



GLOUCESTERSHIRE **SKILLS STRATEGY** **2022-2027**

**GLOUCESTERSHIRE:
FUTURE-PROOFED**

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OVERVIEW OF THE SKILLS STRATEGY

The skills strategy brings together an overview of the employment, recruitment and skills needs of local businesses and employers together with the skills that individuals need to achieve their potential.

In order to provide these skills for local businesses and local residents, the complex, careers, employment and skills landscape needs to be ‘decluttered’, co-ordinated effectively across the County and for employers, training providers and funders to work collaboratively.

1

Overview, structure and **purpose** of the strategy



This strategy seeks to highlight the ‘direction of travel’ of the skills needs of local business sectors and individuals so that colleges, schools, alternative provision settings, independent training providers and universities are all able to:

- ▶ align their provision as closely as possible to local employment and skills needs
- ▶ bid collaboratively for external funding for employment and skills, knowing what the local priorities are
- ▶ be responsive to rapidly-changing employment, careers, recruitment and skills needs

The strategy spells out some the **challenges** faced, by employers, residents, sectors and training providers.

It highlights **opportunities** to build on the existing co-ordination of careers, employment and skills work in the County and showcases examples of **good practice**.

Building on these opportunities and overcoming the challenges faced will require the co-operation and resources of a number of local partner organisations.

Finally, it is recognised that a strategy alone will not change the local careers, employment and skills landscape. Therefore, this strategy is underpinned by an **action plan** that provides the specific actions to implement the strategy, who will undertake them, timescales, how success will be measured and whether or not resources are in place.

Outline of Gloucestershire Skills Strategy





2

What we plan to do and why

1

Support local employers to attract, recruit and retain the staff they need

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Why?

For several years, employers in key sectors in Gloucestershire have been affected as ageing workforces and other structural issues have resulted in the loss of skills and knowledge from their organisations. The impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic and EU Exit have intensified this trend and have led to a smaller pool of talent available for local employers. This means that some employers need to review and alter their recruitment, learning and development approaches to attract and retain staff. Strategically, there is a need to attract and retain more young people to work in Gloucestershire businesses, the majority of which are small to medium enterprises (SMEs).

!
We will do this through:

- ▶ Helping businesses to enhance their strategic workforce planning capabilities and inclusive employment practices
WORKSTREAM 2
- ▶ Helping businesses, especially SMEs, to maximise non-pay benefits such as work-life balance, childcare, flexible working, inclusive work practices, which have been proven to help attract and retain employees, including young people
WORKSTREAM 2
- ▶ Helping local employers to attract a more diverse workforce, so widening the pool of talent available to them
WORKSTREAM 2
- ▶ 'Growing our own' staff through Apprenticeships and T-Levels and ensuring local training providers offer the programmes local employers need
WORKSTREAM 1
- ▶ Helping key local sectors to develop and promote clearer pathways into these sectors, especially where there is lack of awareness of opportunities
WORKSTREAM 2 3 5
- ▶ Helping key local sectors form local/sub-regional centres of specialisation to build on clusters that already exist or are developing (e.g. Cyber)
WORKSTREAM 3

2

Support local employers to upskill and train their staff to invest in them and increase productivity

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Why?

Employers will increasingly need to invest in their staff to retain their talent and improve business productivity.

!
We will do this through:

- ▶ Delivering skills that are needed across many sectors e.g. cyber, digital, leadership and management, customer service, sustainability
WORKSTREAM 1 2 3 5
- ▶ Delivering sector-specific skills needs e.g. Engineering skills in a range of disciplines are needed in the agri-tech sector, the construction sector requires sustainable building skills.
WORKSTREAM 1 2 3 5
- ▶ Taking employers' training needs into account by matching local apprenticeships, T-levels and technical education programmes to local employers' needs
WORKSTREAM 1 2 3 5
- ▶ Involving employers and trade unions in the promotion and delivery of training programmes for employees
WORKSTREAM 1 2 3 5

3

Support local employers to upskill and train their staff to invest in them and increase productivity

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Why?

Recent economic changes have resulted in some residents needing to seek careers and job roles in different sectors and organisations.

!

We will do this through:

- ▶ Making career and job-change pathways clearer and easier to access
WORKSTREAM 1 2 3 4 5
- ▶ Work with delivery partners to ensure individual residents tackle their barriers to employment or training (Workstream 2)
WORKSTREAM 2
- ▶ Joined-up local provision and co-ordinated support
WORKSTREAM 1 2 3 4 5
- ▶ Working with local employers to enhance their inclusive employment practices
WORKSTREAM 2
- ▶ Seeking and securing resources to tackle digital poverty and digital exclusion, including the provision of digital skills at the levels required by local residents
WORKSTREAM 3

4

Maximise the local employment opportunities presented by local developments

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Why?

Contracts issued by local organisations provide substantial opportunities to build in guaranteed apprenticeships, employment and skills for Gloucestershire residents. These are not yet being fully utilised, even for major infrastructure or service delivery contracts.

!

We will do this through:

- ▶ Using and promoting good practice in the use of Social Value and Section 106
WORKSTREAM 2
- ▶ Continuing to bid for projects and facilities that will provide employment and skills opportunities in the County e.g. the Severn Edge STEP nuclear fusion project at Berkeley and Oldbury
WORKSTREAM 2
- ▶ The work of the 'anchor institutions' in Gloucestershire
WORKSTREAM 2

5

Highlight and seek wider changes needed to support the improvement of recruitment and skills in the County

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Why?

Changes to the employment and skills system in isolation are not enough. Other system changes are required to generate the conditions needed for employers to recruit, retain and train the staff they need and for individuals to work effectively.

!

We will do this through:

- ▶ Feedback and lobbying with local and national politicians, funding agencies and national bodies
WORKSTREAM 1 5
- ▶ Examples include: Rural transport, broadband and digital poverty, pay and conditions in certain sectors/job roles, automation/robotics, improved funding for and access to further education and sustainable sixth-forms
- ▶ Working with inward investment partners to ensure that, wherever possible, they can recruit Gloucestershire residents with the required skills and qualifications
WORKSTREAM 5

6

Co-Ordinate and collaborate to simplify the local employment and skills landscape and maximise the impact of limited local resources on the local employment and skills system

?

Why?

The employment and skills 'landscape' is complex, with many stakeholders. Businesses and individuals need help navigating their way through multiple, sometimes competing provision. Limited local resources can be more effectively and efficiently directed to helping local businesses and residents if this work is co-ordinated and undertaken collaboratively.

!

We will do this through:

- ▶ 'One front door' working with employers and residents, linking them with the right careers, employment and training providers for them
WORKSTREAM 1 2 3 4 5
- ▶ Coordinated and joined-up working between local employment and skills providers and organisations and employers
WORKSTREAM 1 2 3 4 5
- ▶ Collaborative bids to support the priorities outlined in this strategy
WORKSTREAM 5
- ▶ Improving careers support and experience of the world of work for young people
WORKSTREAM 1 2 3 4 5
- ▶ Helping employers to connect effectively with the education system so they can help develop the next generation of employees
WORKSTREAM 1 2 3 4 5

!

For more detailed information about the actions we plan to take, please see our [Employment & Skills Action Plan](#).

This section of the strategy provides an overview of the employment, recruitment and skills needs of businesses and other employer organisations in Gloucestershire.

SUMMARY



What has been happening and why?

- ▶ Demand for skills and talent in Gloucestershire is strong, with local employers advertising approximately 158,260 vacancies in 2021 and 96,718 vacancies in 2020.
- ▶ The impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic and EU Exit have combined with structural challenges in some sectors to significantly reduce the talent pool in Gloucestershire and increase the competition for staff between and within sectors.



What we plan to do

We will need to continue to expand and strengthen:

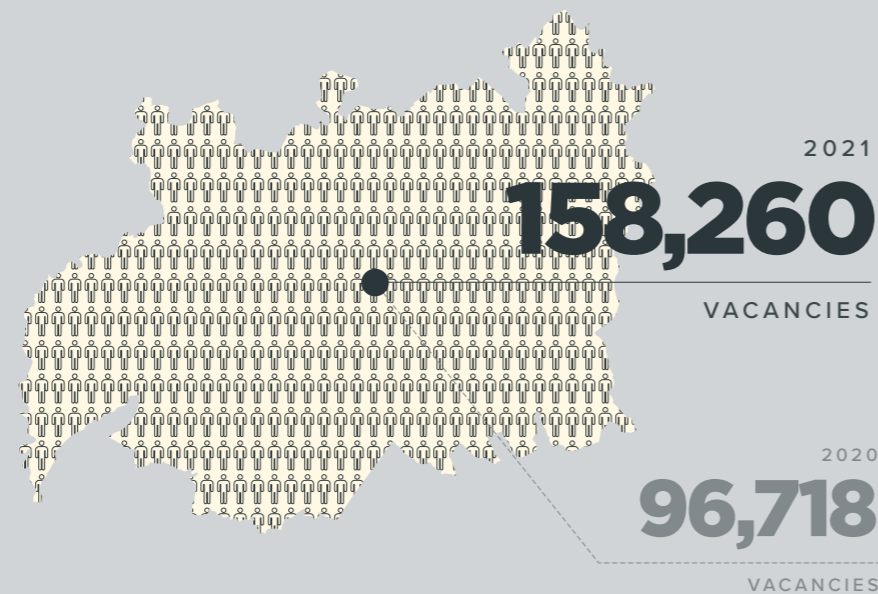
- ▶ Our support for employers to extend their reach to a wider group of Gloucestershire residents and other local talent pools
- ▶ The 'fit' between local employer skills and recruitment needs and the courses/training/qualifications that the local and national training providers deliver
- ▶ Our support for the GFirst Careers Hub and its work with employers, schools, colleges and alternative provision settings
- ▶ The links between local employers and young people to inspire and inform them about local career opportunities and help them make informed decisions about jobs and careers
- ▶ Our supply and availability of trained careers advisers both for young people and adults retraining/changing careers

The employment, recruitment and skills needs of businesses

SKILLS AND TALENT THAT MEET BUSINESS NEEDS



Demand for skills and talent in Gloucestershire is strong, with local employers advertising approximately 158,260 vacancies in 2021 and 96,718 vacancies in 2020 and seeking employees with skills through from Entry Level to Post-Graduate Level (Level 7). Some sectors such as health and social care, had shortages before the pandemic which have since increased, while other sectors such as hospitality and tourism and logistics, have been particularly impacted by the loss of EU workers and employees transitioning to other sectors.



Impacts of the Covid pandemic and EU Exit

Shortages of talent to fill particular roles

The combination of Covid and EU Exit has resulted in shortages of talent to fill particular roles and, in some sectors, challenges in recruiting to multiple roles within the sector. An example is construction workers where the number of EU construction workers in the UK has halved in the past 4 years and contractors laying off workers at the start of the pandemic have not been able to re-hire them. Other examples include: heating engineers, food processors, hospitality and catering workers – especially chefs and waiting staff, IT and computing roles, retail supply chain and truck drivers. In June 2021, UK Hospitality indicated that there was a shortfall of approx. 188,000 workers in the sector nationally and at one point in October 2021 Gloucestershire hospitality employers confirmed they had 664 hotel vacancies, 599 restaurant staff vacancies and 292 bar staff vacancies – all permanent roles, as opposed to those usually hired in the run up to the Christmas period.

Ironically, given the previous predictions and focus on a ‘high skills, high wage’ economy, many of the job roles most affected by and in demand, include lower skilled and lower wage jobs.

At a national level, HM Government monitors skills shortages and produces a ‘Skilled worker shortages list’ as well as implementing tactical changes such as offering short-term visas for those meeting the criteria on the skilled worker shortages list, DfT relaxing rules to enable drivers to work longer and funding apprenticeships.

<https://www.prospects.ac.uk/skills-shortages-and-covid-19>

Recruitment is taking longer and costing more

With skills in short supply, many employers find the recruitment process taking longer and those candidates with in demand skillsets and experience are able to leverage higher salaries.

A recent report from the Open University indicated that 70% of business leaders were finding the recruitment process is taking longer - by an average of one month and 22 days, resulting in 64% spending more on recruitment, with costs increasing by 49%.

In order to attract talent, employers are under pressure to increase salaries and this is contributing to inflation. According to the Recruitment and Employment Confederation, wages have been rising the fastest post-Covid and EU exit than they have in the last 7 years. Day rates for skilled tradespeople have increased by 15% and the OU Report indicated that two thirds of the employers surveyed were obliged to increase salaries offered to recruit the staff they needed.

Reduced number of skilled workers in UK

A report published by the Economic Statistics Centre of Excellence in January 2019 suggested that the non-UK population had reduced by 1.3 million, partially as a result of EU exit.

The hospitality sector across the EU has experienced challenges in recruiting workers but with the UK now outside the EU, these challenges have increased further and faster.

<https://www.escoe.ac.uk/estimating-the-uk-population-during-the-pandemic/>



The need to ‘grow our own’ talent locally

Increasingly, employers are aware that they will need to assist with growing the talent pipeline in the UK, rather than seeking employees from EU and beyond. However, this is not a ‘quick fix’ and will take time and investment both from Government and employers. The DfT statement ‘Employers should invest in our domestic workforce instead of relying on labour from abroad’ is correct but underplays the challenges this brings.

What if businesses are unable to recruit?

Many employers have been unable to increase salaries to attract new staff with the skillsets they need so they have chosen to either hire staff at a lower level than intended or simply leave the role vacant.

This in turn forces employers to spend more on training staff to bring them up to the required levels/standards and/or spend more on temporary staff.

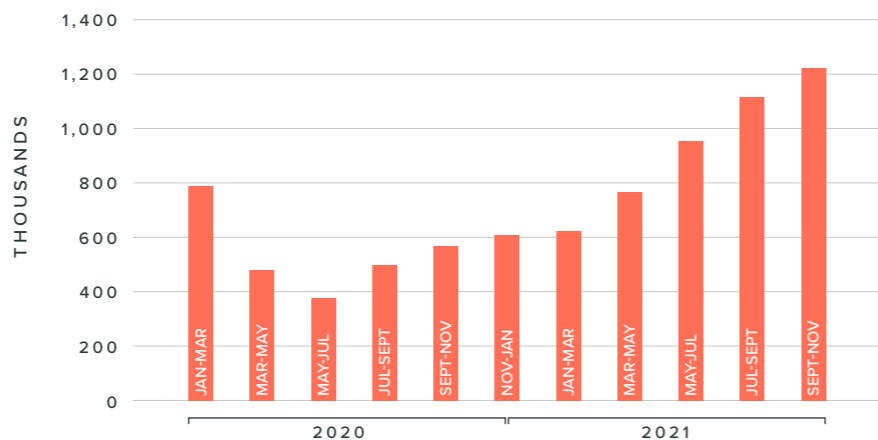
This lack of suitably trained staff and senior managers with the appropriate leadership and management skills, means that many businesses are not as flexible and adaptable as they need to be to navigate their way successfully through the recent rapid political, economic, social and technological (PEST) changes. If businesses are unable to navigate these changes and continue to adapt, some will not be able to continue to trade.

<https://www.open.ac.uk/business/apprenticeships/blog/uk-skills-shortage-costing-organisations-%C2%A363-billion>

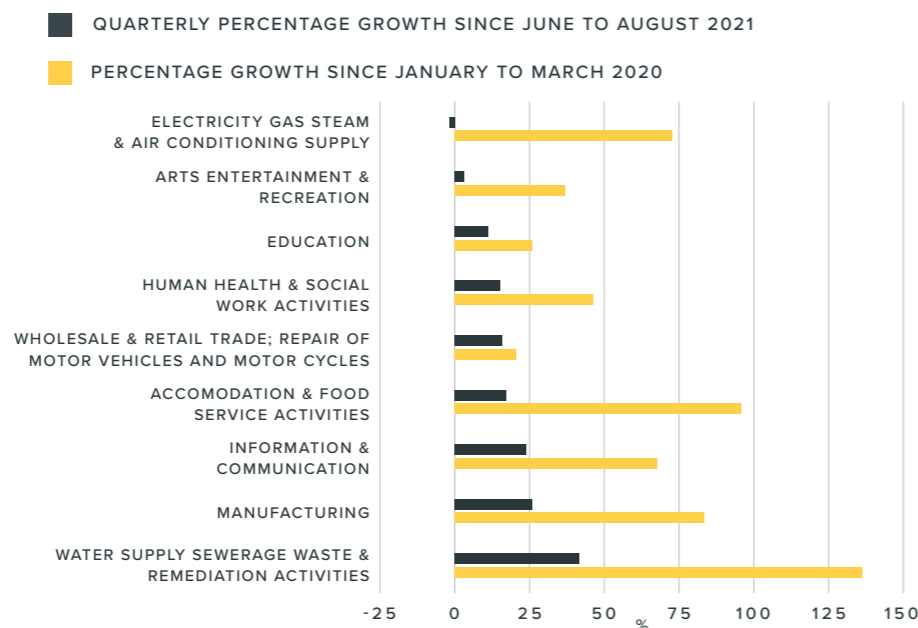
Increases in job postings

Nationally, the pattern is of substantially increased job postings across a number of sectors. Recent ONS data shows the number of job vacancies in September to November 2021 continued to rise to a new record high of 1,219,000; this was an increase of 434,500 from its pre-coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic level (January to March 2020), with 13 of the 18 industry sectors showing record highs.

NUMBER OF VACANCIES IN THE UK, SEASONALLY ADJUSTED, JANUARY TO MARCH 2020 TO SEPTEMBER TO NOVEMBER 2021

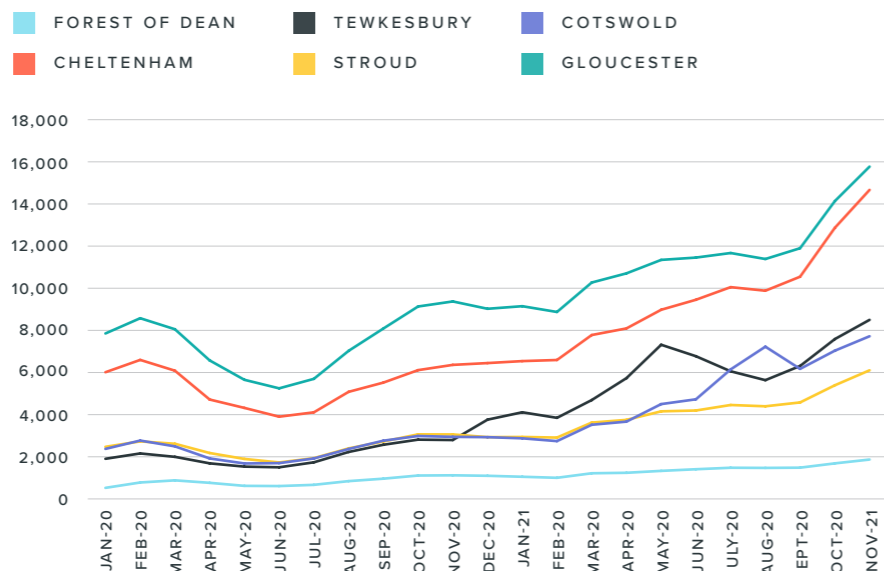


Nationally, only one of the eighteen industry sectors did not display quarterly growth in September to November 2021. With the exception of electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply, quarterly growth was seen in all industries. The fastest rates of growth were seen in water supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation services (41.7%), and manufacturing (26.0%).



Within the county, there has been a similar pattern with Gloucestershire's six districts all showing job posting numbers above pre-pandemic levels. The below shows total jobs by district from January 2020 to November 2021, with most districts displaying a similar trend over the past few months and all seeing an increase when compared to October 2021. Gloucestershire job posting numbers for the month of November 2021 were around 54,875 which is an increase of around 5,981 job postings when compared to updated October 2021 figure of 48,894.

NUMBER OF UNIQUE JOB POSTINGS BY MONTH AND DISTRICT, JANUARY 2020 - NOVEMBER 2021



There is now **greater competition within and between sectors for employees** and for some sectors, there are structural issues to address which are beyond the scope of this strategy e.g. pay and conditions, EU Exit, etc.

As competition for employees increases, **the importance of earlier and more effective careers support** and **attracting a more diverse workforce and those currently further from the labour market** will increase.

