

LEP - Skills and Employment Advisory Panel

**Wednesday, 10th November, 2021 in Zoom Virtual Meeting - Zoom,
at 8.00 am**

Agenda

Part I (Items Publicly Available)

- 1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence**
- 2. Declaration of Interests**
- 3. Minutes of the meeting held on 8 September and Matters Arising** (Pages 1 - 6)
- 4. Up-date from the Lancashire Skills & Employment Hub and partners** (Pages 7 - 20)
- 5. Lancashire Carers Hub and Enterprise Advisor Network 2021/22** (Pages 21 - 26)
Mark Bowman, CEO, Inspira and Kay Vaughan, Careers Hub Leader
(*presentation*)
- 6. Skills Accelerator**
Geoff Mason, Policy Manager, N&W Lancashire Chamber of Commerce –
accountable body for the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) Trailblazer
(*verbal input*)
- 7. Skills Bootcamps** (Pages 27 - 40)
- 8. Reporting to the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership Board**
- 9. Any Other Business**
- 10. Date of Next Meeting**
The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 23 February at 8:00am. The meeting will take place via Zoom.

11. Exclusion of the Press and Public

The Committee is asked to consider whether, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, it considers that the public should be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business on the grounds that there would be a likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the appropriate paragraph of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 as indicated against the heading to the item.

Part II (Private and Confidential)

12. DWP: Plan for Jobs in Lancashire (Pages 41 - 48)

Heather Murray, Senior Partnership Manager Lancashire & Cumbria, DWP
(presentation)



LEP - Skills and Employment Advisory Panel

Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 8th September 2021 at 8.00am at the Zoom Virtual Meeting - Zoom

Present

Amanda Melton

Mark Allanson	Nicola Mortimer
Lindsay Campbell	Alison Robinson
Peter Caney	Bev Robinson
Neil Conlon	Neil Shaw
Ruth England	Stephen Sykes
Gareth Lindsay	Liz Tapner

Observers

Paul Evans, Area Lead, BEIS, Cities and Local Growth Unit
Stephen Jones, Head of FE Territorial Team, ESFA
Heather Murray, Senior Partnership Manager Lancashire, DWP

In Attendance

Sara Gaskell, Strategic Partnerships Manager, Lancashire Skills & Employment Hub
Tracy Heyes, Strategic Partnerships Manager, Lancashire Skills & Employment Hub
Sarah Kemp, Chief Executive Officer, Lancashire Enterprise Partnership
Dr Michele Lawty-Jones, Lancashire Skills & Employment Hub Director
Lisa Moizer, Lancashire Skills & Employment Hub Coordinator
Holly Tween, Democratic Services Officer, Lancashire County Council
Nathan Shoemith, Intern, Lancashire LEP Team
Gaurang Agrawal, Intern, Lancashire LEP Team
Geoff Mason, Policy Manager, N&W Lancashire Chamber of Commerce
Trinley Walker, Policy Advisor, the Work Foundation
Melanie Wilkes, Head of Research, the Work Foundation

1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence

The Chair welcomed all in attendance, and extended particular welcome to Neil Shaw, Rossendale Borough Council CEO who had replaced Dean Langton as the Local Authorities representative Skills Lead.

The panel wished to place on record their thanks to Dean Langton for his work on the panel over the last few years.

Apologies had been received from Edwina Grant.

2. Declaration of Interests

Amanda Melton, Bev Robinson and Alison Robinson worked for organisations involved in the LSIP and SDF projects, covered in item 7.

Resolved: that the declarations be noted

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 26 May 2021 and Matters Arising

The Panel considered the minutes and noted the following:

- The SAP grant had been approved by the LEP Board and the funds received from DfE
- Social Value had been due to be discussed at the informal meeting, but would now be taken to a future meeting
- All the recommendations regarding the Careers Hub had been approved by the LEP Board, and a further update would be given later in the agenda

Resolved: that the minutes of the meeting held on 26 May 2021 are confirmed as an accurate record.

4. Lancashire Skills and Employment Strategic Framework - 6 month progress report

Michele Lawty-Jones, Skills and Employment Hub Director, presented the report outlining progress against each of the four strategic themes in the Lancashire Skills and Employment Strategic Framework and associated challenges for the six-month period from January 2021 to June 2021.

Each theme lead presented an update outlining priorities, objectives, progress and challenges for each theme.

The presenters responded to questions and comments from the panel.

Resolved: The Skills and Employment Advisory Panel:

- i. noted the contents of the paper and the progress against the Framework by theme
- ii. supported the recommendation that the Lancashire Skills and Employment Strategic Framework remains as is, and that the refresh is put on hold and that the position is reviewed at the end of March 2022, and that this

recommendation is made to the LEP Board

5. Careers Hub and Enterprise Adviser Network – update paper

Michele Lawty-Jones, Skills and Employment Hub Director, presented the report updating on progress with funding for the Lancashire Careers Hub and Enterprise Adviser Network (EAN).

It was noted that the main grant from the Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC) had been accepted and the contract with the Skills Hub's delivery partner, Inspira had been extended. Inspira would be invited to the November SEAP meeting to provide an update.

Both applications for research and evaluation projects to CEC were successful and projects are expected to commence in September - October 2021.

Further funds had been secured from the Blackpool Opportunity Area (OA) under the twinning funds, to support the sharing of good practice and learning from Blackpool to wider Lancashire and vice versa.

Peter Caney reported that BAE Systems had approved sponsorship for two projects. These were Innovate Her, a project to inspire girls in secondary school about digital and tech careers, and CREATE Education, supplying 3D printers to school along with an education package. The projects will be targeted at females in secondary schools through the Careers Hub, to stimulate interest in digital and tech careers and increase take up of GCSE Computer Science, with the overall aim of increasing diversity in the Lancashire workforce.

Resolved: that the Skills and Employment Advisory Panel:

- i. Noted the contents of the paper and the funds secured to support Careers Hub and EAN activity across the LEP area
- ii. Noted that a further update on progress and priorities for the coming academic year would be provided at the November meeting by Inspira

6. Skills for Net Zero in Lancashire - Research Report

Stephen Sykes, industry rep for Low Carbon, introduced the presentation and reflected that the Work Foundation had engaged with the LEP's Energy and Low Carbon working group, and captured much anecdotal evidence gathered over the last two years, including feedback from local businesses.

Melanie Wilkes, Head of Research at the Work Foundation, and Trinley Walker, Policy Advisor at the Work Foundation, presented the findings of their research, highlighting their current work themes, the impact of skills gaps and what employers were doing in response, and recommendations coming out of the research.

It was particularly noted that the research had informed the LEP's new sector plan, had supported two successful funding bids and contributed to the planning of a comprehensive research plan with Lancaster University over the next 3 years.

The presenters responded to questions and comments from the panel, and were thanked for their attendance.

Resolved: that the presentation be noted

7. Skills for Jobs White Paper: Skills Accelerator trailblazers

Michele Lawty-Jones introduced the circulated paper giving background to the Skills Accelerator trailblazers, which resulted from the Skills for Jobs White Paper published in January 2021, a key aspiration of which was to place employers at the heart of defining local skills needs.

Collaborative proposals had been submitted on behalf of the three Lancashire-based Chambers by the N&W Lancashire Chamber of Commerce for the Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs) and by Myerscough College on behalf of The Lancashire Colleges for Strategic Development Fund (SDF). The Lancashire Skills and Employment Hub supported the development of the proposals and a letter of support for each was provided by the LEP. The LSIP proposal was cross-sector, whilst the SDF proposal was specifically focused on the skills challenges associated with Low Carbon and net zero ambitions, referencing the collaborative research recently undertaken with the Work Foundation.

Geoff Mason from the N&W Lancashire Chamber of Commerce gave a presentation on the Local Skills Improvement Plans, outlining the plan and particularly noting the good level of support offered from many different organisations across the county.

It was reported that the draft of the plan needs to be produced by the end of February 2022 with the final plan produced by end of March 2022. Strategic Focus Groups would be assembled and feed into the LSIP Board along with an employer group and stakeholder group. The primary aim of the LSIP is to enable providers to effectively respond to and address the technical skills needs of employers in a local area. Once skills gaps were identified, the LSIP could link with job centres, schools etc to signpost to upcoming opportunities.

