Worcestershire
Local Enterprise Partnership

HMG Policy Changes – Skills and Employment

Judy Gibbs – Director of Skills

Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership

The last 12 years…

Multiply

WORCESTERSHIRE APPRENTICESHIPS

THE CAREERS & ENTERPRISE COMPANY

WORCESTERSHIRE MIDLIFE MOT
www.midlifemot.org

CAREERS WORCS

KICKSTART SCHEME

SKILLSBOOST WORCESTERSHIRE

INSPIRING WORCESTERSHIRE
CREATING OUR FUTURE WORKFORCE

WORCESTERSHIRE JOBS

PRIMARY STEM CHALLENGE
CREATING OUR FUTURE WORKFORCE

CAREERS WORCESTERSHIRE SKILLS SHOW 2023

SKILLS FOR LIFE
SKILLS BOOTCAMPS

Skills Highlights

- The complexity of funding into a coherent programme.
- Unemployment remains below regional and national averages, however pockets of high numbers exist – particularly youth unemployment.
- Relationship between business and schools' engagement is one of positivity – high performance against Gatsby Benchmarks
- 88% of our young people had employer encounters in their school setting.
- 10 Years of Worcestershire Apprenticeships – 50,000 people over that period.
- An annual programme of events that act as information, advice and guidance on careers - The Skills Show, Apprenticeship workshops and Awards, Primary STEM Challenge.
- Youth Hubs have supported over 800 young people with support into work, alongside many more into training and personal wellbeing.
- Over 1000 residents upskilled supported by £500k of grant support to respond to employers' needs.
- Over 1750 skills inventions in the last 12 months through Bootcamps and Multiply

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Where are we now and where are we going ?

The Strategy remains…..(for now)

- To enhance the coordination within employment support aimed at reducing claimant levels and improving individual health and well-being whilst impacting positively on economic activity within the county
- Aim for all educational establishments to continually meet all 8 Careers education benchmarks annually, with a particular focus on the Worcestershire economy.
- Create an education and training provision eco-system that meets local needs and future trends of Worcestershire's economy i.e. ensuring FE and HE are responsive.
- To increase the number of graduates and skilled young people in Worcestershire to spend more of their economic life in Worcestershire.
- To improve the economic activity rates in our older workforce by creating a culture of flexible work environments and upskilling/reskilling opportunities

Alignment with Key Stakeholders

- Future of Employment Support Meeting
- Training Providers Association – TPA Quarterly Meeting
- Worcestershire Association of Secondary Heads
- Worcestershire Growth Hub / HW Chamber of Commerce
- Regular 6 weekly meetings with DWP Senior Personnel
- Termly meetings with Further Education colleagues
- Termly meetings with Higher Education colleagues
- Bi-monthly meetings with key Independent training providers
- Bi-monthly meetings with District Councils
- Meetings with Health partners

Next steps

- Maintenance of strategic focus on the five strategic priorities
- Changing environment but stability of programme – Keep on, Keeping on!!.
- Impact measured by the Medium / Long term changes in the labour market
- Training provider marketplace - flexibility/quality – continue to develop and support the local provision
- Employers at the centre of the activity – hear their voice !
- Deliver “ Get Britain Working Plan for Worcestershire” – July 2025
- Support individuals with Health Conditions and Disabilities in and out of work
- Greater alignment with Health, Local DWP and other stakeholders

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Department for Work and Pensions – New Policy

The White Paper plans to address UK labour market challenges, including inactivity and progression

c.22% of LM are economically inactive
900k 18-24y/o NEET
1.5m Women inactive due to caring responsibilities
11/20 of the most inactive areas are in the North.
2.8m inactive due to LT sickness + **3%** move into work **each year**

The rise in economic inactivity in recent years is a central challenge for the UK economy and so the Get Britain Working White Paper (November 2024) set out reforms to address key UK labour market challenges, with a particular focus on tackling **economic inactivity.**

The White Paper set out our plans to **increase employment, improve living standards** by equipping people with the skills, support and confidence to **progress in work**, and **grow the economy.**

Delivering Get Britain Working Reforms will support our priority to empower local areas to deliver joined up employment, health and skills support, helping to achieve our goal to reduce economic inactivity and reach an 80% employment rate.

Key commitments in the Get Britain Working White Paper

Scaling up and deepening the contribution of the NHS and wider health system to improve employment outcomes including supporting the NHS to provide 40,000 extra elective appointments each week, address key public health issues that contribute to worklessness, expand access to expert employment advisers as part of treatment and care pathways.

Eight place-based trailblazers to tackle economic inactivity, including three which will have dedicated input from the local NHS Integrated Case System to enable a locally led joined up approach.

Eight place-based Youth Guarantee trailblazers to design and test how different elements of the Youth Guarantee can be brought together into a coherent offer for young people.

Get Britain Working Plans to bring together local partners and service providers together to enable a joined up approach on work, health, skills and other local services.

Connect to Work funding (formally Universal Support) to enable local areas to deliver back to work support.

