

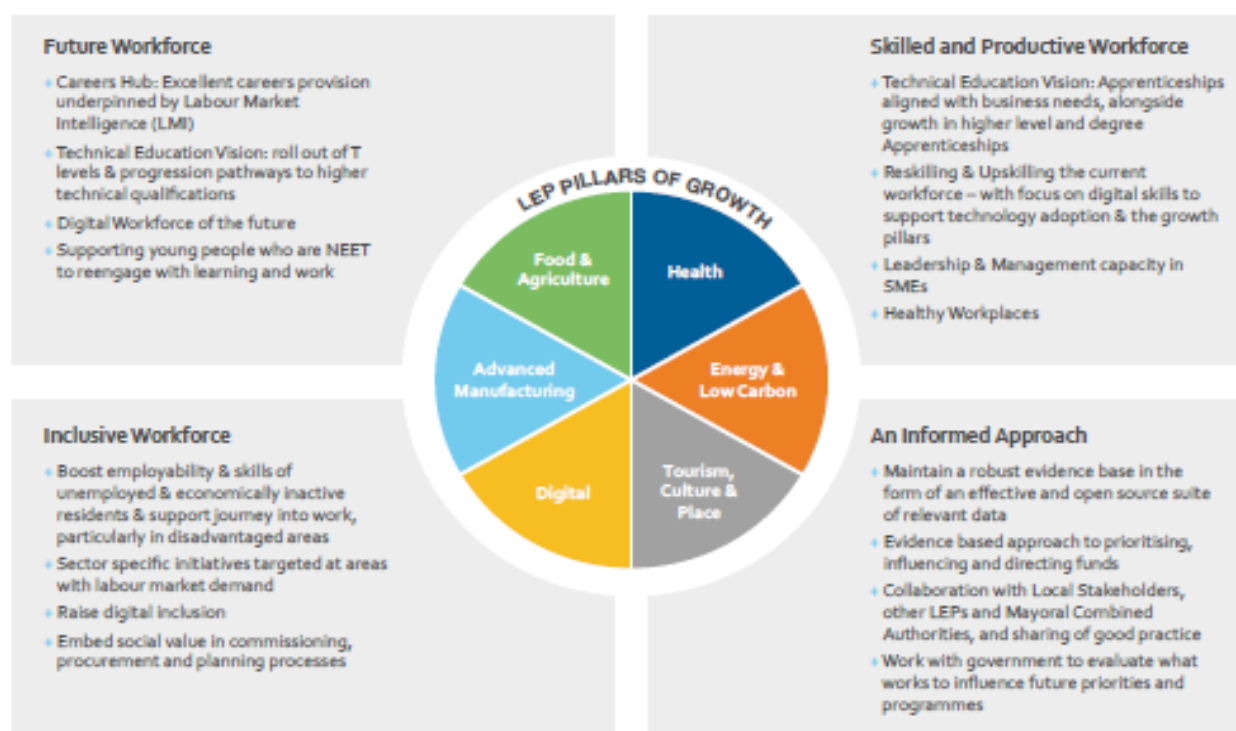
Lancashire Skills and Employment Hub's Future Workforce Strategic Theme

Background

The Lancashire Skills and Employment Strategic Framework is overseen by the Lancashire Skills and Employment Advisory Panel which is a committee of the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), and which supports the work of the 15 authorities across the pan-Lancashire area. The authorities are Lancashire County Council, the 12 district councils, Blackpool Council, and Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council. The Lancashire Skills and Employment Hub supports the work of the board and the implementation of the Lancashire Skills and Employment Strategic Framework, working closely with partners across the area. The evidence base and the framework can be accessed on the Lancashire Skills and Employment Hub website¹.

A summary of the framework can be seen below:

Purpose: An enabler of the LEP's Strategic Economic Framework and the Greater Lancashire Plan, the Lancashire Skills and Employment Strategic Framework aims to build a talent pipeline aligned with the needs of the economy, boost the skills of our people to enhance productivity and drive an inclusive workforce in partnership with businesses, providers and stakeholders.