Alison Robinson from The Lancashire Colleges group gave a presentation on the Strategic Development Fund, outlining the seven projects. It was reported that the bids had been completed at very short notice, and the projects must complete by the end of March 2022. The grant agreements were currently being finalised with DfE, after which the governance structure would be established.

The presenters responded to questions from the committee, and were thanked for their presentations.

Resolved: that the Skills and Employment Advisory Panel:

- i. Noted the contents of the paper as background information to the presentations from partners.
- ii. Supported collaborative working and support from the Skills Hub to the Chamber of Commerce and The Lancashire Colleges regarding the successful implementation of the trailblazers

8. Reporting to the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership

Resolved: that the following items be reported to the LEP Board:

- Report on the 6-month progress report against the Strategic Framework and the proposal that the Framework refresh is put on hold and that the position is reviewed in March 2022.
- Discussion regarding the Skills Accelerator Trailblazers (LSIP and SDF) and support from the Skills Hub to the Chambers and Colleges regarding successful implementation.

9. Any Other Business

It was noted that Lynne Livesey was retiring and had therefore resigned from the committee. The panel wished to place on record their thanks to Lynne for her work and wish her the best for the future. A new higher education sector representative would be sought.

10. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting was scheduled for 8am on 10 November 2021. Virtual/venue details would be confirmed nearer the time.



LEP – Sub Committee

LEP - Skills and Employment Advisory Panel

Private and Confidential: No

Date: Wednesday, 10 November 2021

Up-date from the Lancashire Skills & Employment Hub and partners

Report Author: Dr Michele Lawty-Jones, Director of the Lancashire Skills & Employment Hub, michele.lawty-jones@lancashire.gov.uk

Executive Summary

This paper provides an overview of activity since the last formal committee meeting.

Recommendation

The committee are asked to note the update.

Background and Advice

The update from the Lancashire Skills and Employment Hub and partners is structured against the strategic themes and priorities outlined in the Lancashire Skills and Employment Strategic Framework 2021 and provides an update on activity since the last committee meeting.

	Future Workforce: working with education and business to establish a talent pipeline and future workforce that meets the current and future demands of the local labour market.
Priority 1	Careers Hub: Excellent careers provision underpinned by Labour Market Intelligence (LMI)
<p>Careers Hub and Enterprise Adviser Network</p> <p>Engagement of schools and colleges has remained high with both Enterprise Coordinators and matched Enterprise Advisers. The strong relationships the team have developed with Careers Leaders is cited as a strength by the Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC), with Lancashire achieving the highest percentage of Compass evaluations nationally, with a 98% completion rate at the end of last term.</p>	



Several schools and colleges have seen reductions in their Benchmark 5 and 6 scores during this period, the self-isolation of students has resulted in either employer encounters being postponed or the percentage of young people benefiting from the encounter reducing significantly. It was however pleasing to see that a small number of schools returned to face-to-face work experience at the end of the academic year with many schools planning to offer face to face work experience during the 2021/22 academic year.

Performance against targets has been impacted due to COVID-19, however due to the innovative approach through the Lancashire Careers Hub and commitment of employers and Careers Leaders, performance has remained in line or above national averages. The work undertaken to enable virtual encounters and experiences has contributed significantly to performance, and more importantly, in boosting the aspirations of young people and breaking myths regarding labour market buoyancy. The final position at the end of 2021/22 is detailed below:

	Benchmark 1 Performance		Benchmark 5 Performance		Benchmark 6 Performance	
	Target (July 2020)	July 2021	Target (July 2020)	July 2021	Target (July 2020)	July 2021
Careers Hub Wave 1 (Blackpool, Burnley, Pendle)	90	82.8	75	69	100% partial achievement	100
Careers Hub Wave 3 (Blackburn with Darwen and all other Lancashire areas)	75	69.7	65	63.9	100% partial achievement	95.9
Blackpool Opportunity Area	50	80	75	73	100% partial achievement	93

The average across the 8 Benchmarks for Wave 1 was 5.2 (target of 5), against a national average of 4.2. The average across the 8 Benchmarks for Wave 3 was 4.8 (target of 4), against a national average of 4.1. This was for 154 schools and colleges.

Four Enterprise Coordinators and one new Employer Engagement Enterprise Coordinator were recruited over the summer, following the departure of 4 team members last academic year and in the summer due to promotions and the creation of the new role focused on employer engagement. The new members commenced their induction in September.

Lancashire has now achieved full coverage as a Careers Hub, with all eligible 156 Secondary, SEND, Alternative Provision and Colleges engaged, following the engagement of the final two. All have signed their MoUs for the 2021/22 academic year in line with the deadline set by CEC.

Work continues to develop the technical education section of the Start in Lancashire platform. New videos are being prepared with Coca Cola UK, BP, Eric Wright Construction and Lancashire Teaching Hospitals Trust, where the recruiters within the organisations talk about who and why they recruit from different learning routes – A Levels/Graduates, vocational courses, T Levels and Apprenticeships.



A presentation will be provided at the meeting about the priorities for the coming year.

Effective Transitions Project

Lancashire Careers Hub has been successful in securing funding from JP Morgan through the Careers and Enterprise Company for a two and a half year ‘Effective Transitions’ project. The aim of the project is to identify and work with social-economically disadvantaged young people from the deprived areas of Lancashire that have a history of high NEET figures, to test activities which aim to improve aspirations, attitudes to learning and transition from secondary education to Post 16 provision.

The project aims to test the effectiveness of Extended Work Experience and Engagement Coaching on aspirations and transition with 105 young people identified by 7 targeted schools across Lancashire. A procurement process has been launched to appoint providers and discussions are underway with schools in the target areas, as agreed with the Local Education Authorities. The Post-16 Officers Group will act as the Steering Group for the project. A national launch will take place early November with CEC, with activity due to commence in January 2022.

One of 10 projects across the country, the evaluation of the project will feed into a wider piece, which aims to influence policy and provision regarding young people at risk of NEET.

Priority 2

Technical Education Vision: roll out of T levels & progression pathways to higher technical qualifications

Gatsby Foundation Routes Ready Project

The Gatsby Foundation funded T Level Project with the Skills Hub completes at the end of December. It is pleasing to report that agreement has been reached with The Lancashire Colleges and the Gatsby Foundation to support continuation of the T Level Routeway Networks for two years, giving sustainability to activity initiated through the project.

During this last term of the project, further CPD (Continuing Professional Development) has been developed and funded, including:

- 90 minute sessions for careers professionals working in schools, giving high level content details of T Levels to increase their confidence when talking with parents/carers and young people about T Levels and how they sit within the full post-16 education and training offer.
- 4 session courses in consultative sales and employer relationship development techniques, for business development staff working in colleges.
- 2 session courses in managing and expanding employer relationships with young people on placement, for subject tutors working in colleges.

The team has contributed to the range of evaluative activities organised by the Gatsby Foundation as the project closes. This has included sharing of case studies and contributing to evidence gathering about the effectiveness of local area agencies (LEPs and MCAs in this instance) taking a co-ordinating role in supporting the roll out of policy, led by international organisation, FSG.

T Level Recruitment by Lancashire Colleges

Over 300 young people have started T Level courses in Lancashire this year, more than doubling last year’s number as roll-out continues. Six colleges are now delivering T Levels with more routeways and colleges rolling out through to 2023. The offer currently includes digital, education and childcare, construction, health and science.



Higher Technical Education

Delivery of the higher technical education qualifications newly approved by the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) begins in 2022, with digital being the first routeway to be offered.

The outcome of the second stage application for funding for the Institutes of Technology (IoT), including Lancashire’s, is awaited, with an expectation of announcement of successful bids before Christmas. The IoT will focus on higher technical education developed to meet and anticipate local market needs.

