Report June 2023

Cheshire & Warrington Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP)

Opening Statement

This Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) has been approved by the Secretary of State in line with the approval criteria set out in the Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022, and in accordance with the LSIP Statutory Guidance.

Foreword

The Cheshire & Warrington Local Skills Improvement Plan is built on the voices of local employers and the needs of the people who live and work here. It reflects the real skills challenges facing our region and sets out clear actions to address them.

Through focused engagement with businesses, education providers and partners, this plan identifies where technical skills are needed most, highlights the importance of careers guidance and employability, and recognises the barriers many people face in accessing training or work. It also acknowledges the pressures on educational professionals and the need for stronger links between learning and industry.

This is a practical document, shaped by real feedback and designed to support lasting change. It marks the start of a long-term approach to building a stronger, more responsive skills system for Cheshire & Warrington.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed so far. Your insight is helping to shape a better future for the region.

About the Cheshire & Warrington LSIP

Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs) have been developed to ensure that employers' most pressing skills needs are reflected within the local skills system.

The Cheshire & Warrington LSIP aims to support employers in articulating their skills needs whilst brokering links with Post-16 technical education providers and shaping current and future provision.

Through the development of our LSIP, our engagement with employers has led to:

- **Employers providing specific details of occupations relevant to their businesses**
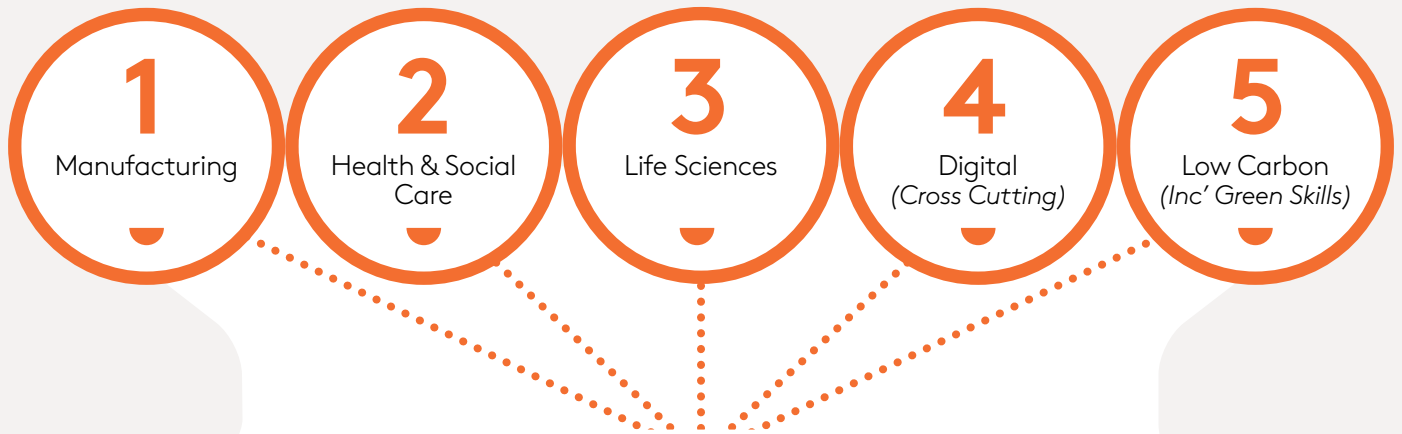
- **Employers highlighting what skills matter for their businesses**

From this, and a range of other intelligence, we have created the LSIP for the sub-region. The aim is to ensure the current and future workforce have the necessary skills and access to local opportunities, as well being able to upskill or reskill to meet changes within industry.

We also want to ensure that we can be responsive to the developing needs of employers.