Job retention scheme – Furlough

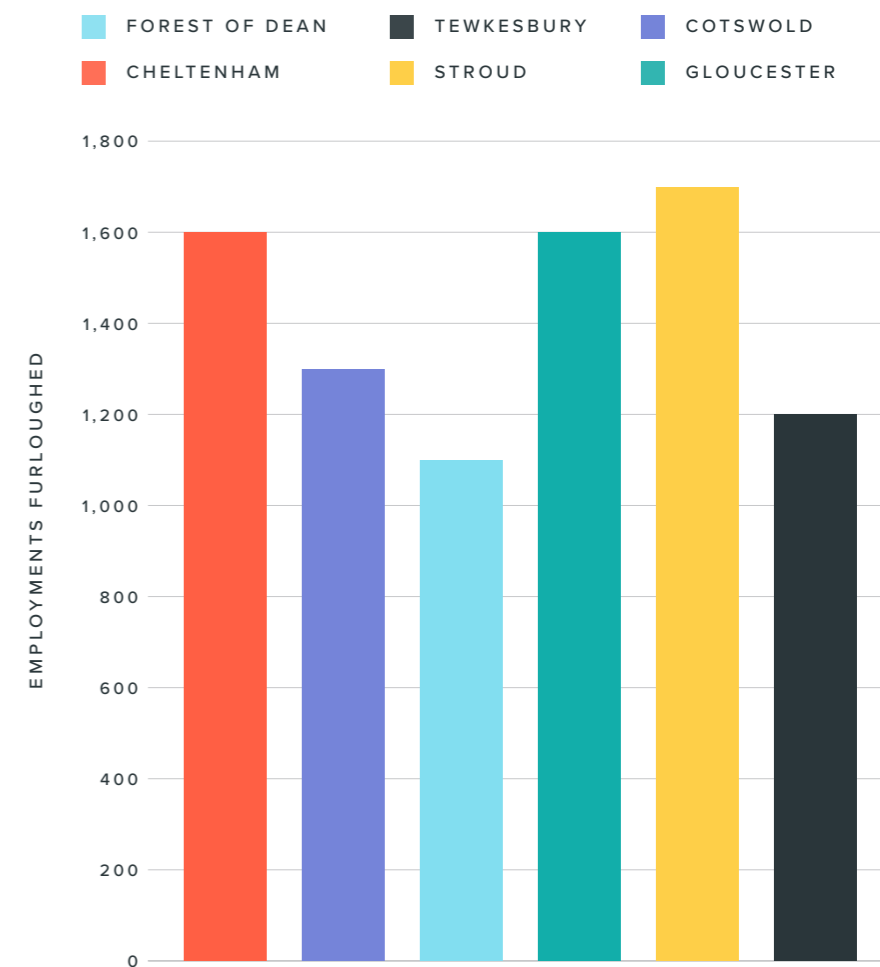
The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (furlough) was announced by the UK Government on 20th March 2020 to support employers who could not maintain their workforce because their operations had been affected by coronavirus pandemic. The Scheme was intended to run between 1st March and 31st May 2020 but was extended, with some adjustments, to 30th September 2021.

Employers were able to apply for grants so that they could cover furloughed employees' usual monthly wage costs for unworked hours, up to a cap of £2,500 per month to June 2021 and then this grant was reduced between July and end of September 2021.

Up to the end of the scheme in September 2021, Gloucestershire saw a cumulative total of **113,500** employments supported by the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme at various times. Final confirmed figures show there were a total of **8,500 employments furloughed** in Gloucestershire at the end of the scheme in September 2021, with 3,210 employments being in the 45 to 59 age bracket.

The below shows the district breakdown of workers furloughed at the end of **September 2021** with Stroud, Cheltenham and Gloucester seeing some of the highest numbers.

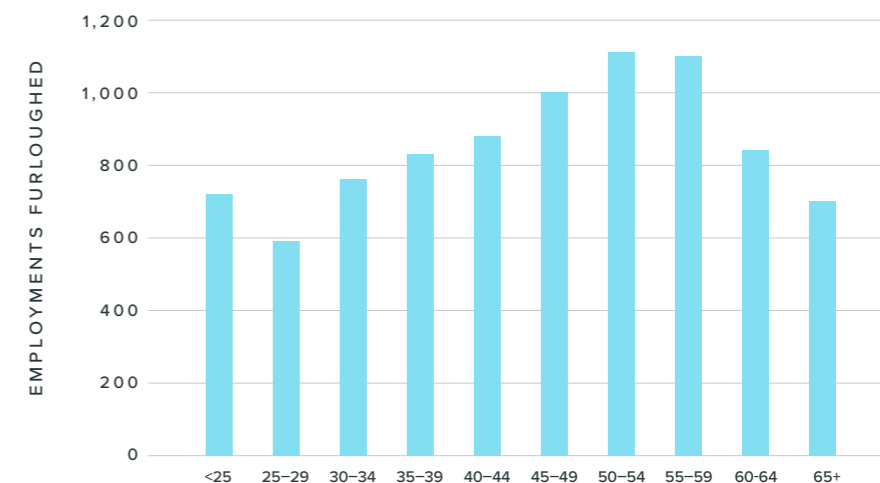
FURLOUGHED EMPLOYMENTS AS AT 30TH SEPTEMBER 2021 (FINAL)



Age profile of furloughed employments

When looking at the age profile of those furloughed employments at the end of the scheme, the age groups with the largest number of furloughed employments were 50 to 54 (1,110) and 55 to 59 (1,100) and 45 to 49 (1,000).

EMPLOYMENTS FURLOUGHED BY AGE IN GLOUCESTERSHIRE AS AT 30TH SEPTEMBER 2021 (FINAL)



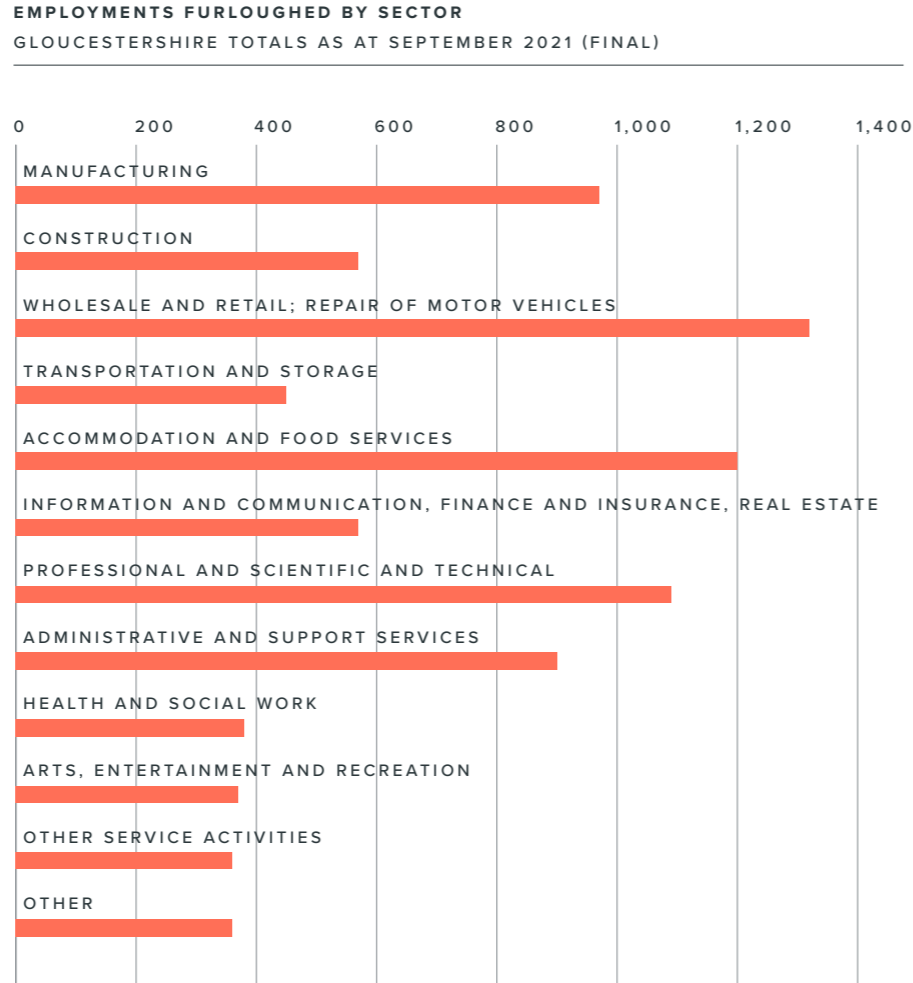
Sectors in Gloucestershire most affected by furlough

According to an [ONS survey in July 2021](#), nationally, the sectors most affected in the latter stages of furlough were performing arts; aerospace and air transport

Sectors in Gloucestershire most affected by furlough were **Accommodation and food services** and **Wholesale and retail; repair of motor vehicles**, which saw some of the largest numbers of furloughed employments. However, all sectors have seen employments furloughed at some point during the scheme.

At the end of September 2021, the **wholesale and retail; repair of motor vehicles** and **accommodation and food services** sectors saw some of the largest numbers of furloughed employments still in place. Other sectors still seeing high numbers were **professional and scientific and technical** and **administrative and support services**.

The following graph shows the total number of furloughed employments in Gloucestershire still in place as the scheme came to a close, which includes claims made up to the 21st November 2021.



Ageing population and replacement demand

Gloucestershire has more people in the 50-59 age band for both male and female, when compared to other age groups in the county. The size of this population, and the fact that it has been fairly static in size as the people have increased in age, suggests that Gloucestershire may face the issue of declining worker availability in the next 15 years as this group approaches retirement age.



The impacts of Covid on employment trends

Lessons learned from across the EU include:

Employment grew in jobs that are critical, can be carried out from home and require low social interaction

Examples include insurance, computer programming and telecommunications sectors. Jobs that could not be carried out from home saw a reduction in employment. This was highest in sectors most severely affected by lockdown measures e.g. accommodation, food and travel and lowest in jobs with high social interaction, such as health, personal care and childcare workers.

When comparing Gloucestershire job posting occupations pre-pandemic in February 2020 to November 2021, those that have seen the biggest increase are care workers and home carers, sales accounts and business managers as well as sales/retail and kitchen and catering assistants. There have also been increases in jobs that can be carried out from home, more specifically administrative assistants, bookkeepers/payroll managers, finance and investment analysts and IT specialist managers.

Geographical impact has been uneven and may widen inequalities that already existed before the pandemic

Job losses were greater in rural areas than in cities and in areas where tourism employment was significant.

Regions most resilient to the economic shock of COVID-19 tend to be ones with **high regional productivity, high level of skilled population levels, high investment in research and development, quality local public institutions and solid digital infrastructure**. Overall, **well-performing labour markets** proved to be better protected against the economic downturn.

The decline in employment rate was slightly higher for men than for women **but the pandemic highlighted long-standing gender inequalities**. Women experienced a steeper fall in working hours than men in the second quarter of 2020 since some sectors characterised by high female employment (e.g. accommodation and food service activities) were strongly impacted by lockdowns. Also, women continued to take on the largest share of caring responsibilities, and faced challenges in balancing work and private life.

Teleworkers are satisfied with working from home when they receive the IT and other equipment they need to do their work, when they do not have to work considerably longer hours and when work does not interfere with family time.

[Source: ESDE review](#)



What do these challenges mean for Gloucestershire?

We will need to continue to expand and strengthen:

- ▶ Our support for local businesses and employers to enable them to become more inclusive employers, reaching and attracting wider pools of talent than they currently do
- ▶ Our support for the GFirst Careers Hub and its work with employers, schools, colleges and alternative provision settings to build a pipeline of local talent
- ▶ The links between local employers and young people to inspire and inform them about local career opportunities and help them make informed decisions about jobs and careers
- ▶ Our supply and availability of trained careers advisers both for young people and adults retraining/ changing careers
- ▶ The 'fit' between local employer skills and recruitment needs and the courses/training/qualifications that the local and national training providers deliver in Gloucestershire



Snapshots of business sectors in Gloucestershire

This section provides an overview of the growth predictions, employment trends, existing and emerging skills needs for each sector, opportunities, threats and initiatives that are already underway and could be developed further.

SUMMARY



What has been happening and why?

- ▶ Each of the main business sectors in Gloucestershire has been impacted by recent economic changes driven by factors such as Covid, EU Exit, ageing workforce, the comparative attractiveness, salaries, terms and conditions of job roles and sectors.
- ▶ The majority of sectors in the County are reporting challenges in recruiting the number and quality of staff they need
- ▶ There are opportunities to strengthen or support all the business sectors and these are detailed in the relevant sector snapshots
- ▶ The sectors report some specific skills needs and, where reported, these are included in the sector snapshots



What we plan to do

We will need to continue to expand and strengthen:

- ▶ Our support for employers to extend their reach to a wider group of Gloucestershire residents and other local talent pools
- ▶ The ‘fit’ between local employer skills and recruitment needs and the courses/ training/qualifications that the local and national training providers deliver – the summaries provided in the sector snapshots should help guide this
- ▶ Our links with union learning providers to ensure awareness of the support and skills training opportunities they offer to their members and other employees
- ▶ Our support for the GFirst Careers Hub and its work with employers, schools, colleges and alternative provision settings
- ▶ The links between local employers and young people to inspire and inform them about local career opportunities and help them make informed decisions about jobs and careers
- ▶ Our supply and availability of trained careers advisers, both for young people and adults retraining/changing careers

ADVANCED MANUFACTURING AND ENGINEERING



State of Play:

On the whole, future growth predictions appear to be stabilising, but some businesses have reported sales decreases and the number of survey respondents expecting to increase staff numbers and investment in the next six months has also fallen.

Despite this, future sales predictions have increased, which indicates that businesses across the region may be planning to streamline current

processes or utilise investments previously made to increase productivity, boost sales, and continue to grow.

Locally there seems to be an educational requirement in relation to the understanding of the manufacturing circular economy, and the sustainability of this sector. Dispelling myths around manufacturing processes is likely to encourage a wider talent pool into this industry. A specialist educational piece

around this needs investment, focussing on the benefits of a circular economy and the possibilities of a greener industrial future. For example - Lead acid batteries are 99% recyclable as opposed to lithium batteries used in the manufacture of e-vehicles, the majority of which currently go into landfill. Changing perceptions through social media and community support is needed here.

1

Skills needs:

Supply chain issues are not the only challenges being faced by SME manufacturers across the South West; over half of respondents (56%) from a Gloucestershire skills survey said that recruitment is also causing concerns. The South West reported a higher percentage of businesses in the sector facing recruitment challenges than the national average and some specific regional support could be required in this area. The challenges around recruitment appear to be affecting manufacturers regardless of whether their trade has increased or reduced since COVID-19, indicating a universal problem that needs to be addressed.

2

Strengths and opportunities:

As well as causing barriers to growth, these supply chain issues could also present an opportunity for SME manufacturers to work collaboratively by connecting those who are unable to fulfil demand, with those who are still struggling with a lack of demand. A number of respondents have told us they are working closely with both customers and suppliers to:

- ▶ Understand future demand and plan for the longer term
- ▶ Review/change inventory holding positions to maintain supply and minimise the impact of price changes for customers
- ▶ Review and often extend lead times to provide accurate forecasts
- ▶ Increase their own supply chains to maintain supply to their customers

3

Threats:

Recruitment challenges are being experienced by a diverse range of businesses, regardless of their current situation or future growth expectations, and has been cited by 56% of regional respondents - 7% greater than nationally.

Alarmingly, almost all firms are citing supply chain issues, which has the potential to constrain present and future growth prospects for the manufacturing industry across the South West of England. 96% of respondents have said that price changes are causing challenges, with 93% believing that this is being driven by a lack of raw materials available. This regional report also suggests that SME manufacturers are under pressure from their customers to maintain supplies and costs, whilst, at the same time, their suppliers are looking to increase the price of the goods they need to purchase. On top of this, there is a need for lead times to be extended to cope with the lack of availability.



Please note that Business West has been contracted to research and report on the skills needs of this sector as part of the Department for Education (DfE) Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) Trailblazer. This research will provide more detail and can be found at <https://www.businesswest.co.uk/local-skills-improvement-plan-lsip-west-england-plus>

AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND RURAL BUSINESSES

State of Play:

In 2019, there were an estimated 8000 people employed in the agriculture, forestry and fishing industries in Gloucestershire, which equates to 2.6% of the total workforce, compared to just 1.6% of the workforce employed in this sector nationally.

According to the government's National Food Strategy, culinary skills have diminished across every social class since convenience food became widely available, and they are still diminishing as one generation after another grows up without trying cookery at home.

From a farming perspective, skills, knowledge, health of workers and employment make up the human capital metric of a farm. With a real lack of perception of farming as a viable career choice, and with fewer migrant workers available, the farming system cannot function if one of these metrics is out of kilter.



1

Skills needs:

Significant digital and data skills are required in agriculture, with more required in the future. Gloucestershire has ambitions to lead and support agri-tech and skills needed include:



Agri-data analysis – including for claims verification; Cyber Security/ Security by Design; Application development/programming; Internet of Things – hardware development; Maintenance engineers and user support skills; robotics and AI.



There is an ongoing demand for **engineers** in agriculture: design; electronic; geospatial; manufacturing; mechanical; refrigeration in addition to sales and supply chain management roles.



Vets and veterinary nurses – There is considerable replacement demand as vets and veterinary nurses retire from the workforce and/or go into other sectors to seek better pay, conditions and work-life balance. EU Exit has also impacted on recruitment at the same time as substantial numbers of people bought pets and increased the number of animals needing treatment.



Butchery – the British Meat Industry reported a 10-15% reduction in the trade pre-pandemic. They are campaigning to have 'Butchers' added to the Shortage Occupation List which is used to vet skilled migrants.



Awareness of where food comes from – using organisations such as LEAF into community projects, schools and urban environments. An understanding will generate the awareness and the appreciation of the food chain system and those in it.



Culinary skills and knowledge and embedding cookery and nutrition teaching as a mainstream subject and not a 'second-class' subject.



The Country Land Owners Association (CLA) are aiming to reduce barriers to **new entrants** into farming. Landowners are keen to support but are unsure of how the Environment and Land Management Sector (ELMS) and the Basic Payment scheme will operate and affect land owner management.



There is a changing **perception** of farming and rural skills amongst younger people – Many do not see the sector as attractive and in order to alter this view they need to be able to see and experience farming as a viable career choice.

2

Strengths and opportunities:

Gloucestershire Food Strategy

Gloucestershire's Good Food Revolution has a vision for Gloucestershire farmers and food businesses to exist in a network of flexible, efficient and diverse local supply models serving private and public markets with a high demand for sustainably produced local food.

The GFirst LEP Agri Food & Rural business group has formed a 'current and future skills' working group to identify areas where skills are lacking, the effect this can have on the farming and wider environment, and plans to get more people to study farming as a career choice.

Defra's agricultural transition plan aims to pull together a national infrastructure around supporting new entrants into agriculture and to innovate and drive agricultural businesses. A grant structure will encourage individuals to the scheme, with the group's support to run a pilot in Gloucestershire.

Hartpury Agri-tech Innovation Farm is shaping the future of digital farming to meet the global demand for new technologies in farming. The Tech Box Park will create a new kind of workspace dedicated to enabling the growth and development of Gloucestershire's agri-tech businesses. Hartpury College and Hartpury University veterinary nursing courses have very successful progression rates into full-time employment.

GOOD PRACTICE

BANKING AND FINANCE, PROFESSIONAL SERVICES



State of Play:

Between December 2020 and November 2021 financial sector job postings in Gloucestershire saw an increase of 43%, from 2,747 in December 2020 to 6,339 in November 2021 (EMSI job posting data.)

With such a vast array of roles from statisticians and economists to payroll clerk and junior accountant, there are a number of opportunities available to all kinds of professionals.

At a glance:

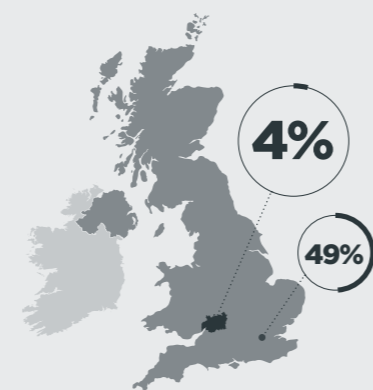
GRADUATES



APPRENTICES



Almost 1 in 5 of all graduates entering the UK labour market each year are employed in financial, professional and business services (FPBS) – and around 1 in 6 of new apprentices in England and Wales.



