



Education & Skills
Funding Agency



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Skills Support for the Workforce Development Plan Development Plan

ESF 2014-2020 Education and Skills Funding Agency

Provider Name	The Growth Company
Contract Number	30379
	LANCASHIRE
	1 April 2019

Section 1 Overview

The ESF SSW project in the Lancashire LEP area is being delivered by The Growth Company as the Lead Accountable Body (LAB). The Growth Company has 9 delivery partners

The contract runs from 1 April 2019 to 31 July 2021. The ESF contract value is £6,092,611 with 3320 learners to be supported.

This Development Plan summarises the activities that will be undertaken by The Growth Company to address the specific requirements set out in the Invitation to Tender Specification published by the ESFA.

Some of the activities included in this Development Plan build on those that were delivered as part of the Engagement Activity Plan for the previous SSW project.

Section 2 Stakeholders

This Development Plan has been prepared in consultation with colleagues from the Lancashire Skills and Employment Hub, part of the Lancashire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP).

It will be shared with the project steering group and the Lancashire Skills and Employment Advisory Panel (a sub-group of the LEP) as will progress reports regarding its implementation on a regular basis.

Stakeholders with a particular interest in the project and represented on the Steering Group include the LEP Skills and Employment Hub, BOOST, Chambers of Commerce, Economic Development Officers, Federation of Small Businesses, Lancashire work Based Learning Executive Forum and Job Centre Plus.

Section 3 Proposed Activity

Describe the activity the plan will deliver (including the rationale for this activity)

Background

The activities within the plan and the focus has been informed by the strategic focus of the LEP Skills and Employment Hub as defined within the Skills and Employment Strategic Framework. The Framework sets out the skills and employment priorities for Lancashire that support the economic growth ambition of the LEP. The purpose of the Strategic Framework is to:-

- a) Increase prosperity and economic growth;
- b) Deliver SEP Priorities;
- c) Address issues of unemployment and economic inactivity; and,
- d) Promote social inclusion, social cohesion, and equality and diversity.

The framework is structured into 4 themes: Future Workforce, Skilled & Productive Workforce, Inclusive Workforce and An Informed Approach. The Skills Support for the Workforce Programme and the activity to be undertaken as part of this plan is particularly intended to support the strategic theme of Skilled and Productive Workforce and SSW is a key step on the LEPs Skills Escalator model which has been developed to show the progression through the 2 themes of the framework Inclusive and Skilled and Productive Workforce. (See attached at Appendix A).

This development plan has been developed with a focus on supporting the key aims of the Skilled and Productive Workforce theme within the Strategic Framework which are set out below

SKILLED AND PRODUCTIVE WORKFORCE

- Increase the number of apprenticeships (including higher level and degree) across our priority sectors.*

- Increase retention of graduates through engagement with business during and after studies.*

- Increase the number of employers undertaking workforce / succession planning and engaging with skills provision.*

- Increase leadership and management capacity in small to medium sized enterprises.*

Recent research undertaken on the Lancashire Labour market in particular the 2018 Lancashire Labour Market Intelligence Toolkit and the Constructions Skills Gap analysis (updated June 2018) have also informed the activity defined within this plan in particular the following:

Skills Requirements - In line with trends forecast for the North West and nationally, demand for higher level skills is expected to increase In Lancashire , as reflected by an upwards shift in the skills profile of the workforce. By 2028, a higher number of people employed in the Lancashire economy will hold qualifications at Level 3 and above, while the number in employment with qualifications at level 2 or below or no qualifications will fall. The number of people in employment with other qualifications, such as apprenticeships, is also expected to increase. This trend typically applies across all occupations. Specific activity has been included in the plan below to reflect the demand for higher levels skills and to support progression from SSW into other higher level learning and higher level and degree apprenticeships.

Sectors - Two sectors – wholesale and retail, and health – account for around one-third of all employment in Lancashire, some 203,000 jobs. Manufacturing is the third largest sector in Lancashire, with 13% of all workers employed in the sector, amounting to 85,000 jobs. Parts of Lancashire have historically been manufacturing bases, and this is shown in the

area having a much larger share of employment in the sector than across the North West (10%) and nationally (9%).*

This trend is expected to continue from 2018 to 2028 with wholesale and retail trade and human health and social work providing the highest number of opportunities in Lancashire – requiring over 134,000 and 97,000 people respectively to fill jobs between 2018 and 2028. On average, this will equate to 12,300 and 8,900 people being recruited to these sectors each year.

