



## **LEP – Sub Committee**

### **LEP - Lancashire Skills and Employment Board**

**Private and Confidential: NO**

**Date:** Thursday, 7 December 2023

### **Update from Lancashire Skills and Employment Hub and partners**

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#### **Executive Summary**

This paper provides an overview of activity since the last formal committee meeting in September 2023.




#### **Recommendation**

The committee are asked to review the contents and raise any questions or clarification points at the meeting.


The update from the Lancashire Skills and Employment Hub (Skills Hub) and partners is structured against the strategic themes and priorities outlined in the Lancashire Skills and Employment Strategic Framework 2021. Key successes and risks are summarised, with a fuller update on the following pages against the themes.

A significant overarching success this quarter is the announcement of the proposed Combined County Authority and devolution deal for Lancashire – the Skills Hub has made a significant contribution regarding labour market intelligence and insights, and the scope of the deal.




Theme	Highlights - Successes	Risks
<p><b>Future Workforce</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Additional project funding of £279,500 has been secured from the Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC) to bolster the work of the Lancashire Careers Hub (details provided in main section)</li> <li>- Technical Education Vision: testing approaches to engaging parents with apprenticeships and technical routes in partnership with Lancashire Work Based Learning Forum</li> <li>- Cyber Festival Education Day – an enormous success, involving primary pupils, FE (Further Education) and HE (Higher Education) students, with a lively panel debate with VIPs and BBC Northwest coverage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sustaining the excellent progress against the Gatsby Benchmarks in the next academic year (next reporting point is January 2024) – each year is a new year</li> <li>- Securing of funds to enable the roll out of Cyber Fairy Tales, following the successful pilot – awaiting approval of funds from DSIT</li> <li>- Limited offer of support for young people who are NEET or at risk of NEET following the closure of the European Social Fund (ESF) programme</li> </ul>
<p><b>Inclusive Workforce</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- New employment programmes supporting the integration of refugees and economically inactive residents have been launched in different parts of Lancashire</li> <li>- The number of Wave 4 (2023/24) Skills Bootcamp providers has increased to 21 with 546 participants enrolled across the programme as of the end of October 2023. Outcomes have started to be achieved with 34 people progressing within the workplace or securing a job</li> <li>- Opportunity to embed Social Value across the Lancashire 2050 themes and through strategic projects, such as the development of the National Cyber Force (NCF)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Escalate has been refreshed to highlight current offers, there are now 64 projects and programmes offering employment support, however provision is fragmented across Lancashire</li> <li>- Risk that outcomes for Skills Bootcamp learners from Wave 3 (2022/23) will not be met by all providers by the end of December. The Skills Hub is tracking the progress of providers and lending support through employer engagement</li> </ul>
<p><b>Skilled &amp; Productive Workforce</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-The apprenticeship grants project has been extended by 30 grants as the original 100 committed by Lancashire County Council (LCC) have been paid or allocated to Lancashire employers</li> <li>- The DfE / UCAS Early Connect pilot has launched and there are thirty school sixth forms and colleges across Lancashire taking part</li> <li>- Multiply is gaining momentum - the Year 2 Quarter 2 return shows performance is exceeding targets across Lancashire; this includes both outreach and substantive learning</li> <li>- Economic Inactivity research has been published and a task &amp; finish group has been convened with key partners to work on an action plan including a proposal to</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reduction in provision following the closure of the ESF programme leaves limited upskilling opportunities for businesses</li> <li>- Sufficient resources and partner commitment to take forward the Economic Inactivity research and recommendations (funds being sought via the Work Well Partnership Programme)</li> <li>- Multiply Project Manager who was instrumental in establishing the programme has moved on, recruited new manager (starting early December)</li> </ul>



	the Work Well Partnership Programme to be a vanguard	
<b>Informed Approach</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Significant usage of the Lancashire skills and employment online interactive Evidence Base</li><li>- Strong body of evidence created regarding Economic Inactivity in Lancashire – research published in the Evidence Base</li><li>- Continued growth in Lancashire businesses signing up to the Lancashire Skills Pledge – annual celebration taking place in The Exchange on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> December</li><li>- Approval of Skills Hub Lead for Skills and Economic Intelligence to be an ONS Accredited researcher, and process underway to put an AOC (Assured Organisational Connectivity Agreement) in place to allow remote access to secure data</li><li>- Adult Education Budget (AEB) commission initiated to gain insights into governance, strategies, and models for devolved funds in other Combined Authority areas to inform planning and discussions with DfE</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Uncertain future funding landscape given Combined Authorities/Upper Tier Local Authorities now to assume the roles and responsibilities of Local Enterprise Partnerships. This has implications for buying data and additional resource in the next financial year</li><li>- Timescales to formally establish Combined County Authority to enable the proposed devolution deal to be taken forward</li></ul>