Priority 3

Digital Workforce of the future

TeenTech

The second Lancashire TeenTech Festival is set to take place between Feb-May 2022, with many schools now registering interest following initial communication. The programme of activity will include:

- Six Innovation Workshops on topics including: sustainable transport, game design, future technology (Robotics, AR/VR, Internet of Things), Health Tech, Environment and big data, and animation
- Build Your Future programme (TeenTech project with Ove Arup Foundation – extra opportunity, funded separately, focused on understanding cities of the future through fun, interactive and engaging live sessions and challenges set by industry experts)
- Easter Holiday Workshops – a week of additional game design workshops as well as rebroadcasting the innovation workshops
- City of Tomorrow aimed at 8–13-year-olds who become designers, engineers and technologists to create their own City of Tomorrow, creating model buildings from recycled materials. In addition to the build days, TeenTech will offer Smart Skills Sessions to primary schools to support students to develop their digital, media and data literacy skills.

Cyber Girls First

Building on the success of the event in Blackpool last academic year, a second online event is planned for 24th November for schools in the Lancaster and Morecambe area. Alongside the same national speakers including CTO from Downing Street, Oracle, JP Morgan, Colt Technology, we will have a range of local inspirational female speakers. Two further events are also in the planning stages for young people in the Blackpool area.

InnovateHer and Create Education

BAE Systems have invested £300,000 in a programme with InnovateHer and Create Education that aims to inspire 7.500 young people across Lancashire about careers in the digital and tech sector. The programme was launched earlier this month in collaboration with the Lancashire Digital Skills Partnership and the Careers Hub. InnovateHer aims to inspire females and non-binary to boost diversity in Lancashire’s digital workforce, providing a mix of online education and interaction with role models, with Create Education providing 3D printers and practical training around additive manufacturing. Together the programmes will offer activities to 70 schools across Lancashire.



Hub Incubation Project: Digital Futures

The Careers Hub and Lancashire Digital Skills Partnership have secured research and evaluation funds through CEC under their Hub Incubation programme which is aimed at testing and evaluating the impact of careers activities.

The project in Lancashire, Digital Futures aims to increase the take-up of Computer Science GCSE amongst girls through the delivery of high quality, locally tailored STEM related careers activities delivered at varying intensities, which will in turn increase the number of young females entering the digital workforce.

The eight participating schools have been selected from those delivering high quality GCSE Computer Science provision with low uptake amongst girls. A comprehensive teacher CPD programme, utilising the local NCCE Computing Hub provision as well as well as training from providers delivering activities, will complement the activity with young people and will be tailored to the needs of the individual schools, increasing capacity to deliver GCSE Computer Science and adapting KS3 delivery to encourage participation and engagement of female pupils.

Digital Advantage

Digital Advantage continues to be jointly funded by Lancashire County Council and Future U – Lancashire’s Uni Connect Programme. The 2021/22 programme will focus on delivering digital skills with industry experts to 70 young people with special educational needs and disability (SEND), care-experienced students and young carers, in schools, colleges and in alternative provision settings across Lancashire.

Priority 4


Supporting Young People who are NEET to reengage with learning and work

The Skills Hub has been lobbying government for some time to support an increase in Traineeship provision in certain parts of Lancashire for young people aged 16-18. An opportunity has now been launched for those providers without a current 16-18 funding contract to apply to become Traineeship providers – work has been undertaken to raise the profile of the opportunity and discussions undertaken with several interested parties in Lancashire.

Youth hubs are now successfully open in most parts of Lancashire and the team has been working with DWP and local authority colleagues to facilitate partnership working with a range of providers for young people.

The team is anticipating a call for applicants for a grant from the Youth Futures Fund (YFF), following a presentation to the LEP Network Skills Leads. YFF are seeking organisations to co-ordinate local partners initially to identify and articulate specific local needs for supporting disadvantaged groups of young people aged 16-24 into work. Potential solutions would emerge from this research which could then be tested over three years with additional funding. The team is preparing by undertaking research into potential target groups and localities needing support and determining which partners are also considering the opportunity.



	<p>Inclusive Workforce: supporting unemployed and inactive residents into sustainable employment, driving up digital skills and embedding social value to 'level up' areas of Lancashire and accelerate inclusive growth.</p>
<p>Priority 1</p>	<p>Boost employability & skills of unemployed & inactive, & support journey into work, particularly in disadvantaged areas</p>
<p>ESF projects Within the ESF programme several projects deliver employability support to unemployed and inactive adults. Data is collected on starts, priority groups and progression into positive destinations. This data is used to identify areas of concern, which are then addressed at the Adult Skills Forum and within project steering groups. Current data shows a positive position against targets.</p> <p>The Adult Skills Forum The Adult Skills Forum is reviewing the latest unemployment data, highlighting the top 5 most affected wards in each local authority area. Wards with claimant count rates above the Lancashire average (5.3% as of September 21) will be discussed, and partners will look to ensure that there is employability support being offered to progress people into work.</p> <p>Escalate, the on-line referral tool continues to support referral agencies, with 274 searches logged from 1st July until 25th October 2021.</p> <p>Plan for Jobs JETS is currently delivered by Ingeus, an active member of the Adult Skills Forum. This project aims to support people who have been unemployed for less than 12 months. The project is performing well and is on target for starts and has progressed 50% of those who have completed into work. Restart is being delivered across the Northwest contract package area, led by the prime contractor G4S and their supply chain partners. In Lancashire, all supply chain partners have delivered presentations at the Adult Skills Forum, updating the members of their offer and wider introductions to mainstream partners have been facilitated.</p> <p>A wider overview of the impact of the Plan for Jobs provision led by Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) in Lancashire will be provided at the meeting.</p> <p>Refugee Support A dedicated working group has been facilitated by the Skills Hub, which has brought together partners to support refugees with labour market integration. In partnership with Lancashire County Council's Resettlement team, four drop-in sessions have been agreed and further work is ongoing regarding needs and support requirements.</p>	
<p>Priority 2</p>	<p>Sector specific initiatives targeted at areas with labour market demand</p>
<p>Sector Based Work Academies Working in partnership with DWP and Marketing Lancashire, a dedicated Hospitality recruitment line has been set up to support the large number of Hospitality venues who need staff. To date, nine businesses have benefited from four Sector Skills Work Academy programmes, with 78 of 102 vacancies having been filled. Sector Based Work Academy Programmes have also been set up to support recruitment in Manufacturing, Care and Administration.</p>	



Lancashire Skills Pledge

Several businesses have pledged through the Lancashire Skills Pledge to employ people who are out of work. These employers are contacted by a member of the Skills Hub team and referred to the most appropriate project.

Fast Track Fund/ Skills Bootcamps

The Department for Education (DfE) announced the winners of the national procurement process for Skills Bootcamps in late July 2021. All the bidders that the Skills Hub supported were successful, as well as some other bids from local and national providers. The Lancashire Digital Skills Partnership has worked with the National Careers Service to produce a single prospectus for Lancashire residents to consolidate what is on offer as there is over 25 different bootcamps available locally. The prospectus and the bootcamps on offer are consolidated on the [LDSP pages of the website](#).

The evaluation of the Lancashire pilots will be discussed at the meeting and the further roll out of Skills Bootcamps.

Priority 3 Raise digital inclusion

Kerry Harrison, lead for the Lancashire Digital Skills Partnership is actively supporting Digital Inclusion focused strategy groups in Blackburn with Darwen and Blackpool. Digital support is included in the offer for the Refugee Resettlement Programme, with several partners offering courses.

Priority 4 Embed social value in commissioning, procurement and planning processes

Social Value

As previously reported in May of this year, the Growth Deal programme has continued to generate Social Value across the Skills Hub thematic areas leveraged through the Growth Deal project funding agreements. As of the end of the last reporting period, ending March 2021 the programme had generated £31.1m.



One notable example is The Lancaster Campus Teaching Hub which has successfully secured a strong, reliable and measurable commitment to Social Value that covers a range of thematic areas including an 'Inclusive Workforce', 'Future Workforce', a 'Skilled and Productive Workforce' and 'Community Benefits'.

The key achievements of the project and their supply chain partners include:

- The project provided opportunities for a total of 16 apprentices through the construction phase of the project across a wide range of trades
- The project delivered a total of 79 training courses providing workforce development opportunities for 16 employees totalling to 1103 training hours
- Work placements were provided for 11 students from Lancaster and Morecambe College
- A total of £4.45 million was spent with local Lancashire based businesses, representing 55% of construction spend, which was retained within the local economy
- 2 'Meet the Builder' sessions for students from Lancaster and Morecombe College
- Nursery School visit to view the diggers alongside school engagement activity delivered to support the local community

In addition to delivering a range of local economic benefits the project also delivered additional sustainability and environmental benefits both in the construction phase and on into the operational phase including:

- Materials – all timber used certified under the Forest Stewardship Council, all carpets from at least 57% recycled material with 100% of paints supplied with an Environmental Product Declaration
- Waste – at least 90% of construction waste was recycled or diverted from landfill with recycling bins provided throughout the building



- Renewable energy – 50 square metre of solar panels fitted to the roof generating clean electricity.