The LSIP focuses on

5 priority sectors:

1 Manufacturing

2 Health & Social Care

3 Life Sciences

4 Digital *(Cross Cutting)*

5 Low Carbon *(Inc' Green Skills)*

5 cross-cutting themes

Accessibility

Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance

Technical Skills

Employability Competencies

Educational Professionals

PROJECTED OUTCOME:

Changing the face of post-16 education to meet employer need

Key Stakeholders

Education Providers
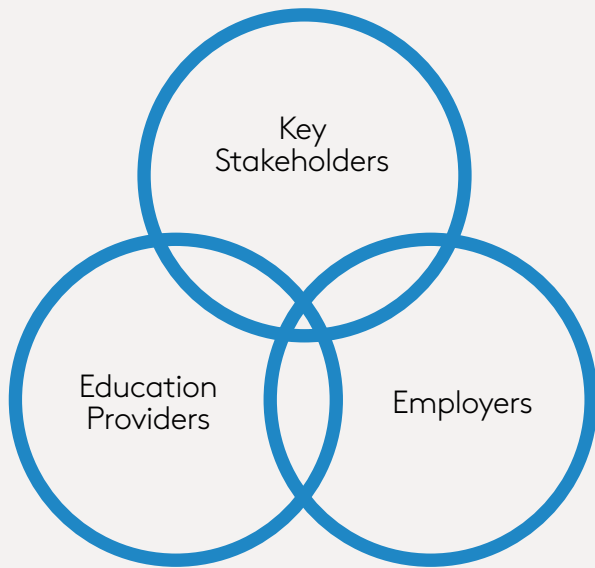
Employers

The success of our LSIP will be dependent on collaboration between employers, post-16 technical education providers and other key stakeholders.

Through this, we aim to:

- Ensure provision meets the needs of employers

- Develop and enhance skills amongst our existing and future workforce

- Ensure careers guidance is reflective of local opportunities

- Ensure local jobs go to local people

- Facilitate employers in influencing provision and course content

- Improve accessibility of provision and funding for both employers and those considered to be at a disadvantage

- Increase uptake on to technical education courses, such as Apprenticeships and T-Levels

- Remove barriers to provision

Join the conversation, get in touch at: **LSIP@sccci.co.uk**

In June 2022, around **437,400 people were employed in Cheshire & Warrington,** representing 75.7% of residents aged 16-64 in the area.

The employment rate in Cheshire & Warrington has remained consistently higher than that for England, with the April 2021 to March 2022 employment rate at **76.8% being 1.4% higher** than the rate for England (75.4%).

Employment rates in Warrington and Cheshire West and Chester have been consistently higher than for England. The pre-pandemic employment rate for Cheshire East, whilst higher than the rate for England, is now below the English level for five consecutive quarters and was **74.1% from April 2021 to March 2022.**

Those aged 16-64 in employment followed similar trends with Warrington and Cheshire West and Chester being consistently above that for England, and the percentage for Cheshire East being below the English level for the last five consecutive quarters.

The current age profile of the Cheshire & Warrington population is older than that for England and is forecast to continue. **By 2030, the population in Cheshire & Warrington aged 60–69 and aged over 80 is forecast to grow at a faster rate than seen nationally.**

The working age population (16-64) is shrinking and constitutes a lower percentage of the total population for Cheshire & Warrington in all three Local Authority areas than is the case for England and the Northwest (ONS). **The population is set to age further, increasing the number of retirements and so driving replacement demand in the labour market.**

The Cheshire & Warrington sub region comprises of **42,025 businesses,** representing **a decline of 1.5% compared to the business count in 2021.** 46% of businesses were in Cheshire East, 33% in Cheshire West and Chester, and 21% in Warrington. **90% of businesses in Cheshire & Warrington employed fewer than 10 people. Only 0.5% of businesses employed more than 250 people.**

Challenges for the region include:

A demand for

71,000

more people qualified to Level 3 or above by 2027

Employers in Cheshire & Warrington are more likely to have skills shortage vacancies in high-skilled roles, and more likely to have bottom line business impacts because of skills shortages

An ageing population and increasing levels of economic inactivity in 50+ age group

Opportunities, however, include:

▶ The Net Zero North West Cluster Plan, with a focus in Cheshire & Warrington

▶ Building upon existing best practice, such as where the Cheshire & Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) have already been commissioned to map LSIP priority sectors against IfATE pathways, to support the technical skills priorities

▶ A large and well-positioned manufacturing base

▶ High employment levels in priority sectors such as Health & Social Care, which are important within the context of Covid-19 and an ageing population

The Key Themes of the Cheshire & Warrington LSIP

In response to employer feedback, the Cheshire & Warrington LSIP priorities are divided across five key themes:

Theme 1 · Technical Skills

Technical skills are split between LSIP priority sectors of Manufacturing, Life Sciences and Health & Social Care, as well as the cross-cutting themes of Digital and Low Carbon (including green skills). We therefore need to ensure the supply of and demand for technical skills matches the needs of employers, to ensure vacancies are filled, productivity is amplified, and employers are able to thrive. We also need to ensure key cross-cutting themes respond to the needs of all employers.