	<p><b>Future Workforce:</b> 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.</p>
<p><b>Priority 1</b></p>	<p><b>Careers Hub: Excellent careers provision underpinned by Labour Market Intelligence (LMI)</b></p>
<p><b>Lancashire Careers Hub</b></p> <p>The Careers Hub presented a progress report and an overview of priorities for 2023-24 at the informal meeting of the committee on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> November (slides circulated). Alongside the core work of supporting schools and colleges to achieve sustained progression against the Gatsby Benchmarks, there are also a range of projects being delivered through the core Careers Hub fund and through additional funds secured to support activity across Lancashire. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• College Sector Days – this creative model tested successfully last year involves employer visits in the morning followed by interactive sessions at the colleges in the afternoon to explore a particular sector and pathways into employment.</li> <li>• Alternative Provision - Transitions Projects – supporting the 11 Alternative Providers across Lancashire to bolster approaches to smoothing transition to post 16 destinations.</li> <li>• Business Network partnerships promoting the Skills Pledge to members.</li> <li>• Work Ready / Employability Skills project - in response to employer feedback via the LSIP, the Chambers, Lancashire Skills and Employment Hub and Lancashire Careers Hub are working in partnership to develop a model to improve the work readiness of young people with employers (as discussed at the informal committee meeting).</li> <li>• Teacher Encounter project (additional £17.5k) prioritising STEM and Digital employers - enabling 40 teachers to spend time in the workplace.</li> <li>• Experiences of the Workplace project (additional £65k) - developing new experiences of the workplace for approximately 540 young people to stimulate the young people’s interest in the digital and cyber sector. Includes partnerships with digital hubs and insights into non-traditional workspaces and remote working.</li> <li>• Targeted Transition Fund (additional £115k) supporting 11 schools and 150 disadvantaged young people in Year 11 through delivery of an Enhanced Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) Framework, building on the best practice developed through the Effective Transitions Project.</li> <li>• ‘Risk of NEET’ project (additional £60k) researching best practice in relation to supporting Key Stage 3 young people at risk of becoming NEET – led by Lancashire County Council 16-19 team with support from the Careers Hub.</li> <li>• ‘Start Small Dream Big’ project (additional £22k) in Blackpool (targeted at Education Improvement Areas) supporting teacher CPD in 32 primary schools alongside an employer encounter. Project commencing in March 2024.</li> </ul> <p>Summer Term progress against CEC targets were reported in September. The next update will be in January 2024, following autumn term.</p>	



<b>Priority 2</b>	<b>Technical Education Vision: roll out of T levels &amp; progression pathways to higher technical qualifications</b>
<b>Technical Education Vision</b> The progress report against the Technical Education Vision is available on the Skills Hub website: <a href="https://www.lancashireskillshub.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/LEP_Tech-Ed-Progress-Review-2023_DIGITAL.pdf">https://www.lancashireskillshub.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/LEP_Tech-Ed-Progress-Review-2023_DIGITAL.pdf</a>  The Careers Hub is working in partnership with the Lancashire Work Based Learning Forum to test approaches to engaging parents with apprenticeships and technical routes. The project will take place with a small number of secondary schools across Lancashire, targeting Year 9 parents.	
<b>Priority 3</b>	<b>Digital Workforce of the future</b>
<b>Oracle and Edge Hill University Mentoring Pilot</b> Working with partners at Edge Hill University, Oracle has embarked on a mentoring scheme with undergraduates at the University who are interested in a career in the digital sector. The programme commenced with careers talks during autumn careers fairs, with identified students receiving 14-21 hours support over 2023/24 academic year. The programme will be evaluated and if successful has the potential to be scaled to other Lancashire-based universities.	
<b>TeenTech</b> Following the success of TeenTech 2023, planning for TeenTech 2024 is well underway with the in-person event planned for the 20 <sup>th</sup> June 2024 hosted at UCLan and the online event on the 6 <sup>th</sup> February. The focus will be on digital, AI and cyber. Information has been sent out to secondary schools, with 18 schools booking so far.	
<b>Cyber Local Funding</b> The Lancashire Digital Skills Partnership (LDSP) Steering Group met with a representative from the Department for Science Innovation and Technology (DSIT) in early November to consider proposals for a further round of Cyber Local Funding, building on the 2022/23 programme.  Three of the proposals relate to the Future Workforce theme: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cyber Fairy Tales (StemFirst) – roll out of the programme to a further 30 primary schools in Lancashire</li><li>• TeenTech (Careers Hub) – sponsorship of the TeenTech 2024 Festival (as above)</li><li>• Integrating Cyber into KS3/4 Geography Lessons (Star Academies) - development of schemes of work, lesson plans and dynamic resources to embed cyber into KS3/4 Geography lessons</li></ul> Feedback was provided on the proposals to the relevant organisations to sharpen the projects. The projects will undergo further scrutiny by DSIT and if successful, DSIT will award grant awards to the proposers.	
<b>Education Day of the Lancashire Cyber Festival</b> The Education Day of the Lancashire Cyber Festival was well received and ended with a <a href="#">2.5minute piece</a> on the BBC Local news, with coverage during breakfast, lunch and evening news on the following day, featuring Kerry Harrison explaining Lancashire’s ambitions to inspire young people about future job opportunities.  Ten primary schools brought a total of 40 young people who took part in the Cyber Fairy Tales activity. The young people were filmed by the BBC but that did not deter them from solving the puzzles. They also met and questioned a series of VIP visitors including Deputy Commander UK	