Interactions with Enablers			
Infrastructure Investment in skills infrastructure. Embedding social value. Building construction skills & workforce of future.	Mental Health Building the resilience of our Future Workforce. Healthy workplaces driving up productivity and health and well-being.	Finance & Inward Investment Supporting inward investment through skills base offer and supporting recruitment.	Stakeholder Engagement Businesses, providers and stakeholders engaged in the implementation of joint objectives.

¹ <https://www.lancshireskillshub.co.uk/strategies/strategic-framework/>

Future Workforce

As shown above, the Future Workforce strategic theme is focused on working with education and business to establish a talent pipeline and a future workforce that meets the current and future demands of the local labour market.

There are four priorities that underpin the Future Workforce theme:

- Raise the breadth and quality of careers provision across secondary schools and post-16 education, inspire young people through engagement with business and enable informed choice
- Implement the Lancashire Technical Education Vision² in collaboration with providers and business including rolling out T Levels and progression pathways to higher technical qualifications
- Develop a digital careers journey through secondary education and post-16 education which embeds digital skills and careers provision
- Support young people who are or at risk of becoming NEET to positively re-engage with learning and work.

A pivotal aspect of the Future Workforce theme is the Lancashire Careers Hub and Enterprise Adviser Network. This is funded by the Careers and Enterprise Company, who receive DfE funding and who fund Careers Hub and Enterprise Adviser Networks across the country. This is matched by Lancashire County Council, Blackpool, and Blackburn with Darwen Unitary Authorities, the LEP, and the Blackpool Opportunity Area.

Lancashire Careers Hub and Enterprise Adviser Network

Strategic Context

The Lancashire Skills and Employment Strategic Framework was published in February 2016. The underpinning research highlighted the inconsistent and fragmented careers education, information, advice, and guidance offer in schools and colleges across the Lancashire area.

As part of the research, a mapping exercise undertaken in November 2015, emphasised the plethora of organisations offering piece meal activity across the area. A debate with the youth council concluded that young people's experiences of careers provision were inconsistent; young people described support as a 'postcode lottery', few had insight into the world of work and indeed, a number of young people indicated that they had not heard of an apprenticeship until they had left school.

The framework prioritised the need to improve the offer to young people – to inspire young people about potential careers opportunities, particularly in Lancashire-based businesses, and to help young people make informed choices about their future based on labour market intelligence.

² <http://www.lancshireskillshub.co.uk/technical-education/>

Careers and Enterprise Company

The Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC) was established in 2015 to take forward the recommendations of the Lord Young review 'Enterprise for All'. The company, which is private sector led and funded by the DfE, aims to improve the careers offer to young people and increase the number of employer encounters that young people experience throughout their educational journey. CEC have built up on an evidence base which demonstrates the positive impact of employer engagement. For example:

'Research shows that a young person who has 4 or more encounters with an employer is 86% less likely to be unemployed or not in education or training (NEET) and can earn up to 18% more during their career'.

CEC approached the LEPs and local authorities across the country in relation to co-funding Enterprise Adviser Networks, to co-ordinate careers and enterprise activities within schools, and increase the engagement and connections between local businesses and schools. As careers provision was identified as a strategic priority within Lancashire, Lancashire County Council and the LEP agreed to co-fund an initial pilot and drive the establishment of a network in Lancashire.

Lancashire Enterprise Adviser Network

In January 2016, the network was initially established in Blackburn with Darwen and Burnley – linking with the two local business networks. In September 2016, the network was rolled out to the rest of East Lancashire, Blackpool (coinciding with the Opportunity Area status), and Morecambe, and then in September 2017, all areas of Lancashire. The Lancashire Skills and Employment Hub subcontract to Inspira, who employ the Enterprise Coordinators and oversee day-to-day delivery.