This approach is also generating positive results across several City Deal projects including the Preston Western Distribution project and the D'urton Lane residential development. The Skills Hub continue to work Wilmott Dixon and L&Q/Trafford Housing Trust, to develop and deliver an ambitious social value programme for the D'Urton Lane development.

In addition to a range of positive outputs already generated on the project which include:

- 4 Local Employment Opportunities
- 2 Weeks Work Placement
- 6 Careers Information Sessions
- 207 Pupils Engaged
- 7 Apprenticeship Opportunities
- Series of Preston College Masterclasses

The project team are working with an extensive range of local partners to realise their social value offering including Preston's College, Inspira, Preston City Council, DWP, Calico, Procure Plus.

On the community front the project team are currently working with the Intact Community Centre to build a Sensory Garden and install fencing and Trafford Housing Trust have established a longer-term partnership to support the centre going forward.

	<p>Skilled & Productive Workforce: working with business to drive up skills in Lancashire's workforce to boost productivity, in-line with the needs of Lancashire's growth pillars.</p>
<p>Priority 1</p>	<p>Technical Education Vision: Apprenticeships aligned with business needs, alongside growth in higher level and degree Apprenticeships</p>
<p>Apprenticeship Action Plan</p> <p>The Skills Hub have been promoting the Lancashire Apprenticeship Service to different audiences including face to face with Lancashire's businesses community, business intermediaries, the Health and Social Care sector, at business expos, and through the Boost Growth Hub and partners.</p> <p>The Lancashire Apprenticeship service is made up of several projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lancashire Skills Pledge – Take on an Apprentice with wraparound business support • Lancashire Apprenticeship Ambassador Network • Lancashire Engaging Apprenticeships Programme (LEAP) • Lancashire Levy Transfer Network • Apprenticeship Grants <p>The projects are led and delivered by a collaboration of organisations in Lancashire who offer funded support to businesses to recruit Apprentices and support Apprentices to complete and progress. Partners include the Lancashire Work Based Learning Forum, UCLan and Inspira.</p>	



The Employer Apprenticeship Toolkit has been refreshed and published alongside an information leaflet to help businesses who have taken on young people through Kickstart placements to support progression to Apprenticeships.

Part of the Lancashire Apprenticeship Service is the Lancashire Levy Transfer Network. Since its launch in June of this year the network has transferred £44,000 of levy to date. This money has directly funded Apprentices in Lancashire.

Priority 2

Reskilling & Upskilling the current workforce – with focus on digital skills to support technology adoption and the growth pillars

Reskill and upskill the Lancashire workforce

The range of skills offers to the Lancashire businesses has expanded. The Skills Hub, working with the Employer Skills Forum has developed a support document to help employers understand the funded programmes available to them, so they can decide which would be best suited to their business. This is accessible through the Project Directory on the Lancashire Skills and Employment Hub website;

<https://www.lancashireskillshub.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Lancashire-Employer-Facing-Offer-Updated-draft-October-2021-002-2-Copy.pdf>

The existing ESF programmes have continued to adapt where relevant to meet changing needs of Lancashire businesses. For example, the Skills Support for the Workforce programme has developed the digital skills offer, in-line with feedback and intelligence from employers. The project also includes a focus on low carbon skills provision.

Redundancy Task Force

The Redundancy Task Force continues to meet. It was envisaged that there would be a significant increase in demand for support for businesses and their employees as furlough came to an end, however this has not materialised, and anecdotal feedback suggests that most employees have gone back to work. Data regarding claimants continues to be monitored to review impact.

Priority 3

Leadership & Management capacity in SMEs

Within the ESIF programme a number of the projects deliver training focused on leadership and management including Team Leading, Leadership and Management qualifications and other provision to support Leaders and Managers in their roles. Further information about these programmes can be found in the support document referenced above.

Priority 4

Healthy Workplaces

The Building Blocks project part of the Business Health Matters Portfolio of projects has now been launched. Supported by ESF funding, the Workplace Health Champion Training project aims to train 5,000 Workplace Health Champions in SMEs across Lancashire to boost health and well-being in the workplace and improve productivity.



Informed Approach: taking an evidence-based approach to identifying the skills and employment issues facing Lancashire's businesses and industries, prioritising and influencing locally and nationally, and working with partners to identify best practice.

Skills Advisory Panels – Local Skills Report

The Skills Advisory Panel Programme Team in DfE have updated Local Skills Report guidance in light of the Local Skills Improvement Plan trailblazer announcements. It has been agreed that due to Lancashire having a Local Skills Improvement Plan trailblazer, the awaited publication of the Greater Lancashire Plan, and the impending Government policy announcements, the Lancashire SAP will update the Labour Market Information annexe and Case Studies but will not refresh the Local Skills Report. This will be reviewed in spring 2022.

Evidence Base

The Evidence Base page on the Skills Hub website, which is open source, now includes an interactive data dashboard for partners, in addition to the LMI Toolkit. The page has received over 2,035 visits, from the start of the 1st April 2021 until 1st October 2021, compared to 1,484 views in the same period last year, showing the value and impact of the new approach. The evidence base will continue to evolve in line with partners and stakeholder feedback, utilising the SAP grant. The Evidence Base page can be viewed here: <https://www.lancshireskillshub.co.uk/our-people/evidence-base/>

Data Intelligence Stakeholder Briefings

Joseph Mount, Skills and Economic Intelligence Officer, has held stakeholder data intelligence briefings with a variety of stakeholders including FE Colleges, Sixth Forms, Universities, Local Authorities, ESF contract deliverers across the LEP area to provide analytical insight into their respective Travel to Work Areas (TTWAs), business base, skills base, demand for skills, and sector forecasts. This information has been well received by all involved. Key organisations were able to take away their own bespoke interactive data dashboard to refer to and explore insights further with colleagues.

A stakeholder survey is now being devised to understand how the evidence base is valued, how it is being used, and what impact the data has had to informing stakeholder delivery plans, bids and curriculum.

Cross cutting tools

Skills Pledge

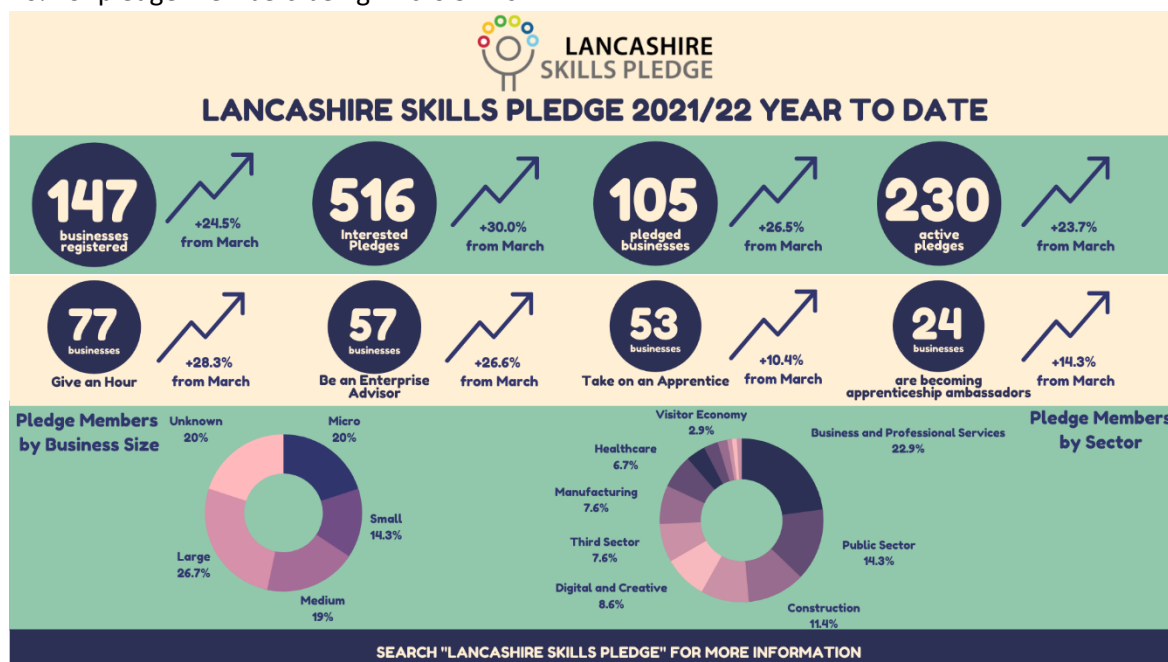
The Lancashire Skills Pledge provides businesses with one door to find out more about Lancashire's key skills and training initiatives. The Skills Pledge also provides recognition to businesses, private, public and third sector, who inspire, recruit and upskill the people of Lancashire.

