

Apprenticeship Action Plan 2021-2023

Introduction

The Apprenticeship Action Plan has been produced in collaboration with key partners with a shared aim of enabling the Apprenticeship system to meet the needs of Lancashire's economy. The plan underpins and is an integral part of the Lancashire Skills and Employment Strategic Framework 2021¹ and the Lancashire Technical Education Vision², and should be read in conjunction with these publications.

The Lancashire Technical Education Vision recognises the importance of a high performing technical education system to the Lancashire area, and the role that technical routes have in enabling people to develop technical skills to improve their job prospects and earning potential, whilst also boosting the productivity of businesses.

Apprenticeship reforms and the establishment of the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) has strengthened the employer led system approach. The publication of the Skills for Jobs White Paper³ continues the journey regarding the development of the technical education system and signals the evolution to an employer centred system approach.

The positive contribution that Apprenticeships make to the economy, individuals and businesses is well evidenced. For every £1 that is spent on Apprenticeships, the national economy gains £21⁴. There is evidence that businesses employing Apprentices gain benefits of increased long-term productivity. 74% of employers say that Apprentices improved products or service quality, and 78% say that they improved productivity⁵.

Apprenticeships enable individuals to earn while they learn, with a practical learning style which suits many to thrive and fulfil their potential. Individuals that undertake Apprenticeships are more loyal, likely to earn more once qualified and have enhanced employment prospects⁶.

Building on the strong foundation of Lancashire's high-quality network of Apprenticeship training providers, collaborative ways of working, the Lancashire wide Careers Hub and network of employers, there is now an opportunity to rebuild the legacy of Apprenticeships in Lancashire and 'grow our own'. While making the most of the policy developments and incentives that the Government have set out in the Skills for Jobs White Paper.

The Apprenticeship Action Plan is Lancashire's shared response to maximise the benefits of Apprenticeship training for businesses and individuals by working with businesses, partners and the Government. This will support growth in Apprenticeships which in turn will contribute to businesses having the skilled and productive workforce they require to enable resilience, recovery, and regrowth of Lancashire.

¹ [Lancashire Skills and Employment Strategic Framework](#)

² [Lancashire Technical Education Vision](#)

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/skills-for-jobs-lifelong-learning-for-opportunity-and-growth>

⁴ <https://cebr.com/reports/economic-impact-of-apprenticeships/>

⁵ www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/659710/Apprenticeships_evaluation_2017_employers.pdf

⁶ Return on Investment – <https://www.lancshireskillshub.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Rates-of-Return-to-Apprenticeships-Exec-Summary.pdf>

2019/20 Apprenticeship Action Plan Review

In 2019 an Apprenticeship Action Plan Group worked collectively to produce a joint action plan to support the recovery of Apprenticeships across Lancashire.

Achievements from the 2019/20 action plan include:

- ✓ Apprenticeship Support and Knowledge for Schools and Colleges programme (ASK) undertook 167 activities across 88 schools in Lancashire outperforming targets.
- ✓ Bespoke 'next steps' support resources for year 11 and 13 pupils issued to all Lancashire schools and sixth forms.
- ✓ Business referral processes created to support employers to take on Apprentices, directly from employers via the Skills Pledge, through business networks and the Boost Growth Hub, by the Lancashire Work Based Learning Executive Forum (LWBLEF).
- ✓ A localised [Employer's Apprenticeship Toolkit](#) was published.
- ✓ The Lancashire Leaders' made a public pledge that the Local Authorities in the Lancashire LEP area would work together to meet the 2.3% Apprenticeship target.
- ✓ 10 out of 15 Local Authorities joined the Skills Pledge and are actively involved in apprenticeship pledges and 45 businesses are actively involved in one or more Apprenticeship Skills Pledges.

Response to COVID- 19

The Lancashire Skills and Employment Hub worked with the LWBLEF to gather timely local intelligence from its members to understand the immediate impact of COVID-19 on Lancashire Apprentices and the Apprenticeship sector, including Apprentices who had been furloughed, made redundant and Apprentices with delayed training. This information was shared with BEIS, DfE, Local Authorities and other key partners. This evidence supported the joint lobbying of Government for additional support for providers and employers and encouraged employers to take on redundant Apprentices.

The www.skillsforwork.info microsite was launched in summer 2020 with over 50 partners. The site brings together information about support for those that are furloughed, to boost skills for business recovery and employability, for those facing redundancy and those seeking work, and for younger people aged 16-24. Apprenticeship support and initiatives both local and national have been integrated across the site.

In response to the impact of COVID-19, the government published a 'Plan for Jobs' aiming to reduce the impact of the pandemic on businesses and people, with a number of schemes aimed at incentivising employers to keep on employing – for example, through the furlough scheme and job retention bonus, by incentivising Apprenticeships and the introduction of the Kickstart programme. Work is underway to ensure that the schemes are maximised locally, working with DWP, Jobcentre Plus and local partners to integrate the schemes with existing provision, and to also communicate the offers clearly to employers and individuals.