This is followed by accommodation and food services, where there is a total requirement for over 86,000 people between 2018 and 2028 – or approximately 7,800 people per annum on average, and administrative and support services, which will have opportunities for over 79,000 people (or 7,200 per annum).**

Other sectors offering opportunities for over 320,000 people between 2018 and 2028 include**:

- Manufacturing (5,300 per annum)
- Education (5,000 per annum)
- Professional, scientific and technical services (4,100 per annum)
- Construction (3,900 per annum)
- Arts, entertainment and recreation (3,300 per annum)
- Information and communication (2,900 per annum)
- Transport and storage (2,800 per annum)
- Public administration (2,200 per annum)

It is important that the SSW programme supports the high growth sectors within Lancashire and therefore within the plan specific activity has been included to ensure that there is a thorough understanding of the skills gaps and training requirements within these sectors.

Sources:

*Business Register and Employment Survey 2016, Market Locations, Lancashire LEP Evidence Base

**Oxford Economics, 2018

Key Activities within the plan

1. Ensuring strategic fit - To ensure that the project adds value, complements and avoids duplication with other activities available for businesses in the LEP area, in particular through working with the LEP to establish and drive forward the Lancashire Employer Skills Forum, development of a business facing Employer Skills Model/Map and to complete a comprehensive mapping exercise which sets out how the business facing skills programmes and business support programmes work together at a strategic level and also complete a detailed stakeholder mapping exercise at a sub-regional level to be agreed with the LEP.
2. Targeting and priority setting - To ensure that provision is flexible and responsive to local conditions, takes into account local LMI and focuses on those areas of highest need including undertaking research and coordinating sector skills partnership activity as appropriate to ensure the programme responds to the skills needs of the LEP's priority sectors and to inform new product development and innovation.
3. Marketing and promotion - To support the referral of businesses to the project, directly and through intermediaries/stakeholders in particular supporting the development of the Lancashire Skills Pledge. To encourage employers to work with the project to offer opportunities and progression routes for learners and to inform curriculum design.
4. Progression pathways - To ensure the effective provision of higher level skills and the promotion of this skills offer and also ensuring clarity of pathways to apprenticeships and developing brokerage of opportunities between participants and employers.

5. Alignment with other LEP Strategic Initiatives – To ensure that SSW aligns and is responsive to other LEP strategic priorities including the Technical Education Vision, the Digital Skills Partnership and in particular progression pathways are developed that support these initiatives.
6. Strategic Partnership Manager - To allocate resource to work in partnership with Lancashire's Skills Hub, to co-ordinate delivery between these 2 strands of activity and other opt-in projects and directly matched ESIF projects and to develop and ensure timely delivery of the development plan
7. Steering the SSW Project - Create and manage a steering group which will sit across all strands of activity with relevant local stakeholders, which will report to the LEP via the Skills Advisory Panel.
8. Working with the Business Growth Hub (BOOST) - To put in place a data sharing and a service level agreement with the Lancashire Growth Hub (Boost) and input employer contacts and activity on the Growth Hub CRM system. The data will be used to support referrals from the Growth Hub, a joined up approach to employer engagement and to support Lancashire-wide marketing campaigns promoting business support products and skill and will work enable the Growth Company to work pro-actively with the Growth Hub to support business support simplification and effective engagement of employers.
9. Evaluation – To undertake evaluation of the project at the mid and end point of the project with the aim of ensuring continued learning and informing future provision.

Section 4 Action plan

(including timescales and responsibility)

Action	Timescales	Lead
Ensuring Strategic fit		
To develop a comprehensive and overarching strategic map to inform how the SSW project will work with other skills projects and business support projects across Lancashire and to develop detailed geographically focused stakeholder maps; 1 st Phase Strategic map 2 nd Phase Detailed Stakeholder Maps	June 2019 June 2019	TH/JH
Participate in the Employer Skills Forum to share information and intelligence with the providers of other projects and activities, share good practice, etc.	Ongoing	TH/JH
Develop and promote a Business facing "Employer Skills Model/Map" that provides clarity for Lancashire Businesses regarding the ESF funded employer facing skills offer working in partnership with other ESF projects.	July 2019	TH
Targeting and priority setting		
Work with the LEP Skills and Employment Hub to develop and coordinate effective Sector Partnerships that inform new product development and innovation in particular as follows; 1. Health and Social Care Skills Partnership	June 2019 and then ongoing	TH