The Lancashire Colleges became a Skill Pledge Partner in September and now manage the Work Experience and Industry Placements pledge which links to Lancashire's colleges.

Skills Pledge membership has increased by 26.5% to 105 businesses and the number of active pledges has grown to 230, an increase of over 23% since the end of March 2021. The "Be an Enterprise Advisor" pledge has grown strongly, and is now the second most popular pledge, after "Give an Hour".



Skills Pledge Members are well spread across the spectrum in terms of size of businesses, with 20% of pledge members being Micro SMEs.



www.SkillsforWork.info

The Skills for Work microsite was launched in July 2020, to enable Lancashire residents to access support if furloughed, facing redundancy, looking for work or 16-25. As of the 1st October 2021, the website has received 17,565 views (an additional 2,000 since May 2021), with in excess of 5,600 views to the 16-24 page. There were also almost 3,000 external links clicked through to support on partner sites.

Twitter

As of 20th October 2021, Twitter followers had increased by 135 followers since May 2021, making our total number of followers 3,053.

Department for Digital Culture Media and Sport (DCMS): Evaluation of Local Digital Skills Partnerships

The DCMS have worked with Amion Consulting to evaluate the first six Local Digital Skills Partnerships. The paper was launched at the Leeds Digital Festival in September. The report is very positive about the benefits of a Local Digital Skills Partnership.

“The evaluation found that more digital skills activity had been delivered over a shorter time period in areas with a DSP when compared to three areas without a DCMS-funded Local DSP. Consultees also stated that the quality of delivery had been enhanced through greater involvement of businesses in steering activity taken forward by the Local DSPs.” The full report is available on-line: [Local DSP Evaluation report](#)

In addition, DCMS working with Steer, have also published an evaluation of the UK’s Regional Digital Ecosystems. The Lancashire Digital Skills Partnership and local businesses such as Miralis contributed to this work. The full report is available on-line: [Digital Ecosystems report.](#)



Fast Track Digital Workforce Fund

A full evaluation of the Fast Track Fund is yet to be published by DCMS, however the Lancashire Digital Skills Partnership has commissioned Amion Consulting to undertake a qualitative evaluation of the project with Lancashire employers and providers. The evaluation has supported the Skills Hub response to the DfE’s consultation on the National Skills Fund. This document is shared in the papers of this meeting and will be discussed further on the agenda.

Lancashire Digital Economy Report 2021

LCC Digital Lead, Maya Ellis, has led on an inward investment focused piece of work that combines existing research, including that of the Lancashire Digital Skills Partnership, to showcase the digital sector in the county. This will become an annual piece of work funded by LCC.

This is the link to the press release regarding the publication

<https://investinlancashire.com/2021/10/04/lancashires-digital-dividend/> and a copy can be downloaded here: <https://investinlancashire.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/2021-Digital-Economy-Report-Download.pdf>

List of Background Papers

Paper

Date

Contact/Tel

N/A

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A



Lancashire Careers Hub

Mark Bowman
Chief Executive, Inspira

Kay Vaughan
Careers Hub Lead, Inspira



LANCASHIRE
ENTERPRISE
ADVISER NETWORK



Powered by



Lancashire
Enterprise Partners



Context

Lancashire Careers Hub has now reached full coverage, supporting all 156 secondary schools (including special schools and alternative providers) and colleges across Lancashire to develop inspirational careers programmes, increasing employer encounters and experiences, boosting aspiration, showcasing technical and academic routes to employment, and enabling informed choices



Main Activities During 2020 –21

- Worked with schools and colleges to develop inspirational careers plans.
- Engaged employers – including Cornerstone employers who work with the Careers Hub and Skills Hub to drive the programme, Enterprise Advisers who are matched to each institution, and employers to deliver careers activities.
- Development of digital tools to support virtual encounters and experiences, Securing of projects to add value to the Careers Hub.
- Embedding of technical education routes into careers programmes.





Achievements 2020 - 21

	Benchmark 1 Performance		Benchmark 5 Performance		Benchmark 6 Performance	
	Target	July 2021	Target	July 2021	Target	July 2021
Careers Hub Wave 1	90	82.8	75	69	100% partial achievement	100
Careers Hub Wave 3	75	69.7	65	63.9	100% partial achievement	95.9
Blackpool Opportunity Area	50	80	75	73	100% partial achievement	93

The average across the 8 Benchmarks for Wave 1 was 5.2 (target of 5), against a national average of 4.2.

The average across the 8 Benchmarks for Wave 3 was 4.8 (target of 4), against a national average of 4.1.



Main Plans 2021 –22

- Continue to support schools and colleges to make progress against the Gatsby Benchmarks
- Launch and implementation of BAE sponsored programme aimed at inspiring young people to pursue digital and tech careers
- Progress action plans with Business Networks to drive engagement with the Lancashire Skills Pledge and pledges associated with the Careers Hubs
- CPD for careers professionals in regard to T Levels, to drive integration of Technical Education routes
- Set up and progress implementation of research and evaluation projects with the Careers and Enterprise Company





Contact details

Kay Vaughan –

kay.vaughan@inspira.org.uk

Mark Bowman –

mark.bowman@inspira.org.uk

Pete Alger –

pete.alger@inspira.org.uk

Websites

www.inspira.org.uk

www.lancashirecareershubs.co.uk



Powered by





LEP – Sub Committee

LEP - Skills and Employment Advisory Panel

Private and Confidential: No

Date: Wednesday, 10 November 2021

Skills Bootcamps

Appendix 1 refers

Report Author: Kerry Harrison, Lancashire Digital Skills Partnership Coordinator,
Kerry.harrison@lancashirelep.co.uk

Executive Summary

Digital Bootcamps were piloted in Lancashire and Greater Manchester through the Fast Track Digital Workforce Fund, in partnership with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). The model was driven by employers, with employer-provider collaborations developing 12+ week bootcamp programmes, providing intensive training to fast tracking unemployed residents into hard to fill digital jobs.

The model was adopted and adapted by the Department for Education (DfE) under the National Skills Fund, with pilots taking place locally and in several other areas across the country. The DfE model had an increased focus on guaranteed interviews and progression into employment or within the workplace. Following devolved pilots, Skills Bootcamps were rolled out nationally through a national procurement process focusing on digital and construction. There are now over 25 different Skills Bootcamps available in Lancashire which are summarised on the Lancashire Skills Hub website.

A qualitative evaluation of the Lancashire pilots funded by DCMS and DfE has been conducted by Amion consulting. The purpose of the evaluation was to provide insight into the approach locally, and to support feedback to DfE directly and via the National Skills Fund consultation. The evaluation report is provided in Appendix 1 for consideration by committee members.

A presentation of key findings will be presented at the meeting, with view to initiating a discussion about the Skills Bootcamp model and further application. The headlines from the Spending Review indicate that Skills Bootcamps are to receive further funding, with the number 'quadrupling', following the launch of a national procurement process for 'HGV Skills Bootcamps'.



Recommendation

1. The committee are asked to note the contents of the report, as background information to the presentation from the Lancashire Digital Skills Partnership Coordinator.
2. The committee are asked to consider the further application of Skills Bootcamps in Lancashire and the potential to address hard to fill technical vacancies and enable Lancashire residents to 'fast track' their skills development and secure higher value roles.