Only 4% of the top 1000 Financial and Professional Business services are based in the South West, with 49% located in London.



1

Skills needs:

Many large financial services businesses are increasingly offering sponsorship, as they have the processes and financial stability to be able to do so. Employers are finding it increasingly difficult to find top finance talent. Consideration is being given to sponsoring accounting and finance professionals from overseas. Locally, there is a shortage of accountants as fewer people study accountancy as a career choice. Some of those who would have been potential employees for local financial services companies have been attracted to larger cities, especially as companies there are still offering 'London weighting' style salary benefits whilst flexible working enables employees to travel into the office much less often and live outside of the cities in less expensive areas. This means that Gloucestershire businesses need to offer better incentives to attract people with the right skills, but not just monetary incentives: a better work / life balance, flexible working options are a given now.

2

Strengths and opportunities:

Lloyds Banking Group (LBG)

In 2017, Lloyds Banking Group (LBG) set out to forecast the skills they would need over the next three years to help them successfully deliver their new business strategy. LBG had re-focused their work with graduates and apprenticeships to build the identified key future skills. The Group's location strategy also played a key role, with targeted recruitment campaigns focused on attracting key future skills to 5 specific 'hubs' across the UK (London, South West, North West, West Yorkshire, and Scotland). Lessons from this work could be adopted by other Financial Services companies and those in other sectors too.

Research from PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) highlighted that 93% of CEOs who had introduced upskilling programmes reported that these programmes had increased productivity. Upskilling also helped attract and retain talent and deliver a resilient workforce.

There are opportunities to build a lifelong learning culture across the sector through: enhancing strategic workforce planning capabilities; supporting mid-career retraining through an employer-led skills brokerage service; and developing and promoting clearer pathways into the sector. There are also opportunities to attract and retain highly skilled talent through forming a local/sub-regional centre of specialisation and building on clusters that already exist or are developing (e.g. cyber), locating senior roles in the county and strengthening the talent pipeline.

CONSTRUCTION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

State of Play:

Need for more construction workers

- ▶ The level of output growth means the South West construction workforce will increase, although the average annual growth rate of 0.7% is just slightly lower than the UK figure of 1.0%. This means that the South West construction workforce of 244,000 in 2020 will steadily increase to 252,600 by the end of 2025.
- ▶ The annual recruitment requirement in the South West is set to average 2.6% per year, based on 2020 workforce levels, well above the UK figure of 1.6% and the strongest regional rate in the forecast.
- ▶ The shortfall in the number of skilled construction workers currently at its highest point since 2007 (Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS)).

Need to increase the appeal of construction careers with young people

- ▶ The appeal of construction as a career for young people is low, scoring 4.2 out of 10 among 14 to 19 year olds (Construction Industry Training Board (CITB)).

- ▶ Only one in ten children between the ages of 16 and 18 would consider a career in construction, fearing that the industry would be ‘challenging and unexciting’ (L&Q Feb 2019)

Ageing workforce

- ▶ One in five construction employees is aged over 55 (2011 census).
- ▶ The HM Construction Sector Deal highlighted that 32% of the UK construction sector workforce is aged 50 or over, with only 10% under the age of 25.
- ▶ The Farmer review of construction skills (Modernise or Die, 2016) has identified the potential for the industry’s workforce to decline by 20-25% in a decade.

Green skills and sustainable construction

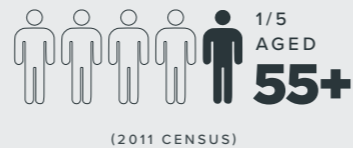
- ▶ There is a shortage of retrofit skilled workers and construction professionals who understand and have experience of using sustainable construction methods.

At a glance:

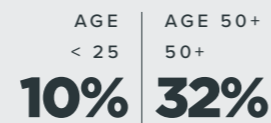
CONSTRUCTION FORCE GROWTH RATE



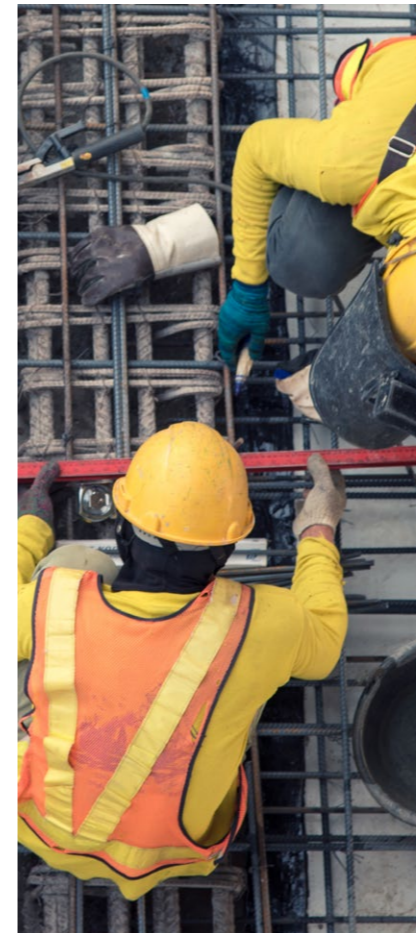
EMPLOYEE AGE



CONSTRUCTION SECTOR WORKFORCE



APPEAL OF CONSTRUCTION



1 Skills needs:

This increase in demand means the South West construction industry will have to increase current recruitment by 6,400 new workers each year to have the workforce to deliver expected work between the end of 2020 and 2025.

The following occupations have some of the strongest recruitment requirement levels:

- ▶ Wood trades and interior fit out (1,550 per year)
- ▶ Electrical trades and installation (750 per year)
- ▶ Non-construction professional, technical, IT, and other office-based staff (750 per year).

However, there will also be increased demand for labourers, plant operatives, surveyors and other construction professional and technical staff.

2

Strengths and opportunities:

Local opportunities in Gloucestershire such as The Golden Valley Development, The Forum and The Kings Quarter development in Gloucester, and the recent Levelling Up funding awards in Forest of Dean, Gloucester and to Gloucestershire County Council have resulted in a number of opportunities that will increase the demand for construction skills in the county. (Please also see Section 5 of this strategy).

Sustainable development opportunities have been created through Green /Net Zero developments for retrofit skills in order to support Government aspirations towards Net Zero. Stroud District Council’s successful One Public Estate bid provides a strong learning opportunity to clarify retrofit needs and the skills/skilled workforce needed to support this work. This in turn will enable us to develop ways to scale up this work.

Gloucestershire College and South Gloucestershire & Stroud College have construction training provision from Level 1 upwards.

The Gloucestershire Construction Training Group, established in 2004, provides a forum for training providers engaged in construction training and other partners, to come together to tackle construction skills needs in a co-ordinated manner.



The AccXel Centre

The AccXel Centre in Cinderford was launched in December 2021 following an investment of **£1.96 million** from GFirst LEP through the Getting Building Fund and it has been established as the construction sector’s first co-funded, industry-led construction skills accelerator centre. The AccXel programmes have been designed to ensure that individuals receive the best theoretical and practical construction education available, with a job at the end of it. Sustainability in the sector is taught via specialist professional courses, and embedded within all direct delivery training. This is to ensure that people entering and upskilling within the industry are educated fully in environmental and sustainability considerations. The AccXel Centre also seeks to challenge and address issues surrounding diversity within construction and perception within the industry.

GOOD PRACTICE

CYBER-TECH



State of Play:

Cyber crime is on the increase, and remote working brings new cyber challenges. Cyber attacks on businesses are increasing, partly because the potential gains larger.

There are currently 620 digital businesses trading across the county and this number is increasing. This presents a notable scale of activity and the foundations of a flourishing cyber sector. Gloucestershire is the second largest cyber cluster behind London, with Cheltenham having the highest density of cyber businesses in the country.

1

Skills needs:

Staff at all levels in all businesses and organisations need knowledge of the implications of cyber attacks, an awareness of cyber crime and who is accountable, and protective prevention measures to take. The same can be said of individual Gloucestershire residents.

The South West Cyber Resilience Centre, part of the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) and run by serving police officers, delivers simple and comprehensible guidance on reducing cyber risks, cyber attack prevention to protect businesses and third sector organisations in the South West region.

2

Strengths and opportunities:



Cynam and GFirst Careers Hub working together

The recruitment of an Employment Engagement Enterprise Co-Ordinator (EEEC) in 2021, co-funded by the Careers & Enterprise Company (CEC) and Capita, employed by Cynam and working closely with the GFirst LEP Careers Hub team, provides a good opportunity to positively influence and co-ordinate a wide range of cyber and digital skills initiatives in the County. It also enables young people to understand and experience the opportunities the cyber and digital sector can offer.

GOOD PRACTICE



The formation of a **Gloucestershire Digital Skills Partnership** would further assist with the strategic and operational co-ordination of cyber and digital provision in the County and would provide further strategic and operational support to the EEEEC and training providers. Cynam, The University of Gloucestershire, Gloucestershire College and other local stakeholders have expressed support for such a development.

The **Golden Valley Development** will increase capacity and sector growth with 11,000 jobs. It will showcase Cheltenham and the county as a cradle for cyber tech innovation. GFirst LEP, Gloucestershire County Council and Cheltenham Borough Council are working with GCHQ, Hub8 and CyNam to better define the offer and to promote the area. It is also creating a localised industrial strategy which will highlight this sector as one that has huge potential.

The cyber industry is recognising that people with autism can provide invaluable skills to the sector and are often the best performers in technical roles. GCHQ, for example, is one of the biggest employers those with autism in the country.



!

Education sector

It is important to highlight that the education sector, which includes schools, colleges, alternative provision settings, independent training providers and universities, has its own recruitment and retention challenges. These have been an issue for the sector for some years and in particular specialisms (e.g. computer science teachers in schools, construction and plumbing lecturers in FE, etc.) but the recent economic changes have further entrenched these issues as potential teachers/tutors/lecturers see better paid opportunities outside the sector. The shift to online/blended learning during the Covid pandemic, whilst suiting a lot of the workforce and their learners, has been very challenging for some, and has led some staff to seek other work or retirement. Similarly, the huge growth in demand for cyber, digital and IT professionals to support the significant growth in home-based/remote working and increased demand for IT services, has meant that IT professionals employed in the education sector to manage the IT networks and other systems in education organisations, have been tempted away from their roles, so threatening the delivery capacity and reliability of these organisations.

The knock-on effect of this is that the education sector sometimes cannot recruit or retain the staff needed to deliver learning programmes in the very subject areas that are sought after by local employers.

ENERGY AND GREEN RENEWABLES



State of Play:

Gloucestershire is in the top percentile of counties in the UK where recruitment is rising in the renewables sector (Emsi).

Training and skills providers need greater guidance from apprenticeship, awarding and sector bodies and more flexible, increased funding from DfE to enable them to:

- ▶ Adjust existing qualifications and training to incorporate more sustainable and ‘green’ skills
- ▶ Deliver new ‘green’ apprenticeships and technical qualifications that meet the rapidly changing needs of the sector and other aligned sectors (e.g. construction, engineering, etc.)

Locally, energy businesses are having difficulty in recruiting for specialist skills. There is

demand from industry for a combined approach with secondary schools and further education to work closely with industry and with government, to develop and teach new skills alongside current ones to future proof projects.

By working together longer-term, students gain in-depth understanding of what it’s like to work in the sector, dispelling myths and opening up opportunities.

1

Skills needs:

Currently, there is insufficient formal training available within the county to fulfil demand. Energy component and skills summary illustrates a requirement for:



Hydrogen boilers
Retraining for **120,000 gas engineers** (1-2 days)



Heat pumps
60,000 new workers, **15,000** per year



Building fabric
30,000 per year



Heat networks
9,500 per year

It was reported at the Sixth Carbon Budget in December 2020

“It is unlikely that the market will develop prerequisite skills in time, potentially resulting in poor quality installations. Government intervention, working closely with installers and others in the private sector and with local government is required, to ensure the skills employers need are available at the required scale and on a timely basis”.



2

Strengths and opportunities:

Over the last year, there has been a 100% increase in unique job postings within the Green economy which demonstrates Gloucestershire’s pivotal role within the country. Within the Local industrial Strategy (LIS), GFirst LEP is ensuring the sustainability and Net Zero agendas are being progressed through:

- ▶ **Alignment with the Gloucestershire Sustainable Energy Strategy**
- ▶ **Ambition to be the Greenest County nationally**
- ▶ **Ambition to lead nationally on decarbonisation of heat**
- ▶ **Capacity within the building retrofit supply chain identified as a risk**

We need to create and deliver high-quality, local training programmes, utilising the expertise of several partner organisations. Part of the challenge in this is getting clarity over which skills are needed and ensuring they are built into existing and emerging qualifications. This work requires the leadership of the Green Jobs Taskforce and the Energy Systems Catapult, as well as local training providers and employers working together to share needs, understanding and plan delivery.

All the colleges and universities operating in the County are keen to support the ‘green’ and Net Zero agenda and several are undertaking reviews of their own learning provision and their own business practices to further support this agenda.

The Active Building Centre (ABC) is a £20m Catapult funded organisation, supported by the 10 leading UK universities; Swansea, Cardiff, Bath, Loughborough, Birmingham, Sheffield, Nottingham, Imperial College, University College, and Newcastle.

It is a centre of excellence working to accelerate the UK’s drive towards net-zero carbon by transforming the way buildings are powered and heated. ABC have built a team of dynamic, innovative thinkers and doers who are passionate about applying new ideas and fresh perspectives to solve some of the biggest problems facing the world today and drive lasting societal, political and environmental change. They recently held a COP26 Gloucestershire event on the run up to the national event, which reviewed business case studies, challenges and exciting opportunities for Gloucestershire businesses within the green energy sector.

The One Public Estate retrofit project being led by Stroud District Council will enable the sharing of lessons learned with other local authorities and stakeholders.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

State of Play:

EU Exit and the Covid-19 pandemic have combined to increase the already existing high demand for health and social care staff. Demand is expected to grow further in the next few years and local provision needs to keep pace with this. We will work with One Gloucestershire to better understand their workforce development needs and, where possible, support the work with skills providers to meet these needs.

The Covid pandemic has also highlighted the mental health and wellbeing needs of many people. There are considerable numbers of mental health job vacancies.

GOOD PRACTICE The sector has had success through a 'values-based' approach to recruitment and has developed a care certificate for those newly recruited to the sector and which consists of 15 minimum standards that need to be met.



1

Skills needs:

- ▶ Digital / technology
- ▶ User centred / personalised care
- ▶ Promoting independence / enablement (not doing 'to' / for but 'with')
- ▶ Knowledge of safeguarding, dementia, mental health, learning disabilities and autism
- ▶ Effective and compassionate communication and collaboration skills are essential
- ▶ Increasingly social care staff need basic clinical skills, particularly to spot signs of deterioration and liaise effectively with NHS colleagues

2

Strengths and opportunities:

University of Gloucestershire (UoG) and University of West of England (UWE) have both developed nursing training programmes in the County and UoG's plans to deliver programmes in its new Kings Square Campus (previously the Debenhams store) in Gloucester will provide opportunities to further strengthen training provision for the local NHS Trusts and social care providers. UoG's BSC in Nursing is approved by the Nursing and Midwifery Council and offers both on-campus learning at Oxstalls Campus in Gloucester and a blended learning option on location with an NHS 'Practice Pod' in a number of locations.

Hartpury College and Hartpury University, whilst providing routes into elite sport, many students and graduates progress into careers in therapy, nutrition and wellbeing.

Skills for Care produces [key workforce intelligence](#) which local authorities can use to gain insight on their local workforce trends.

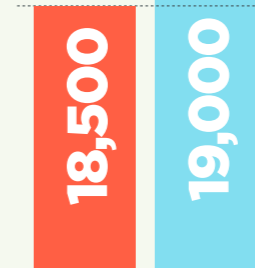
Key findings:



19,000 JOBS

IN THE LOCAL AUTHORITY AND INDEPENDENT SECTOR

CHANGE IN JOBS



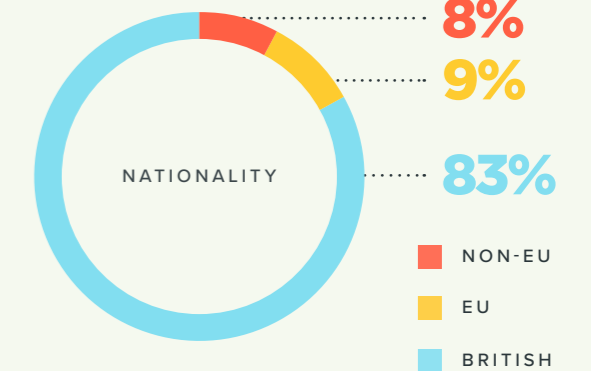
2019/20 2020/21

THERE WAS A CHANGE OF
500 JOBS
SINCE 2019/20 IN
LOCAL AUTHORITY AND
INDEPENDENT SECTORS

AVERAGE HOURLY PAY FOR CARE WORKERS

LOCAL AUTHORITY
£12.31

INDEPENDENT SECTOR
£9.34



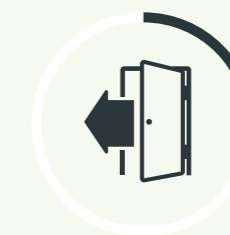
17%

OF JOBS WERE ZERO-HOURS CONTRACTS.



7.1%

AVERAGE VACANCY RATE IN 2020/21.



31.9%

AVERAGE TURNOVER RATE.



55+

25%

AGED 55 OR ABOVE.

This workforce intelligence is fed by the [Adult Social Care Workforce Data Set](#) (ASC-WDS), a data collection service commissioned and funded by DHSC.



Please note that Business West has been contracted to research and report on the skills needs of this sector as part of the Department for Education (DfE) Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) Trailblazer. This research will provide more detail and can be found at <https://www.businesswest.co.uk/local-skills-improvement-plan-lsip-west-england-plus>

RETAIL

State of Play:

The pandemic accelerated the transition by some customers to buy more through online retailers and less through in-store purchases.

The retail sector has been affected by the emergence of the 'at home' economy through such trends as customers shopping online, using digital services at home and eating at home having cooked their meals from scratch.

Even before the pandemic, the retail sector traditionally experienced high turnover of staff and one of the impacts of Covid was, for some retail employees, to find work elsewhere, as 'non essential' employers had to close their doors. This was often in the 'key worker' positions and the competition for employees with the necessary skills and aptitudes intensified. Consequently, the retail sector is now having to adapt to these changes and fill these gaps by using a range of approaches including:

- ▶ Multi-channel recruiting using social media, through current employees' social networks and local recruitment approaches



- ▶ Faster and online interview processes – The need to secure staff quickly and ahead of competitors has led some retailers to recruit remotely and make job offers immediately
- ▶ Increased use of e-commerce – Some customers remain wary of shopping in-store so many retailers now pursue multi-channel sales, with an increased proportion of sales coming through online retail. This has increased the need for e-commerce systems specialists and managers.

Just 4–5% of workers in areas of the economy hardest hit

by the pandemic, like retail, were undertaking re-skilling in 2019 and traditionally, the sector has relied on 'on-the-job' training. This can lead to lower productivity through mistakes needing to be corrected, lost revenue and a poor customer experience so many retailers now use a combination of training approaches including: checklists; top-up interval training; training videos; social media/social networks; webinars; online training courses; role playing scenarios; etc. Investing in the workforce this way means the employee feels valued, and aims to increase productivity, and reduce staff turnover rates.



1

Skills needs:

Staff shortages in physical retail are partly the result of EU workers returning home prior to EU Exit and not returning once the Covid pandemic took hold. This was compounded by some retail workers on furlough choosing to move into other sectors.

Fashion retailers are understood to be some of the hardest hit, followed closely by small independent retailers which employ under 1000 staff.

“There is already a skills shortage within certain new areas like user experience and e-commerce development. We need to ask ourselves, how do we attract the IT crowd away from the usual routes to have a long and successful career with a fast-paced retailer? How do we train for potential roles that don't even exist yet? That's the next challenge.”