A new jobs and careers service focused on improving engagement, employment and earnings. Initial investment will look to enable new digital prototypes and tests and trials of elements of the new service, including an enhanced employer offer

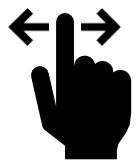
Launching an independent review into the role of UK employers in promoting health and inclusive workplaces.

A health and disability green paper in Spring 2025 looking at how the system supports people who can work to remain in or start employment, in a way that is fair and fiscally sustainable.

To enable these outcomes, we have some very specific things to deliver in 2025/26:

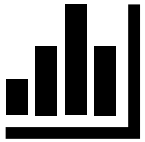
	Jan 2025	Feb 2025	March 2025	April 2025	May 2025 onwards
Trailblazers	• Initial proposals from Trailblazer areas submitted (although early sharing of plans encouraged where areas are able to)	• Assessing proposals and ongoing dialogue with areas to further develop and refine plans	• Finalising funding and go live arrangements	• Phased delivery to begin	• Phased delivery and rollout with ongoing engagement
GBW Plans	• Development of guidance. • Confirm resources and support packages for local areas, including stakeholder engagement and comms plan.	• Ongoing discussion and ambition to share draft guidance with local areas.	• Ambition to share draft guidance. • Ongoing discussion with areas on guidance. • Areas to start development of local plans	• Development funding becomes available to local areas	• Areas to develop plans with expectation that most areas have plans in place by late summer
Connect to Work	• Ongoing engagement with areas on delivery plans	• Ongoing engagement with areas on delivery plans		• Possible first areas launch their local Connect to Work Programme (TBC)	• First local Connect to Work Programmes start to open for referrals
NJCS	• Expect to be able to propose an initial plan for structured engagement with mayoral authorities for the design process by the end of January	• Ongoing engagement and designing/planning of service		• Series of workshops to conclude with MCAs / local government stakeholders regarding design of a locally tailored jobs and careers service	• JCP boundaries to align more closely with established mayoral authorities (date TBC) • Test and trials for localism strand begin
WorkWell	• WorkWell in delivery in 15 pilot areas across England.				• Annual review of WorkWell grants

The Get Britain Working White Paper also committed to working together with local areas on:



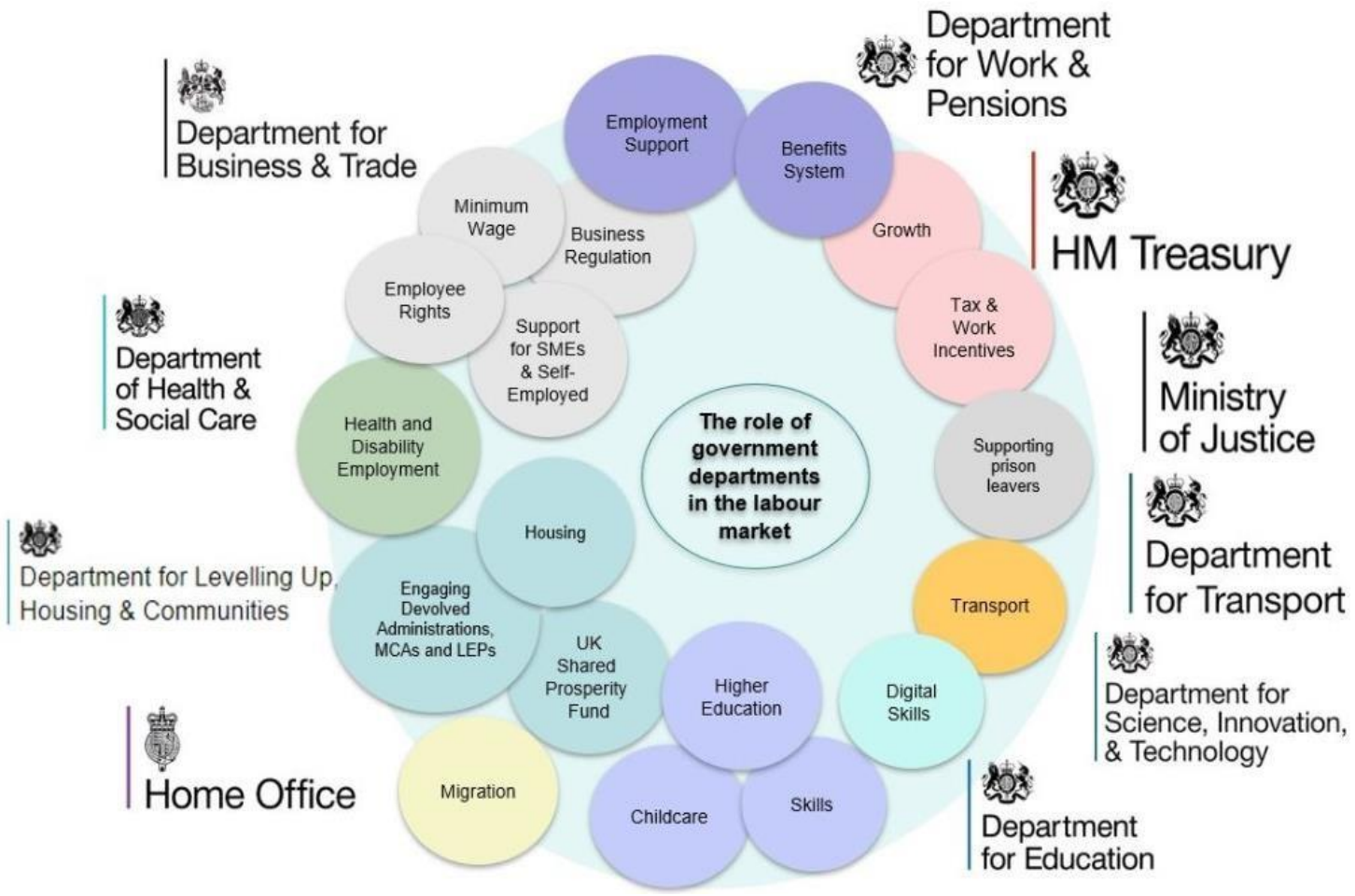
Identifying how to join up a **single system** across a national jobs and careers service, local support and health systems with clear routeways and referral points for users.

