Skills

**Timescale – complete by December 2024**

- Support smarter ways of working as we see the development of the new Health & Social Care Strategic Board, Life Sciences Group led by Cogent Skills and Digital Skills Project with Careers Hub. We will also be merging our manufacturing and low carbon working groups due to the significant crossovers between the two sectors.
- Building on partnerships and understanding where the linkages lie. For example, CIMSPA (Chartered Institute of Managing Sports and Physical Activity) have

recognised the importance of the LSIP and have identified how they can link in with its work. As a result of our partnership approach, we have welcomed CIMSPA to our Health & Social Care Working Group, and look forward to having them contribute to our Health & Social Care Strategic Board. The Northern Skills Network have taken a similar approach with their response to the theme of Educational Professionals.

**Timescale – complete by March 2025**

- Monitoring LSIF delivery in response to employer needs where specific technical skills gaps and future requirements have been identified.
- Timescale – ongoing until August 2026 (Subject to Funding).
- Maintain up to date data analysis linked to the LSIP Priorities.
- Increase apprenticeship uptake and levy transfer promotion and monitor quarterly.
- Continue working with providers to identify how provisions can be more responsive to employer needs.
- Ensure ongoing employer influence of future curriculum

planning.

- Support the Working Groups to ensure the employer voice continues to be heard.
- LSIP will sit on relevant Strategic Employer Skills Boards/Groups.
- Build upon the work of College Employer Skills Boards.
- There is also ongoing work with HyNet ESG to ensure they understand their responsibilities to their supply chain and beyond.

### Theme 2 – Accessibility

**Timescale – complete by December 2024**

- The NEET project is being led by Careers Hub and was launched in September 2023. Work has been undertaken to establish common ways of working across the three local authorities, with a goal to release a toolkit into high schools to reduce potential NEET figures. We are awaiting the publication of the toolkit.

**Timescale – Complete by March 2025**

- CWaC led, UKSPF Year 3 funded programme responding to LSIP, delivered by West Cheshire & North Wales Chamber. The programme identifies training needs, offers skills brokerage and

training grants to SMEs.

- 15 case studies demonstrating the benefits of training and impact or any gaps in training offer.
- Working with HyNet to consider communications to understand the benefits of the project to support employers in understanding the implications of low carbon on business.
- Full mapping of current support available for those considered to be at a disadvantage to assist accessing provisions and employment.
- We have established links regarding care leavers but would like to take this further, to encourage private sector employers to sign the Care Leavers Covenant. Similarly, with the Armed Forces Covenant.
- Full mapping of current Digital-related provisions, including MS Office training provisions, Careers Hub projects and Local Authority work, e.g. Digital Cheshire.
- Following feedback from our website focus group and a website audit, work is to be undertaken to reposition the website to better fit employer needs.

### **Theme 3 – Employability Competencies**

**Timescale – complete by December 2024**

- Map where there are gaps in delivering employability skills.

**Timescale – complete by March 2025**

- Establish activities to demonstrate how key skills are applied and transferable within employment through building relationships between providers and employers.

**Timescale – complete by September 2025**

- Further embed employability skills, interpersonal skills and work experience into the curriculum.

**Timescale – ongoing until August 2026 (Subject to Funding)**

- Increase mechanisms to increase the exposure of learners to the world of work so that they understand what is expected of them within the workplace.
- Careers in the curriculum activities to increase employer contributions within the classroom to further influence learners.

### **Theme 4 – CEIAG**

**Timescale – complete by September 2024**

- Establishment of an events calendar to make it easier for employers to see expectations of all providers and partners across the region, to provide more tailored activities and reduce duplication.

**Timescale – complete by June 2025**

- CWLPN to work with the Careers Hub on ITP pilot to increase local engagement activities in schools.

### **Theme 5 – Educational Professionals**

We have already begun to support the ongoing formation of relationships between providers and employers, and assessing to what extent employers are able to engage and support this agenda. If these relationships continue to be formed, we expect to see enhanced opportunities for employer/provider teaching collaboration.