Seth Davies, senior HR officer at Next Group

- ▶ Digital and cyber skills including website design and digital marketing – These are needed by smaller retailers especially, with online trading a key way for retailers' businesses to survive.
- ▶ Warehouse and logistics management
- ▶ Implementation of new technologies including in-store Electronic Point of Sale (EPOS)
- ▶ Use of customer data for marketing
- ▶ Environmental/sustainable/low carbon agenda and how retailers can embrace and implement this, including customer, operations and brand decisions

2

Strengths and opportunities:

- ▶ Helping local leaders develop skills and capacity, alongside people who have different and complementary experience and skills. This includes people from different sectors and different types of organisation.
- ▶ Supporting local councils with how to engage and build a collaborative vision with community organisations and entrepreneurs.
- ▶ Smaller retailers especially, getting on line in order to survive and offering bespoke training for this.
- ▶ Post-Covid recovery grant monies have helped local independents to survive with new shops opening whilst some larger chains have collapsed.
- ▶ Getting people to re-engage with retail -

“We have a massive marketing plan, this year is a profit recovery year, exciting things set to come. I can see a rejuvenation coming as people re-engage with retail.”

Martin Bundy,
John Lewis Cheltenham.

TOURISM AND VISITOR ECONOMY



State of Play:

In 2019, the Tourism & Visitor Economy industry was worth £966 million a year to Gloucestershire.

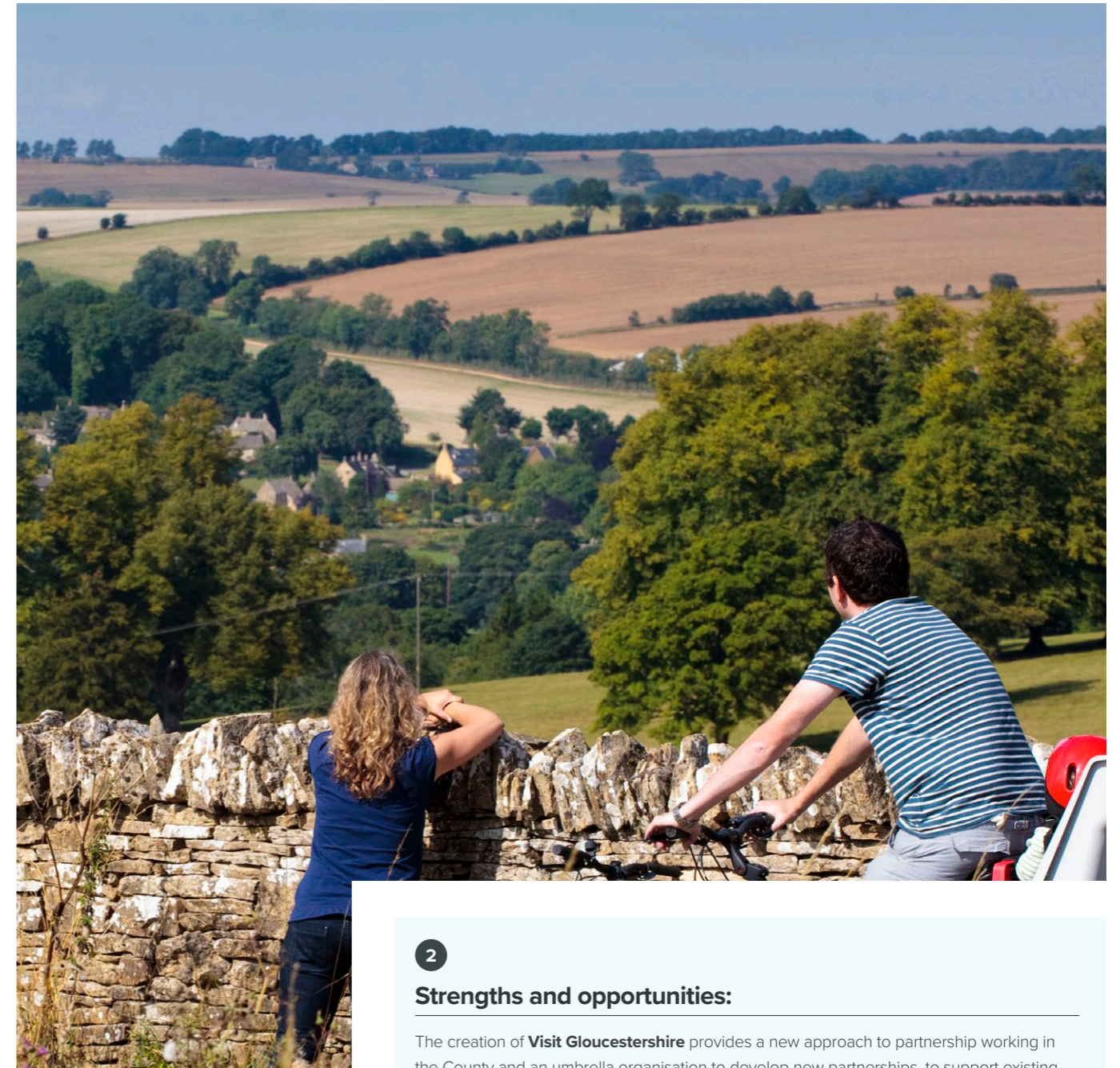
There has been relatively little collaborative working due, in part, to there being no overarching Destination

Marketing Organisation (DMO) and the recognition of the wider value that can be gained by working with partner industries such as retail, hospitality and community engagement.

83% of local residents agreed or strongly agreed that tourists

visiting Gloucestershire bring benefits for their community.

Pre-Pandemic around 850 businesses in the formal visitor economy employed almost 13,000 people in Gloucestershire.



2

Strengths and opportunities:

The creation of **Visit Gloucestershire** provides a new approach to partnership working in the County and an umbrella organisation to develop new partnerships, to support existing strategic management organisations (SMO), destination marketing organisations (DMO), and local destination organisations (LDO).

Tourism Strategy – This has been developed to support long-term sustainable growth, forecasting that visitor spending will grow 17% over the 2019 baseline, reaching £1.13 billion by 2030, supporting the creation of some 2,200 jobs and 150 new businesses. It supports partner organisations to deliver on 5 outcomes. It will also enable the engagement and education of communities and businesses of the value of the local visitor pound.

There are opportunities to develop industry-led catering and hospitality training to train chefs and others. This follows disinvestment by local colleges over some years, partly resulting from a lack of investment from the sector when it had access to EU and non-EU migrant workers.

Local employers, working with the Careers Hub and careers services could maximise linkages between educational establishments and the sector, highlight the wide range of employment opportunities in the sector and illustrate their value as quality career options.

1

Skills needs:

- ▶ Skills in hospitality and tourism management.
- ▶ Digital and cyber skills – there is a need for greater understanding of digital applications and training for hospitality businesses to get online.
- ▶ Telephone customer service skills and basic employability skills for entrants to the sector.

TRANSPORT



State of Play:

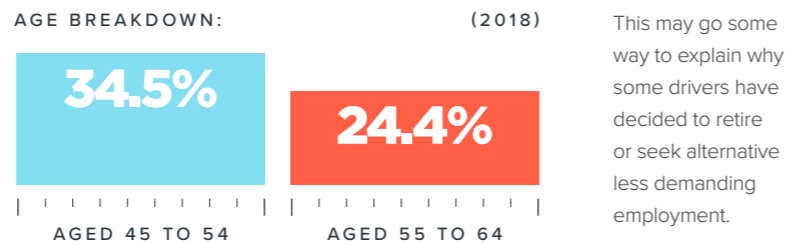
As widely reported, there was a significantly increased demand for Large/Heavy Goods Vehicle (LGV & HGV) drivers in 2021. This has been acknowledged as a wider historic problem of trying to fill shortages within the industry over many years. The combination of the pandemic and EU Exit has further exacerbated the shortage within the industry as overseas drivers have now returned to their place of birth, or have re-evaluated their chosen career with potentially better working conditions to be found in other sectors.

Latest figures suggest that Gloucestershire places itself 8% above the national average in the availability of driver's jobs being advertised which is a 1.2% increase on the previous year. This supports the theory that although there is a year on year increase in drivers jobs available within the county, there may well be a deficit left by existing drivers leaving the industry.

GENDER BREAKDOWN FOR THE INDUSTRY:



AGE BREAKDOWN: (2018)

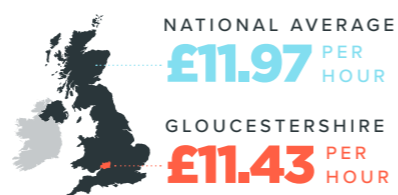


LARGEST EMPLOYERS OF DRIVERS



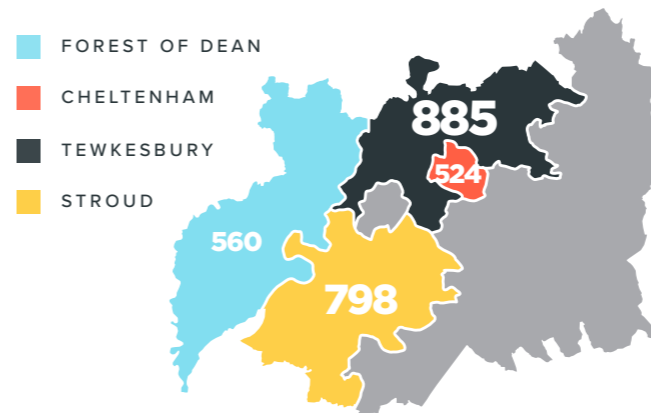
The largest employers of drivers in the county are the dedicated freight transport companies (60% of all LGV driving jobs).

AVERAGE WAGE FOR DRIVERS



The average wage for Drivers in Gloucestershire is £11.43 per hour compared with the national average of £11.97.

LGV JOBS ADVERTISED:



In 2020, within Gloucestershire the Districts of Tewkesbury and Stroud advertise more LGV driving jobs than the remaining districts advertising 885 and 798 respectively against Forest of Dean at 560 and Cheltenham at 524. This is in part due to the preferences for distribution companies to locate their businesses for easier access to major road networks.

Local training organisations suggest that the closure of the Large Goods testing centre in Gloucester impacted negatively on HGV training in the County because this necessitated travel outside the county for LGV testing, so increasing training and assessment costs.

The cost of training and attaining a licence is estimated at between £250 and £300 for a LGV licence and driving courses can range from £600-£1924 (2021).

Feedback from local logistics firms indicates that long hours and working conditions have made driving jobs less attractive compared with other sectors, as the commercial demands of logistics organisations often result in drivers spending longer time behind the wheel than planned.

1

Strengths and opportunities:

Local training providers have the capacity and will to react quickly and successfully to local training needs. An example of this is:



As a direct result of the national HGV driver shortage, the DfE launched a call for training organisations to deliver HGV Class 1 training courses under the Government's Plan for Jobs 'Bootcamp' initiative. This is where unemployed individuals can receive free intensive training to qualify as an LGV/HGV driver. Betaris and Gloucestershire College were successful in securing a contract to deliver this training in Gloucestershire in 2021-22. The delivery model for four courses is 10 days classroom learning and 5 days practical training and capacity is 56 learners. Once the DfE-funded 'bootcamps' have been delivered, Betaris will be offering 3 courses for HGV training using Gloucestershire College's Adult Education Budget (AEB) funding delivered over a 5 week period April to June 2022.

GOOD PRACTICE



5

Issues and opportunities highlighted by local authorities

This section identifies the main issues and opportunities highlighted by the local authorities in the County. Through their work with local businesses, residents, in planning and place-shaping, they have highlighted a number of issues and opportunities to be addressed to support the employment and skills activity within the County.

SUMMARY



Issues identified by local authorities include:

- ▶ recruitment challenges for them as employers; rural transport challenges



Opportunities identified by local authorities include:

- ▶ Social Value, Section 106 and 'Anchor Institution' opportunities;
- ▶ potential of the STEP Fusion project;
- ▶ recruitment;
- ▶ joining up local authority-led and other local economic and skills plans;
- ▶ 'Green'/sustainability skills;
- ▶ Traditional and heritage skills;
- ▶ Better linkages with and understanding of local employers and SMEs;
- ▶ Opportunities to maximise Growth Hub engagement

ISSUES, OPPORTUNITIES AND KEY THEMES



1

Issues:

Recruitment challenges are affecting local authorities as employers

- ▶ There are increased recruitment challenges in professional public sector roles such as planning, environmental health and legal. This is presenting a negative impact on other sectors in the hospitality sector (around food premises inspections), and planning (related to the retrofit sector).
- ▶ Local authorities are also facing recruitment challenges in roles ranging from transport planning, social workers, procurement specialists, social care practitioners, highways senior managers, SHE Advisors (Safety, Health and Environment), Educational Psychiatrists and drivers.

- ▶ A better understanding of available early career and entry pathways into public sector organisations.
- ▶ Employers are reporting recruitment challenges to local authorities that echo those expressed in the sector snapshots in section 4 of this strategy. These recruitment challenges include the need for transport, childcare, flexible working patterns, etc.
- ▶ Local authorities reflected the importance of certain sectors for their work with residents: health, social care, transport and logistics.
- ▶ Recruiting and retaining local talent is challenging, especially with a proportion of 18-21 year old students migrating out of Gloucestershire to other universities and not returning.

Rural transport

- ▶ In some parts of Gloucestershire, transport links are poor to and from rural areas which have a direct impact on recruitment and skills for rurality-based employers.



2

Opportunities

Social Value, Section 106 and 'Anchor Institution' opportunities to maximise Employment & Skills benefits

There are strategic plans for the construction of housing and infrastructure in Gloucestershire and these bring with them significant employment and skills opportunities.

M5 Junction 10

Gloucestershire County Council have been successful in their bid to Highways England for funding to upgrade Junction 10 of the M5. The agreement is for £250million with a delivery by October 2024. This funding will be used to improve access to and from the motorway northbound and southbound to a new link road into Cheltenham and will be critical in the delivery of housing and employment growth in this area.

M5 Junction 9 / A46

Options are currently being considered for a new dual carriageway between the M5 near Tewkesbury and Teddington Hands roundabout and associated works to M5 junction 9. The scheme would improve regional/national north-south road connectivity as well as solving long standing local traffic issues along the A46 corridor. The scheme will also unlock transport capacity to support the delivery of the Tewkesbury Garden Town.

A417 Missing Link

The planned £500 million upgrade of the A417, a key route linking the South West and Midlands, will see a single lane stretch of carriageway between the Brockworth bypass and Cowley roundabout in Gloucestershire, upgraded to dual carriageway.

Golden Valley Development

This West Cheltenham strategic allocation site was identified to deliver 1,100 homes and 45 ha of employment land and will include the development of a major cyber park to host businesses in the cyber and digital supply chain. <https://www.goldenvalleyuk.com/>

Tewkesbury Garden Town

The Tewkesbury/Ashchurch area was awarded Garden Town status in 2019 based upon a potential development of 10,195 homes and approximately 100 hectares of employment land. <https://www.tewkesburygardentown.co.uk/>

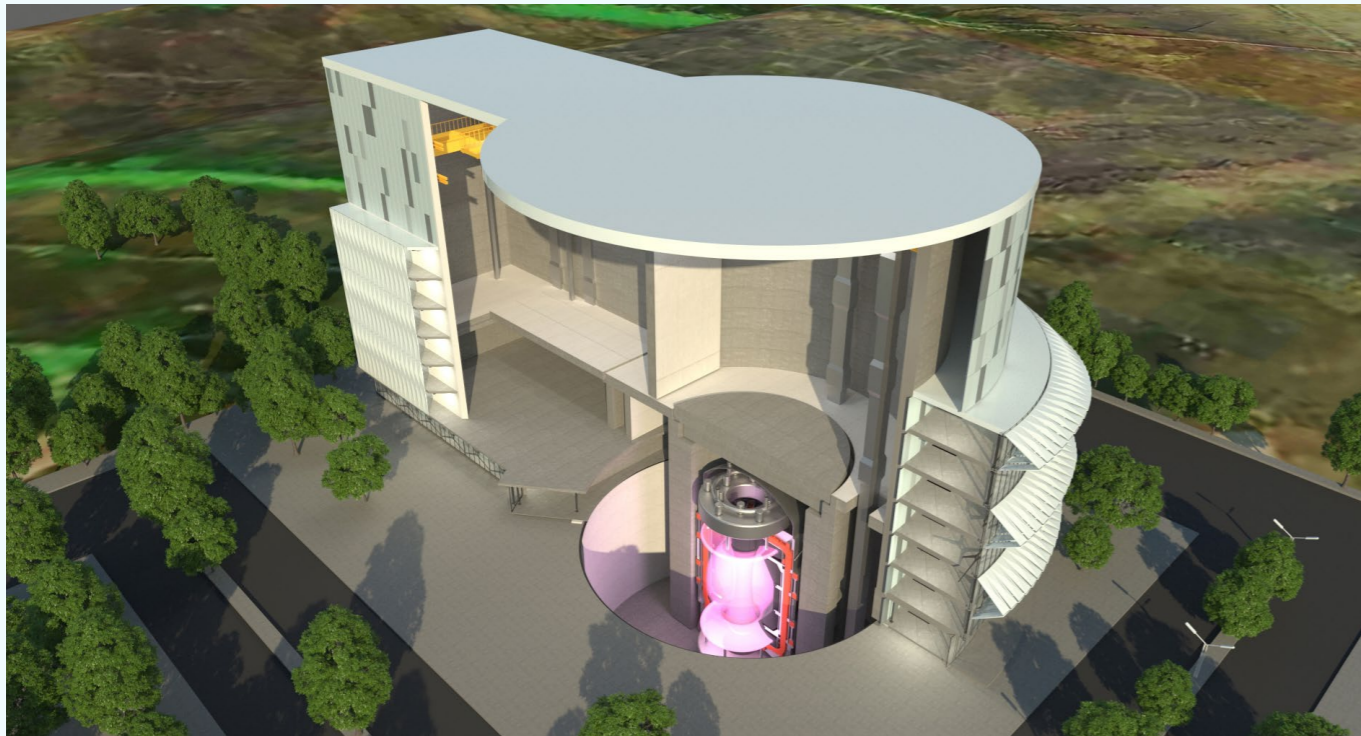
Gloucester City Centre

Gloucester City Centre is undergoing significant redevelopment, including the construction of a digital quarter and The Forum providing 125,000 sq ft of office space, a shared workspace hub, an innovation hub designed for emerging cyber businesses and incubator businesses, a 116-bedroom four-star hotel, a 9,000 sq ft gym, restaurants, shops, bars and cathedral view apartments, together with a multi-storey car park, alongside over one acre of public realm and landscaping work.

<https://www.forumdigital.co.uk/>

The University of Gloucestershire has purchased the Debenhams store close to the site of the Forum and this will provide further learning opportunities in the city centre.

The extensive pipeline of housing, transport infrastructure and regeneration projects in Gloucestershire provides significant opportunities for local authorities and other anchor institutions to build Social Value and Section 106 requirements into major contracts. It enables them to work with developers to ensure that apprenticeships, careers inspiration and support, jobs and skills development are all integrated for the benefit of local residents and businesses.



Potential of the STEP Fusion project for Employment and Skills opportunities

As part of the drive to decarbonise the UK's energy supply, Gloucestershire is bidding to establish the UK's first commercial fusion prototype utilising sites at Oldbury on Severn and Berkeley. Fusion is detailed in the Government's Energy White paper and Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution.

Spherical Tokamak for Energy Production (STEP) is the preferred option for a prototype fusion power plant, with the Government having already committed £222m investment into STEP. Key local partners including Gloucestershire County Council, GFirst LEP, Magnox, Nuclear South West, South Glos and Stroud College, Stroud District Council and the Western Gateway are working closely with the UK Atomic Energy Authority (UKAEA) and other organisations to position Oldbury and Berkeley as the most viable site for the STEP project. A final decision is expected by December 2022 and should the bid be successful, the STEP project could generate significant investment, employment and skills opportunities in the County.