Accountability and governance. The Government will work with local areas to create suitable accountability frameworks, where these are not in place, to underpin the relationship with central Government, to agree outcomes and to determine how different partners should be held accountable for results.



Better use of data. The Government wants local areas to have improved data to understand local population needs and to help design future programmes. We also need better data to track outcomes and develop the evidence base.
DWP will continue to work with local areas to identify the barriers to enable effective **data sharing** between local areas and central government.

Working across Government and with wider stakeholders



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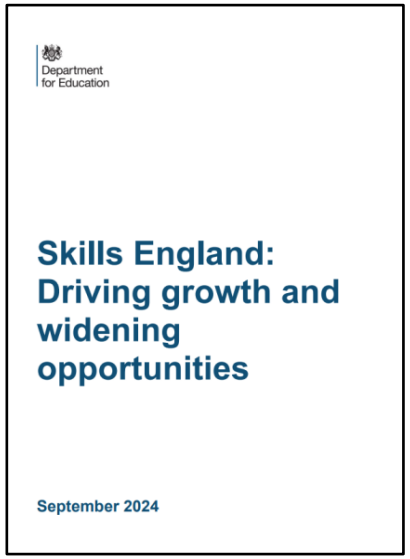
Department for Education – Policy Changes

A Future Fit Skills System

- The government's first mission is **economic growth**, central to which is a **future-fit skills system**.
- A strong and inclusive skills system is essential for economic growth and opportunity.
- The system needs to address specific **regional** challenges such as unemployment, **industry-specific** skills shortages, and economic regeneration, and
- Contribute to broader goals like economic growth, innovation, and sustainability by ensuring a skilled and adaptable workforce across the country.

The Skills England: Driving Growth and Widening Opportunities



Skills Challenges: several challenges that limit economic growth and opportunities, including a fragmented skills landscape, skills mismatches, and local disparities

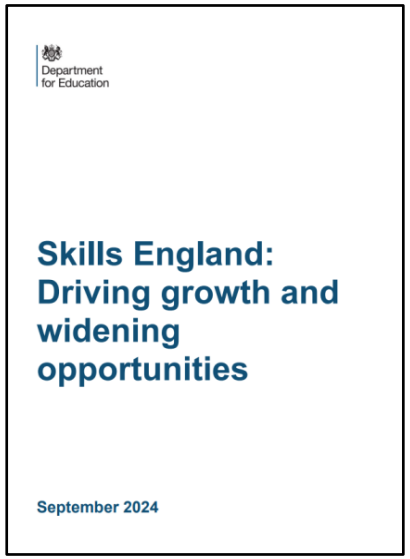
High-Demand Jobs: highlights occupations that are in high demand and projects their growth in the future. Key sectors include digital technologies, green workforce, life sciences, and construction

Unified Skills Assessment: Skills England aims to provide a unified assessment of national skills needs, ensuring that qualifications and training programs are aligned with these needs

Local Skills Systems: emphasizes the importance of local skills systems that meet regional needs while forming a coherent national network

Future Megatrends: future megatrends, such as technological advancements and the transition to a green economy, will impact the UK labour market.

Apprenticeships play a key role in addressing skills gaps and supporting economic growth



Expansion of Apprenticeships: the need to expand apprenticeship programs across various sectors, particularly in high-demand areas like digital technologies, green industries, and construction

Flexible Apprenticeships: Suggests providing additional support and resources to help SMEs participate in apprenticeship programs and proposes the introduction of foundation apprenticeships as a pathway for young people and those with limited work experience to gain essential skills and work readiness.