Theme 2 · Accessibility

Accessibility relates to both employers and learners. The four threads of accessibility can be defined as: accessibility of **information; accessibility of training, provision** and funding; accessibility for those considered to be at a **disadvantage;** and accessibility of support in assessing future skills needs.

Theme 3 · Employability Competencies

This can also be defined as Employability Skills. Employers report concerns regarding job applicants not being 'work-ready.' For example, they do not have sufficient communication ability, behavioural attitudes are not appropriate, or they have unrealistic perceptions of what happens in the workplace. We also need to consider upskilling of the existing workforce. Therefore, what we wish to consider in this LSIP is how employability competencies can be embedded further into curriculum, or further support provided.

Theme 4 · Careers, Education Information Advice and Guidance (CEIAG)

This theme covers many aspects and is closely linked to Themes 3 and 5. The LSIP process seeks to address concerns that careers guidance may not reflect local opportunities and progression routes available; that those delivering CEIAG, educational teaching professionals and those who can influence others (such as parents and carers) have sufficient access to information regarding local opportunities; more opportunities need to be made available to allow for experience within the workplace; and how what is taught in curriculum can be applied within the workplace.

Theme 5 · Educational Professionals

We are addressing this theme within two threads:

Ensuring there are enough educational teaching professionals to deliver the training we need to support employers.

Ensuring educational professionals have up to date knowledge and understanding of the priority sectors and can apply this to develop the skills of the future workforce (linking with Theme 4).

Theme 01

Technical Skills

Taking forward the initial objectives of the LSIPs, as set out by the Department for Education, to focus on technical post-16 education, we have identified the following key priority sectors based on Cheshire & Warrington LEP's Local Skills Report (published in January 2022):

Manufacturing

Health & Social Care

Life Sciences

Digital *(Cross Cutting)*

Low Carbon *(Inc Green Skills)*

The following details reflect our need to ensure technical skills meet the requirements of employers. Within each of the priority sectors outlined above we have:

- Highlighted specific occupations relating to each sector

- Considered provision that is already available in the Cheshire and Warrington region

- Considered emerging technologies and matters that affect business

- Identified skills gaps and future requirements

Join the conversation, get in touch at: **LSIP@sccci.co.uk**

Sector 1

Manufacturing

Priority Sector 1
• Manufacturing •

Priority Sector 2
• Health & Social •

Priority Sector 3
• Life Sciences •

Priority Sector 4
• Digital •

Priority Sector 5
• Low Carbon •

Sector 1
Manufacturing

The Manufacturing and Advanced Engineering Sector is a significant part of the Cheshire & Warrington economy. We also give due consideration to engineering within manufacturing.

The area is home to a significant automotive cluster and **95% of UK car production** lies within a 3-hour drive, presenting significant opportunities for the automotive supply chain.

The manufacturing sector employed 42,000 people in Cheshire & Warrington in 2022. The sector employed a slightly higher percentage of the workforce than the UK average. The average wage per job in the sector was £38,000 and it **contributed 17.5% of total Cheshire & Warrington GVA.**

Almost half of all the sector's employment was in four sub sectors:

- Manufacture of Motor Vehicles, Trailers and Semi-trailers

- Manufacture of Food Products

- Manufacture of Fabricated Metal Products, Except Machinery and Equipment

- Manufacture of Basic Pharmaceutical Products and Pharmaceutical Preparations

The top ten occupations employed in the manufacturing sector in Cheshire & Warrington are set out in the table on page 18. These account for **30% of all employment** in the sector. Hourly wages for these occupations range **from £9.86** (Packers, Bottlers, Canners and Fillers) **to £22.36** (Production Managers and Directors in Manufacturing).