Anchor Institutions and their impact on local employment and skills

'Anchor institutions' are large organisations with a long-term commitment to an area. Beyond their impact through their purchasing power and building Social Value into their contracts, anchor institutions can have significant positive effects on the employment and skills landscape of an area. This includes:

Further explanations and proposals for anchor institutions in Gloucestershire can be found in the 2021 'Sources of Strength' Report by Gloucestershire's Director of Public Health (Employment p 9-12)

<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/gloucestershire-county-council-news/news-november-2021/public-health-report-puts-spotlight-on-key-role-played-by-local-organisations/>

Recruitment

- ▶ There are opportunities to promote the wide range of careers that are available within local authorities along with what total reward packages look like i.e. flexible working, pension, wellbeing, impact the work has on the community, etc. in addition to salary.
- ▶ There is potential for the Careers Hub and Employment & Skills Hub to help with the longer-term recruitment needs of key sectors and local authorities in the County. Initial work supporting the Cyber and Digital and the Health & Social Care sectors in 2022-24 will help inform what is possible, what works and the resource implications of this work. This in turn will enable models to be developed and adjusted for the needs of local authorities and other sectors.



Joining up local authority-led and other local economic and skills plans

- ▶ The local authorities all have local economic strategic plans either in place or in development. These provide opportunities for joined-up working in the County. Where possible this skills strategy has taken these into account and linked with these District strategies.
- ▶ Several local authorities have had/continue to facilitate local economic recovery working groups. Again, these provide opportunities for joined-up working in the County and there is membership/regular dialogue between these groups and the GFirst LEP and GCC Employment & Skills Hub and teams.
- ▶ The Local Government Association's (LGA's) People and Places strategy offers opportunities for greater collaborative working locally.
- ▶ There is a strong emphasis to raise the profile of localities as attractive and appealing places to work, as well as being hospitality and tourism areas.

'Green'/sustainability skills

- ▶ More work is needed to understand the emerging 'Green sector' and the skills and jobs that will be needed so that local and national priorities for action are based on intelligence and evidence. The One Public Estate project being led and delivered by Stroud District Council will generate lessons learned for retrofit work in the County that can be shared across other local authorities.

Traditional and heritage skills

- ▶ The combination of heritage skills such as dry-stone walling, slate roofing, boat building and restoration through T Neilsen and Company at Gloucester Docks, and other companies and training providers could offer opportunities for a 'heritage skills centre/network' in the County. This could build on the work to support the agriculture, rural and food business sector at the Royal Agricultural University (RAU), Hartpury College and Hartpury University, and others.

Better linkages with and understanding of local employers and SMEs

- ▶ Most councils reported an increased understanding of locally-based employers they had not previously engaged with. This was as a direct result of their work with local businesses through the Covid grant funding processes.
- ▶ Several local authorities highlighted the need to ensure linkages to wider county projects are inclusive e.g the cyber developments in Cheltenham, and that they generate benefits for residents and businesses across the County.

Opportunities to maximise Growth Hub engagement

- ▶ Several local authorities highlighted the strengths of the Gloucestershire Growth Hub Network providing a physical as well as a digital presence and suggested that they and other stakeholders could do more to increase local employers' awareness, access to and uptake of business advice on a local level. Some authorities suggested that there were opportunities to promote apprenticeships via this route and that more support was needed for micro businesses and SMEs to enable them to take on apprentices, and understand T-levels.



6

Skills that support individuals to **achieve their potential**

This section of the strategy provides an overview of the employment and skills schemes and programmes that are being delivered in Gloucestershire, together with some examples of good practice, challenges and opportunities to improve how these schemes maximise the skills potential of Gloucestershire residents.

SUMMARY



This section provides overviews of:

- ▶ Apprenticeships
- ▶ T-Levels
- ▶ Inclusive employment programmes including those commissioned by DWP and local programmes
- ▶ The Gloucestershire Employment Charter Pilot
- ▶ The importance of the voluntary and community sector in employment and skills
- ▶ Business start-up skills and self-employment
- ▶ Cyber and digital skills
- ▶ Functional skills
- ▶ The Lifetime Skills Guarantee

APPRENTICESHIPS

Despite some ongoing frustrations from some businesses, 61% of business leaders nationally, agree that the apprenticeship levy introduced by the UK government to encourage greater investment in work-based training should help to reduce the skills shortage in the next five years.

(OU Business Barometer)

A survey by Cheltenham Economic Recovery Taskforce, (June – December 2021), indicated that employers saw the main benefits of taking on apprentices as:

- ▶ future-proofing their business
- ▶ securing the best talent
- ▶ accessing Government funding
- ▶ building business resilience
- ▶ improving productivity
- ▶ improving staff morale

The survey also indicated that once employers had supported their first apprentices, they were keen to offer further apprenticeships in the future.

Apprenticeships provide an opportunity for employers to 'grow their own' talent and secure employees who understand their business needs and are committed to working with them to develop their careers. Apprenticeships also help Gloucestershire retain more young people by building strong links with local employers and enabling young people to see and develop career paths locally.

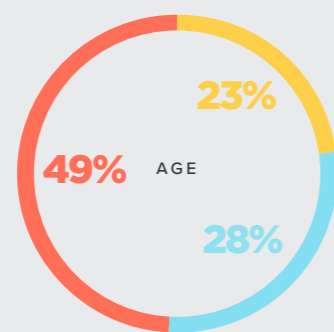
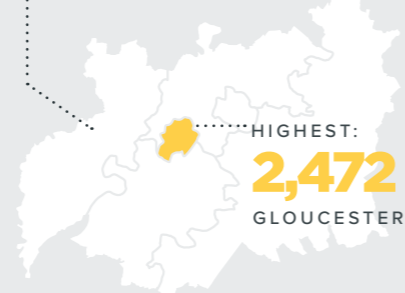
Apprenticeship starts overview

The apprenticeship market in Gloucestershire was significantly impacted by the pandemic. Data indicates that at the end of April 2021 there were 8,848 apprenticeship starts between August 2020 and April 2021.

In terms of Districts, Gloucester saw the highest number of apprenticeship starts with 2,472 in that time, followed by Stroud.

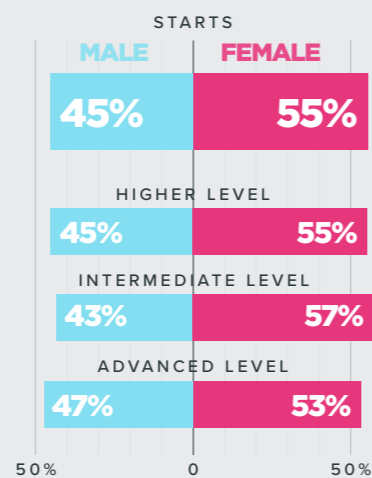
8,848

APPRENTICESHIP STARTS
AUG 2020 – APR 2021



- UNDER 19
- 19-24
- 25+

Age - 23% of the total number of people starting an apprenticeship programme were under the age of 19 years, 28% aged 19-24 years and 49% over the age of 25 years.



Gender - 55% of the total starts of apprenticeship programmes were female which follows national trends, with the highest uptake in advanced apprenticeships. With higher level apprenticeships, 55% of the total number of starts were taken by female participants. Intermediate level apprenticeships the split was 57% female participants and male 43%. Advanced level apprenticeships the split was 53% female participants and male 47%.



Switch to online and blended apprenticeship training delivery

Apprentices who started their apprenticeship either prior to or during the pandemic have experienced not only the change in the way they work, but also in the way that their apprenticeship training has had to be delivered. The move from face-to-face delivery to that of completely remote delivery through virtual technologies has had positive and negative impacts. Apprentices and training providers have found delivery of practical training elements more challenging than delivery in sectors/job roles where the tasks and training are more administrative.

There have been some real successes around blended training delivery and in the recovery from the pandemic period, we want to ensure that the effective use of technology is retained, especially when this method can save time, lower carbon footprint and also enhance ongoing use of technology by apprentices and employers. However, there are still elements of apprenticeships that apprentices wish to take place through face-to-face interactions, not only with their workplace mentors but also with their trainers/tutors and other apprentices alike.

Employers

The option for employers to take individuals onto the Government's Kickstart programme, introduced in October 2020, had an impact on apprenticeship starts as an initial entry route into employment. The challenges of remote working, lockdowns and uncertainties around business sustainability were also factors in the decline in apprenticeship starts. Where some employers used this time to upskill their existing staff, the pressures on public sector services also had a negative impact on apprenticeship provisions, especially in health & social care, as well as schools' workforces.

Health and Social Care apprenticeships in Gloucestershire have been hit hard by the pandemic and we have seen training providers pull out of delivery completely, which is of concern to employers in this sector, but also more widely across the Integrated Care System (ICS) and Proud to Care.

Funding

Funding for apprenticeship training providers has mainly remained constant over the last year, with little movement within the funding bands for the apprenticeship standards.

One of the most significant changes is that all employers wishing to use apprenticeship funding now need to register on the Digital Apprenticeship Service (DAS), which has caused a number of challenges for employers wishing to engage, existing employers offering apprenticeships and ultimately apprentices. One of these challenges has been the pooled PAYE that some employers find themselves in, notably schools. This has caused an issue whereby the school cannot then set up their own account as they need their own individual PAYE code, which then has an impact on the training provider not being able to access the funding. In some circumstances, employers have had to engage with an Apprenticeship Training Agency (ATA) to then employ the apprentice. This has been raised with HMRC and the Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) who has been supportive and continue to try to find a resolution to this.

Apprenticeship Levy transfer to other employers has been very successful in the last 12-18 months with some large employers in Gloucestershire exhausting their 25% of transfer allocation supporting other employers within Gloucestershire by funding the training in full for them. We are keen to see further expansion of the Apprenticeship Levy transfer in Gloucestershire from more large employers to their supply chains and local SMEs.

An example of effective Apprenticeship Levy transfer is the collaboration of the ICS partners (Gloucestershire County Council, Gloucestershire NHS Trust, Gloucestershire Health and Care NHS Foundation Trust, CCG) and supporting apprentices and employers across Gloucestershire. This resulted in these partner organisations transferring apprenticeship funding to the value of £340,000 in the six months between April 2021-September 2021.

GOOD PRACTICE

T-LEVELS

Why introduce T-Levels?

T-levels were detailed in the 'Skills & Post-16 Education Bill' as part of the Further Education system review of learning and skills provision. They are being introduced with the aim of simplifying the over-complex system of technical education and ensure the skills which students gain meet the needs of a 21st century workforce.



Wider qualifications review

As at July 2018, there were over 4,000 Level 3 qualifications eligible for public funding with many courses available in the same subject areas, including over 200 different engineering qualifications. Many courses have been judged as not adequately equipping students with the skills employers need now and those which will be needed and are evolving. The existing qualifications landscape is confusing for students, parents, and employers.

T-LEVELS

THE NEXT LEVEL QUALIFICATION

What T-levels consist of


T-Levels are two-year vocational programmes for 16 – 19 year olds, which follow GCSEs and sit alongside A level and apprenticeship pathways. T-Levels are based on the same standards as apprenticeships, designed by employers. They are a mix of classroom-based learning and an on-the-job industry placement, (approximately a 45-day work placement over two years). The total duration to complete a T-Level is approx. 1,800 hours of learning.

English and mathematics form essential components of T-levels, with students required to achieve either a Level 2 Functional Skills or GCSE Grade 4 to achieve the full T Level.

One T-Level is the equivalent to 3 A levels and can be achieved at pass, merit, distinction or distinction*.

T Levels approved for delivery – phase 1

The first tranche launched in September 2020: **(32 education providers selected nationally)** delivering: Design, surveying and planning for construction; Digital production, design and development; Education and childcare.

-  Design, surveying and planning for construction
-  Digital production, design and development
-  Education and childcare

Cirencester College is a trailblazer provider in Gloucestershire.

The second tranche of delivery commenced September 2021: **(74 education providers nationally)** delivering:

-  Building services engineering for construction
-  Onsite construction
-  Science
-  Health
-  Healthcare science
-  Digital business services
-  Digital support and services

Remaining T Levels to be introduced in 2022-23

(125 education providers nationally).

-  Accounting
-  Agriculture, land management and production
-  Animal care and management
-  Catering
-  Craft and design
-  Design and development for engineering and manufacturing
-  Finance
-  Hair, beauty and aesthetics
-  Legal
-  Maintenance, installation and repair for engineering and manufacturing
-  Management and administration
-  Engineering, manufacturing, processing and control
-  Media, broadcast and production

CHALLENGE

Major challenges in introducing T-levels

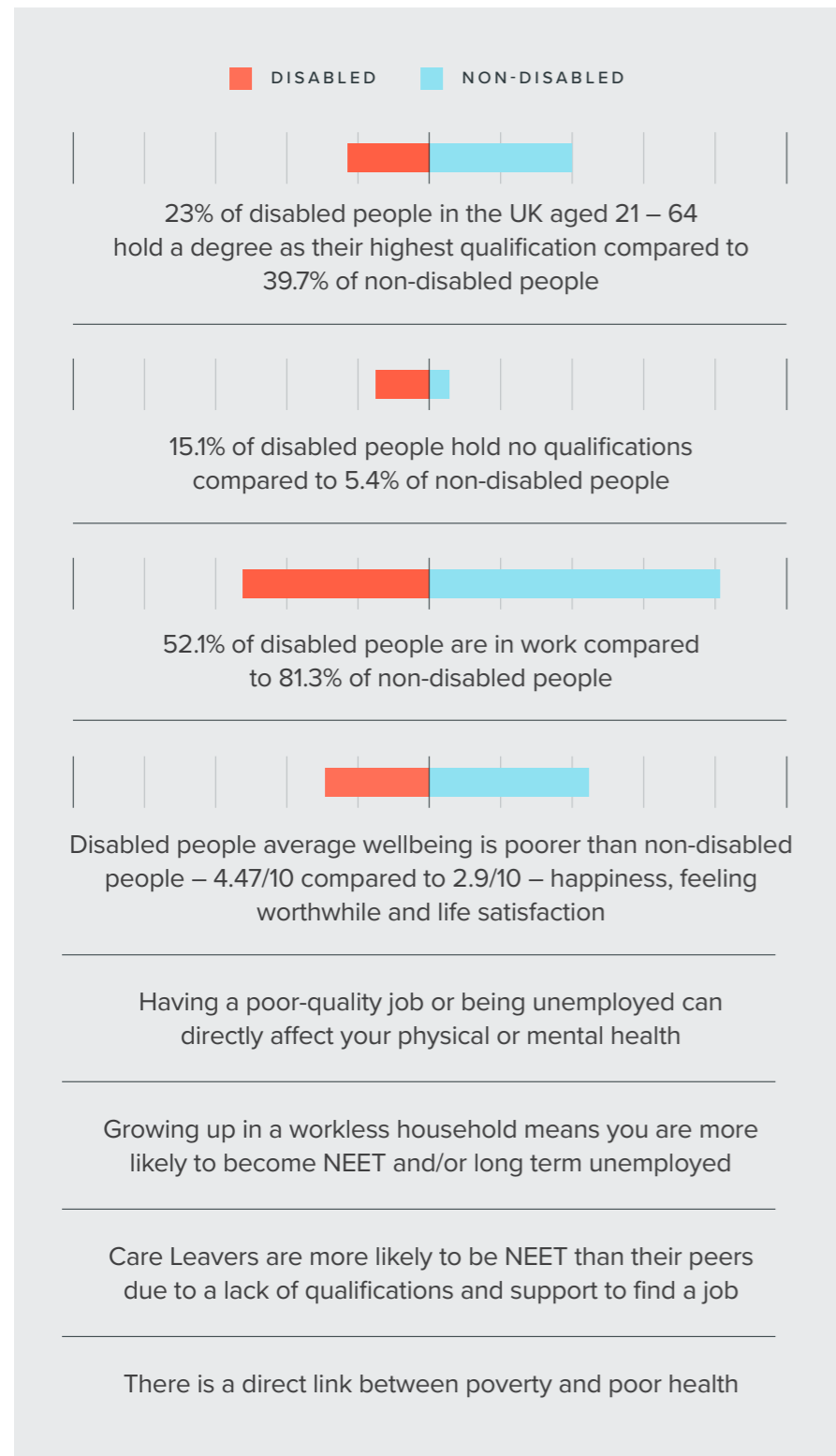
The need for substantial industry placements (45 days) and content that closely mirrors industry standard practice, places a strong emphasis on effective links between the education and business sectors, and the awareness, understanding and support of local employers. Clarity is needed on the future of BTECs and other Level 3 qualifications through the qualification review so that the role of T Levels can be clarified. It will take time for T-Levels to become accepted by universities and employers as having parity with A-Levels. This in turn increases the importance of careers 'guidance' to inform FE, HE, and Apprenticeship choices pre and post GCSE. There are substantial teacher training and professional development implications for training providers seeking to deliver T-Levels. Finally, how T-Levels will meet the needs of students with additional needs is not yet clear, e.g. those with pre-L2 functional skills seeking to gain full T-levels.



How we are supporting the implementation of T-Levels in Gloucestershire

- ▶ Investment in skills capital projects that support the implementation of T-Levels e.g. in the Digital Skills centre at Cirencester College
- ▶ The pilot of the Gloucestershire Employment Charter includes the industry placements and employer links needed to successfully deliver T-Levels
- ▶ Promotion of T-Levels to local employers
- ▶ Promotion of T-Levels as alternatives to A-Levels for young people via the Careers Hub and the Employment & Skills Hub, and encouraging schools to implement their Baker Clause requirements by enabling apprenticeship and T-Level providers to promote their programmes to students

INCLUSIVE EMPLOYMENT



Addressing employment inequalities experienced by high risk groups means working with employers, families, carers and professionals to develop the skills of individuals to allow them to fulfil their career ambitions. This requires looking beyond qualifications to provide bespoke packages of support to encourage and develop skills, attitude and capacity.

Working together in Gloucestershire to address the holistic employment and skills needs of those who are at risk of long-term unemployment is essential to ensure sustainable employment. Addressing the environment around the individual requires collaboration and an understanding of the challenges both individuals and employers face and working together to overcome these.

Working with young people to develop their skills and understanding of inclusive workplaces will ensure that future generations of those who have disabilities, are care-experienced or live in areas of deprivation have access to the same opportunities as others. Appropriate skills provision needs to be available for everyone regardless of their ability with acknowledgement that people have different aspirations, experience and capacity, this will in turn help us to develop workplaces that are inclusive and encourage people to flourish and live more fulfilling and healthier lives.

CHALLENGE

There is competition between programmes and ensuring individuals are guided to the right programme for them

Department of Work & Pensions (DWP) Programmes

There are a number of DWP programmes available, all targeting different customer groups, with different timelines but similar content. The main challenge experienced by providers and partners is the blurred lines between programmes and how they interact with locally developed provision. Job Centre Plus (JCP) Work Coaches have limited time with claimants and depending on which programme is prioritised by DWP/Jobcentre Plus, referrals to other programmes can be affected.

All DWP programmes strive for one outcome – paid, sustainable employment. DWP and locally developed initiatives like Forwards and GEM all compete for resource and market share. Referral organisations are not clear of the offers and whether participation in multiple programmes is allowed due to double-funding implications. It is essential that to help people develop the employability skills they need, which are appropriate to their capacity and desired occupation, they get to the right programmes for them. If not, individuals' employment outcomes could take longer or not happen at all.

JCP Work Coaches' time is limited with a high caseload of claimants, and do not always have the wider awareness of local provision outside of DWP-funded programmes. Therefore, claimants may not be made aware of all their options. Referrals to provision can be influenced by DWP priorities and targets which are set at the highest level. The emphasis therefore, is on the local referral provider to assess if their programme is the most appropriate provision for the claimant.



Access to Work is a programme that helps people with disabilities who are moving into, or who are already in work, providing practical support including transport, job coaching, assistive technology etc. It can also be used for a short period of time for people who are in a work placement or a Supported Internship. This can provide support for people to learn new work skills or identify their skills needs but it cannot be used for voluntary work. This means that people seeking voluntary work to increase their confidence and skills do not have access to the same level of support as those seeking paid work. This is an issue, particularly for young people transitioning from education with a lack of support available to allow them to take up such placements.

Local Provision

Gloucestershire has a number of local initiatives which help people who are furthest from the labour market or at risk of long-term unemployment to develop their employability skills.

- A** AIM Supported Internships are an employability-focused education programme for young people with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) and provide them with opportunities to develop their employability skills in real work place settings.
- B** The Forwards Supported Employment Service managed and delivered by Gloucestershire county Council (GCC) provides support for;
 - ▶ People with health conditions or disabilities including mental health
 - ▶ Young people who are leaving or have left care settings
 - ▶ Young people who are NEET and disengaged from the education system
- C** The Gloucestershire GEM Project provides support for people furthest from the labour market to move into or closer to education, employment or training.