**Further collaborative activities we are planning to support addressing this theme include:**

- Launching a working group specifically to address this theme.
- Appointing a provider to lead on upskilling of industry professionals.
- Engaging with employers to understand how they feel they could support us with this theme.
- Social media & PR campaigns.
- Identifying a provider that can lead on increased training.
- Raise awareness of the benefits of this career path, particularly targeting industry professionals considering retirement/change of career, leading up to retirement.
- Establishment of a brokerage service between employers and providers.
- Raising awareness amongst providers of provisions being available for FE Skills Tutor level 5.
- Sharing resourcing plans across colleges in addressing the gap in digital skills tutors.

As much as we are aware of the gaps we have locally, we must also consider the national picture. Therefore, as we move forward with the LSIP, we will be working closely with other LSIPs to share best practice on how they are addressing this theme within their own regions.

**Solutions that are being investigated include:**

- Methods for increasing remuneration for tutors in STEM related subjects.
- Staff recruitment events targeting skills operatives from industry.
- Working with employers to promote a 'dual professional' approach, whereby employees are released from their industry roles to work within an educational setting on a part-time basis.
- Consideration to national schemes such as Taking Teaching Further (TTF) to support the recruitment of staff from industry who are new to teaching, or promoting financial incentives such as Teacher Education bursaries.

## 07. Closing statements.

The successful delivery of the Cheshire & Warrington LSIP to date has been due to the collaboration across the sub-region. We are proud of the positive feedback we have received from our collaboration with partners as we progress with the delivery of our LSIP. Feedback received includes:

**The Cheshire & Warrington LSIP has demonstrated:**

- *“Understanding our specific needs in the wider context of the local area.”*
- *“It was really important to understand what employers were telling us around skills gaps so that we can then look at a strategic level what needs to be in place to support our customers access those opportunities but be better prepared.”*
- *“To deliver what we need as a business around sustainability and everything we need, being involved with the LSIP network helps us understand properly the skills that we need. So, we need that broader thinking, particularly around skills we don't know we need yet or they don't exist as yet.”*

- *“We're listening and we shape the offer accordingly and through the work of the LSIP we gain that clarity around the employer voice and need, and then we can reflect that in the offer.”*

**We want to thank all stakeholders and employers who have supported the process, helping ensure the Cheshire & Warrington LSIP truly reflects employers' needs. In particular, although not limited to, we would like to thank:**

- Cheshire College South & West Reaseheath College
- Macclesfield College
- Warrington & Vale Royal College
- Priestley College; Richmond Training; Cogent Skills
- University of Chester
- Enterprise Cheshire & Warrington
- The Cheshire & Warrington Pledge Partnership
- Cheshire & Warrington Learning Provider Network
- Warrington Borough Council; Cheshire East Council

- Cheshire West & Chester Council
- Warrington Chamber of Commerce
- West Cheshire & North Wales Chamber of Commerce
- DWP
- Cheshire & Warrington LSIP Board members

The Cheshire & Warrington LSIP team will remain committed to working collaboratively with key stakeholders, providers and employers across the region to ensure successful delivery of the Cheshire & Warrington LSIP.



For further information on the Cheshire & Warrington LSIP, and to keep up to date with our latest news, please **visit our website.**



## 08. Case Studies.

### 3T Collaboration

The LSIP low carbon and manufacturing working group meetings in early 2024, were attended by 3T, an independent learning provider specialising in the energy sector.

As a result of the meetings 3T were introduced to Thorn Cross prison, Progressive Energy, the organisation leading the Hynet project, as well as local Jobcentre Plus (JCP) and college contacts.

Since the working group 3T has deepened the relationship with Progressive Energy, resulting in Progressive Energy and some of the HyNet stakeholders visiting 3T's existing training centre in Manchester to understand the training they can offer to meet the construction and low carbon skills needs of the HyNet employers.

LSIP are continuing to link 3T into the local Cheshire and Warrington process to access bootcamp funding and with local colleges with AEB funding. The plan is for 3T to bring a mobile training unit into the Cheshire and Warrington area to facilitate training in engineering construction training such as plating, welding, pipefitting and rigging & slinging into Thorn Cross prison as well as into locations identified by JCP to allow access to training with Hynet job outcomes for ex-offenders, unemployed and economically inactive individuals. 3T's sister company, Utility & Construction Training, specialises in the utilities sector and will provide Hydrogen Safety training as well as Carbon Capture training.