StratCom – Lieutenant General Tom Copinger-Symes; Director Function Integration MOD - Claire Fry; Commander NCF, Air Vice-Marshal Tim Neal-Hopes OBE; and Andrew Elliot – Director of Cyber Security and Digital Identity, DSIT.

The group were joined by Zain Javed, Cofounder and CEO of Citation Cyber and chair of the Lancashire Cyber Alliance over lunch with a closed audience of local, regional and national stakeholders for a lively panel discussion regarding building the local digital and cyber talent pipeline facilitated by Dr Michele Lawty-Jones.

Seven FE Colleges attended and completed the CGI escape room – in a shipping container on the university square, an activity with either Oracle or CyberFirst, with the opportunity to then browse a series of exhibition stands. Approximately 350 HE students from UCLan and Edge Hill also attended the day visiting the exhibition stands which showcased a range of organisations and opportunities.


**Priority 4**

**Supporting Young People who are NEET (not in employment, education, or training) to reengage with learning and work**

**Strategic Meetings**

The Lancashire Post-16 Officers Group (with upper tier authority representatives) met on the 17th of November. Kay Vaughan updated the group on the additional Careers Hub projects, a few of which are aimed at reducing NEET rates, including the Targeted Transitions project, support to Alternative Providers, and the ‘Risk of NEET’ research focused on Key Stage 3.



	<p><b>Inclusive Workforce:</b> 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><b>Priority 1</b></p>	<p><b>Boost employability &amp; skills of unemployed &amp; inactive, &amp; support journey into work, particularly in disadvantaged areas</b></p>
<p><b>Plan for Jobs</b></p> <p>The WHP (Work and Health Programme) is targeted at claimants with health conditions and/or disabilities and will be running until September 2024. The new Pioneer programme, which is an extension of the WHP, went live in the North West on the 13th September 2023. The WHP Pioneer programme is a pilot which will inform and phase into Universal Support. The programme has been commissioned for 12 months and offers employment and in-work support for residents who are economically inactive, ex-offenders, ex-military, members of armed forces, carers or ex-carers, homeless or those who have a disability. The programme can be accessed through DWP referral (20%) or by self-referral (80%).</p> <p>To date on the Restart Scheme there have been 15,530 referrals made by DWP with 80% of these progressing into starts (12,379). The highest number of referrals have been received from Blackburn, Nelson, Preston and Burnley JCP offices. There have been 5,018 overall (4,024 initial) Job Starts (40%) and 2,540 sustainable Job Outcomes (20%) to-date. Following the Autumn statement, an extension and expansion of the Restart scheme in England and Wales has been announced - with the extension lasting until June 2026 - offering prolonged and enhanced support to individuals. The programme is now being made available to individuals who have been on Universal Credit for 6 months, rather than the current 9 months.</p> <p>Individual Placement and Support (IPS) provides 12 months' employment support, plus 6 months' in-work support to people who are economically inactive who are experiencing mental health or drugs and alcohol barriers. The IPS model is currently being delivered across Lancashire in varying intensities depending on level of need. The Skills Hub is facilitating an IPS network group to share best practice and to raise the profile of support available – as part of the focus on supporting people who are Economically Inactive.</p> <p>The new Refugee Employability Programme (REP), a Home Office initiative, provides 18 months of voluntary support to unemployed or part-time working refugees aged 18-66. It focuses on addressing specific needs not fully covered by mainstream services, offering three levels of assistance—employment, integration, and English language. As the REP is funded by the Home Office, recipients of support can also access ESOL funded by the Adult Education Budget to boost English language skills. As of November 20th, REP has gained traction in Leyland, Preston, Blackburn, Burnley, Hyndburn, and Lancaster, with 37 participants enrolled and 20 awaiting eligibility checks.</p> <p><b>UKSPF – targeting Economically Inactive</b></p> <p>Active Lancashire and Selnet are offering the Move Forward project to support economically inactive residents in Preston and Pendle until the end of March 2024. Active Lancashire have also secured UKSPF to deliver The Bridge project for the economically inactive under the Rossendale</p>	