In all cases the programmes support people to identify career choices and develop their knowledge and skills to achieve their aspirations.

CHALLENGE

The main challenges are similar to the DWP providers i.e. crossover with other programmes. In the case of GEM there can be clashes with funding streams requiring individuals to choose to be on one programme and requiring communication with DWP and the provider to ensure there is no conflict with benefit conditionality.



Meeting the challenges of competing programmes and effective referral to the right programme for an individual

Short-term - The Programme Interdependencies Group set up by Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) brings together all employment and adult skills providers, working together to share knowledge and, where appropriate, referrals. The Group has produced a sharable document which aims to help referral organisations understand eligibility criteria, referral routes and what other provision could add value to their customers' journeys.

Longer-term - Existing local employment support programmes have been funded through a combination of DWP, European Social Fund (ESF) and Lottery funding. With the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) likely to include employment & skills priorities and opportunities to bid for funding, the lessons learned above should be incorporated into future bids and commissioning of local and national provision.

Employers are central to success

Employers are key to the success of any inclusive employment and skills strategy. Understanding their needs, ensuring people have the right skills to do the jobs required and asking employers to review how diversity within the workforce can benefit their businesses are essential. The next step is for us to work with employers to build business cases for inclusive employment around the recruitment of new staff and the retention of existing employees.

By encouraging employers to work with local employment and skills providers in a collaborative way, we can influence the design and delivery of provision tailored to help people who face the greatest challenges to secure employment whilst meeting employers' needs.

Job Carving highlights how an individual's work skills can be utilised, by analysing the whole workforce roles within an company to create a specific position that meets the employers needs as well as the individual's. Outside of supported employment, this approach is not widely used, as employers usually create a job description to employ someone who fulfils most/all of the requirements. By analysing the workforce, the needs and gap analysis related to recruitment can identify more opportunities for people with limited capacity and create more inclusive workplaces.

Wage incentives have been used in Europe to "encourage" employers to take on disabled people but sustainability can become a problem as some employers do not continue the employment once any incentive ceases. However, paid work placements like those secured through the Kickstart scheme can offer employers the opportunity to take on people at no risk for a short period of time to allow them to understand the skills of an individual in their workplace.

CHALLENGE

Managing **employers' expectations of young people** in the Kickstart scheme proved challenging. Some employers who offered opportunities expected young people to be experienced and qualified, missing the point of the scheme which was to develop a young person's employability skills to help them move onto a sustainable career path. Kickstart was an ideal opportunity to support those young people at risk of long-term unemployment, however some employers' expectations meant that these groups were still overlooked.

The more people with disabilities and other challenges we can get into work the easier it will become to increase the number of inclusive workplaces. We are keen for inclusive employers to work with us and:

- ▶ **talk to other employers** about their experiences
- ▶ **act as role models** for other employers and people with disabilities, care leavers, people from BME communities with the aspiration to achieve
- ▶ **provide peer to peer support**

The Forwards Kickstart trainee was responsible for leading sessions with other Kickstart trainees in the GCC Gateway to help identify any areas of good practice or challenges. Supported in the background, he was responsible for talking to other trainees to find out their experiences on a peer to peer basis.

Work Experience

Both paid and unpaid work experience opportunities are essential to help build the confidence and skills of those who have additional challenges in the workplace. They enable individuals to 'get a foot in the door' and start conversations about their skills and qualities with an employer.

CHALLENGE

Accessing meaningful work experience placements whilst in education is a challenge for many young people with disabilities and those young people who are disengaged from education do not have the opportunity to have meaningful conversations about career pathways. This means they start their working life at a disadvantage.

Good quality work experience is essential and helps:

- ▶ Young people to understand their capabilities, skills gaps and the business sector as well as providing practical experience of work-related skills and a clear educational route where appropriate.
- ▶ Employers to identify how they can support young people especially with challenges in the labour market and learn about how simple reasonable adjustments can be made to accommodate a broad range of abilities

Forwards work experience placements and 30/30 Challenge

Of the first 10 disabled people placed in work experience placements with Forwards, 8 secured paid employment with their host employer.

The Forwards 30/30 Challenge helped a number of young people with disabilities secure work awareness sessions with local employers. Employers were keen to engage as this was a "minimal commitment" however many employers went on to offer work experience placements to young people and some young people even secured part time work.

CHALLENGE

Apprenticeship and work experience challenges:

- ▶ Apprenticeships present barriers for young people who cannot achieve a Level 2 Competency. A significant number of young people with capability to undertake an apprenticeship lose out because "Inclusive" or "Supported" Apprenticeships are not really understood by providers so they are not offered. These allow a young person with Entry Level 3 capacity for English and Maths to take part provided they can achieve a Level 2 competency. They were launched some years ago but nationally very few young people with limited capacity have been able to take part.
- ▶ In Gloucestershire those with Entry Level capacity who have EHCPs are able to take part in AIM Supported Internships which offer workplace and college learning but they are part of their education programme and unlike apprenticeships they are unpaid.
- ▶ Employers have limited capacity and some have to deal with multiple requests from schools, colleges and employment support providers, whilst other employers are not contacted at all
- ▶ Some employers use the excuse of "Health and Safety" as a reason for not taking on someone with a disability and in most cases this is not valid.
- ▶ The previous focus on apprenticeship assessment resulted in some employers recruiting apprentices whilst providing little or no training This led, in some cases, to higher volumes of low-quality apprenticeships so the off-the-job funding rule that has been introduced seeks to ensure that apprentices have access to substantial training.

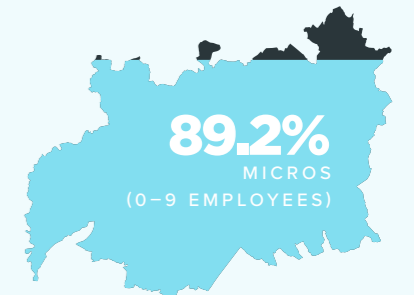
CHALLENGE

Employer engagement

APPROX.

29,735

BUSINESSES IN GLOUCESTERSHIRE



Local businesses and employers are critical to the success of all local and national employment and skills initiatives as they provide the job opportunities. There are approx.29,735 businesses in Gloucestershire and approx. 89.2% of these are micros (0-9 employees). This creates real challenges in terms of co-ordinated communications with employers and employers' ability to respond to support E & S initiatives.

The complexity and range of initiatives and having so many organisations operating in the local employment and skills landscape and engaging employers, means that some employers simply disengage, whilst others are not contacted nor aware of the initiatives. Once aware, employers then need further understanding and support to actually engage and support these initiatives.

The Gloucestershire Employment Charter pilot and the GCC & GFirst LEP Employment & Skills Hub will provide means of engaging employers in a co-ordinated way to enable customers to gain access to such things as: careers inspiration talks; work placements (including sustained programmes for T-levels and degree placements); Internships (including supported internships); Apprenticeships; Interview practice; Enterprise projects; 'Live' employer projects.

THE GLOUCESTERSHIRE EMPLOYMENT CHARTER PILOT



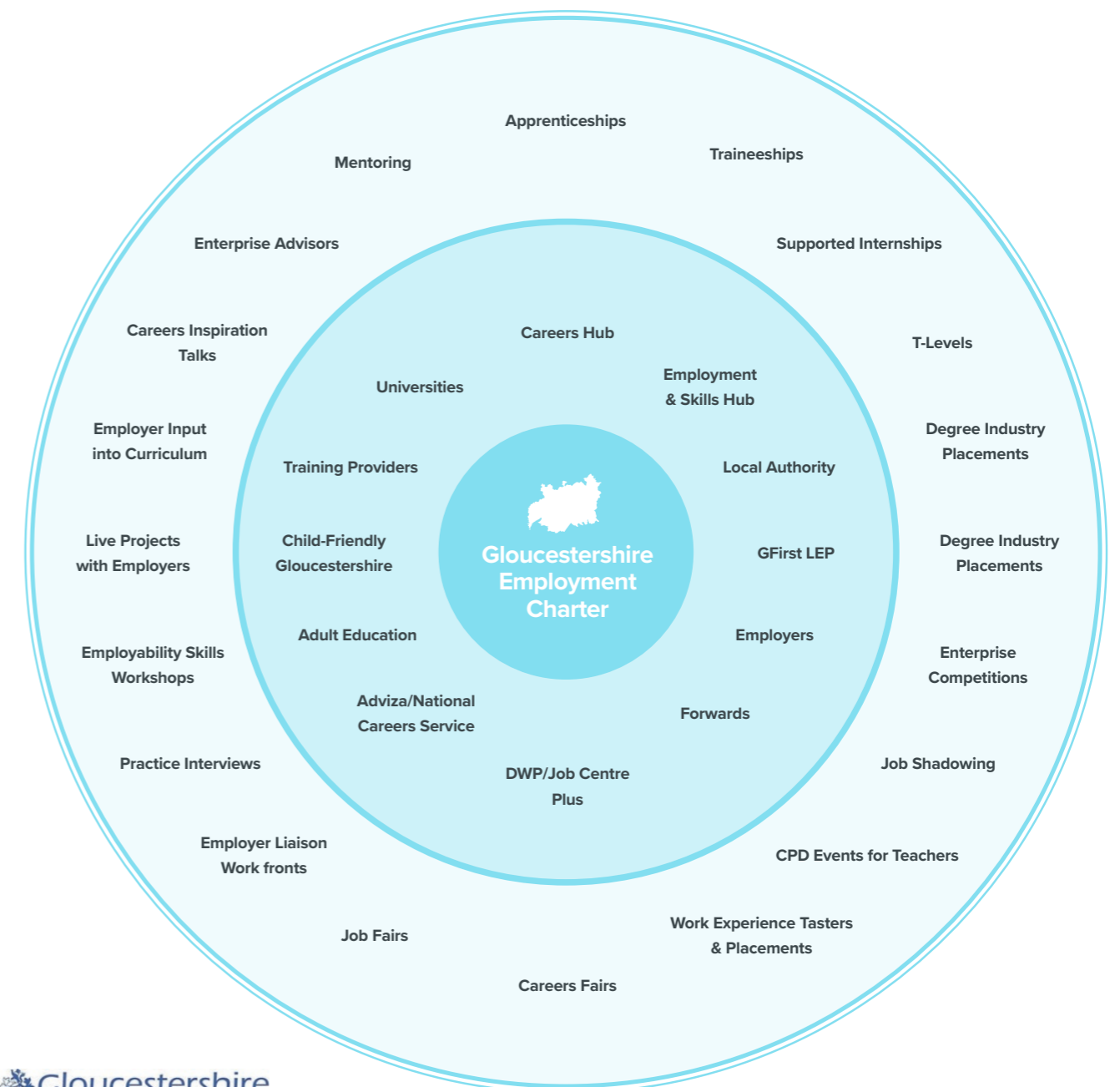
The Employment Charter pilot is a means of encouraging employers to extend their links with careers, education, employment and skills providers to help meet the needs of these providers, their learners, and customers to experience meaningful career-inspiring encounters with employers.

It provides a co-ordinated response to employers' concerns about current workforce and recruitment needs, and how to secure/retain future local talent. It is a responsive approach to manage and facilitate the support local education and skills providers have requested to increase access to the best quality employer engagement and workplace interactions.

The Employment Charter work will be led by GFirst LEP and Gloucestershire County Council and will involve working with local employers and several stakeholder organisations to deliver a wide range of employer engagement activities, work experience placements, and work-related careers support activities. The Charter will

underpin and integrate with the work of the Careers & Enterprise Company and GFirst Careers Hub.

The Charter will be piloted between January and March 2022 and lessons learned will be used to inform a wider roll-out across the County after April 2022. Six schools and one college have been selected for the pilot project and findings will include estimates of needs of the schools and college for such things as careers talks, enterprise education activities, work placements, and continuing professional development for a range of staff, etc. as well as the resources that would be needed to deliver the Employment Charter across all the secondary schools, colleges and higher education providers in Gloucestershire.



CHALLENGE

Family, peer and community challenges and opportunities

For some young people, their family, peers and community can negatively impact their aspirations and employability. In areas of high unemployment there are also high numbers of young people who are NEET. Young people often take inspiration from those around them and this can work positively or negatively. Working with the whole family in some cases will help to address the low aspirations both for the current and future generations. The Covid-19 pandemic saw a significant rise in unemployment which increased the probability of more workless households across the County. The loss of jobs in some sectors resulted in some adults and young people struggling to understand how their skills could transfer to another sector. Family learning programmes could help to support families experiencing unemployment and NEET situations.

Young people who are furthest from the labour market need the support of their families and communities to help them engage with provision. We need to ensure that families can support people both young and old when both looking for work and also when they start work. Without this we have found people can struggle so working with the family unit, social workers, teachers and others is essential as, particularly in the case of young people, they are influenced by others around them.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR IN EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS

The Voluntary and Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector in Gloucestershire is well placed to increase its already significant contribution to the economic, social and environmental development of the County.

The sector can do this through building on its reach into local communities, expanding/adapting established services to meet the changing needs of local residents. The VCSE sector already has a number of key strengths in:

- ▶ Innovation in products and services
- ▶ Engagement and support of under-represented groups and communities
- ▶ Flexibility and responsiveness to change

- ▶ Implementing community-led developments and capacity building

In addition to being important local employers, the majority of VCSE sector organisations in the County provide training for their staff and volunteers, and in many cases, offer training externally too. Volunteering, with suitable induction, training and ongoing support has been proven to be a very effective means of helping residents into or back into paid work.

The success of the GEM project has resulted from the VCSE Sector delivering outcomes for people in their communities. The VCSE Sector plays an important part in terms of skills delivery for people who are at risk of long-term unemployment.

Often people who are not in touch with Job Centre Plus (JCP) will find accessing community organisations easier. Many GEM participants were referred through community organisations that have a wealth of experience to provide support to people who need it.

For example, volunteering and social enterprise opportunities are a valuable way of helping to increase employability skills and build confidence. The value of community-based support should not be underestimated so we need to build on the excellent relationships GEM and other partnership work has developed with the VCSE Sector and encourage more cross sector working.

Social enterprises

We have a number of social enterprises in the county providing people at risk of long-term unemployment with a much-needed supportive environment to develop their skills. The Forest Upcycling Project, Café 16 and the Grace Network are examples of such projects that provide work experience, voluntary and paid work opportunities for people who have complex challenges. These and similar organisations have provided many people with their first step into or back into employment and support with progression into other jobs. They promote inclusivity and provide the employability and work skills that those who are disengaged need.

CHALLENGE

Economically Inactive

Another overlooked group are those who are "Economically Inactive". Most DWP programmes only work with those who are claiming Universal Credit (UC) but there are significantly more people who are not on UC or on UC who don't have the requirement for a work conversation. Because they are not in touch with the Job Centre they may miss out on having the opportunity to discuss potential employment. Many would like to work but they don't know how to access support. The Gloucestershire GEM Project provides support for people who are furthest from the labour market including those who are economically inactive. Funded by the National Lottery Community Fund and European Social Fund, GEM has made a big difference in providing support to people who have not engaged with other provision or JCP. Due to finish in December 2022 there will be a gap which will need to be filled by other provision coming on line through other funding sources.

BUSINESS START-UP SKILLS AND SELF EMPLOYMENT

Self-employment, particularly for some of our more disadvantaged groups, may be a viable option, however this requires promotion of self-employment and specific skills and support for which current provision is extremely limited.

Provision tends to be short-term and focused on developing a business plan and sourcing finance but there is little support for people during the first year of trading when the business is often most at risk. This sort of support and signposting to available provision like Co-Op Futures, GEL, the Growth Hub Network, Innovation Labs, Princes Trust, etc is needed, along with what support is offered.

Entrepreneurial skills taught to young people can have a range of benefits:

- ▶ encouraging young people to develop their own business ideas, gain an understanding about business which they can take into their first job
- ▶ help them to understand the further education pathways they may need to achieve their employment or self-employment goals
- ▶ help them identify routes of self-fulfilment beyond the traditional employment routes



DIGITAL AND CYBER SKILLS



CHALLENGE

Digital exclusion/ digital poverty

This is a challenge common to all providers in terms of individuals having access to hardware or broadband, but also having the skills to use computers as a successful means of communications or accessing training.

Local providers have started to roll out courses to help people with participation, however these cannot take a broad-brush approach. Within our customer groups, there is a broad spectrum of ability, so courses need to be tailored to an individual or group need. With courses delivered online due to Covid lockdown, most foundation level courses were unable to run due to learners not meeting the basic levels of IT.

Community Access to IT is limited although it is available the demand means that not everyone can access it at a time when it is needed.

Opportunity

There is scope for further research into and support for digital exclusion and poverty in Gloucestershire and for more organisations to support this work e.g. co-ordination through a Digital Skills Partnership, donation of used IT equipment by employers for refurbishment and re-use within the community, tailored digital skills courses, subsidised broadband access, etc.

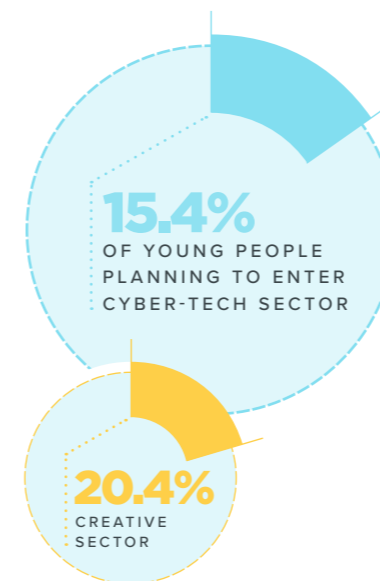
The recent increase in cyber and digital provision at Levels 4 to 7 provides stronger pathways into cyber and digital careers. Along with Cynam's, the colleges' and universities' and GFirst LEP's work to establish more extensive and deeper links with local cyber and digital employers, this should result in a pipeline of talent for local employers and opportunities for those achieving these qualifications to gain local employment opportunities. This in turn will help retain a number of young people in-county who may have sought to study and then work elsewhere.

We will need to continue to support the work of these local providers and assist them in establishing strong links with local cyber and digital employers, as well as helping them to promote the associated careers and employment pathways via such platforms as the Careers Hub and Skills Portal.

We will continue to support emerging initiatives to encourage greater collaboration between businesses active in the cyber-tech and digital sector, academia, and nationally important institutions such as GCHQ. Collaborative working of this nature will create an environment in which innovation within cyber-tech, artificial intelligence and associated cross-sector businesses will flourish and grow. We will also to continue look beyond Gloucestershire, to seek collaborations with others such as the Universities of Oxford, Bath, South Wales, Cardiff, and Bristol to further develop and accelerate the pipeline of talent to satisfy current demand and support projected growth in cyber-tech and the digital economy.

Cyber and digital skills development in Gloucestershire schools

Our overall aim is to increase the pipeline of talent entering the local cyber and digital workforce. The strong and growing cyber and digital 'cluster' in Gloucestershire will provide significant employment opportunities for these young people as they leave the education system and help meet one of our Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) goals of retaining more young people in the County.



Through our LIS research, we identified that 15.4% of young people surveyed have plans to enter the cyber-tech sector showing a good level of interest, with room to grow. 20.4% want to enter the creative industries, which is increasingly likely to incorporate advanced digital skills.

The provision and delivery of cyber/digital information and engagement throughout Gloucestershire's secondary schools and colleges is of a high quality in comparison to many other parts of the UK mainly as a result of the Cyber First programme established in association with the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) and the location and support of GCHQ. This work has been further accelerated by Cynam employing an Employer Engagement Enterprise Co-Ordinator who works closely with the GFirst LEP's Careers Hub team and who is co-funded by the Careers & Enterprise Company and Capita.



The Cyber First programme which has focused on secondary schools and colleges, building relationships with digital/cyber focused businesses, aims to get education and business working together to better understand the future training needs and requirements in Gloucestershire; inspiring and developing our future pipeline of talent. Due to the success of the programme, it will be extended and expanded to encourage further school and business engagement throughout the South West. [CyberFirst Schools / Colleges - NCSC.GOV.UK](https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/cyberfirst)

CHALLENGE

Uptake of cyber and digital skills programmes in schools

Unfortunately, not all Gloucestershire academies/secondary schools can commit to the Cyber First programme and not all are able to deliver Computer Science at GCSE and or A-Level due in many cases to the availability of staff and current resources but this does not exclude these schools from entering other associated programmes so that all students and learners can participate in some level of cyber learning and activity.