List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
-------	------	-------------

N/A

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

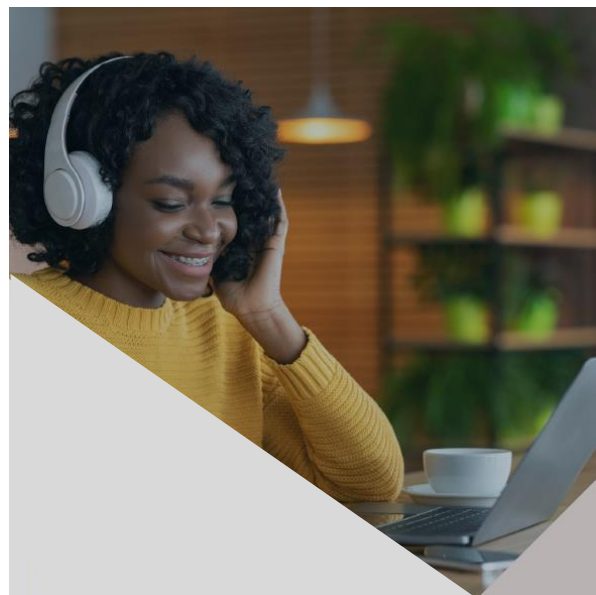
N/A



Digital Skills Bootcamps

A review of the Lancashire Bootcamps

October 2021



Contents

Headline Findings..... 1

Background 2

The Bootcamp Model (Q29) 2

The Provider Experience (Q31 & 32)..... 3

Widening Access to Digital Skills (Q34-36)..... 5

Employer Involvement (Q39)..... 6

Pathways (Q43)..... 7

Policy Considerations..... 8

Suggestions for the next phase of Bootcamps in Lancashire 9

Appendix A – Consultees

Headline Findings

- **Successful delivery to date:** Providers and employers involved with the Bootcamp programme in Lancashire have been broadly happy with the way it has been delivered, although the Covid pandemic presented a number of logistical challenges and impacted on employment opportunities for those completing Bootcamps during 2020 and early 2021.
- **Designed to meet local needs:** The flexibilities within the Bootcamp model meant that the content of the Bootcamps could be designed to meet the specific needs of Lancashire employers and that content could be adapted as circumstances changed or in response to learner needs. It is important that this local dimension – which builds better relationships between employers, learners and training providers – is retained as the Bootcamp model moves from pilot to mainstream provision.
- **Filling gaps in existing provision:** The Bootcamps complement existing education and training provision which is more focused on the development of knowledge, and allows learners to focus specifically on acquiring and learning to apply the skills they will need in defined digital roles.
- **Raising awareness and understanding of the Bootcamp offer:** Awareness and understanding of the Bootcamp model is growing amongst learners and employers but is limited given their relatively recent introduction. To maximise the benefits of the approach, learners, employers and providers need to understand what the Bootcamps offer (recognising that they vary considerably in terms of digital skills focus, level, target learners and relevance to digital sub-sectors and employers). Entry requirements, progression routes and fit with other digital skills provision through Sector Based Work Academies, further education and higher education need to be communicated in an easily understood format (such as a matrix).
- **Developing a coherent Bootcamp programme for Lancashire:** Greater co-ordination between Bootcamps operating in Lancashire would ensure that learners are matched to the Bootcamp which best meets their interests and existing skillsets, and reduce competition between Bootcamps for learners. It could also increase job entry rates by ensuring employers are able to access graduates from across the Bootcamps, rather than only the one with which they are specifically engaged. This coordination is best achieved through local partnership working and is challenging in an environment where Bootcamp provision is procured nationally. The shift to national procurement has involved limited partnership working with local areas. As a result, local oversight and direction of the Bootcamp programme has been reduced. This makes ensuring coherence both more important and more challenging.
- **Broader support for learners and employers:** Whilst Bootcamps have been successful in developing technical skills amongst people moving into Lancashire's digital workforce, this on its own is not sufficient to tackle digital skills needs. Learners also need to develop the confidence and job ready skills which will enable them to successfully make the transition into digital roles. Employers also need to be supported (particularly where their small digital teams make it difficult to provide the mentoring and support which new digital recruits need to succeed) to recruit and embed learners from Bootcamps and create the range of digital roles which appeal to Bootcamp learners (for example, more flexible roles rather than

full-time positions). Some providers have successfully established peer support networks to provide learners with a supportive community post-Bootcamp.

- **Raising the visibility of digital careers in Lancashire:** Alongside further delivery of digital skills Bootcamps, ongoing work is required to increase the visibility of the digital sector and digital roles in Lancashire, demonstrating to residents the range of opportunities available to them locally and encouraging people to see digital careers as an option for them.

Background

This short report summarises feedback on the Lancashire Digital Skills Bootcamps, gathered from participants at four virtual focus groups, held online during week commencing the 6th September and week commencing the 13th September 2021. It also includes reflections on the policy implications of the feedback obtained. Three focus groups were held with providers and employers who had been directly involved in the delivery of the digital skills bootcamps. A fourth group included wider digital stakeholders (for example, employers, higher education and further education representatives) who had not been directly involved but have a shared interest in supporting the development of digital skills in Lancashire. A full list of participants is provided in Appendix A. Topic guides were used to structure the discussions:

Provider / employer focus group	Policy / stakeholder group
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial engagement and design of the Bootcamp programme • Experience of delivery • Bootcamp outcomes – learners, employers, providers • Effectiveness in meeting Lancashire’s digital skills priorities • Key changes and recommendations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximising employer involvement • Improving the learner experience • Tackling provider issues • Priorities for the next phase of Bootcamps

In parallel with the consultation work in Lancashire, the Department for Education (DfE) are running a consultation on the National Skills Fund. Information gathered through the focus groups will inform Lancashire Digital Skills Partnership’s and Lancashire Skills & Employment Hub’s responses to the DfE consultation. Findings relevant to the DfE consultation questions are indicated throughout the report.

The Bootcamp Model (Q29)

The consultees were all supportive of the Bootcamp model. Particular elements which were of value included:

- **Delivering industry-specific training** and focusing learning specifically on skills needs identified by employers. For the employers most closely involved in the delivery of Bootcamps, the ability to design a training course which was bespoke to their needs was extremely valuable, particularly for employers whose needs have not been met by traditional qualifications and training provision. Providers also highlighted the importance of equipping learners with industry certifications which made them more valuable to employers.

- **Delivery of training through short, intensive courses** was valued both by training providers (who had previously used this model) and by providers who usually deliver more traditional, further education provision. The short, intensive delivery model is ideal for developing and applying specific skills. This can enhance a good existing knowledge base (for example, some Bootcamp cohorts were largely made up of graduates who had good digital knowledge but little applied experience) to allow entry to more complex digital roles, for example, in cyber and software development, etc. It also enables speedy entry to digital roles which require less underlying knowledge, such as digital marketing. The focus on the specific skills required for work, rather than the underpinning knowledge, is not a replacement for more traditional learning but a complementary offer.
- **The flexible delivery model** provided an opportunity for providers to shape the content of their Bootcamps to the specific needs and interests of Lancashire's employers (and learners) and meant that Bootcamps providers could "*identify an immediate need and react to it*", even part-way through delivery. The switch to an online learning approach imposed by the pandemic allowed learners greater flexibility in their learning but did require careful management and the provision of enhanced support to keep learners engaged and monitor progress.
- **The direct relationship to employment opportunities, job interviews and employer recruitment pipelines** was very important to some learners but the impact of the pandemic on recruitment of those who participated in the Bootcamps was significant, given the point in time at which Bootcamps were delivered and concluded. With the strong focus being on delivering skills to equip people for work, the hiatus in recruitment activity amongst many Lancashire employers was a significant challenge. Ongoing efforts are being made by providers to secure employment for former Bootcamp learners as the labour market recovers.
- **The emphasis on improving diversity in technical skills** was embraced by providers, but ongoing challenges were faced in recruiting a more diverse group of learners, leading some Bootcamp providers to review the way in which they were marketed and promoted. Where more diverse learner groups were successfully recruited (for example, women from a South Asian background in the Bootcamp run by Blackburn Rovers FC), a further challenge was in identifying employment opportunities which could align with their other commitments (for example, part-time roles). Alongside efforts to increase diversity amongst learners, ongoing efforts are required to support employers to be more flexible in their expectations of how digital roles are organised and filled, in order to open up digital opportunities to a more diverse workforce.