The manufacturing sector employed

42,000

people in Cheshire & Warrington in 2022

The average wage per job in the sector was

£38,000

From the LSIP Employer Skills Survey and further employer engagement work, we have found that:

- Age profile in manufacturing (specifically) is a labour supply challenge, with a generally older workforce profile. Employers reported difficulties in attracting school leavers who do not see manufacturing as a sector where they can progress and develop a career

- The sector is perceived to be male dominated. This reflected difficulties when trying to recruit females

- Digitisation and automation (in manufacturing) has not radically altered the skills requirement but requires slightly higher-level IT skills. This is deemed as more of a challenge given the age profile of the workforce and a need to build confidence and aptitude in these areas

- Engineering qualifications are needed as a single skill (in preference to multi-skilled). This allows for greater knowledge in the area

- Lean, Six Sigma and Business Improvement Techniques need to be integrated into other manufacturing linked qualifications, not left as stand-alone training, which is primarily organised in house

- There is a view that CAD and Project Management could be integrated into STEM courses at Level 2 and Level 3

- Off-the-job training is deemed as disruptive, and more agile training options need to be considered

Through feedback received directly from Providers, we have found that:

- Offering courses at Level 2 supports students to progress to Level 3

- Automotive and engineering courses alignment at Level 3 fits with employers' expectations

- Clearer occupational pathways exist with T-Levels, Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs) and Higher National Certificates (HNCs)

- Electrical Engineering is promoted at college but needs additional promotion in schools

- Lack of course uptake is a barrier to running successful targeted courses

- There are less Level 3 females moving straight into industry; they tend to move on to Higher Education (HE) and HNC

Join the conversation, get in touch at: **LSIP@sccci.co.uk**

Key **Manufacturing** Occupations

In January 2023, top occupations in the Manufacturing sector in Cheshire & Warrington were:

EMPLOYER NEED	PRIORITY	GREEN ECONOMY ADDITIONAL NEED	POSSIBLE FUNDING FOR ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS	LOCAL PROVISION*1
Production Managers and Directors in Manufacturing (844)	Degree Apprenticeships /HE	Understanding – Sustainability Leadership	Employer/Local Skills Improvement Fund (LSIF)	Yes
Metal Working Production and Maintenance Fitters (512)	Apprenticeship Levels 2 and 3	Awareness	Employer/LSIF	Yes
Sales Accounts and Business Development Managers (558)	Full time FE/HE Apprenticeships	Awareness	Employer/LSIF	Yes
Food and Drink Process Operatives (67)	Apprenticeships Levels 2 and 3	Awareness	Employer/LSIF	Yes
Elementary Storage Occupations (3027)	Apprenticeships Levels 2 and 3	Awareness	Employer/LSIF	Yes
Packers, Bottlers, Canners and Fillers (318)	Apprenticeships Levels 3 and 4	Awareness	Employer/LSIF	No
Assemblers (Vehicles and Metal Goods) (82)	Apprenticeships Levels 2 and 3	Awareness	Employer/LSIF	Yes
Chemical and Related Process Operatives (136)	Apprenticeships	Understanding	Employer/LSIF	No
Production and Process Engineers (461)	Full time FE/HE Apprenticeships Levels 3 and 4	Understanding	Employer/LSIF	Yes
Vehicle Technicians, Mechanics and Electricians (1248)	Apprenticeships up to Level 5	Understanding	Employer/LSIF	Yes

Source Lightcast Jan 2023 | NB *1 Confirmation of provision available locally is as accurate as possible but could be subject to change.

Manufacturing Skills Gaps & Upskilling

In addition to the occupations detailed below, our engagement has shown specific skills gaps and upskilling needs required in the sector as follows:

EMPLOYER NEED	PRIORITY FOR EXISTING WORKFORCE (SKILLS GAPS/UPSKILLING)	PRIORITY FOR THE FUTURE WORKFORCE	LOCAL PROVISION*1
Supply Chain Apprenticeships	Apprenticeship	Apprenticeship	No
Health and Safety Apprenticeships	Apprenticeship	Apprenticeship/ incorporated into other courses	Yes
Food Hygiene Certification	Short course	Incorporated into other courses	Yes
Forklift Truck (FLT) Training (potentially included within Engineering courses)	Independent Training Provider (ITP) provision	ITP provision	Yes
Lean/Six Sigma/Business Improvement Techniques as part of other qualifications	Full cost programmes /Apprenticeship Levels 3 and 4	Apprenticeship Levels 3 and 4	Yes
Project Management	Apprenticeship Level 4	Apprenticeship Levels 3 and 4, within T-Level	Yes
Ability to complete paperwork (e.g., CV writing, job application forms, papers relevant to the job)	Short course LSIF	16-19 full time additionality AEB DWP pre-employability	No
Basic IT skills (Outlook, Word, Excel and other Office programmes)	Short course LSIF	16-19 full time additionality AEB DWP pre-employability	No
Higher level IT skills	Apprenticeship	16-19 full time additionality	Yes
Health and Safety	Short course	16-19 full time additionality	Yes
Upskilling for emerging green technology	Short course LSIF	16-19 full time additionality AEB	No
Digital Transformation	Short course LSIF	16-19 full time additionality	No
Automation	Short course LSIF	16-19 full time additionality	No
Electrical Engineers	Apprenticeship	16-19 full time, Apprenticeship	Yes
Mechanical Engineers	Apprenticeship	16-19 full time, Apprenticeship	Yes

Sector 2

Health &
Social Care

Sector 2
Health & Social Care

The Health & Social Care sector employed

58,000

people in Cheshire & Warrington in 2022

The average wage per job in the sector was

£27,000

The Health & Social Care sector employed 58,000 people in Cheshire & Warrington in 2022. The sector employed a lower percentage of the workforce than is the case nationally. The average wage per job in the sector was £27,000 and it contributed 6% to Cheshire & Warrington's GVA.

The demands on the sector, which are reflected across the UK, are replicated and amplified in **Cheshire & Warrington which has a higher than national average ageing population.** This is exacerbated by the increase in pressures on key services as a result of the Covid pandemic.

The top ten occupations employed in the Health & Social Care sector in Cheshire & Warrington are set out in the table on page 24. These account for **about 60% of all employment in the sector.** Hourly wages for these occupations range from £9.23 (Cleaners and Domestics) to £24.08 (Medical Practitioners).

Lightcast data indicates employers experience **greater recruitment difficulties regionally versus nationally.** There are high staff turnover rates in Cheshire & Warrington at 30%, and **males are under-represented.**

Through feedback received directly from employers within the sector, we note that:

- Combined roles would be preferable (e.g., Support Worker with health care and youth work skills).

- An ageing population is a key driver for change in the sector.

- The continued impact of the pandemic has reduced the supply of labour, with many choosing to leave existing roles.

- The cost-of-living crisis was seen as a dominant challenge for the sector.

- More support is needed for new employers joining the sector to assist with specific areas such as training audits, budgets, legal responsibilities and dispute resolutions.

- Lower levels have been observed for certain roles (such as Personal Assistants) or the quality of applications were not deemed to have been of a high enough standard.

- Clarity is needed in terms of routes into the health sector and routes into social care.

- There are concerns regarding a lack of Level 5+ provision locally.

- The main barrier for training within business related to releasing staff for training as businesses need to consider staff/client ratios. Understanding provision available was also considered to be a barrier.

- There is a generational gap with digital skills/capabilities, the need for which is becoming greater given trends towards digitalisation and digital health care service delivery.

- Skills requirements focus on temperaments and attitudes, such as emotional resilience and softer skills such as sensitivity and boundary skills (e.g., talking to family members), as well as self-assessment and self-regulation.

Through feedback received directly from Providers, we note that:

- Current programmes are academic and not skills based.

- Work placements are easier to find within the NHS rather than other employers within this sector.

- Within the care sector, students need to be at least 18 years' old and have a driving licence with access to a car. This is a barrier for some learners.

- The recruitment challenge within this sector leads to employers not being able to release employees to support student workers, which creates a vicious cycle.

- There is currently very limited digital content at Level 3 in this sector.

- Some providers include resilience and personal care in this sector, but it is being provided as an "add on" to the curriculum. They are working with other businesses to provide this (e.g., local funeral directors).