Quality and Accessibility: Stresses the importance of ensuring that apprenticeships are of high quality and accessible to a diverse range of individuals, including those from underrepresented groups

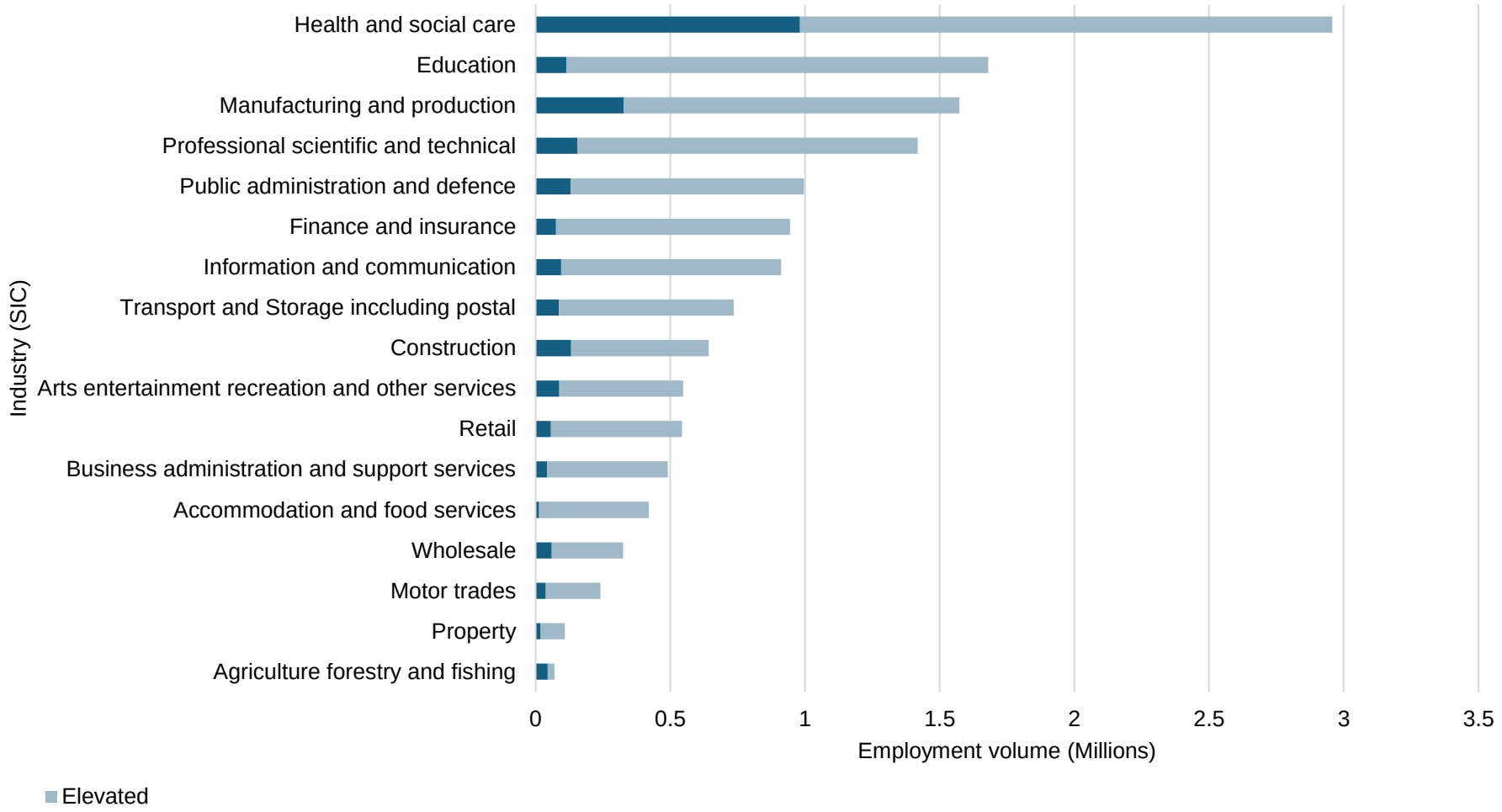
Employer Engagement: Encourages stronger collaboration between employers and training providers to design apprenticeship programs that: meet the specific needs of businesses and industries

Funding and Support: There is a focus on increasing funding and support for apprenticeships to make them a viable and attractive option for both employers and apprentices.

Current skills needs landscape: Health, Education and Manufacturing sectors lead job demand

Occupations in demand - demand by industry:

Employment volumes and industry for occupations in critical and elevated demand



10 Sectors Priority Focus

Health and social care and Construction are key to delivering the Government's five missions and where Skills England have identified strong evidence of economic importance and job growth.

1 **Digital and Technology:** In 2019 more than half (56%) of job adverts required specific digital skills. Digital skills, including AI, will become increasingly important.

2 **Life sciences:** Employment in Life Sciences has been increasing since 2008/09, with a 15% increase between 2018/19 and 2021/22.

3 **Clean Energy:** Many clean energy sectors will need to expand to meet the government's mission to deliver clean power by 2030, with overlaps in the required and skills.