Works Branding until March 2024. Calico Ltd also have UKSPF and are delivering employability support for the economically inactive in Burnley and Lancaster. Support is patchy across the county, with the closure of the ESF programme.

**Resources**

The Skills Hub have worked with partners to update the Escalate Tool post ESF projects, with 64 opportunities added, including Skills Bootcamps. New opportunities include new UKSPF projects supporting people into work, the REP programme and the WHP Pioneer programme. Information will continue to be updated on the system and accumulate in a relaunch of the system with an Escalate Roadshow early 2024. The Skills Hub is currently running sessions in all Job Centre Plus venues to provide an outline of the tool to refresh and encourage JCP work coaches to signpost customers onto the available programmes/ provision.

**The Lancashire Adult Skills Forum**

With 75 current members, the forum serves as a platform for collaboration, enabling partners and stakeholders to exchange best practices, identify skills gaps, and establish new provisions. Chaired by the Skills Hub, the forum recently focused on priorities and recommendations from the Economic Inactivity report. Partners and Stakeholders engaged in an activity to outline existing provision, identify provision gaps, and explore opportunities for integrating work and health services in Lancashire.

**Cyber Local Funding**

Further to the proposed activity under the Future Workforce theme, one successful proposition includes the extension of the Cyber Ark activity with IMO Charity. This new project, subject to final approval by DSIT, will see a pre-bootcamp tech skills programme, based within the local community groups they have been working with in Blackburn. The programme will be based on the Tech Discovery programme that the Skills Hub has already trialled with CompTIA which aims to break down barriers with local communities and other underrepresented groups in tech, with view to progressing residents towards Skills Bootcamp provision.

**Cyber KickStart**

The Skills Hub is waiting for confirmation of funding from DSIT to run a small Kickstart style pilot with four employers focused specifically on giving entry level cyber experience to young adults (18-25), increasing new skills and developing their employability. The project echoes many of the features of the original DWP programme with maximum 25hr placement for 6 months with payment to the Kickstarter and small payment to the employer to cover costs.

<b>Priority 2</b>	<b>Sector specific initiatives targeted at areas with labour market demand</b>
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**Pre-Skills Bootcamps**

Feedback from JCP Centres is that many customers need support to be able to access Skills Bootcamps, as they are pitched at Level 3. The Skills Hub has encouraged AEB providers to develop Pre-Skills Bootcamps to bridge the gap. Lancashire Adult Learning and PHX have planned delivery of two Pre-Skills Bootcamp courses starting on the 27/11/23 in readiness for 40 individuals to potentially transition into Skills Bootcamps commencing in January 2024. The courses will also include input from National Careers Service and Skills Bootcamp providers in the format of a 'Dragons Den' event.