The Provider Experience (Q31 & 32)

The providers consulted were broadly positive about the Bootcamp model, although a number of challenges had been experienced.

The first of these was **the impact of the pandemic**, which required a significant and rapid shift in ways of working from what had been planned. Most providers coped well with the move to online delivery. Although there were initial challenges with regard to kit and connectivity, providers have now built consideration of these into their induction and on-boarding process for learners. Online delivery provided more flexibility for learners and most providers said that they would continue to use a blended learning model even once the pandemic is over.

A second challenge was **the need to combine the delivery of technical skills with broader employability support**. Given the very specific nature of the technical skills required, *“trying to find appropriate teachers is difficult”*. Some providers used employers or technical specialists (for example, software developers) to deliver this aspect of the Bootcamp programme, whilst qualified teachers and trainers provided learning and pastoral support such as ensuring attendance, monitoring progress, supporting learners and ensuring that they were fully understanding the learning content.

Whilst the focus was initially very much on technical digital skills, through their employer engagement providers realised that there was also a need for the skills which would help Bootcamp learners integrate in the workplace. This covered a wide range of employability skills, including being able to *“speak geek – people need to be able to converse with potential employers”*, being confident in interviews, in the workplace and being able to demonstrate how they could apply the technical skills they had acquired. Providers built this ‘job readiness’ support into Bootcamp delivery, for example, through undertaking mock interviews, encouraging engagement with employers through ‘lunch and learn’ sessions and through the ‘real world’ projects which learners undertook. Many reported a need to build confidence amongst learners, particularly female learners, who might find job descriptions for entry-level digital positions *“off-putting”* and decide not to apply for a role they were capable of doing – *“it can be a challenge to get people to put themselves forwards – its daunting to be catapulted very quickly into an entry-level role”*.

To ensure that learners were well-prepared for work, **providers worked closely with employers**. However, this became more challenging during the pandemic when some employers needed to focus urgently on maintaining their operations and their ability to engage with the Bootcamps was much reduced. A number of employers were no longer able to offer job opportunities or even guaranteed job interviews to Bootcamp participants. Many furloughed workers or made Bootcamp learners redundant. Adapting Bootcamp delivery and focus in the light of changing employer circumstances proved challenging for some providers.

Some providers contrasted the experience of delivering Bootcamps in Lancashire, where digital businesses and opportunities are dispersed across the County, with that of delivering them in Manchester and Salford, where the sector and the employment opportunities it offers are more geographically concentrated and, therefore, more visible. Although connections are being developed across Lancashire through hubs including The Landmark in Burnley and Fraser House in Lancaster, increasing the profile of digital opportunities will help to attract more potential learners and ensure that digital careers become as highly regarded as more traditional options such as law and medicine. There is also an ongoing need to promote the importance of digital skills to the wider business base, with some providers stating that SMEs, in particular, often do not understand how enhanced digital skills could benefit their operations: *“in Manchester, it’s buzzing – we’ve not got the same digital infrastructure, culture or vision but we’re slowly getting employers to engage and understand, we’re building connections across Lancashire.”*

Finally, a number of providers stated that **the challenge of delivering Bootcamps increased as the model moved from the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) where it was piloted, to the Department for Education (DfE), who use a funding mechanism with a greater focus on Payment by Results**. The use of entry to employment as the key positive outcome from Bootcamps was particularly challenging during the pandemic when employers were reluctant to take on new recruits. The short time period in which providers are able to report and claim payment for ‘positive outcomes’ means that Bootcamp graduates now moving into work as digital recruitment recovers are not always captured in the outcomes data. There is, therefore, a risk that the longer-term benefits of participating in

Bootcamps are overlooked (and not financially rewarded) and that the focus on securing job outcomes obscures other positive destinations including further learning or self-employment.

To respond to these challenges, a number of Bootcamps had been delivered by consortia including both specialist digital organisations and more general training providers, bringing together the range of expertise required. Bootcamp providers had adopted a number of approaches to help learners into employment, including promoting potential recruits through employer and sector networks and using in-house recruitment agencies to match learners up with existing employer vacancies.

Widening Access to Digital Skills (Q34-36)

Providers had recruited a wide range of learners to their Bootcamp provision, including recent graduates, people who were on furlough or had been made redundant, people recruited through DWP who were unemployed and a small number who were in work but wanted to improve their skills in order to progress. Conscious efforts were made to target women, people from BAME backgrounds and to bring younger workers into digital roles.

Some Bootcamps were heavily over-subscribed, particularly in later rounds once the model became better known and following the impact of the pandemic. Providers used a range of methods to select appropriate candidates including assessing existing skills and knowledge, 'tech tests' (for some of the more advanced level Bootcamps) and interviews. Providers noted that candidates' *"passion, drive and commitment to learn"* were at least as important as existing skills.

The delivery models adopted by some providers enabled a wider range of learners to access digital skills through the Bootcamps. The flexibility offered by the shift to online learning meant it could be undertaken by those in work, on furlough or with other responsibilities at a time that suited them. Most providers consulted intend to stick with a blended learning model in future, with people able to access online learning at their convenience, with learning sessions recorded or streamed so that they can be accessed remotely. However, other providers used a model where all learners were learning at the same time, even if this was remotely rather than face-to-face. The range of different Bootcamp offers also acted to widen access to digital skills – meaning that *"there is a way of learning which suits everyone"*.

The Bootcamps in Lancashire have so far engaged a wide range of employers, ranging from major multinationals such as EG Group to small and microbusinesses. This includes one Bootcamp which worked specifically with advanced manufacturing businesses, building on relationships developed through the delivery of manufacturing and engineering training to deliver digital skills to the manufacturing workforce. This model demonstrates how Bootcamps can be tailored to meet the specific digital skills needs of employers from a range of sectors, allowing them to train their workforce in the digital skills they require, rather than having to participate in more traditional training courses, much of which may not be relevant to their needs.

To date, most of the Lancashire Bootcamps have been delivered to potential new entrants to the digital workforce, rather than upskilling current workers. Smaller employers in particular face challenges in releasing existing staff for training, including the employers who were involved in the employer-led consortium. There is also a reluctance to fund training for workers given the level of staff turnover in digital roles and the potential for workers to be 'poached' by larger businesses.

Bootcamp Duration

The providers consulted felt that a duration of 12-16 weeks was appropriate for a Bootcamp, although the length is, in part, determined by the level at which the Bootcamp is pitched and the degree of previous knowledge and expertise which is required. Rather than setting minimum and maximum durations, providers and employers should determine the appropriate Bootcamp length, taking account of the agreed content, level of expertise amongst learners and the amount of time which learners are able to dedicate to the Bootcamp (for example, it may be appropriate to allow some learners longer to complete the content given their other commitments and to avoid excluding learners who could benefit from the Bootcamp model).

Employer Expectations

Some employers who had not been directly involved were sceptical about how prepared for employment in a digital role someone could be after just 16 weeks of training. In contrast, some providers reported unrealistic expectations amongst employers about the level of expertise that Bootcamp graduates might have: *“on a software development scale of 1 to 10, they were expecting them to be at level 5, when level 2 or 3 is more realistic.”* One provider noted that there was *“lots of confusion in the market – people don’t understand how things fit together”*. This indicates the need for better communication of the Bootcamp offer and an explanation of the entry requirements and expectations for different Bootcamps.

Employer Involvement (Q39)

Providers reported good employer engagement in the design and development of their Bootcamp content and delivery. Some specialist digital training organisations had used similar delivery models in the past. These providers had existing relationships with employers and had worked with them to develop the content of their courses. For others, the Bootcamps provided an opportunity to bring together a new cohort of employers who faced shared challenges in finding digital talent. Other providers used the Bootcamp opportunity to broaden their training offer to existing employer partners, for example, engaging employers for whom they deliver manufacturing and engineering apprenticeships in digital training for the wider workforce.