**3t** Training  
Technology  
Transformation

## NHS Countess of Chester Hospital – Apprenticeship Levy Transfer

**Transfer of Apprenticeship Levy makes a huge difference for individual apprentices, and the skills and employment system. The NW NHS Trusts underspend around £12M. This is money lost to the system which could be spent on growing a skilled workforce.**

Attending the “LSIP Conference” in November 2023 provided the NW NHS Levy Transfer Service an opportunity to promote the set up they have in place to facilitate transfers, to a wider audience of employers. The team identified requests for apprenticeship funding, matchmade them with an organisation with Levy Funds available for gifting and support the employers with the required administration processes.

Last year, the Countess of Chester hospital transferred over £52,000 of their Levy to other organisations in their areas such as GP practices, care homes, nursing homes and hospices to support their staff to develop through apprenticeships.



*I am really glad the levy allows us to help support training for non-levy payers whose services impact the hospital and the health and social care system in our region. We have supported staff in these organisations to undertake apprenticeships such as Nursing Associate, Assistant Practitioner, Registered Nurse and Adult Care Worker to name a few.”*

.....  
**Molly Whelan**  
Vocational Development Manager  
COCH



## BGen and WVR College Partnership

**Background:** BGen, a Warrington-based engineering company, were invited to attend the LSIP manufacturing working group meeting in early 2024. At the meeting they connected with Warrington and Vale Royal (WVR) College.

**Collaboration:** At the LSIP event, BGen's Electrical Design Director engaged with the Engineering department at WVR College. This collaboration aimed to enhance practical training for students in the Electrical Engineering department by providing real-world industry experience. BGen developed a structured student work placement to bridge academic knowledge and industry practice.

**Work Placement Program:** The placement included various activities to provide comprehensive exposure:

1. **Office Environment:** Students are introduced to essential office tasks, such as printing and filing, to understand administrative processes.
2. **2D CAD/Document Controls:** Training in 2D Computer-Aided Design (CAD) and document management systems equips students with fundamental skills in drafting and documentation.



3. **Project Controls/QA/CDM/IOM:** Students learn about project management, quality assurance, Construction Design Management (CDM), and Integrated Operating Model (IOM) project process model.
4. **D Modelling:** Hands-on experience with industry-based 3D modelling software familiarises students with latest innovation and digitalisation techniques.

**Outcome and Future Plans:** The BGen/WVR College collaboration, aims to close the gap between education and industry needs, ensuring that young people are well-prepared for engineering careers. There are high expectations for increasing collaborative efforts to explore ways BGen can support curriculum development and offer career progression routes into engineering for WVR College students over the coming years. The collaboration has strengthened ties between BGen and WVR College, hoping to foster a pipeline of skilled engineers for the future.

## Total People Collaboration

**Total People have actively collaborated with the Cheshire and Warrington Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) to bolster workforce skills development for local employers, particularly in the engineering sector. By partnering with LSIP, Total People have been able to connect with new businesses, facilitating close working relationships with local SME employers and helping to understand the apprenticeships available that meet specific industry needs.**

One notable success has been the introduction of Lifestyle, fostering a productive relationship that has enlightened employers about skills development opportunities available in the area which will in turn, benefit the local economy. LSIP's role in these introductions has been crucial, providing an opportunity for Total People to showcase their expertise and customised training solutions. These efforts will not only improve workforce skills but also strengthen community ties, promoting sustained economic growth and development in Cheshire and Warrington. The ongoing partnership between LSIP and ITPS, such as Total People, exemplifies a strategic approach to workforce development, ensuring businesses have access to partners that can support them with growing skilled and competent employees.





## Colas Partnership

I attended the LSIP Conference where leaders from small businesses spoke about how they engage with the colleges. This inspired me and I better understood how working with the colleges can lead to influencing changes in training provisions.

At the LSIP Conference, I was introduced to members of the skills and employer engagement team from HMPPS Thorn Cross open prison. Working with ex-offenders is a priority for Colas so this has been an important connection for us in our local area. Since the Conference, we have had lots of meetings with the Prison team and put lots of plans in place. They have been amazing contacts and linked us with many other prisons, including Styal prison for opportunities for women to help raise aspirations. We have been sharing our vacancies with prison for Highways Maintenance operative permanent positions on release. Linking with them has given us great opportunities.