It is important that everyone, in particular girls and members of the BAME community, have the opportunity to learn more about this rapidly developing sector and not to feel 'left behind' or excluded.

To support this aim, there are a range of activities that any school and young person can become involved in such as:

-  Cyber Girls Competition
-  bursaries and apprenticeships
-  CyberFirst Schools/Colleges
-  CyberFirst resources
-  CyberSprinters

[Schools - NCSC.GOV.UK](https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/schools)

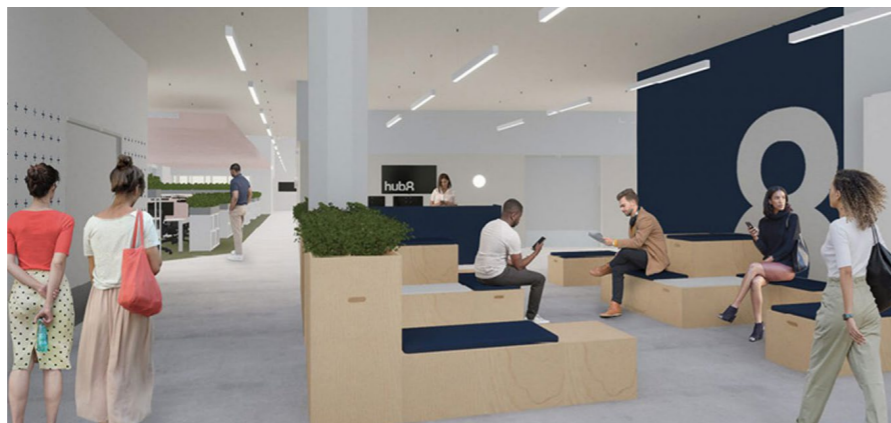
In addition to the Cyber First programme, GFirst LEP, the Careers & Enterprise Company (CEC) and CyNam are committed to collaborating further to work with a wide range of schools, delivering targeted presentations, focused careers events, cyber activities and vocational experiences, to enable schools to meet their Gatsby Benchmarks and Baker Clause/provider access agreement requirements as well as enabling access to further vocational training and employment opportunities with cyber focused businesses.

We want every secondary school, college, university and independent training provider based within the county, to be able to take advantage and thrive in this rapidly developing cyber/digital landscape, and to enable all students and learners to explore a range of pathways and opportunities to enter this sector or access further training. We will continue to encourage active involvement and engagement with as many schools as possible, by building on those relationships through the Careers Hub the recruitment and placing of specialist Cyber Enterprise advisors to create positive cyber careers and education platform.



Cyber and digital skills development for individuals and employers in further and higher education

Colleges, universities and independent training providers operating in Gloucestershire have been both proactive and responsive to the cyber and digital skills needs of local employers. In recent years, they have expanded and updated their provision to better suit the needs of local residents and employers, and there is now strong provision in place across all levels, from helping residents become more 'digitally savvy' to bank, shop and access services online, to specific, degree/level 6 qualifications that are in demand from local employers to upskill existing employees or enable them to recruit employees with these skills already developed. We are keen to see this work continue to better match local provision with local demand and to adapt to the rapidly changing cyber and digital training needs of local employers and residents. This can only be achieved through the ongoing active support of local employers, and we are working closely with Cynam (Cyber Cheltenham) to expand and increase the effectiveness of links with local cyber and digital employers, as well as employers who need cyber and digital skills but which operate in other sectors.



Gloucestershire College has established cyber incubation units within the College's Cheltenham Campus to create a range of new office space, shared and dedicated laboratories, workshops and co-working facilities designed specifically for high-tech, cyber-based entrepreneurs and innovators, with access to educational facilities. This was part-funded through GFirst LEP and the 'Getting Building Fund'. Gloucestershire College's cyber and digital provision has been enhanced through collaboration with the University of West of England (UWE) and currently includes provision at Level 4 (HNC Computing, Software Developer Higher Apprenticeship, Software Tester Higher Apprenticeship), Level 5 (HND Digital Forensics and Cyber Security), and Level 6 (Cyber Security Technical Professional Integrated Degree Apprenticeship).



GCHQ is the UK's national cyber security and communications centre and has created a large pool of skills and talent that also impacts on local employment in finance, computing and management-consultancy, with particular focus on microbusiness and high-growth sectors. GCHQ runs engagement initiatives such as demonstrating new technologies at the Cheltenham science festival and sponsoring entrepreneurship programmes in local schools. In terms of talent engagement and retention, there may be further scope for GCHQ to support talent networks for spinouts and engage with local education providers as broader activity around cyber and AI data sectors progress.



Cirencester College, again in part through its involvement in the Swindon College-led IoT, is in the process of building a £4.48m digital skills centre to open in Spring 2022. This centre will provide additional learning space modelled on digital industries, rather than traditional classrooms, and will support progression into cyber and digital careers. Again, this was part-funded through GFirst LEP and the 'Getting Building Fund'.



Gloucestershire College, the University of West of England (UWE) and the University of Gloucestershire, in part through their involvement in the two Institutes of Technology (IoTs) that operate in the County, are working with other universities, businesses and government agencies on the Cheltenham Cyber Park ('Cyber Central') within the Golden Valley Development area.



Gloucestershire's Universities, Further Education colleges, Adult Education Service, Library Service and independent training providers (ITPs) are increasingly seeking to align the courses they offer with the many local opportunities in cyber-tech and further work on this alignment is welcomed.



The University of Gloucestershire, through both its School of Business and Technology, and its C11 Cyber Training facility at Berkeley Science and Technology Park, undertakes research and knowledge exchange activities that support innovation; deliver innovative solutions, courses, training and materials in areas related to cyber-tech and digital, business growth and innovation. Provision currently includes Level 7 (MSc in Cyber Security; Technical and Applied Computing; Creative Computing; Digital Construction), Level 6 (BSc (Hons) in Computer and Cyber Forensics; Cyber and Computer Security; Computing Technologies and Degree Apprenticeship in Digital and Technology Solutions).



South Gloucestershire and Stroud College's cyber and digital provision currently includes provision at Level 4 (HNC/HND Computing, and the following Higher Apprenticeships: Software Developer; Software Tester; Cyber Security Technologist; Network Engineer).

FUNCTIONAL SKILLS

Functional skills are vital skills in maths, English and information and communication technology (ICT) that most people need in their daily lives.

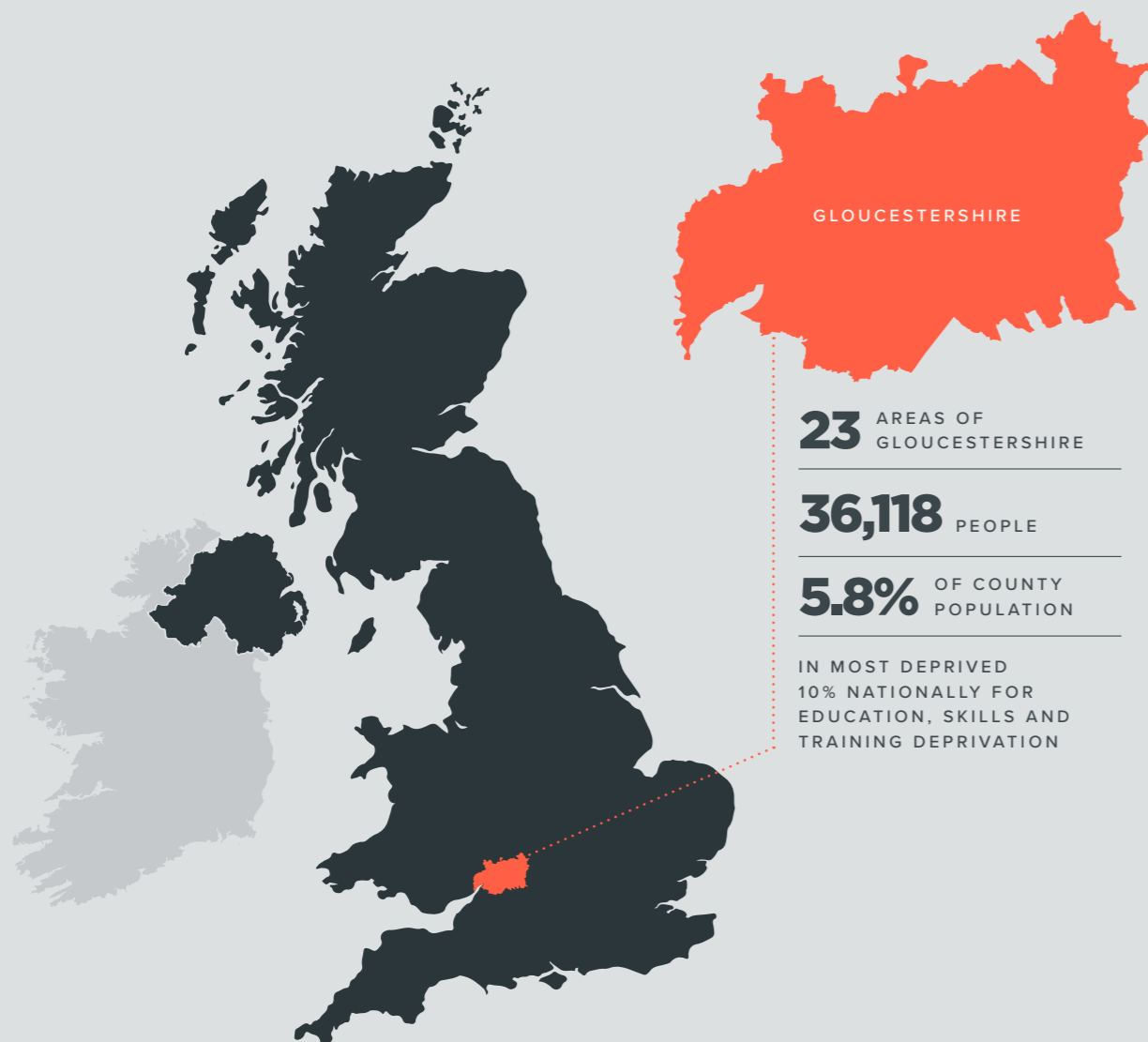
There are 23 areas of Gloucestershire in the most deprived 10% nationally for Education, Skills and Training Deprivation. These 23 areas account for 36,118 people (5.8% of the county population).

It is important that the drive to deliver higher level skills in the County does not happen at the expense of supporting those residents who need to develop and improve their functional skills.

Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) Adult Education Service, colleges, independent training providers and union learning teams all support this agenda by delivering functional skills programmes.



It is essential that these programmes continue to be funded and delivered in Gloucestershire.



LIFETIME SKILLS GUARANTEE

NATIONAL SKILLS FUND
£2.5 BILLION

LIFETIME SKILLS GUARANTEE
£95 MILLION
FUNDING



£3,400
PER PERSON

4,000
FREE LEVEL 3
QUALIFICATIONS
AND SKILLS
BOOTCAMPS

The Lifetime Skills Guarantee is a government-backed initiative which is aimed at transforming the skills system so that everyone, no matter where they live and irrelevant to their background, can gain the skills they need to progress in work at any stage of their lives.

It is funded by approx. £95 million from the £2.5 billion National Skills Fund. The guarantee is estimated to be worth about £3,400 per person and currently includes approx. 4,000 free level 3 (equivalent to A-Levels) qualifications and the skills bootcamps (including the Digital Skills Bootcamps and HGV Driver Bootcamps mentioned elsewhere in this strategy).



The qualifications offered under the Lifetime Skills Guarantee will be regularly reviewed to help meet future skills needs as the economy changes.



Skills intelligence, co-ordination and investment – making things happen

In order to make best use of limited resources in the County, all employment and skills planning, support and delivery organisations need to work collaboratively and prioritise key workstreams around obtaining and sharing skills intelligence, co-ordinating their work and seeking and securing investment in the local employment and skills system.

SUMMARY



Skills intelligence:

- ▶ Gather and disseminate accurate and up-to-date Labour Market Information (LMI); Audit, strengthen and expand careers support; GFirst Careers Hub; National Careers Service provision



Co-Ordination

- ▶ Dealing with the challenge of a complex and cluttered careers, employment and skills landscape



Investment:

- ▶ Secure and make best use of limited resources



Implementing this skills strategy:

- ▶ The role of the Gloucestershire Skills Advisory Panel (GSAP); the employment and skills Action Plan

SKILLS INTELLIGENCE

Information on key trends and demands in the local labour market can be used to inform the provision of education and training, the development of career paths, and organisations' recruitment processes. It also helps with securing and prioritising limited employment and skills funding and other resources and targeting these to those most in need.



Accurate and up-to-date Labour Market Information (LMI) is fundamental in:

- ▶ Helping young people and adults make informed choices about jobs and careers
- ▶ Helping training providers adjust their provision in order to better meet local employers' needs and maximise their learners' opportunities to progress into work
- ▶ Helping businesses to understand the level of competition for employees and who they are competing with for them (as this now works cross-sector with many adults who are in mid-career, switching or being forced to switch to different sectors).
- ▶ Helping employment support providers (e.g. delivering the DWP/Jobcentre Plus work coach support, or the Kickstart, JETS and Restart programmes) to better understand the local jobs market and therefore better support their customers
- ▶ Bids for additional resources to support employment and skills work in the County

This in turn, may help the County as a whole retain more of its young people, especially if the jobs and careers that are more visible to them are attractive ones for them.

GFirst LEP and Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) are well placed to ensure that the work already commenced to provide effective LMI to those that need it, continues and is developed further to meet customers' needs. This work already underway includes:

- ▶ Monthly LMI reports to schools, colleges and alternative provision settings via the Careers Hub
- ▶ Monthly LMI reports to other training providers via the Skills Portal
- ▶ Monthly LMI reports for those seeking work/career change via the Skills Portal
- ▶ The licencing of the EMSI Career Coach careers and job postings tool available via the Skills Portal
- ▶ Use of LMI by employment and training providers with their customers
- ▶ Use of LMI by Employment & Skills Hub staff with customers



Further work is needed to:

Audit, strengthen and expand Careers Support in Gloucestershire

This includes:

- ▶ Research current Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) capacity available across Gloucestershire to identify demand across the whole education and skills sector to optimise supply
- ▶ Further training, sharing of good practice and resources for school careers leads via the Careers Hub
- ▶ Ensuring all employment and training providers have adequate careers support capacity, and if not, seeking ways to resource and facilitate this
- ▶ Recruitment and training of more careers advisers, especially those with the skills needed to support adults changing careers at 50+ into other sectors, by Adviza, DWP, employment and training providers, GFirst LEP & GCC for the Employment & Skills Hub





- Gatsby Benchmark 1**
A stable careers programme.
- Gatsby Benchmark 2**
Learning from labour market information.
- Gatsby Benchmark 3**
Addressing the needs of every pupil.
- Gatsby Benchmark 4**
Linking curriculum learning to careers.
- Gatsby Benchmark 5**
Encounters with employers and employees.
- Gatsby Benchmark 6**
Experience of workplaces.
- Gatsby Benchmark 7**
Encounters with FE and HE.
- Gatsby Benchmark 8**
Personal Guidance.



IN PARTNERSHIP WITH:
THE CAREERS & ENTERPRISE COMPANY

GFIRST CAREERS HUB



Background to our Careers Hub

Co-funded by GFirst LEP and the Department for Education via The Careers and Enterprise Company, the GFirst Careers Hub has been created to support schools, colleges and alternative provision settings in Gloucestershire to develop their own strong and innovative careers programmes. The GFirst Careers Hub was set up in the Summer of 2020 and went live that Autumn.

Careers Hubs are being established across England and these are the main support mechanisms for careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) for young people. Careers Hubs are encouraged to become 'Incubators for Innovation' where the Careers and Enterprise Company mantra of 'Test, Learn and Adapt', can be applied locally to improve outcomes for young people, education providers and employers.

Aim of our Careers Hub

The aim of the GFirst Careers Hub is ensure that every young person has access to high quality, relevant and informed careers education, advice and guidance at multiple points during their time in secondary and post-16 education. Having this support leads to higher levels of attainment and achievement, greater ambition and positive increases in socio-economic metrics such as the Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) or social mobility indicators.

Eligibility to join the Careers Hub

Every state-funded educational institution that has pupils aged between 11 and 18 years is eligible to become a part of their local network, including selective schools, special schools, FE and Sixth Form colleges and alternative provisions.

In Gloucestershire there 59 eligible schools and colleges, of which 49 are already in the Careers Hub and the remaining 10 are in the extended network with very levels of engagement (Figures at January 2022).

There is a place for every secondary-level state funded school, college and alternative provision setting and a role for every suitable business volunteer and employer within the GFirst Careers Hub. By creating links between them we can improve the support and advice that young people need to make informed choices about their careers, further and higher education.

Who supports the work of the Careers Hub?

The Careers Hub staff - The Careers Hub currently has five members of staff, the Hub Manager, and four Enterprise Co-Ordinators, who each work strategically with a caseload of schools, colleges, and alternative provision settings and with a range of local employers and partner organisations. Work with the cyber and digital sector and initiatives in the County is enhanced by the work of an Employer Engagement Enterprise Co-Ordinator, who is employed by Cynam (Cyber Cheltenham) and who liaises closely with the Careers Hub team.

Enterprise Advisers - Hub schools and colleges are also supported by Enterprise Advisers, local business professionals who support the careers lead in the establishment to raise the aspirations of young people throughout Gloucestershire, develop and implement the establishment's careers strategy, implement the Gatsby Benchmarks, and engage with the Senior Leadership Teams within educational facilities. They use their strategic skills to put opportunities with local employers at the heart of a young person's education.

As well as partners such as Gloucestershire County Council, the DWP and LEP business groups, the GFirst Careers Hub is also supported by some strategic and operational teams:

The Careers Hub Steering Group provides strategic oversight and review of the Hub's work. Meeting at least once a term the group is made up of colleagues from industry, education, local authorities, youth groups, civil service, voluntary and charitable sectors. The

group reviews progress, helps to set targets and objectives and plays the role of 'critical friend'.

The Careers Hub Cornerstone Employer Group is made up of businesses and employers who are keen to engage in more depth and to work with the Hub team to support the development of careers education. The Group drives conversations within their own networks (both by encouraging their own staff to become Enterprise Advisers and by acting as cheerleaders within their industries), engages directly with schools, colleges and young people and provides feedback that informs Hub priorities e.g. the difficulties being faced by employers in recruiting new staff and how these issues could be tackled.

There are currently five employers in the GFirst Careers Hub Cornerstone Employer Group but the aim is to recruit more in order to better represent the local economy and employment landscape.

Child-Friendly Gloucestershire is a coalition of organisations and individuals from faith, voluntary, commercial and statutory sectors in Gloucestershire that aspires to a County where all children and young people can flourish. The Coalition is designed to be the focal point in the County for the development of services for all children, young people and their families under Section 10 of the Children's Act (2004).

In particular, the 'transition to employment' workstream of Child-Friendly Gloucestershire works closely with the GFirst Careers Hub to increase local employment opportunities for young people and to decrease youth unemployment.

CHALLENGE

Data and information on school and college careers support for young people

This is held by the Careers & Enterprise Company (CEC) and the GFirst Careers Hub and relies on the schools, colleges and alternative provision settings in the Hub completing and submitting termly self-assessments against the Gatsby Benchmarks using a tool called Compass +.

Some schools are currently not submitting termly updates so consequently the Hub team and the Careers & Enterprise Company are unable to help them with suitable resources/solutions to their careers education offer and their students may therefore be missing out.

CHALLENGE

School prioritisation of and resources for careers support

Schools and colleges have limited resources to support their students' careers education. In some cases, this impacts through having a careers lead who has several other responsibilities and limited time to plan and manage a careers programme. In other cases there is a disconnect between the careers lead and the school senior leadership team.

How much and how effectively schools prioritise careers support for students varies considerably from school to school and between multi-academy trusts (MATs).

Schools do not have 'ringfenced' careers education budgets and many students/ex-students have fed back to the Hub team that exam success is prioritised over preparation for work and effective careers education.