**Skills Bootcamps**

Wave 4 (2023/24) Skills Bootcamp providers have enrolled 546 learners to date. The delivery partners met the initial key performance target of 300 enrolments by the end of September achieving 61% (430). The three providers Gloucester College, House Builder XL and Total Futures, who were on the reserve list following the procurement process, have successfully begun delivery. One provider has chosen to hand back funding allocated, and a small number are also looking to reduce their numbers, as a result the Skills Hub are in the process of re-allocating this funding to providers who have used their allocated funding and are meeting the required KPI requirements. The full list of Skills Bootcamps available through the Lancashire programme is detailed on the Skills Hub website: <https://www.lancashireskillshub.co.uk/skillsbootcamps/>

Wave 3 (2022/23) continues with all providers now actively seeking successful outcomes for their participants. The deadline for all outcomes is the end of December 2023. The number of outcomes is tracking at just over 40% (against a target of 75%) – the Skills Hub is working closely with providers to track progress and lend support through the engagement of employers with view to increasing successful outcomes. Providers are partially paid on outcomes and will lose their milestone three payments – however, there is no financial impact to LCC as payment is made by DfE on expenditure. It is understood that 75% is proving to be a challenging target across the country.

Following support from the committee, the Skills Hub submitted a proposal for £6,442,906 of grant funding for Wave 5 (2024/25) to the Department for Education (DfE) and are awaiting confirmation of funds. Engagement events are being planned in December for prospective Skills Bootcamp providers - prior to the launch of the Invitation to Tender (ITT).

<b>Priority 3</b>	<b>Raise digital inclusion</b>
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**Digital Freedoms**  
The Digital Freedoms project led by Selnet is now coming to an end, with over 900 digital devices distributed with wrap around skill support. A final project report will be received shortly.

<b>Priority 4</b>	<b>Embed social value in commissioning, procurement and planning processes</b>
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**D'Urton Lane Development Social Value Programme**

The Skills Hub continues to work with Wilmott Dixon and L&Q/Trafford Housing Trust, to deliver the social value programme for the D'Urton Lane development. The programme will deliver 248 new 2, 3 and 4-bedroom homes in Fulwood, located in North Preston. To date the project has delivered strongly around social value including:

- 19 new jobs created on the project through the Principal Contractor and Supply Chain.
- Supporting 157 Jobs through Willmott Dixon and the project Supply Chain. This includes 58% employment within a 20-mile radius.
- Achieving 32% supply chain spend within 20 miles.
- 30 Apprentices have worked a total of 479 weeks on site, across a range of trade and technical roles.
- 39 work placements delivered for Veterans, Graduates, College Students and NEETs
- 33 Construction Careers Information Advice and Guidance sessions provided to a total of 494 young local people.



- Utilising 4 Social Enterprises in the Supply Chain with a total spend of £244k including Recycling Lives.
- In November, the Team delivered a Community day to further engage with local residents and to highlight a £20,000 investment in the local community, including the Intact Centre Sensory Garden in Ingol.
- 7 Community initiatives supporting a range of activities, with over 100 staff hours volunteered.

#### **Lancashire Central Development and Farrington Cricket Club**

The Skills Hub has been active in shaping the social value requirements for these two landmark projects. The Hub has supported the establishment of KPIs for the Farrington Cricket Club. Located in Farington, the complex will provide a second home for Lancashire County's cricket club and house a Centre of Excellence for women's cricket in the Northwest. Construction has commenced with Eric Wright Construction appointed to deliver the project.

A series of meetings has also been held with Maple Grove Developments to inform and shape a social value framework to guide activity at the Lancashire Central Development, whilst planning permission is sought. The proposed social value framework will be used to mandate appointed contractors to deliver a range of Employment, Skills and Community activities.

#### **Supporting Social Value through the NCF**

In late November, the team will support the delivery of a joint workshop to identify and plan for Social Value opportunities allied to the proposed NCF project at Samlesbury. The landmark investment offers an opportunity to secure a wide range of Social Value to benefit local communities and people.


#### **Embedding Social Value within Lancashire 2050**

In mid-November the Skills Hub hosted a workshop with Lancashire 2050 thematic leads. As part of the refresh of the Lancashire Skills and Employment Strategic Framework, the Skills Hub committed to develop a revised approach to social value that is aligned to Lancashire 2050, enabling a range of support and activities to be directed towards delivery of Lancashire 2050. The collaborative workshop was the first step in this process and attended by representatives from all Lancashire 2050 themes.

#### **Supporting Local Procurement and Social Value with Blackpool SMEs**

The Skills Hub formed part of a working group, with CITB, Calico and Blackpool Council to support the delivery an event in October. The event was attended by 40 local businesses and gave an overview of how SMEs can access public sector opportunities, in addition to support in successfully delivering social value.