I met Niall MacFadyn via a direct referral from the LSIP team. Niall leads some Green skills activities in Cheshire West. We are planning to take part in his Green Careers Expo next year, as well as supporting his Weir pumphouse retrofit project. We're keen to promote opportunities on this.

The LSIP team are supporting our Supply Chain meeting to talk about Levy Transfer. This is a great opportunity for us to influence their understanding and thinking of how we might further spend and /or pledge our levy. Working with the LSIP has opened doors for us to achieve results.



“  
*Attending the LSIP working groups and other activities led by the LSIP have given us lots of opportunities to network with training providers.*  
.....  
**Gillian Carr**  
Social Value Coordinator

## HMPPS Thorn Cross Collaboration

HMPPS Thorn Cross were first introduced to the Local Skills Improvement Plan at the North West Business Leadership Team visit to the prison, attended by the LSIP.

The LSIP Team were able to introduce me to the Local Enterprise Partnership (now Enterprise Cheshire & Warrington), which allowed us to explore potential Bootcamp funding. We are now in ongoing discussions with Liverpool and Manchester, for potential replication in Cheshire.

When developing education, we wanted to meet LSIP requirements. Not all of our men are released into Cheshire, but as we recognise the sectors are common throughout the majority of LSIPs, we are able to ensure our offering is transferrable.

Our Employment Team are part of the LSIP Working Groups, which has enabled us to make additional contacts with both local businesses and training providers. Our introduction via the LSIP to The Pledge, enabled us to network at the Warrington Careers Fair, making more business connections.

We asked the LSIP for advice on CEIAG qualifications for members of our team. They were able to refer us to our local colleges and a member of our team is now completing IAG Level 3 at Cheshire College – South and West as a result of this referral.

The LSIP introduced us to Sharp Futures. We are now in discussion with them to provide industry space and employment on release.



*Our relationship with the LSIP has been invaluable. It's an agile relationship; if we approach the LSIP there is always an answer and someone to be directed to. We will see more impact from the relationships when we have a better understanding of what we need in the prisons*

**Louise Parr**

**Regional Employment Lead for Greater Manchester, Merseyside and Cheshire, New Future Network and HMPPS**



## Media Release: Cheshire & Warrington Business & Skills Conference, 16th November 2023, Alderley Park.

We are delighted with the feedback following our first Business & Skills Conference. Thank you to all the training providers, employers and local stakeholders who joined us and participated so fully in the agenda.

- Better inform local businesses about post-16 education and skills opportunities within Cheshire & Warrington, for both new and existing workforces and how they can benefit from this.
- Advance future course development based on local skills needs.
- Broker links between businesses, providers and the current skills system, to better understand what currently exists.
- Enable different and new ways of thinking towards working with local providers.

The Cheshire & Warrington Pledge Partnership spoke about the importance of business engaging with young people and teaching staff, to improve experiences about the world of work and build a talent pipeline.

Expert panels highlighted the benefits of T-Levels, apprenticeships and apprenticeship levy transfer, as well as employing ex-offenders and veterans, supported internships and how DWP can better support businesses.

In the afternoon, we broke out by LSIP priority sector (Manufacturing, Health & Social Care, Life Sciences, Digital, Low Carbon) to discuss current training provisions and opportunities for improvement. The conversation in each group was passionate and although there were common opportunities across all of the sectors, we noted specific opportunities to explore further.

We then launched our LSIP website: **[www.cheshireandwarringtonLSIP.co.uk](http://www.cheshireandwarringtonLSIP.co.uk)**

The purpose of the website is to be an honest broker, for employers to access the skills system in its easiest form; supporting employers to get to the information they need as easily as possible.

Following the event, we will now launch our Sector Working Groups. These Groups will help to enable real change in the skills training provisions, by putting the voice of employers at its heart.

If you would like to get involved in a working group – please contact us by emailing **[lsip@sccci.co.uk](mailto:lsip@sccci.co.uk)**.