Labour Market Context

After a county wide drop in Apprenticeship starts post the Apprenticeship Reforms (Spring 2017) Lancashire's starts had begun to experience a recovery, and as of 2018/19 Apprenticeship starts were at 73.2% of their pre-reform level, with an 8.7% increase in starts (1,046 starts) between 2017/18 and 2018/19, above both the North West (0.3%) and England (5.5%).

In the academic year 2019/20, during which the pandemic began overall Apprenticeship starts in Lancashire decreased by 21.1% (down 2,751 starts) compared with the previous year. The reduction in starts in Lancashire has been more severe than in the North West (19.4% decrease) and in England as a whole (17.8% decrease). Lancashire's Apprenticeship starts as a percentage of the 16-64 year old population was 1.12%, higher than in the North West (1.03% of residents) and England (0.78% of residents).

Apprenticeship Starts	
By Level	<p>Higher Apprenticeship starts (Level 4 and above) in Lancashire increased by 4.8% (an increase of 115 on the previous year's 2,491 starts), however this was considerably less than the 9.2% increase in the North West and 9.9% in England.</p> <p>Advanced Apprenticeship starts in Lancashire have decreased by 20% (a decrease of 1,195 on the previous year's 5,979 starts), in line with the 20.9% decrease across the North West and 19.4% decrease across England.</p> <p>Intermediate starts in Lancashire have decreased by 35.5% (a decrease of 1,671 on the previous year's 4,710 starts), a larger decrease than the 32.3% decrease in the North West and the 30.9% decrease in England.</p>
By Age	<p>Under 19 Apprenticeship starts in Lancashire decreased by 22% (a decrease of 823 on the previous year's 3,734 starts) in line with decreases both regionally (21.2%) and nationally (21.9%).</p> <p>19-24 year old Apprenticeship starts had a 24.2% reduction (a reduction of 861 compared to the previous year's 3,559) this was a larger decrease than was seen regionally (21.0%) and nationally (17.9%). In comparison to the age bands Under 19s' and '25 year olds plus' this constituted the largest percentage age band decrease in starts in Lancashire.</p> <p>25 year old plus starts reduced by 18.5% (1,067 less than last year's 5772) which was a larger decrease than regionally (17.5%) and nationally (16%).</p>
By Sector	<p>Business, Administration and Law saw the largest drop in numbers of starts, with a decrease of 1,102 starts (28.1% reduction) from the previous year. This compares to national decrease of 19.9% and a North West decrease of 23.4%.</p> <p>Other subject areas which have seen decreases from the previous year include Health, Public Services and Care (637 fewer starts, -18.1%), Retail and Commercial Enterprise (579 fewer starts, -37.4%), and Leisure, Travel and Tourism (154 fewer starts, -55.8%).</p> <p>The only subject area which saw an increase in starts was Education and Training with 151 more starts versus previous year (61.9% increase).</p>
By Local Authority Area	<p>All local authority areas have had a reduction in the number of Apprenticeship starts from 2018/19 to 2019/20. Blackpool has seen the largest fall in the number of starts, with a reduction of 278 starts compared to the previous year (23.8% reduction). Burnley has seen the largest percentage reduction of 27.4% (-207 starts).</p>

	While there have been reductions across all Lancashire's local authority areas, Ribble Valley, West Lancashire and Chorley's reductions in Apprenticeship starts have been less severe than the average percentage reduction across the country.
By Business Size	<p>Following the introduction of the Apprenticeship reforms, the percentage of apprenticeship starts from Small and Medium Enterprise's (SMEs - fewer than 250 employees) dropped considerably, from 66% in 2015/16 to 51% in 2019/20. Large businesses (employing 250 people or more) now account for 49%, compared to 34% in 2015/16. The North West and England have experienced similar shifts</p> <p>When looking at nominal numbers the shift is stark, up to 2018/19 (setting to one side the effects of the pandemic in 2019/20), starts from large businesses were 350 higher than in 2015/16, whereas those from SMEs were down by over 4,500. The decrease in SME's taking on Apprentices has brought with it lower overall numbers of starts, as the increases from Large companies haven't made up the shortfall.</p>

Apprenticeship Vacancy Data

Overall in academic year 2018/19 there were 3280 vacancies posted compared to 2270, approximately a third fewer posting in 2019/20. As of December 2020, Apprenticeship vacancies have started to recover, seeing many consecutive months of postings higher than the previous two academic years. As of the end of Q3 2020/21, vacancy postings marked as Apprenticeships are at 2230, 98.1% of the level of the entirety of 2019/20.