	<p><b>Skilled &amp; Productive Workforce:</b> 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><b>Priority 1</b></p>	<p><b>Technical Education Vision: Apprenticeships aligned with business needs, alongside growth in higher level and degree Apprenticeships</b></p>
<p><b>Lancashire Young Apprenticeships Grants</b></p> <p>The original target for the grant programme was 100, with a further 5 being funded through the Northwest Apprenticeship Network (for those over 24). All grants have now been allocated to employers across Lancashire who are new to or who have not recruited an apprentice for the last 2 years.</p> <p>An extension of 30 grants has been approved by Lancashire County Council, the Skills Hub has already received 11 requests for grants from the additional 30. The grant offer has enabled wider skills conversation to be undertaken with employers and wider employer engagement to take place.</p> <p><b>'Early Connect' pilot with DfE and UCAS</b></p> <p>The Early Connect pilot continues to evolve with DfE and UCAS. Thirty colleges and sixth forms across Lancashire have signed up to the pilot and are participating; current activity includes engaging with staff to review their knowledge and understanding of apprenticeships and to support the enhancement of this so that they can support students effectively.</p> <p>The Working Group with local stakeholders continues to meet to support the pilot – both in terms of supporting students and engaging employers. A project plan is in development detailing the different contributions from partners. This includes promoting the service to employers to ensure the early advertising of vacancies and ensuring that corresponding employment start dates are after the exam period of May/June.</p>	
<p><b>Priority 2</b></p>	<p><b>Reskilling &amp; Upskilling the current workforce – with focus on digital skills to support technology adoption and the growth pillars</b></p>
<p><b>Multiply</b></p> <p>Multiply is the national fully funded programme, aimed at helping people to become more confident with numbers. The Skills Hub is leading the programme in the LCC (Lancashire County Council) area, with support from the External Investment team. The programme is delivered through four delivery partners: WEA (community grants); PHX; Inspira; and The Lancashire Colleges.</p> <p>This project is performing well in its second year of delivery, with 168% of learner starts achieved and 112% of spend in Quarter 2 of the financial year. This includes an increase in substantive learning, with learners progressing from outreach activity. All providers are now meeting their profile targets and are working well to demonstrate the quality and compliance of their activity during performance visits. The DfE were very complimentary during the Quarter 2 performance review. A further community of practice event will be held on the 28th of November with the aim</p>	



to share good practice across Lancashire, Blackpool, and Blackburn with Darwen, with both unitary areas also exceeding targets.

The Project Manager, Pamela Lightbown, has moved onto pastures new – Pamela did an excellent job in establishing the programme and will be missed. A new Project Manager has been recruited and will be joining the Skills Hub in December.

**Priority 3**

**Leadership & Management capacity in SMEs**

**UKSPF**

The loss of European Regional Development Funds (ERDF) and ESF funding has significantly reduced the offer of funded leadership and management qualifications for businesses. A small number of local authorities are commissioning activity funded through their UKSPF funding, this includes West Lancashire, Pendle, and Preston.

**Lancashire Levy Transfer Network**

Apprenticeships in leadership and management are an alternative for employers who are looking to upskill their teams, and for SMEs the Lancashire Levy Network (LLTN) can help to match them with larger businesses who have unspent levy to share. The LLTN, led by the Lancashire Work Based Learning Forum, has transferred over £1m to over 35 organisations, across a range of apprenticeship standards, supporting over 170 apprentices.

**Priority 4**


**Healthy Workplaces**

**Economic Inactivity - ‘Stemming the Flow’**

As economic inactivity grows in Lancashire there is a continued need to support healthy workplaces. The Skills Hub, with funds from the three upper tier authorities, commissioned ThinkUK and 50 Degrees to undertake research into the determinants of economic inactivity in Lancashire. The research has now been published: <https://www.lancshireskillshub.co.uk/our-people/evidence-base/reports/> and was discussed at the informal committee meeting in November.

A task and finish group has been established, including the Skills Hub, ICB, upper tier authorities, Chamber of Commerce and other stakeholders to take forward the recommendations and priorities within the report. This includes preparing for the launch of the ‘Work Well Partnership Programme’ and invitation for proposals from local areas to be vanguards to test approaches to supporting employed and newly unemployed residents struggling to work due to health conditions. The prospectus will be launched in December with a closing date in January 2024. The leading body will be the ICB, however a collaborative tender is needed to secure the funding. There is an intention to have 15 vanguards across the UK, with a total funding pot of £57m. A further update will be provided at the meeting.