4 **Professional and Business Services:** The sector will be greatly affected by automation, estimated to lead to a net gain of around 584,000 jobs between 2020 and 2040

5 **Financial Services:** Demand for all but one of the sector's future skills is growing faster than supply. Roles in data, software, cyber and risk are particularly hard to fill.

6 **Defence:** There was an estimated 17.8% rise in defence industry recruitment between 2021 and 2022 (based on a sample of defence companies)

7 **Creative:** The sector is growing, with a 54% increase in filled jobs between 2011 and 2023. A third (33%) of vacancies in the creative industries are due to skills shortages.

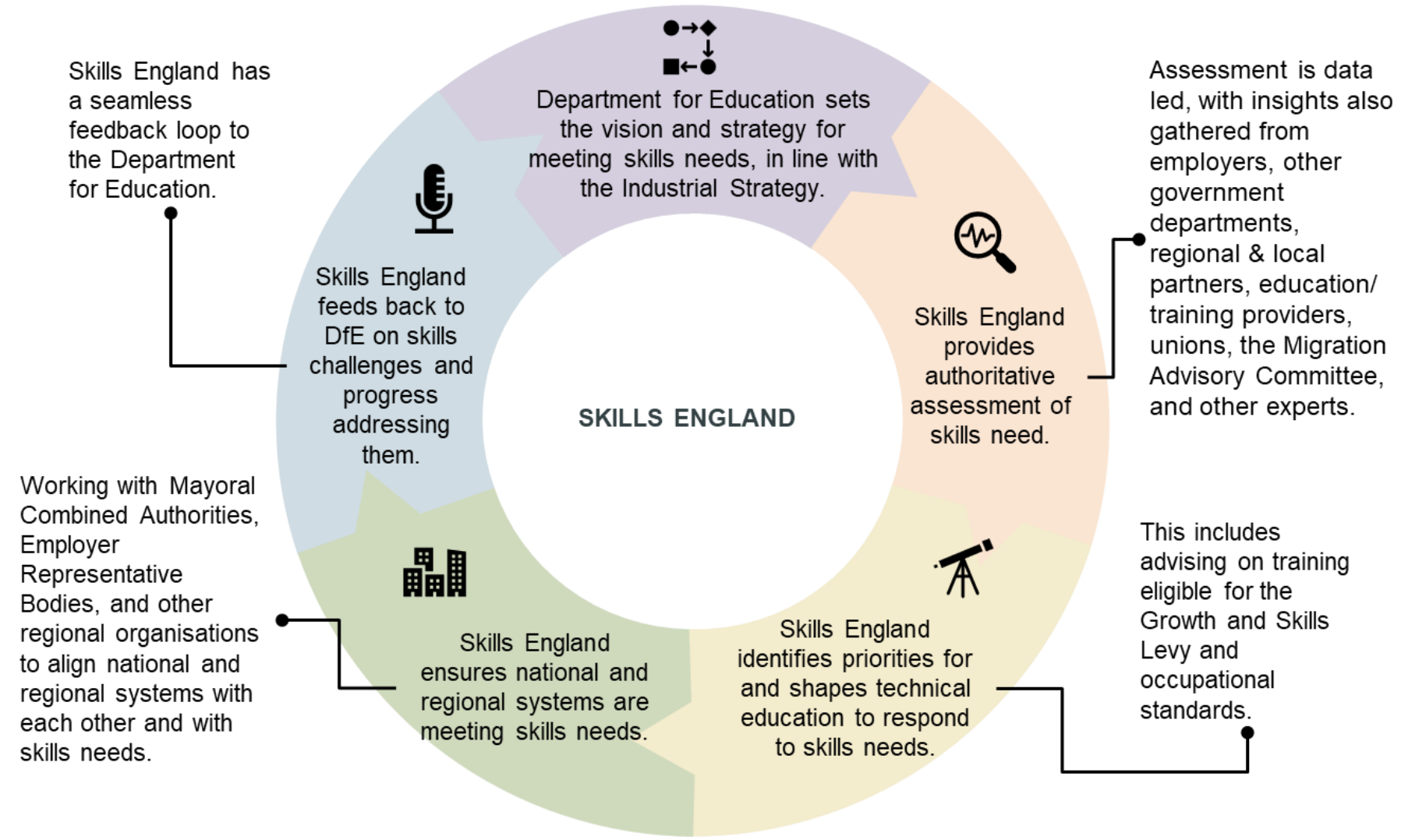
8 **Advanced Manufacturing:** 42% of vacancies in manufacturing are due to skills shortages. Automation is a key theme driving jobs and skills trends between now and 2030.

9 **Construction:** Government's commitment to deliver 1.5m homes over this Parliament will require an expansion of the UK's construction workforce

10 **Health and social care:** The health and social care industry has the highest number of jobs in critical (980k) and elevated demand (2m)

The Role of Skills England

- Unify the skills landscape.
- Develop a clear assessment of the country's skills needs.
- Collaborate with businesses, training partners, unions, and government.