Priorities for the Careers Hub:

The Hub's strategic plan has been developed in a format consistent with CEC requirements and those of the other Careers Hubs in the country. The plan links closely with the wider employment and skills priorities in Gloucestershire and the Steering Group ensures that the work of the Careers Hub is closely aligned with these priorities and the changing careers support needs of young people in the County.

We aim for a careers system that has a measurable impact on young people - now and in the future:

1

Amplifying Technical & Vocational Routes

We will:

- ▶ use local knowledge and Labour Market Information (LMI) to signpost routes into apprenticeships and technical education
- ▶ promote and bring together the support available for young people with apprenticeships and technical education, including the support offered by ASK, DWP, Uni Connect
- ▶ work with Cornerstone Employers to provide a blended approach (online and face-to-face) to employer engagement and work experience
- ▶ reduce the risk of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds not accessing technical and/or vocational education

2

A Self-Improving System

We will:

- ▶ engage school and college Heads, Governors and Senior Leadership Teams (SLTs) to help them further improve their careers strategies and careers support for their students through their School Improvement Plan, improved student attainment and outcomes
- ▶ work with Hub schools and colleges to improve their use of Compass+ and increase the number of returns. Plan with CEC materials a coordinated programme to improve knowledge and understanding of the available resources and how Compass+ can make an impact at school level
- ▶ assess current levels of Careers Leader training, experience and confidence and seek resources to improve these as required
- ▶ reduce risk of hard to reach communities not accessing the guidance and advice that their young people need to make good choices about their future
- ▶ maximise the effectiveness of Enterprise Advisors as a resource for schools and colleges



We include all young people in careers education - working to remove barriers:

3

Effective Transitions

We will:

- ▶ Address lack of knowledge about what is on offer from employers and educate employers about the difference they can make in supporting transitions
- ▶ Ensure students have access to transition support so that they are supported to make good informed decisions about their future
- ▶ Increase local partnership working with key organisations in order to provide a full menu of options for all, including GROWS, Prospects, GCC, GEM/Forwards
- ▶ Increase young people's awareness of independent training providers by ensuring that there is an inclusive approach to CEIAG

4

Removing Barriers

We will:

- ▶ Work with employers to organise industry-led events and increase the uptake of employer engagement and work experience opportunities
- ▶ Consider commissioning deeper research and evaluation into the seasonal job market - what is the offer and why some young people do not take up these roles
- ▶ Work with partner organisations to seek ways to reduce the digital poverty that is negatively affecting certain communities furthest away from education or employment opportunities

We build leaders and institutions who can sustain the mission in the long term:

5

Building leaders for the system

We will:

- ▶ Work with school and college Heads, Governors and Senior Leadership Teams (SLTs) to help them develop themselves, their Careers Leaders and others in their organisations to lead system changes and improvements in CEIAG
- ▶ Better demonstrate the impact our work is having and why
- ▶ Work with our Cornerstone Employers to provide examples and leadership in CEIAG to other employers
- ▶ Address the risk of some areas / schools progressing faster than others if there isn't an engaged community of Careers Leaders
- ▶ Create strong, defined links with other local groups and strategies: GSAP, LSIP, Future Me, Child Friendly Gloucestershire, GCC Employment & Skills Hub, DWP Youth Hubs

6

Careers Education as part of economic recovery

We will:

- ▶ use local knowledge and Labour Market Information (LMI) to signpost routes into apprenticeships and technical education so that more young people enter employment with local employers
- ▶ bring local employers and education institutions together to help the employers build sustainable 'talent pipelines' and recruit young people

Employers build long term sustainable, mutually beneficial partnerships with schools and colleges

7

Employers build long term sustainable, mutually beneficial partnerships with schools and colleges

We will:

- ▶ collaborate with industry partners to develop education & skills pathways into local employment sectors and organisations
- ▶ use local knowledge and Labour Market Information (LMI) to signpost routes into apprenticeships and technical education so that more young people enter employment with local employers
- ▶ bring local employers and education institutions together to help the employers build sustainable 'talent pipelines' and recruit young people

National Careers Service provision in Gloucestershire

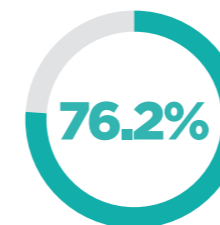


Adviza currently holds the contract to deliver the National Careers Service (NCS) in Gloucestershire.



Between April and October 2021, the NCS in Gloucestershire delivered by Adviza, supported 1,625 customers (including 898 male and 710 female), providing support that included:

- career planning and psychometric testing;
- CV support;
- matching customers to local employers and jobs;
- identification and support for confidence or motivational issues;
- help to improve digital skills;
- skills gap analysis;
- provision of local Labour Market information (LMI);
- webinars in specific careers;
- redundancy support.



UNEMPLOYED / RISK OF REDUNDANCY



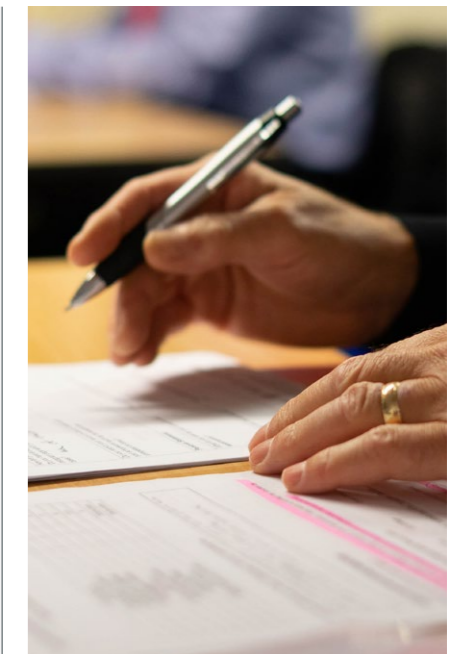
AGE 50+



NEET

76.2% of the customers supported by Adviza were unemployed or at risk of redundancy and 15% were aged over 50 and unemployed. 21.4% were NEET. Analysis of the most popular jobs sought by their customers during this period highlighted the most sought-after job roles were:

- drivers;
- storage and warehouse managers;
- sales and retail assistants;
- receptionists;
- production and process engineers;
- primary and nursery education teaching professionals;
- labourers;
- kitchen and catering assistants.



Opportunities

Work has already commenced to get National Careers Service (NCS) and DWP/Jobcentre Plus staff and customers to utilise the Career Coach tool hosted by GFirst LEP on the Gloucestershire Skills Portal <https://www.skillsportalglos.com/career-coach/>. This will enable them to access a GFirst LEP centrally purchased and free-to-users careers tool that links with live job postings. Greater awareness and uptake of this tool will provide further careers information and LMI for individual customers and the staff who support them.

A redundancy 'taskforce' including Adviza, DWP, GFirst LEP, local authorities, Growth Hub Network partner organisations, unions and training providers was established in 2020 and there is an ongoing need to ensure there is early visibility and intervention when local employers are considering making redundancies.

Greater collaboration and integration of the National Careers Service with the Careers Hub, GFirst LEP and the GCC and GFirst LEP Employment & Skills Hub will enable better planning and support for those seeking work, moving from one sector to another or retraining.

Work with NCS colleagues to understand and support their plans for continual professional development (CPD) for careers advisers, particularly around sector knowledge and County priorities e.g. agri-tech, cyber and digital, health & social care.

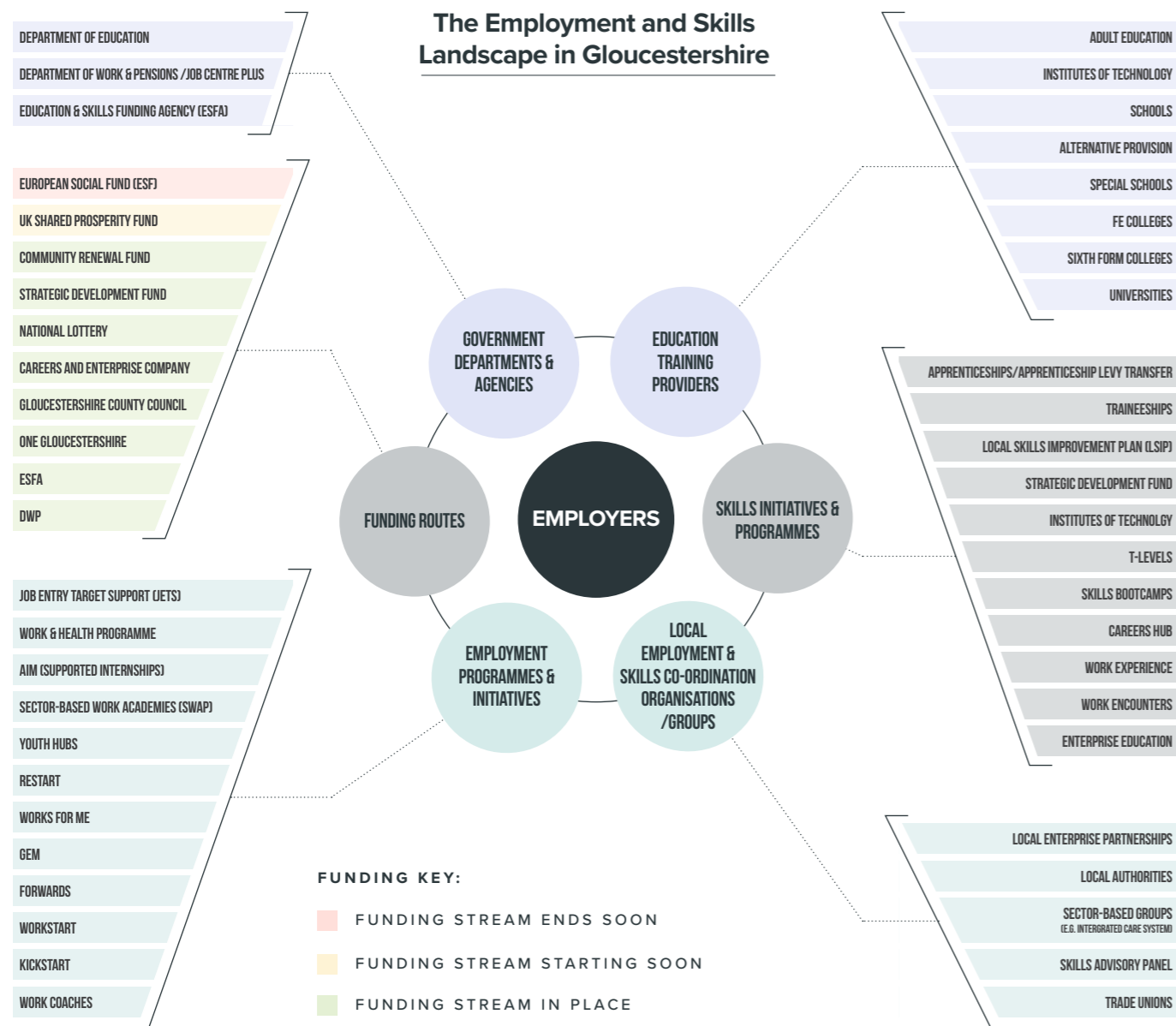
SKILLS CO-ORDINATION

CHALLENGE

Complex and cluttered careers, employment and skills landscape

As can be seen from the diagram below, the local careers, employment and skills landscape is complex and places great demands on local employers, as well as those seeking to co-ordinate the work and funding streams involved. This in turn, means that it is challenging for young people and adults seeking support and guidance on careers, employment and skills to know where to go or who to ask for appropriate information and help.

The plethora of national employment and skills initiatives that are commissioned/procured by DWP and DfE (e.g. Kickstart, Restart, Digital Skills Bootcamps, Local Skills Improvement Plan Trailblazers, etc.) need co-ordinating and steering locally in order to avoid duplication/confusion for potential customers.



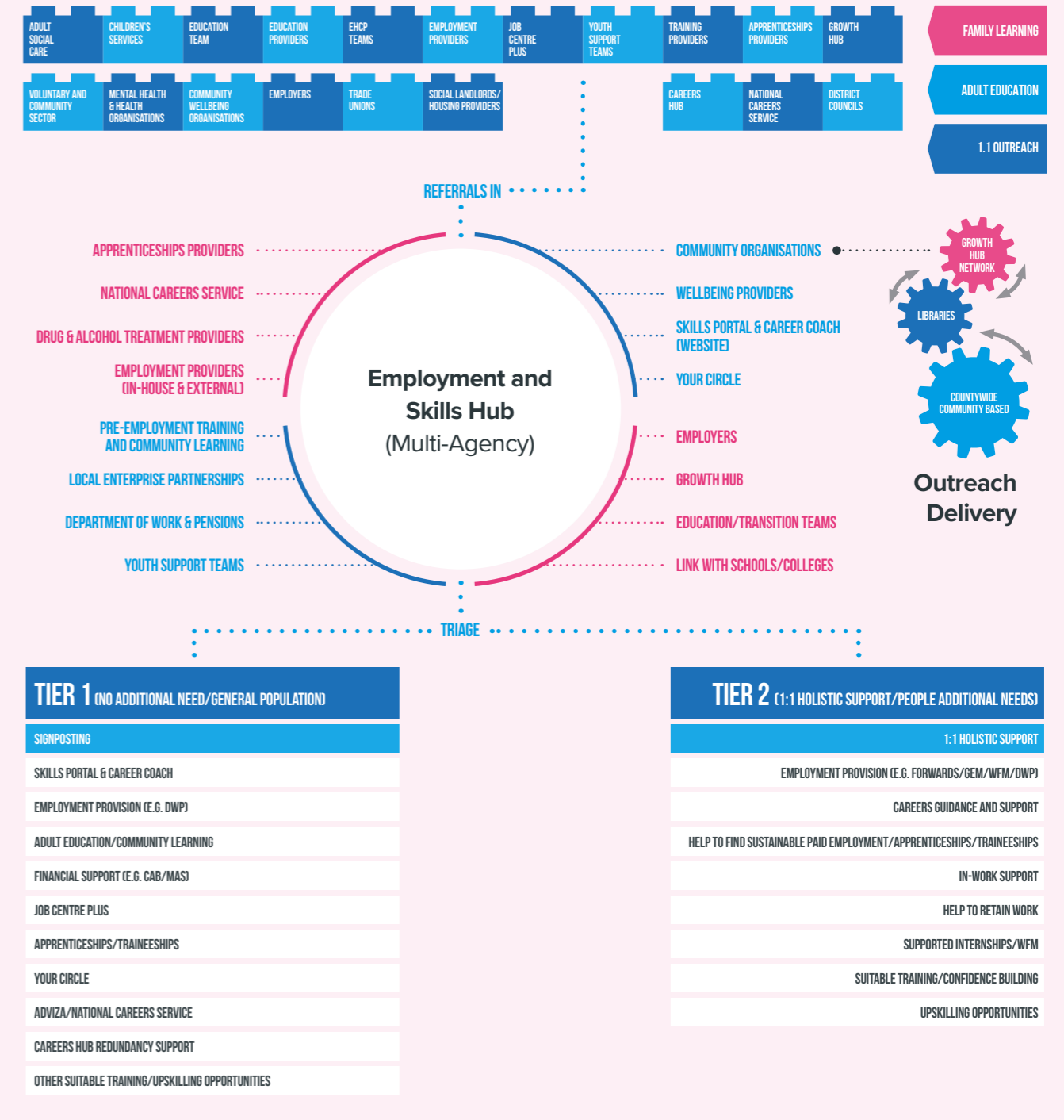
Various approaches already being taken are intended to 'declutter' this complex situation and make it easier for young people and adults to engage and find the support they need. These approaches include:

- ▶ The 'direction of travel', collaborative approach and workstreams highlighted in this strategy and action plan

- ▶ The strategic planning and review work undertaken by Gloucestershire Skills Advisory Panel (GSAP). This work and the membership of the GSAP is explained more fully at <https://www.gfirstlep.com/about-us/skills-for-business/>

- ▶ The work of the GCC and GFirst LEP's Employment & Skills Hub and the GFirst Careers Hub brings together strategic and operational 'join up' in the County (please see the diagram below) and provide focal points for external bids for Employment & Skills projects and resources

Partner Organisations



INVESTMENT - SECURE AND MAKE BEST USE OF LIMITED RESOURCES



CHALLENGE

Employment and skills funding

Funding for employment and skills delivery, and particularly the co-ordination of this work and 'bridge-building' between agencies, providers and employers, is very limited so existing resources need to be managed and utilised effectively.

Some employment and skills funding streams are coming to an end (e.g. European Social Fund (ESF)) whilst others require local match-funding to continue (e.g. Careers Hub requires c £70k p.a. to retain the Enterprise Co-Ordinators and their support and delivery of careers programmes in schools and alternative provision settings.)

Colleges and independent training providers find it hard to secure sufficient resources to deliver 'bread and butter' training courses that are needed by local employers and residents, but which do not come with bidding opportunities for capital or revenue funding.

Opportunities

Further funding opportunities such as Community Renewal Fund (CRF) and UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) will be managed by the Economy, Environment & Infrastructure (EE&I) team of GCC in conjunction with Central Government, whilst others e.g. Strategic Development Fund will be managed centrally by DfE.

The Employment & Skills Hub set up by GCC and GFirst LEP will help ensure expertise is available to bid for and access these funds, either directly, or through shaping/contributing to bids from local partner organisations.

IMPLEMENTING THIS SKILLS STRATEGY



The employment and skills Action Plan

This will be used to co-ordinate and drive the implementation of the strategy. It will require actions, resources and collaboration between a wide range of local and national careers, employment and skills providers, employers, funders and agencies and will be reviewed quarterly and reported on every six months.

The main workstreams of the action plan are shown in section 2 of this strategy and the detailed actions, along with those responsible for delivery, outcomes, resources and success measures are shown within the action plan itself. This can be found at <https://www.gfirstlep.com/downloads/2022/action-plan-for-employment-and-skills-strategy-v5-jan-2022.pdf>

The role of the Gloucestershire Skills Advisory Panel (GSAP)

The Gloucestershire Skills Advisory Panel (GSAP) provides a link between local economic development needs and strategic planning, with the mandate to address issues around skills and unemployment/worklessness in the County. It is an advisory body with no legal status but with a specific role as part of GFirst Local Enterprise Partnership and the local authority structure within Gloucestershire.

The aim of the Panel is to boost economic growth by creating a more appropriate,

relevant and highly skilled local workforce, and its role is to shape and influence employment and skills training and support to meet the skills needs of employers in Gloucestershire.

This is done by engaging private and public sector employers, colleges, training providers and the voluntary and community sector in the development and delivery of this integrated employment and skills strategy, associated action plan and workstreams.

The GSAP will be responsible for the monitoring and reporting of progress against the skills strategy and action plan to the GFirst LEP Board and the Gloucestershire Economic Growth Joint Committee (GEGJC).

ANNEXES

1

How the strategy was developed

This strategy was developed in the Autumn of 2021 when the economic impacts of Covid and EU Exit were combining with a number of underlying, structural issues in certain sectors in the County. The strategy is therefore a combination of a continuation of the trajectory for employment and skills that we established through the following strategic plans and as a strategic and tactical response to the impacts of Covid and EU Exit.

- ▶ the Strategic Economic Plan (SEP)
- ▶ the European Structural Investment Fund (ESIF) Strategy
- ▶ the Local Industrial Strategy
- ▶ the Employment & Skills Evidence Base
- ▶ the Local Skills Report

All the above documents can be accessed at

<https://www.gfirstlep.com/about-us/skills-for-business/>

Under the direction of the GFirst LEP Director of Employment and Skills, the strategy was written by members of staff within GFirst LEP and Gloucestershire County Council, with contributions from local businesses and employers, Gloucestershire Skills Advisory Panel (GSAP) members, Gloucestershire County Council and District Council members and officers, LEP Board members, DWP/Jobcentre Plus, Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and training providers.

If you would like to provide any feedback on this strategy, please contact the GFirst LEP Director of Employment and Skills peter.carr@gfirstlep.com

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Sources and links to further information

These are included in the body of the strategy at relevant points. Further employment and skills data for Gloucestershire can be found at <https://www.gfirstlep.com/about-us/skills-for-business/> including three other key documents published at the same time as this strategy:

- ▶ the Employment & Skills Evidence Base
- ▶ the Local Skills Report
- ▶ Local Skills Report Core Indicators (Annex A)





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