	<b>Informed Approach:</b> 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.
<p><b>Evidence Base</b></p> <p>The open-source Evidence Base page on the Skills Hub website has received almost than 600 visits, from the start of September 2023 until mid-November 2023. The evidence base now contains the newly published research on Economic Inactivity, this features survey and face to face interview data on inactive residents, wider data insight, and a set of 5 priorities and 14 underpinning recommendations for how Lancashire might tackle the growth in economic inactivity. The Evidence Base can be viewed here: <a href="https://www.lancshireskillshub.co.uk/our-people/evidence-base/">https://www.lancshireskillshub.co.uk/our-people/evidence-base/</a></p> <p><b>Cambridge Econometrics Local Economy Forecasting Model (LEFM)</b></p> <p>In the previous update, it was noted that the Lancashire Skills and Employment Hub procured Cambridge Econometrics latest projections for Lancashire’s economy. These forecast employment by sector and occupation, and gross value added (GVA) by sector for Lancashire and its districts through to 2050. Preliminary comparisons had shown a reduction in growth prospects in Lancashire relative to previous forecast scenarios. Shortly after the forecasting had been procured, the Office for National Statistics released the provisional estimates of local area GVA (Gross Value Added). The Skills Hub undertook an exercise to normalise the latest forecast scenario to reconcile it to the more up to date ONS GVA data. The overall picture of the long-term shift towards stronger growth in jobs which require higher level qualifications is unchanged, but level of employment and GVA expected by 2050 has dropped relative to previous forecast rounds, and the reconciled scenario has dropped further below the latest procured forecast. The forecast takes account of high and persistent inflation rates, elevated interest rates compared to previous forecasts, the war in Ukraine, global supply chain challenges, and the broad macroeconomic consensus for growth in the United Kingdom, and prices in the prospect of an inflation adjusted fall in GVA in Lancashire for 2023.</p> <p><b>Lancashire 2050: Data Observatory</b></p> <p>The Skills Hub are working alongside Lancashire County Council around the design and implementation of a “Data Observatory” to facilitate linkages between strategic themes of the Lancashire 2050 programme. Each of the 8 themes now has a set of preliminary key dynamics and indicators. Throughout the winter, work will continue on an agreed format for a “state of the county” report, which will set out some of the key data behind the challenges that the 2050 programme sets about tackling, including commentary from each of the theme groups around their action plans and delivery against these priorities.</p> <p><b>Higher Education Outcomes Data</b></p> <p>The Skills Hub has purchased an additional iteration of the HESA (Higher Education Statistics Authority) Graduate Outcomes Survey. This will cover the three academic years ending 2021/22, and will bring in additional layers of analysis, such as row level data on earnings after graduation, the sector people are working in, the location and the name of the employer (where not disclosive of individuals). The survey data will also include a “loyalty” flag, which will enable better analysis of graduate retention through the lens of local residents going through higher education, and then remaining to work in Lancashire after they graduate, including those undertaking higher education qualifications in further education settings (such as colleges). This data has been integral in catalysing discussions around making a priority of graduate retention, linking Lancashire’s relative average</p>	



performance to Lancashire's poor productivity levels and growth in productivity, particularly through the lens of the 2050 programme.

#### **ONS Assured Organisational Connectivity**

The Skills Hub's lead for Skills and Economic Intelligence has been designated an Accredited Researcher by the Office for National Statistics, conferring eligibility to access (subject to case-by-case approval) secure datasets which are not in the public domain, and carry restrictions around their use and around publication. The Skills Hub, alongside colleagues from Lancashire County Council, are in the process of setting up an AOC agreement (Assured Organisational Connectivity Agreement) with the ONS to allow accredited researchers' access to these datasets remotely. This should widen the availability of data for the Skills Hub to draw upon for specific research, such as accessing the Interdepartmental Business Register (IDBR) and the Longitudinal Education Outcomes data.