The Growth and Skills Offer – the New App Levy

A wider more **flexible** skills offer to enable employers to access a broader range of high-quality training offers.

Skills England will play a crucial role in determining **which training will be eligible for the expanded levy.**

Employers will be encouraged to invest in apprenticeships and training to address skills shortages.

Apprenticeships will remain **central to the skills offer** continuing to provide support a high skill high productively workforce.

Apprenticeships will provide genuine progression opportunities, **prioritising quality and rigour.**

The Growth and Skills Offer will prioritise investment that:

supports economic growth,

increases opportunity especially for young people,

better meets the skills needs of employers and

increases investment in skills shortage areas.

Shorter Apprenticeships - increasing flexibility

Apprenticeships must currently have a duration of at least 12 months, but we recognise that there are circumstances where a learner can achieve full occupational competence more quickly.

We are reducing the minimum duration in legislation to 8 months, so that shorter apprenticeships are possible from *August 2025*

This will allow training to be delivered and completed more quickly, *where that makes sense*.

Benefits:

Specific Occupational Standards

- all apprentices on certain standards, where full competence can be delivered more quickly – minimum duration is minimum of 8 months not 12.

Apprentices with Significant Prior Learning

- apprentices who have significant prior learning, where the 12-month rule means they are currently ineligible to upskill through an apprenticeship.

Apprentices who can achieve full occupational competence more quickly

- No longer must extend learning period to ensure meets the minimum requirement of 12 months to retain funding eligibility.

English and Maths Flexibilities

Gaining level 2 skills in both English and maths gives young people the opportunity to progress in life, learning and work

But the current approach to English and maths in apprenticeships is not working

A high proportion undertaking English and maths drop out …..

…..meaning they will not realise the benefits the policy sets out to deliver; and we see a poor return on our investment.

So, all apprentices will continue to develop job specific English and maths skills through their training

And we will continue to require 16–18-year-old apprentices to achieve English and maths qualifications

But we will only fund English and maths qualifications for adults wherever they or their employer wants them as part of their apprenticeship.

Giving employers more flexibility over when standalone qualifications are required.

Improvements to Apprenticeships

Stakeholders have told us that **the end-point assessments (EPA**) process can be unnecessarily complex, burdensome and protracted

We will streamline the assessment process for apprenticeships.

Existing assessment plans will be rewritten on a standard-by-standard basis to reflect these changes, from April 2025.

Where appropriate assessments can happen while on programme rather than all at the end so that it can happen at the right time and place; and ensuring apprentices are assessed on what matters most to employers, removing any unnecessary duplication.

End Point Assessment Organisations (EPAOs) will be able to delegate assessment to the provider, where appropriate.

Foundation Apprenticeships

"Pathway for young people and those with limited work experience to gain essential skills and work readiness."

Support **employers** in key sectors to meet their current and future skills and resource needs by developing new opportunities to engage with younger employees

01

Support **young people** by giving them access to a work-based offer in foundation occupations that also provides a clear pathway to specialist and high-quality career progression and development opportunities.

02

Foundation apprenticeships will offer clear progression into apprenticeships that are more advanced or more occupationally specific.

Department for Education

- **The Training Provider Market**

market – with varying levels of supply across the occupational standards.

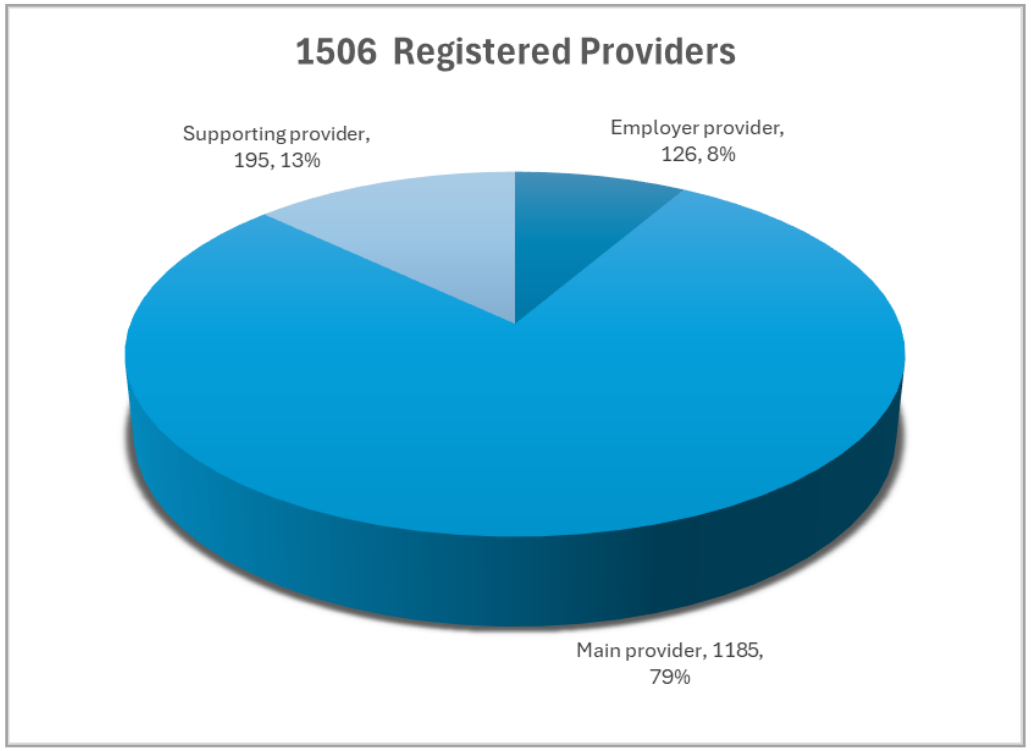
Successful apprenticeships rely on effective collaboration between the employer, training provider and the apprentice.