The network is made up of funded Enterprise Coordinators who support a cluster of around 16 schools and colleges each. The coordinators match volunteer business leaders from private, public, and third sector companies, 'Enterprise Advisers' to schools and colleges, to work with a named Careers Leader and the school or college leadership team to develop a careers plan, and ultimately increase the number of planned employer encounters that young people experience throughout their educational journey. The coordinators and advisers support the schools to review their careers plan against the Gatsby Benchmarks, which were incorporated into the Ofsted inspection framework in September 2018 (as per the government's Careers Strategy), and to develop their careers offer to young people. The initial focus being on two of the eight Gatsby Benchmarks – employer encounters every year for every pupil, and experiences of the workplace.

Over 160 volunteers from business are currently engaged in Enterprise Adviser roles. Business volunteers hold senior roles, to enable them to support the schools and colleges with strategic planning. Volunteers are from a range of private sector businesses in the priority sectors and public sector, and a range of large, medium, and small businesses – reflecting the business demographic of Lancashire.

Twinning funds from the Blackpool Opportunity Area have enabled further engagement of business networks across Lancashire. Joint actions plans are in place with 13 business networks – from the three Chambers of Commerce and Federation of Small Businesses to geographically focused networks such as the

Fylde Responsible Business Network and the Burnley Bondholders. Action plans are in place to encourage members to engage in the Careers Hub and Enterprise Adviser Network, through the Lancashire Skills Pledge.

Key to the coordinator roles is working with providers of activities and embedding activities in the career's plans, to enable the schools and colleges to take a strategic approach to improving the offer to young people. For example, working with local businesses, STEMfirst, JCP Support into Schools, Future U (the Uni Connects programme), National Careers Service, and private providers.

Lancashire Careers Hub

The LEP secured a pilot Careers Hub in the first wave. The Lancashire Careers Hub was launched in September 2018 and involved 30 schools and colleges. The purpose of the Careers Hub was to add value to the existing Enterprise Adviser Network, by supporting schools and colleges to achieve the full breadth of the eight Gatsby Benchmarks. The Careers Hub in Lancashire is focused on quality and sustainability, working closely with Careers Leaders in the educational institutions.

In September 2019, the Careers Hub rolled out to 130 schools and colleges, and in September 2021 to every secondary school and college in Lancashire, including all the special schools and alternative providers – 156 institutions in total. The phased roll out of both the Careers Hub and the Enterprise Adviser Network has ensured quality and progress. Lancashire is one of a small number of areas that has reached full coverage, engaging all secondary schools and colleges, and is one of the largest Careers Hubs across the country.

As part of the development of the Careers Hub, a Cornerstone Employer group was established, initially in the Blackpool Opportunity Area, with careers inspiration and transition to the world of work being one of three priorities of the opportunity area in Blackpool. The group is now Lancashire wide. The Cornerstones have individual commitment plans and come together as a group to support the strategic development of the Careers Hub. They also act as ambassadors in the business community. The group is chaired by Peter Caney of BAE Systems, who is also a member of the Lancashire Skills and Employment Advisory Panel. Employers include a range of businesses for example, BAE Systems, Blackpool Transport, Westinghouse, Regenda, United Utilities, and Pendleside Hospice.

Each Careers Hub has a lead Head Teacher – in Lancashire, this is Ruth England, Head Teacher at Shuttleworth College, which is a secondary school in Burnley. Ruth is also a member of the Lancashire Skills and Employment Advisory Panel.

Early evaluation includes a step-change in the number of good quality employer encounters, improved teacher and tutor knowledge of the local labour market, excellent feedback from students, improved aspirations and awareness of different pathways including apprenticeship opportunities, and improved outcomes in Ofsted inspections. In the longer term, it is anticipated that there will be a positive impact on destinations, with less young people becoming NEET, and wider engagement in apprenticeships and technical education routes, and greater retention rates in post-16 options due to more informed decision making.

The Careers Hub is one of the highest performing in the country – and received the accolade of the ‘Careers Hub of the Year’ at the last annual awards event run by the Careers and Enterprise Company and the Gatsby Foundation in 2019.