*We were delighted with the 100% positive feedback we received from attendees following the event, and look forward to building on the positive links that have been made between employers and training providers today*

**Sarah Emes Young**  
LSIP Project Manager





## 09. ANNEX: Local Skills Improvement Fund Projects.

Karen Roberts Assistant Principal



### Overarching aims of the collaboration

- Increase skills provision, creating new level 3-5 LSIP aligned courses in: manufacturing, health & social care, life sciences with cross cutting digital and low carbon themes.
- Support employer engagement and innovation.
- Improve quality in skills provision by upskilling teaching staff.
- Increase collaborative, inclusive activities, improving regional coordination and efficiency.
- Provide long term sustainability, establishing funding routes beyond LSIF funding.
- Projects will build upon colleges collaborating on SDF projects, dovetailing with other funded initiatives such as the IoT, HTQs, Apprenticeships and T Levels, structured to align with the LSIP, ensuring that each fund adds value/complements the others.
- Projects will support learners and local businesses by providing additionality to existing programmes, expanding learning opportunities, widening participation in new training or development activities. Projects will provide clear progression routes to higher education.

### Need help?

May we also take this opportunity to highlight how our LSIP can assist you:

Navigating your way around training provisions and funding available.

Understanding your current and future skills needs.

Supporting you to engage with young people.

Promoting skills opportunities for your business in the region.

Guidance on the Apprenticeship Levy.

Taking on an apprentice or an industry placement (required for courses such as T Levels).

Accessing different talent pools, to extend your inclusive workforce.

Influence training available locally, to meet your business needs.

## Project 1

- **Aim:** To develop specialist provision in Health & Healthcare Science.
- Creating a replica hospital ward providing two areas of specialist training:

### Paediatrics/Midwifery and Geriatric/General Care

- **Project Lead:** Cheshire College South & West (CCSW)
- **LSIP Priority Sectors:** Health & Healthcare Science
- **LSIP Cross Cutting themes:** soft skills and behaviours – Employability – Digital

### Activity and Partnership

#### Activities to be delivered/ partnerships:

- Offer an enhanced curriculum teaching area with the ability to introduce new training courses e.g., Health Therapy.
- Use the replica hospital ward to introduce clinical care and practical skills into the healthcare programmes.

- Establish links with the Collaborative Partner, The University of Chester to develop a progression pathway for healthcare learners to move on to higher education courses in Nursing, Midwifery or Life Sciences.

#### Outcomes:

- Strengthen existing collaborative working within the sub-region.
- Enhanced learning environments at Ellesmere Port and provide cutting edge resources.
- Support collaborative working across providers to create learning content, deliver programmes and outcomes that are tailored to addressing skills shortages in identified LSIP areas.
- Support education reforms to meet national and local priorities by providing clear routes for the Lifetime Skills Guarantee.

## Project 2

- **Aim:** To develop specialist provisions in Engineering and Advanced Manufacturing.
- **Project Lead:** Cheshire College South & West (CCSW).
- **LSIP Priority Sectors:** Engineering & Manufacturing.
- **LSIP Cross Cutting themes:** Embedding sustainability into other programmes.

### Activity and Partnership

#### Activities to be delivered/ partnerships:

- Develop current engineering, electrical engineering, and manufacturing college courses.
- Increase the implementation of digital skills.
- Engineering maintenance pathway development embedding themes of sustainability, net zero and project management.

#### Outcomes:

- New equipment will enable integration of new skills and knowledge into the curriculum.
- Improved job readiness for careers in electrical engineering, digital transformation, automation and production and process engineering.
- Alignment with all Cheshire College programmes, complementing other projects and providing skills and equipment to develop and deliver more specialist training to align with LSIP key priorities.

## Project 3

- **Aim:** To develop an Immersive Learning Environment:
  - Digital Simulation Hub.
  - Career Skills Hub.
- **Project Lead:** Reaseheath College.
- **LSIP Priority Sectors:** Manufacturing.
- **LSIP Cross Cutting themes:** Employability, Low Carbon, Digital.
- Career Skills Hub - to incorporate digital skills development and to support the delivery of Microsoft Office 365 programmes and industry specific digital literacy programmes in line with the LSIP and LMI data report. This will also focus on the development of wider employability skills including team building, resilience, communication, leadership skills.