Key Stage 4 and 16-18 Destinations Data

6% of Key Stage 4 leavers and 11% of 16-18 leavers entered a sustained Apprenticeship destination from the 2018/19 cohort which is the same as the previous year and in line with the North West.

N.B. If you are interested in viewing the full data pack please see Annex A.

Key Issues

1. Growth in the number of Higher Level Apprenticeship starts trails behind the North West and the country
2. 16-24 year olds have been the age group most adversely effected by COVID-19 and this reflects in the Apprenticeship start data
3. Significant impact of the pandemic on Apprenticeship starts in some sector subject areas and variances in Apprenticeship starts by local authority
4. Numbers of Apprentices on a break in learning has increased as well as delays to Apprenticeship completions, and progressions, as well as Apprentices being made redundant
5. Impact of pandemic on business confidence, which in turn is impacting recruitment and therefore causing delays in taking on Apprentices
6. The trend over time in a lower take up of Apprentices by SMEs – also an opportunity for growth.
7. Expansion and introduction of incentives and programmes has made it complicated for employers to engage
8. Providers are vital in the response to our current skills challenges; they also face greater challenges during the recovery period which will inevitably require training and upskilling

The Apprenticeship Action Plan

This plan covers the period 2021 to 2023 and is aligned to both the refreshed Lancashire Skills and Employment Strategic Framework 2021 and the Lancashire Technical Education Vision. The plan is underpinned by an evidence base and was developed in consultation with key stakeholders. An Apprenticeship Action Plan Group will monitor progress against the plan.

Priority	Objectives <i>(AAP1 - transferred from first Apprenticeship Action Plan)</i>	Actions	Lead & supporting partners	Outputs	Outcomes	
1 Apprenticeships aligned with business needs, alongside growth in Higher level and Degree Apprenticeships.	1. Support Lancashire's businesses particularly SMEs to identify how Apprenticeships can meet their skills needs, meet their social value commitments/ aspirations, and support them to utilise Apprenticeships to train their workforce.	Deliver an employer facing Apprenticeship Communications Plan – with a focus on SME's, Higher and Degree Apprenticeships and incentives. Utilising business to business peer influencers e.g. BOOST Apprenticeship Ambassador Network; working with business intermediaries – including Chambers of Commerce and Federation of Small Businesses; and DWP employer facing staff. Review and increase Apprenticeship activity with businesses through the development of Social Value commitments across the LEPs programmes and project portfolio.	Lancashire Skills Hub (LSH), Lancashire Work Based Learning Executive Forum (LWBLEF), North West Apprenticeship Ambassador Network (NWAAN), business intermediaries, Local Authorities, BOOST Growth Hub, DWP, Growth Deal Management Board, City Deal Executive, Construction Skills Training Partnership	Refreshed business facing marketing resources Events/webinars to support employers Referrals to LWBLEF Submission of the Employment and Skills plans as part of the planning process	Increase in Apprenticeship starts annually Increased number of Apprenticeship vacancies Increase in the number of Apprenticeship starts within SMEs Increase in number of businesses transferring and receiving levy, and the amount transferred	
	2. Support Lancashire's businesses to improve the quality of Apprenticeships and encourage progression.	LEAP Project will deliver coaching/mentoring training to Apprenticeship mentors/managers. LEAP Project will deliver enrichment/bridging training to support people to begin an Apprenticeship and progress to higher Apprenticeships.		LEAP Project (LWBLEF), LSH, Boost and Intermediaries partners	Employees receiving coaching/mentoring training Individuals receiving enrichment/bridging training	Increase the number of projects which have committed to the delivery of Apprenticeship opportunities within their Social Value delivery plans
	3. Work with partners to deliver a collaborative approach to support the transfer of unused Apprenticeship Levy.	Create and deliver the Levy Transfer Service (LEAP Project) that adds value to the national system due to be launched summer 2021.		LEAP Project (LWBLEF), Lancashire Levy Transfer Network, LSH, Boost and Intermediaries partners	Businesses transferring 'unspent Apprenticeship Levy Levy transfer case studies produced	
	4. Support the growth of Apprenticeships in the existing and emerging priority sectors (AAP1).	Work with partners to promote Apprenticeship to priority sectors: Public Sector, Department for Education (DfE) sector managers, Lancashire Digital Skills Partnership (LDSP), Health and Social Care Skills Partnership and LEP Sector Groups; and understand sector specific issues and lobby appropriately.		LSH, Public Sector employers, DfE, LDSP, LEP Sector Groups, LWBLEF	Sector specific event/webinars and communications Engagement with sector groups	2.3% Local Authority target increased