2. Logistics – to work with the LEP Skills and Employment Hub and partners including in particular the appropriate Chambers of Commerce to establish a sector group/forum to enable a greater understanding of skills and training issues.	July 2019 and ongoing	TH
3. Visitor Economy - To work with Marketing Lancashire to establish mechanisms for engaging with businesses within the Visitor Economy.	September 2019 and ongoing	TH
4. Construction – to support the LEP in working with CITB to establish a Lancashire construction forum.	September 2019 and ongoing	TH
5. Manufacturing and Energy and Environment – to work with the LEP and other partners including in particular the appropriate Chambers of Commerce to establish a mechanism for linking with manufacturing businesses to enable a greater understanding of skills and training issues.	July 2019 and ongoing	TH
6. Support the establishment of other sector forums and sector events as agreed with the LEP Skills and Employment Hub	Ongoing	TH
Review the existing LMI and as it is updated to inform the skills offer particularly relating to sector specific issues and geographical coverage.		
Phase 1	April to July 2019	TH
Phase 2	July 2019 to January 2020	TH
Marketing and promotion		
Work with the LEP Skills and Employment Hub to build on the pilot Skills Pledge and facilitate the launch of a full Skills Pledge Model that enables businesses to engage with skills provision in Lancashire	June 2019	TH
Support the full roll out of the Skills Pledge Model across Lancashire.	September 2019	TH
Enter into an SLA with the Skills and Employment Hub that sets out the role of the Growth Company in responding to the Skills Pledge requests.	June 2019	TH/IK
Develop a project website to help promote the project to key referral agencies and businesses in Lancashire.	August 2019	JH
Develop marketing collateral to promote the project to the target group and referral agencies (leaflets, banner stands etc.)	June 2019	JH
Engage Boost and LA Economic Development (or similar) teams to promote the project and agree referral protocols for employers.	On-going	TH/JH
Progression pathways		
Participate in the Lancashire Apprenticeship Action Group and contribute to the development of the action plan and ongoing monitoring and review of the plan.	On-going	JH

To map clear pathways and next steps for learners and businesses including higher level learning and apprenticeships including degree apprenticeships and produce material that is available to learners and businesses.	September 2019 and then ongoing	JH/TH
Alignment with LEP strategic initiatives		
Participate in and support the LEP Local Digital skills Partnership (LDSP) Ensure the development of appropriate provision that respond to the findings of the research undertaken through this partnership. Following completion of the research by the LDSP review the digital skills offer to ensure it is complementary to the wider digital skills provision in Lancashire and fits into a pathway of provision for businesses.	April 2019 and ongoing August 2019 Ongoing	TH/JH TH/JH TH/JH
Participate in and support the development of actions to respond to Lancashire Technical Education vision in particular contributing to actions that raise awareness amongst businesses of the link between technical education route ways and upskilling pathways ion the workplace.	Ongoing	TH
Strategic Partnership Manager		
Provide a resource to work with in partnership with Lancashire's Skills Hub to co-ordinate delivery between this project and other ESIF projects in the area.	April 2019	IK
Steering the SSW Project		
Request the continuation of the existing Steering Group for this new contract.	March 2019	TH
Chair SSW steering Group, review Terms of Reference and Membership of the Steering Group.	1 st meeting post April 2019	TH
Participate in SSW steering group and in particular ensure the presentation of comprehensive information to enable the group to fulfil their role in steering the project.	On-going	JH/IK/TH
Working with the Business Growth Hub (BOOST)		
To complete and sign the data sharing and service level agreement (MOU) with the Lancashire Growth Hub (Boost).	July 2019	IK
To develop the mechanisms for inputting employer data on the Growth Hub (BOOST) CRM.	June 2019	JH/TH
To work with the Employer Skills Forum and BOOST to develop a Lancashire wide marketing campaign including a series of events to promote business support products and skills products and which will support business support simplification and effective engagement of employers.	Commencing May 2019 Ongoing	TH
Evaluation		
Conduct an evaluation at the end of the project to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the contract from commissioning through to delivery to inform future practice and priorities.	July 2021	IK