### Outcomes:

### Activity and Partnership

#### Activities to be delivered/ partnerships:

- Develop current engineering, electrical engineering, and manufacturing college courses.
- Immersive Learning Environment - enhance functionality by adding touch interface by installing laser curtain technology.
- Digital Simulation Hub - a range of simulators to develop the skills required for new and emerging technologies in precision farming, construction plant engineering, agri-tech, bus and coach engineering and welding.

- Increase in skills provision, particularly enhancing digital/technology knowledge within key sectors, outlined as LSIP priorities.
- Increased number of employers engaged with and benefitting from new technologies, thus reducing local skills gaps.
- Improvement in the quality of provision and staff training.
- Improved employability skills through the development of digital literacy programmes.

03.

## Project 4

- **Aim:** Upskill/reskill the existing workforce within industries impacted by the Low Carbon agenda.
- To establish WVR as a 'green skills' training provider.
- To address the 'green' skills gaps as outlined in the Cheshire & Warrington LSIP.
- To support the local workforce and economy to prepare for current and future skills demand.
- **Project Lead:** Warrington & Vale Royal College.
- **LSIP Priority Sectors:** Manufacturing and Engineering.
- **LSIP Cross Cutting themes:** Low Carbon.
- Review the college's own infrastructure and use of digital technology to inform future investment, improving support for local businesses to become 'greener'.
- Apply for UK Shared Prosperity Funds to build capacity and help with the delivery of the project.
- Existing collaborations with local training providers and collaborative opportunities for all colleges including complimentary 'green skills' local provisions and mirroring the Energy Skills Partnership approach.

### Outcomes:

- Increase green skills provisions, particularly construction, engineering and digital.
- Increase number of employers engaged with and benefitting from the new provisions and facilities, thus reducing local skills gaps.
- Improvement in the quality of provisions, enhanced staff training, development of a more innovative curriculum.
- Increase collaborative activities with employers and other providers, ensuring a complimentary local training offer addressing LSIP priorities.

### Activity and Partnership

#### Activities to be delivered/ partnerships:

- New equipment, staff training, curriculum development, marketing and branding to launch a new 'green skills training academy' (Warrington campus).
- Work with employers/stakeholders to create bespoke training courses, addressing current skills gaps/ future demand.

04.

## Project 5

- **Aim:** Provide improved learning facilities at the college's Winsford campus.
- Assist delivery under the new Institute of Technology, due to launch in September 2024.
- Learning facilities will support delivery of the campus's Engineering and Manufacturing provisions as well as the new Life Sciences and Health programmes.
- Provide facilities to support independent and blended learning, focused on developing learners' digital skills.
- **Project Lead:** Warrington & Vale Royal College.
- **LSIP Priority Sectors:** Health & Science.
- **LSIP Cross Cutting themes:** Digital.
- Expanded independent learning facilities supporting employer engagement, and mainstream provisions including T-Levels, HTQs, Apprenticeships and Access to HE programmes.
- Improved digital teaching and learning tools and facilities supporting delivery of employer responsive online and blended programmes.
- Provide additional capacity within the College Business Centre, driving employer engagement within Engineering & Manufacturing, Life Sciences and Health & Social Care at the Winsford campus.

### Outcomes:

- New Engineering & Manufacturing, Digital, Life Sciences and Health & Social Care courses aligned to LSIP skills gaps.
- Increase in employers engaged with and benefitting from new provisions and facilities at the Winsford campus, reducing local skills gaps.
- Improvement in quality of provisions and learner experiences following investment in premises.
- Increase in collaborative activities with employers and other providers, ensuring a complimentary local training offer, addressing LSIP skills priorities.

### Activity and Partnership

#### Activities to be delivered/ partnerships:

- Winsford campus provisions will focus on Engineering & Manufacturing, Life Sciences and Health & Social Care.
- Addressing digital skills gaps within the workforce, utilising facilities at the Winsford campus to better support digital skill development.
- Delivery of new adult provisions as well as existing planned L3, 4 and 5 courses launching under the Institute of Technology.