Whilst the pandemic created extremely challenging circumstances to delivery provision, investment was made in a digital platform called ‘Start in Lancashire’ utilising Blackpool Opportunity Area funds and other funds from local partners to enable encounters and experiences with employers, further education, higher education, and apprenticeships to pivot to the virtual world. The platform uses local labour market intelligence from the Skills Hub and sets out the world of work by sector and by travel to work area in Lancashire³.

Progress against the targets set by the CEC is provided below. In terms of governance, progress is reported to the Lancashire Skills and Employment Advisory Panel, and through to the LEP Board. Progress is also discussed in a number of forums – for example, Careers Leader Community of Practices that are run across local authority areas and Enterprise Adviser cluster meetings, to share good practice and support progress.

	Careers Hub – Autumn 2021 (Based on CEC data)	
	Target % (July 2022)	Actual % (December 2021)
EA’s matched to schools	98%	83%
Gatsby BM 1	80%	79%
Gatsby BM 5	Sustained Progress Baseline July 21- 63%	75%
Gatsby BM 6	Sustained Progress Baseline July 21– 36%	49%
Average BM’s	5	5.53

The average across the eight benchmarks for Lancashire Careers Hub at the end of the Autumn Term was 5.53 (target of 5), against a national average of 4.35.

Integration

The Careers Hub and Enterprise Adviser Network are key to supporting the priorities under the Future Workforce.

The Lancashire Technical Education Vision has a number of priorities, one of which is to raise the profile of technical education routes with young people. A key priority within the work of the Careers Hub is to ensure that young people are aware of the different pathways available to them – whether that be academic or technical – through vocational provision or apprenticeships. The Careers Hub work closely with the

³ <https://lancashire.startprofile.com/page/industries-national>

Lancashire Work Based Learning Forum to draw into careers plans sessions regarding apprenticeships and engagement of Young Apprentice Ambassadors who tell their story to pupils and students and who act as role models. Much activity has also taken place, working collaboratively with the Gatsby Foundation and the college network, to integrate information regarding T Levels – new technical qualifications that are equivalent to three A Levels in specific occupational pathways. Technical routes are critical to needs of Lancashire's industry base and are a way to boost the skills of local people, alongside the academic route.

A priority within the framework is to also build the talent pipeline to meet the current and future demands in regard to digital and cyber skills – both within the digital sector and across sectors. The Careers Hub is collaborating with the Lancashire Digital Skills Partnership to integrate digital programmes to raise the profile of the plethora of job opportunities. This includes the Teen Tech Festival, delivered in collaboration with Maggie Philbin and her team, Cyber Girls in Blackpool and Lancaster and Morecambe, and a programme sponsored by BAE Systems which is supporting 70 schools, and 7,500 young people to engage in activities with InnovateHer – to boost gender diversity in our digital workforce, and Create Education, which is gifting 3D printers to schools and providing sessions regarding additive manufacturing. These efforts will build our future workforce in-line with the demands of the local labour market and have supported inward investment opportunities – such as the announcement regarding the basing of the National Cyber Force in Lancashire.

There is also a focus on ensuring that young people from disadvantaged boroughs are able to engage in careers activities to build their insight and boost social mobility – recognising that some young people lack social collateral and insight into different careers opportunities through their family and friends. As one young person said in Blackpool: *'I need to see it to be it'*.

The Careers Hub also collaborates with providers of programmes supported by European Social Funds that aim to support young people who are at risk of NEET and funds have been secured this year to undertake a two and a half year programme to test the benefits of extended work experience and enhanced careers sessions to support young people in year 10 to transition positively to post-16 destinations who live in disadvantaged areas and who are at risk of NEET.

The Careers Hub is integrated into the Lancashire Skills Pledge, which was developed to enable employers to easily engage in the skills and employment programmes available to them across Lancashire, and to pledge their commitment to inspiring, developing, and recruiting the people of Lancashire. A growing group of committed employers are signed up to the pledge.