#### **Adult Education Budget (AEB) commission**

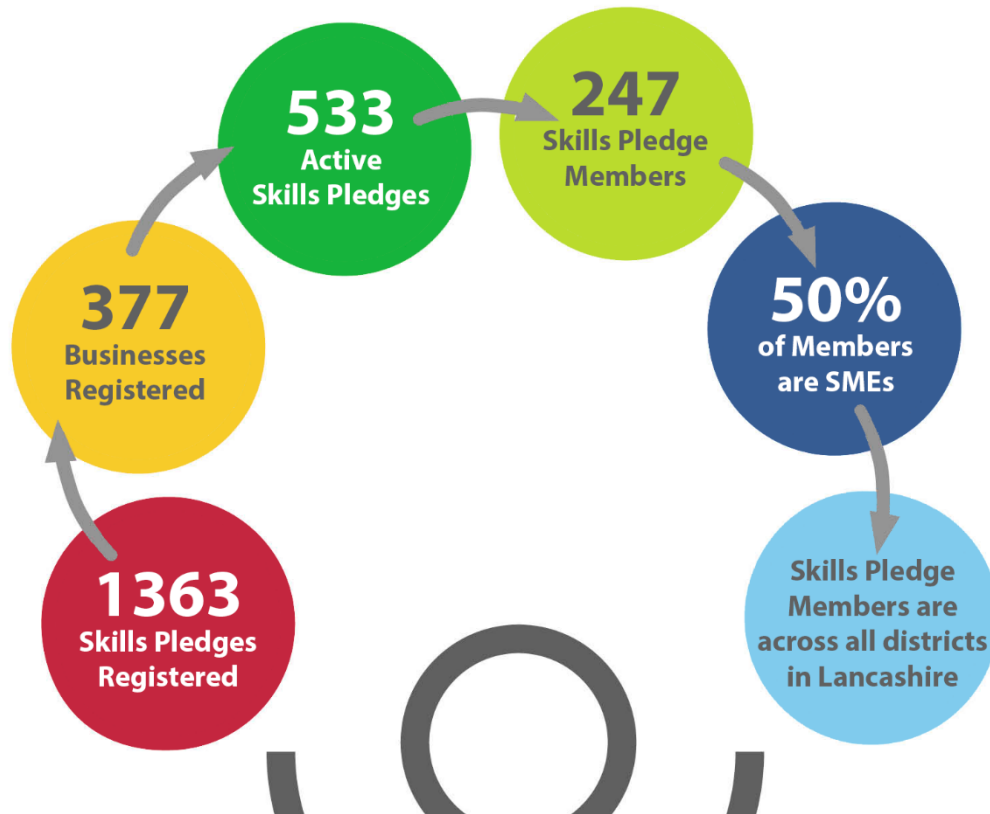
The proposed devolution deal for Lancashire was announced in the Autumn statement. A process is underway to secure a consultancy to review governance, strategies, and models for the delivery of AEB in Combined Authorities across the country, with review to gaining insights into good practice and lessons learnt to support the development of a local model, and to inform discussions with the DfE.

#### **Cross Cutting Tools**

##### **Skills Pledge**

The part-time Skills Pledge Project Officer has now been in post for nearly four months and has been reviewing the current Skills Pledge data and implementing changes to improve the database and processes. Their current focus has been to review the current data to ensure it is up-to-date and re-engaging with current members to review their pledges with a view to increasing their participation in multiple pledges. They are also in the process of launching a series of CPD events/masterclasses for Lancashire Skills Pledge members. The first CPD Session will be 'Successful Social Value Bid Writing' taking place in mid-December.

Plans for the annual celebration event on 8<sup>th</sup> December are progressing with two Lancashire businesses confirmed to speak at the event alongside County Cllr Phillippa Williamson.



Since the last update, the Lancashire Skills Pledge has continued to grow across all metrics, with the number of businesses registering up 2.4% to 377. The 377 businesses registered their interest in 1,363 pledges.

The number of active skills pledges has increased from 519 to 533 pledges, and there are now 247 Skills Pledge Members, an increase of ~4% since the September 2023 update.

Considering individual pledges, the most popular is 'Help Young People get Work Ready' (160 active pledges).

#### **[www.SkillsforWork.info](http://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. The furlough has been replaced with 'working and want to learn new skills or upskill' and content of the website is reviewed to ensure that it remains current. As of the 23th of November 2023, the website has had around 24,800 views, a growth of 1.3% since August 2023. There were 300 new views since 17<sup>th</sup> August 2023. This is below the figures seen previously in the August 2023 update, with that update recording 900 additional views and a 4% growth.

#### **Twitter and LinkedIn**

Since August 2023, the Skills Hub Twitter profile has gained 25 new followers, with a total of 3,533 followers. Since August 2023, this twitter profile has created more than 11,000 impressions. The Skills Hub LinkedIn group has grown to 2,148, gaining 46 new followers in the last 30 days.





### List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
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N/A

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A