Training Providers are:

- Route to market
- Delivery agents

Our market needs to be:

- Responsive
- Adaptable
- High quality



Four Main Types:

- Independent Training Providers (ITPs)
- FE Colleges
- Higher Education Institutions
- Employer Providers

Across and within the 4 keys groups, the skills training offer varies significantly.

Geography:
- National
- Multi region
- Locality focussed

Skills Offer:
- Broader multi sector skills
- Specialists
- Niche

Customer Expertise:
- Levy Employers
- SME Employers
- Young People
- Disadvantaged Groups

And…
- Volume
- Quality

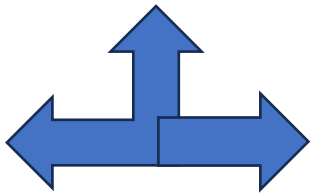
Balancing supply in demand led market:

In 2023/24:

- **Over 800** providers delivering business administration (route)

Vs

- Just over 300 in digital (route)



APAR Market Entry Policy

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Changes to Careers Education

Progress

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94%

of secondary schools and colleges in Careers Hubs

6/8

Average Gatsby Benchmark score (with higher performance in established Hubs)

x2

young people twice as likely to report awareness of apprenticeships by Year 11

£150m

£150m saved each year due to reduction in NEET young people

A pathway to fulfilling progression

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Primary school

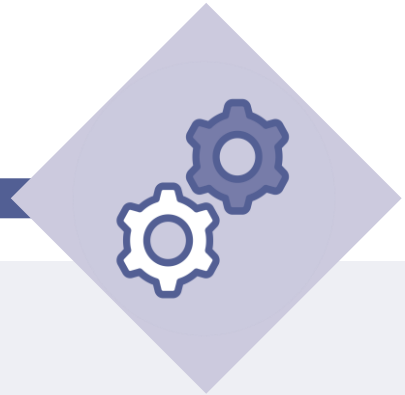
We raise aspirations and reduce stereotypes (pilot programme underway)

Secondary School

- *High quality work experience and skill development*
- *Information about apprenticeships, technical routes and local jobs*