Employer involvement in the Lancashire Bootcamps included:

- **Input into curriculum design** – through consultations and ongoing engagement with training providers, providing feedback on skills needs and challenges and identifying digital skills priorities.
- **Employer Oversight Boards** – who reviewed both the content and the delivery of Bootcamp courses to ensure that the implementation of the model aligned to employer needs.
- **Direct involvement in teaching** – in a number of cases, employers were directly involved in teaching technical aspects of the course content. This ensured that the technical skills which employers wanted from the Bootcamps were delivered in line with their specific needs. Sometimes employer delivery of technical skills occurred alongside teaching and training professionals who provided pastoral support, checked understanding, encouraged ongoing engagement etc.
- **Real-world projects** – after an initial period of intensive skills development, most Bootcamps included the opportunity to put skills into practice through project work.

Many employers provided example or real-world projects for learners to work on, providing information on challenges faced by the business, providing feedback on students' work and giving learners the opportunity to build up a portfolio of projects which demonstrated how they could apply their new skills.

- **Talks and visits** – although site visits were limited by the pandemic, some providers asked employers to deliver talks, 'lunch and learn' sessions and share their experience with Bootcamp learners. These informal contacts were valuable for learners to help them understand potential employment opportunities and provided employers with exposure to Bootcamp learners. This helped to ensure they had realistic expectations of the skills and confidence levels amongst potential recruits.
- **Mock interviews and mentoring** – to help prepare learners for entry into employment, some providers had relationships with employers who would run mock interviews, and even act as mentors for learners. This provided learners with an opportunity to get advice directly from employers involved in recruiting people to digital roles.

The intention was that the employers engaged with Bootcamps would provide guaranteed interviews and a pipeline of job opportunities for learners. This proved to be challenging during the pandemic. The delivery timetable for the Lancashire Bootcamps meant that many learners completed their courses at a point in time where recruitment opportunities were very limited. Some employers were facing significant challenges in other parts of their businesses which meant that digital recruitment was put on hold. Digital businesses faced severe challenges in retaining existing staff, which made it very hard to take on new workers.

The economic conditions meant that it was challenging for the Bootcamps to meet their targets for getting people into employment. However, demand for digital workers is now returning and efforts continue to support previous Bootcamp graduates into work.

One of the Lancashire Bootcamps was wholly delivered by a consortium of employers who saw it as an opportunity to develop bespoke training content which met their specific skills needs: *"it came about because we were fed up that there was no specific training provision which met our needs"*. Delivering the Bootcamp was a steep learning curve for the consortium who took on new areas of work including recruiting learners, developing course content, managing a public sector funding contract and dealing with the monitoring and administrative requirements. They also acted as a 'recruitment agency', referring learners they could not take on themselves to contacts and collaborators in the sector. Delivering the contract proved extremely challenging but did ensure that they could access potential new recruits with the exact skillsets that they required.

Although the consultations were held with those who had been involved in the delivery of Bootcamps, there is a recognition that a large part of the employer base has not yet been engaged. As the Bootcamps become better established, it will be important to extend their reach to ensure the needs of a wider group of employers are being met.

Pathways (Q43)

Although Bootcamps are designed to equip people for work and the DfE payment model for the nationally procured Bootcamps includes an element which is only paid once learners enter employment or an apprenticeship, the experience in Lancashire demonstrates the importance of also enabling progression to other outcomes. This is because:

- a) some Bootcamps concluded during a period when job opportunities were limited and employers across the country faced considerable challenges in taking on new staff; and
- b) the digital employment opportunities available locally were not suitable for all Bootcamp learners (for example, most were full-time positions).

Therefore, it is important that Bootcamps also provide learners with the skills and knowledge they need to be able to progress to other destinations, such as further learning and apprenticeships, or self-employment where that provides a better fit with their circumstances than entering employment.

To enable this to occur, the Bootcamps need to be mapped and understood within the overall digital skills training landscape, with an understanding of entry routes and requirements; the knowledge and skills that will be acquired; their fit with sector skills needs and the range of potential progression routes for learners.

Policy Considerations

The Bootcamp programme in Lancashire has already gone through a number of iterations. An initial pilot phase, funded by DCMS, was developed in conjunction with Lancashire stakeholders, led by the Lancashire Digital Skills Partnership and GMCA. Local procurement meant that those working in digital and tech sectors 'on the ground', who had a clear understanding of skills needs and priorities, influenced which Bootcamps were chosen to receive funding and ensured that provision was tailored to local needs and consortia had clear links to local employers. The funding model was based on the delivery of the Bootcamp (with quality measures built in), rather than learner outcomes. Later pilot rounds funded through DfE imposed staged payments linked to recruitment, retention at the mid-point of the Bootcamp and completion of the course, which proved challenging for some providers who were affected by significant learner turnover given the impact of the pandemic. This funding model presented high financial risk to providers and some withdrew from taking part as a result.

With Bootcamps becoming a greater part of DfE's developing policy on skills provision through the National Skills Fund, the most recent procurement round has been undertaken nationally rather than locally. Opportunities for the Lancashire stakeholders and strategic bodies such as the LEP to influence what is to be delivered in Lancashire area are limited. This procurement model potentially put the LEP (inclusive of the Lancashire Digital Skills Partnership and Lancashire Skills and Employment Hub) in direct competition with its stakeholders to bid for funding. It did not recognise the strategic nature of the LEP. This approach goes against the move towards greater devolution at County level which is expected to be an important feature of the forthcoming Levelling Up White Paper.

It also risks undermining some of the benefits of the Bootcamp model which were identified through the focus groups. Reducing or removing local influence over decision-making is likely to lead to provision which is less tailored to the specific needs of Lancashire's employers, leaving Bootcamp learners less well-equipped to enter local digital roles. Ensuring coordination between providers and local businesses is more challenging when some have limited local connections. The opportunity to create stronger relationships between learners, employers and providers, which build confidence and encourage further investment in skills and training, is reduced when providers do not have an established local track record and have to establish their credibility with local residents and employers. It is important that the strengths of the Bootcamp model are not lost as it becomes part of mainstream skills

provision, and the focus on delivering tailored digital skills provision – informed by a clear understanding of local needs and in partnership with local employers and stakeholders – is retained.

Suggestions for the next phase of Bootcamps in Lancashire

A range of suggestions were made for the next phase of Bootcamps in Lancashire including:

- Enhancing connections between Bootcamps rather than a series of stand-alone offers: filtering candidates to the most appropriate Bootcamp, matching learners from across all the Bootcamps to employment opportunities and enhancing the current ad hoc connections which exist into something more systematic.
- Embedding the Bootcamps in overall digital skills provision by clarifying entry requirements, progression routes and specific skills focus and converting the Bootcamps to a rolling programme of provision rather than the stop-start model.
- Increasing the visibility and understanding of the Bootcamp offer amongst a wider group of employers.
- Harnessing the Bootcamp model to anticipate future digital skills challenges – for example, through upskilling those whose job roles will be affected by digitisation across the economy, including engineers, mechanics, electricians, retail workers etc – and facilitate the development of emerging digital sectors.
- Provide enhanced confidence building and mentoring support as part of, or alongside, the Bootcamp technical skills development, to give learners the confidence to enter digital roles at the end of the Bootcamp.
- Recognise a broader range of positive outcomes for Bootcamp learners including self-employment and further learning in addition to entry to employment.
- Support employers to be more open to flexible employment within digital roles, ensuring opportunities are suitable for a wider range of learners.
- Address issues within the financial model, including less reliance on Payment by Results, a broader range of positive results which generate payment and a longer period over which results can be recorded.

Appendix A – Consultees

Adrian Wright – UCLan

Amber Keats – In4.0Group

Clare Russell – Runshaw College

Colin McLaughlin – Lancaster University

Danielle Brown – In4.0Group

David Muir – Code Nation

Gabrielle Aspinall – CB Partners

Jim Richards – UCLan

Kam Kothia – Time2 Technology

Maya Ellis – Lancashire County Council

Mohammed Seedat – Blackburn Rovers FC

Nicola Mortimer – Tech Lancaster / Milliamp

Nicholas Poyiadgi – CompTIA

Paul Sharples – Themis, Burnley College

Rafik Adam – Enterprise 4 All

Roz Atherton – Code Nation

Saeed Umar – Lancashire Teaching Hospitals

Zeshan Sattar – CompTIA

Agenda Item 12

Document is Restricted