## Project 6

- **Aim:** Develop the current automotive provision along two themes: Electric and Hybrid Vehicle Technology and Advanced Driver Assist Systems (ADAS). Enhance digital skills within the area and align programmes to employer needs. Staff and employer workforce upskilling.
- Building of pathways to higher level technical programmes.
- Contribution to net zero.
- **Project Lead:** Macclesfield.
- **LSIP Priority Sectors:** Engineering & Manufacturing.
- **LSIP Cross Cutting themes:** Low Carbon, Employability Skills.
- Reskilling/upskilling of the workforce with the move to building and maintenance of hybrid or electric car batteries, alongside the transition in manufacturing, key skills gaps identified in the construction and EV charging infrastructure.
- Employability skills; customer service, planning and organisation skills alongside wider employability skills such as communication, resilience and teamwork.

### Outcomes:

- Upgraded and improved learning facilities and resources to support the delivery of a range of provisions.
- Delivering timely and responsive development for employers.
- Creating a pipeline of talent, trained and retained in the region.

### Activity and Partnership

#### Activities to be delivered/ partnerships:

- Investment in appropriate vehicles, training rigs, lifts, sectioned training components and systems, and specialist areas specifically designed for electric/hybrid vehicle technology to access diagnostic training.



## 10. ANNEX: Our Network Groups.

Group Name	Led By	Purpose for Attending	Comments
Cheshire & Warrington Learning Provider Network Meeting	Julie Shawcross	Collaboration	LSIP Provider Partner
Cheshire Business Leaders	FSB	Information Sharing	
North West Business Leaders – People & Skills Group	NWBL Group	Information Sharing, Gather Employer Voice	
Into Work Board	Enterprise Cheshire & Warrington	Information Sharing, Collaboration	LSIP Partner
CIMSPA C&W Local Skills Accountability Board	CIMPSA	Information Sharing, Collaboration	LSIP Partner
Priestley College Employer Board	Priestley College	Collaboration	LSIP Provider Partner
Reaseheath Skills Boards	Reaseheath College	Collaboration	LSIP Provider Partner
Cheshire College – South & West Strategic Employer Advisory Panel	CCSW	Collaboration	LSIP Provider Partner
Data & Labour Market Steering Group	Enterprise Cheshire & Warrington	Information Sharing, Collaboration	LSIP Partner
The Pledge Partnership Enterprise Advisor Group	The Pledge Partnership (Careers Hub)	Information Sharing, Gather Employer Voice, Collaboration	LSIP Partner
Post 16 Mapping	Warrington Vale Royal College	Information Sharing, Collaboration	LSIP Provider Partner

## 11. ANNEX: Glossary of Abbreviations.

C&W	Cheshire and Warrington	JCP	Job Centre Plus
C&WLPN	Cheshire and Warrington Learning Provider Network	KPI	Key Performance Indicator
CAD	Computer Aided Design	LEP	Local Enterprise Partnership
CEC	Careers and Enterprise Company	LMI	Labour Market Information
CEIAG	Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance	LSIF	Local Skills Improvement Fund(ing)
CIMSPA	Chartered Institute of Managing Sports and Physical Activity	LSIP	Local Skills Improvement Plan
CNC	Computer numerical control (Engineering term)	MS	Office Microsoft Office
CPD	Continuous Professional Development	NCS	National Citizen Service
CWAC	Cheshire West and Chester Council	NEET	Not in employment, education or training
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions	SEMH	Social, Emotional and Mental Health Difficulties
ECW	Enterprise Cheshire and Warrington	SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disability
ESG	Environment and Social Governance	SLA	printing Stereolithography (Engineering term)
FDM	printing Fused deposition modelling (Engineering term)	SME	Small and Medium sized Enterprises
FE	Further Education	STEM	Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics
HE	Higher Education	SWAP	Sector-based Work Academy Programme
HEI	Higher Education Institute	TNA	Training Needs Analysis
HMPPS	His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service	TTF	Taking Teaching Further
HTQ	Higher Technical Qualification	UKSPF	UK Shared Prosperity Fund
IEP	Institute of Employability Professionals	UTC	University Technical College
IOT	Institute of Technology	VCS	Voluntary and Community Sector
ITP	Independent Training Provider		



LSIP Website



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