Transition

- Personalised advice
- Targeted support for young people at risk



A good job or further study/training or supported placement

CEC: data – co-ordination - quality

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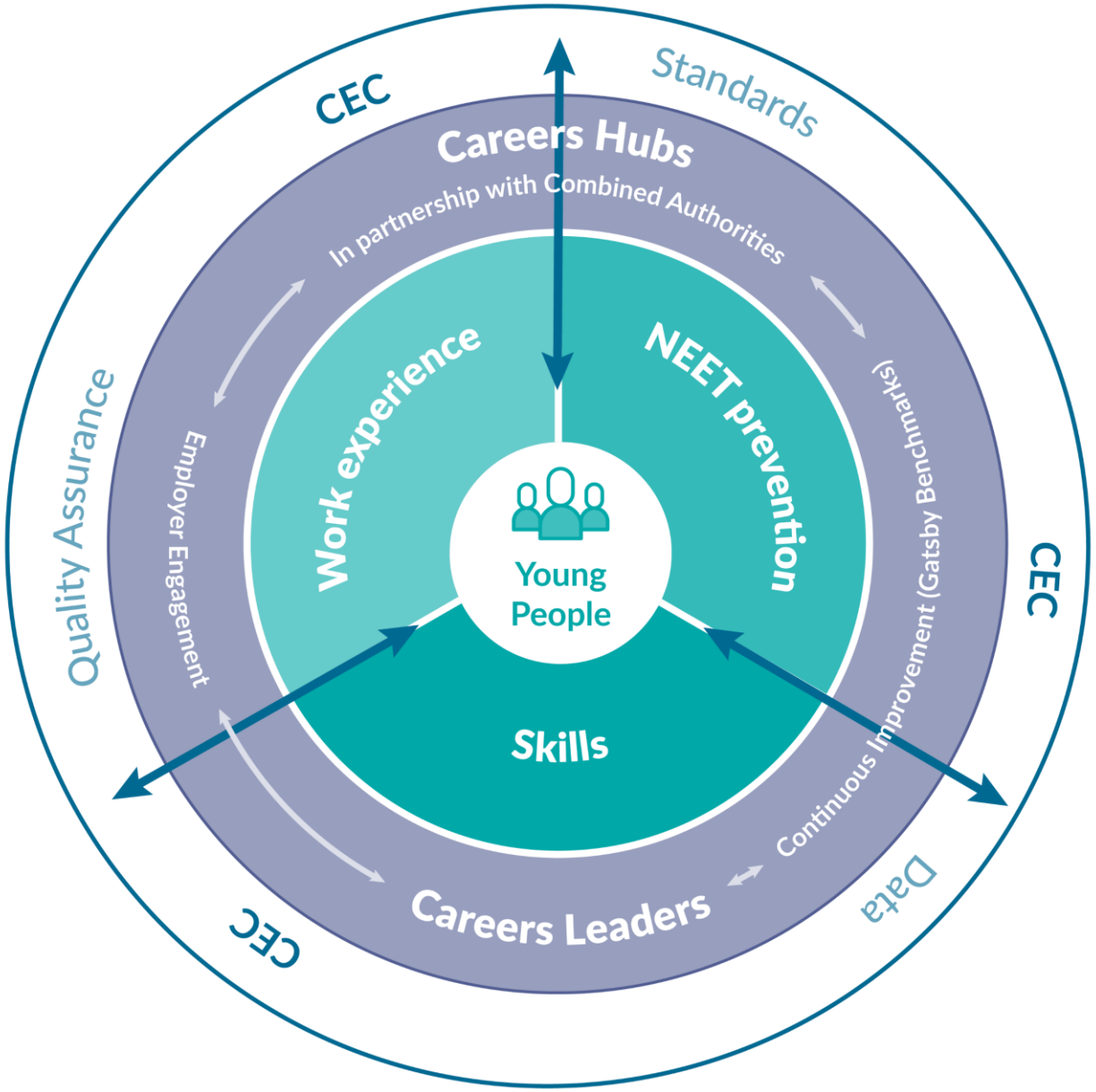

Objectives for the government funded support to improve CEIAG for young people

Our ambition is to ensure that all young people in education receive the support they need to make informed choices about their learning, training and employment opportunities. This will break down the barriers to opportunity for young people, helping them to progress to good jobs, driving growth and productivity.

We expect the future offer to:

1. **Provide strategic leadership on the careers agenda:** coordinated nationally and delivered through a network of local hubs, to drive continuous improvement in careers education for young people, based on data and insights, to realise the ambitions of the government.
2. **Support educational establishments across England to deliver high quality careers programmes and drive continuous improvement in line with the Gatsby Benchmarks,** including primary schools, secondary schools, colleges, special schools, alternative provision settings and Independent Training Providers (ITPs).
3. **Deliver enhanced support** to young people whose needs are not otherwise being sufficiently met, to help mitigate the barriers which may otherwise limit their opportunities.
4. **Raise awareness, and increase take-up, of vocational and technical options** (Apprenticeships, T Levels and Higher Technical Qualifications) and promote parity of esteem with academic routes.
5. **Generate increased employer engagement** to facilitate the ambition for two weeks' worth of work experience for every young person, and workplace encounters, to help ensure young people are work ready.

Gatsby Next Ten - the finding themes

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1. Careers at the heart of education and leadership – Careers Impact System
2. Inclusion and impact for every young person – RONI integration
3. Meaningful and varied encounters and experiences – new work experience model
4. Focusing on the use of information and data – Future Skills Questionnaire
5. Engagement of parents and carers – new parent questionnaire

The Government's vision for work experience

- Ambition to deliver **two weeks' worth of work experience** for every young person- with a focus on multiple, targeted and variable workplace experiences, totalling 10 days.
- Expect work experience to be pivotal in improving work readiness and employability
- Experiences should be aspirational and inspirational, employer-led, first hand and active (two-way employer-pupil interaction).

Expecting this to be broken down into a weeks' worth in year 7-9 and a further weeks' worth in year 10 or 11.

- **Years 7-9 –** Multiple and varied employer-led activities (individual or group, supplementing in-person with hybrid or virtual experiences where this can add value) to explore different industries and occupations, in line with Gatsby Benchmark 6.
- **Year 10-11 –** work experience placement(s) totalling one weeks' worth, in an industry matched to young people's interests and career aspirations. This should allow pupils to experience a real working environment and begin to develop work-based skills and behaviours .

Why take a progressive approach?

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Traditional

equalex

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Skills and Talent Pledge

T: 01905 672700 E: enquiries@wlep.co.uk W: www.wlep.co.uk @worcsLEP #OneWorcs

New Talent and Skills Pledge for Worcestershire

- Launched at last weeks Big Conversation
- Whole county approach

- Ask – Support the approach generate more apprenticeship vacancies

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Any questions please email Judy Gibbs

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