		Work with partners to develop the Flexi-job Apprenticeships proposition in Digital in Lancashire.	LDPS, LSH, DfE, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS)	Introduction of Digital Flexi-job Apprenticeships in Lancashire	
	5. Support 16-24 years old Apprenticeships growth.	Promote the benefits of businesses taking on 16-24 years old Apprentices, including sponsorship of the Apprenticeship Award at the Sub 36 Awards. Apprenticeship communications with Youth Hub DWP staff.	Local Authorities, LSH DWP, LWBLEF, Apprenticeship Action Group	16-24 year old Ambassadors speaking at business events 16-24 year old Apprenticeship case studies	
2 Raise the profile of Technical Education to ensure that Technical Education routes have the same parity of esteem as academic routes.	6. Careers Hub: Excellent Apprenticeship careers provision underpinned by Labour Market Intelligence (LMI).	Provide up to date vacancy LMI to schools and colleges to inform young people and their parents/carers of Apprenticeship opportunities. Making Technical Education at the forefront of Start Lancashire platform – including apprenticeships case studies.	Inspira, LWBLEF, LSH	Start Lancashire presents latest Apprenticeship LMI on the platform Apprenticeship case studies on Start Lancashire	Increase of numbers of progressions into Apprenticeships from Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5
	7. Provision of quality encounters and experiences for young people with businesses who take on Apprentices.	ASK project to deliver to all institutions in the Lancashire Careers Hub, including sector specific focussed sessions and a blended approach (AAP1). Apprenticeship Ambassador Network allied with the Enterprise Advisors and Give an Hour activities.	LWBLEF, Inspira, LSH	ASK Programme meets its targets Number of EAs / Apprenticeship Ambassadors	Number of ASK programme activities conducted Growth in Apprenticeship Ambassadors activities
	8. Providers are supported to respond to the skills challenges raised during the COVID-19 recovery period.	Develop and undertake a CPD programme with LWBLEF members.	LWBLEF	Number of providers accessing CPD opportunities	Increase in Apprenticeship starts annually
3 An Informed Approach.	9. Taking an evidence-based approach to identifying the Apprenticeship issues facing Lancashire's businesses and sectors.	Deeper dives into key issues identified.	LSH, Public Sector partners	Production of data and analytical reports	As a result of the conclusions of the deeper dives review actions and plan
	10. Work alongside Government Departments and key partners to align Apprenticeship strategies and plans	Add value to and utilise regional and national communication plans, national levy transfer service and new Apprenticeship training associations etc.	LSH, NWAAN, LEP Network, Government departments, Department for Education (DfE) and DCMS, LWBLEF, Local Authorities	Evidence of alignment with national projects communicated to partners	

Monitoring and Evaluation

This captures the breadth of activities being delivered collectively by partners aligned with the Action Plan, and outcomes that are secured. The logic chain 'objectives - actions - outputs - outcomes', enables the tracking of achievements, both in terms of activities delivered and impacts secured, over time. Each outcome has a target or baseline which will be reported on annually.

Outcomes	Target / Baselines (rounded to nearest 5)
<p>1. Increase in Apprenticeship starts annually overall</p> <p>Starts by Level – with a focus on Higher and Degree Apprenticeships</p> <p>Starts by Age – with a focus of 16-24 year olds</p> <p>Starts by Sector – with a focus on Lancashire's priority sectors</p>	<p>Baseline 2019/20 starts - 10,315</p> <p>Intermediate – 3,040 Advanced – 4,785 Higher – 2,490</p> <p>16-18 year olds – 2,910 19-24 year olds – 2,700 25 plus year olds – 4,705</p> <p>Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care - 125 Business, Administration and Law – 2,815 Construction, Planning and the Built Environment - 770 Education and Training - 395 Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies – 1,790 Health, Public Services and Care – 2,890 Information and Communication Technology - 415 Leisure, Travel and Tourism - 120</p>
2. Increase in the number of Apprenticeship vacancies posted	<p>Baseline 2019/20 vacancies - 2271</p>
3. Increase in the number of businesses taking on one or more Apprentices by size, with a focus on Small and Medium Enterprises SMEs	<p>Baseline Large business (250+ employees) - 4,220 Small and Medium Enterprises (0 - 249 employees) - 4,380</p>
4. LEAP Project	<p>Targets to be confirmed for LEAP project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in number of businesses transferring and receiving levy, and amount transferred • Number of employees receiving coaching/mentoring training • Number of employees receiving the Apprenticeship enrichment/bridging training
5. Apprenticeship Social Value Employment and Skills Targets	Target to be confirmed
6. 2.3% Local Authority target increased	<p>Baseline 2019/20 – 1.5%</p>
7. Increase of destination into sustained Apprenticeships from Key Stage 4 and 16-18 (consider two year lag in data)	<p>Baseline 2018/19 Key Stage 4 – 6% 16-18 – 11%</p>
8. Number of ASK programme activities conducted	Target – 340 per annum
9. Number of activities undertaken by Apprenticeship Ambassadors	Target – 40 per annum