TH – Tracy Heyes Strategic Partnership Manager
IK – Ian Kerr Operations Director SSW
JH – Janette Healey Service Manager

Section 5 Impact of Activity

Activity	Impacts
Ensuring strategic fit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased understanding among stakeholders including intermediaries and businesses of the differentiation between different ESF funded project offers. Increased and more relevant referrals to ESF funded projects. Clarity for businesses and stakeholders of the skills offer.
Targeting and priority setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project meets the gaps identified by the Sector Partnerships and through research undertaken by the Lancashire Skills and Employment Hub.
Marketing and promotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective Skills Pledge model that enables employers to engage with the comprehensive skills offer in Lancashire. Increased referrals to the project and in particular via the Lancashire Skills Pledge.
Progression pathways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increases awareness of pathways into higher level learning and apprenticeships. Increased number of learners progressing into higher level learning and apprenticeships. Increased take up of apprenticeships in Lancashire.
Alignment with other Strategic Initiatives LEP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Digital Skills offer contributes to the Skills Gaps identified through the Lancashire Digital Skills Partnership. Effective Lancashire digital skills offer.
Strategic Partnership Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued focus of SSW on LEP strategic priorities and that it is complimentary to and aligns with other provision. Delivery of the development plan.
Steering the SSW Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective Stakeholder engagement.
Working with the Business Growth Hub (BOOST)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased referrals from BOOST and BOOST partners and also referrals to other Business support products. Increase awareness of stakeholders including intermediaries and businesses of the comprehensive skills and business support offer.
Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the contract from commissioning through to delivery. Influences ESFA and LEP priorities and commissioning and contracting arrangements.

Section 6 Key Risks

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation
Key personnel change	Low	Low	The coordination of the delivery of the plan will be led by the Strategic Partnership Manager. The Partnership approach to this plan including the monitoring of the plan by the SSW Steering Group will ensure that any resourcing issues are flagged at an early stage and addressed.
Insufficient funding is available to enable delivery of the plan	Medium	Medium	The plan is designed such that most actions will be delivered efficiently at little or no cost with staff and partnership time resourcing the delivery. We will explore options to work with other ESF projects if appropriate to share costs and achieve economies of scale.

Key stakeholders do not engage in activities detailed in the plan and therefore alignment of ESF funded project is not effective.	Low	Medium	Strategic Partnership manager post is in place to drive and facilitate effective working between ESF funded projects.
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Section 7 Meeting the LEP Priorities

The Development Plan has been developed in consultation with the LEP Skills and Employment Hub and the activity included within it is aligned with the wider strategic activity of the LEP and supports the key themes in the Lancashire Skills and Employment Strategic Framework particularly "Skilled and Productive Workforce"

In delivering the plan there will be continued focus on considering the skills gaps within the LEPS priority sectors as follows and focusing support and development of new products and innovation in these sectors

- Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering
- Energy and Environment
- Finance and Professional Services
- Visitor Economy
- Creative and Digital
- Health and Social Care
- Construction

In addition Digital Skills is a significant priority focus, with the recent launch of the Local Digital Skills Partnership in Lancashire and the activity within the plan will drive a continued focus on participating in and supporting the work in the LDSP and ensuring product development and innovation that responds to the work of the LDSP.

The strategic focus of the plan will be across the whole geography of Lancashire and consideration will be given as to how the activity to be undertaken as part of the plan will reflect this and also how the outcomes of the activity of the plan will inform product development and innovation at a local level.

The plan will support the development of progression into additional learning and apprenticeships and in particular support the focus on higher level learning and progression into degree apprenticeships.

Section 8 Monitoring and Review

This Development Plan will be shared with the project steering group and the Lancashire Skills and Employment Advisory Panel (a sub-group of the LEP) as will progress reports regarding its implementation on a regular basis.

The individuals named in the Action Plan will jointly review progress and risks to ensure that activities are on-track, they will also consider whether any additional activities or actions should be added to the plan as the project progresses.

Section 9 Measures of Success

The main measure of success will be the extent to which the contract is successfully delivered and meets LEP priorities as identified in the ESFA contract specification.

The MI provided to the ESFA and included in reports for use by the Steering Group and the Skills and Employment Advisory Panel will indicate the extent to which this has been achieved.

Completed By

Date

LEP Approval date

ESFA Approval date