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Key **Health & Social Care** Occupations

In January 2023, the top occupations in the Health & Social Care sector in Cheshire & Warrington were recorded as follows:

EMPLOYER NEED	PRIORITY	LOCAL PROVISION[*1]
Nurses (6375)	Nursing Degree Apprenticeship	Yes
Nursing Auxiliaries and Assistants (1539)	Healthcare support worker and senior Levels 2 and 3 Apprenticeships Nursing Associate Level 5/Level 5 Assistant Practitioner	Yes
Medical Practitioners (1024)	Degree/PHD	No
Cleaners and Domestics	Apprenticeship Level 2	No
Other Administrative Occupations (4821)	Apprenticeship Level 2	No
Nursery Nurses and Assistants (794)	Apprenticeships/Care Certificate Possible recruitment and employability training via JCP/Bootcamp/AEB	Yes
Senior Care Workers (282)	Apprenticeships	Yes

Source Lightcast Jan 2023

Health & Social Care
Skills Gaps and Upskilling

EMPLOYER NEED	PRIORITY FOR EXISTING WORKFORCE (SKILLS GAPS/UPSKILLING)	PRIORITY FOR THE FUTURE WORKFORCE	LOCAL PROVISION*1
Consistent/Certificated induction process across all Health & Social Care settings	For discussion/development with Skills for Care	Apprenticeship	No
Midwifery Level 5	Upskilling to Degree level	No funding available /consider progression pathways to HE	Yes
Physiotherapy Level 5	Upskilling to Degree level	No funding available /consider progression pathways to HE	No
Basic RGN training for Personal Assistants	For discussion/development with Skills for Care	16-19 full time/Apprenticeships	No
Leadership and Managerial including overarching business management skills	Short course	16-19 full time additionality	No
Basic IT skills (Outlook, Word, Excel and other Office programmes)	Short course	16-19 full time additionality/Apprenticeship	No
Digital Transformation	Short course	Embedded into existing courses	No
IT Skills relevant to software used	Short course	16-19 full time additionality	No

Sector 3

Life Sciences

Priority Sector 1
• Manufacturing •

Priority Sector 2
• Health & Social •

Priority Sector 3
• Life Sciences •

Priority Sector 4
• Digital •

Priority Sector 5
• Low Carbon •

Sector 3
Life Sciences

7,000

life sciences jobs are planned at Alderley Park

Over 160 biotech and life sciences businesses are now operating in the former Cheshire Science Corridor Enterprise Zone

Cheshire & Warrington has a thriving life sciences sector, with strengths in sub-sectors including biotechnology, contract research organisations, drug discovery and wound care.

Start-ups lead the way in the latest innovations and medical discoveries, alongside established **world-leading life sciences firms.** Top recruiters in Cheshire & Warrington include AstraZeneca and NHS Trusts such as Mid Cheshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.

Alderley Park is the UK's largest single-site life science campus, with **7,000 jobs planned by 2025,** and there are now **over 160 biotech and life-sciences businesses** in what was the Cheshire Science Corridor Enterprise Zone. Cancer Research UK Manchester Institute and Medicines Discovery Catapult are based in the sub-region.

Through feedback received directly from employers within the sector, we note that:

▶ There is a lack of scientific based apprenticeships (e.g., Laboratory Technician).

▶ Local training provision is not always up to date, particularly with digital skills and automation.

▶ Higher level maths skills and data analysis are lacking.

▶ "Fundamentals of Clinical Development" awareness is needed within schools (STEM link) to enhance knowledge of the sector, as well as a greater understanding that the work outcomes are potentially life changing.

▶ Lack of awareness of computer sciences linked to life sciences.

▶ There is a requirement for cost effective local training. Currently, skills training is outsourced to Manchester and London, with links also to Nottingham Trent University.

Through feedback received directly from Providers, we note that:

▶ Links with Alderley Park have been difficult to establish. There are some links with Daresbury.

▶ Work placements preference appears to be for HE level.

Key **Life Sciences** Occupations

In 2021, there were about 12,500 science pathway jobs in Cheshire & Warrington, of which 3,250 people in Cheshire & Warrington worked in Life Sciences.

Circa 4,500 science pathway jobs are at Level 3, around 1,500 require a Level 4 and the remainder require qualifications at degree level and above.

On average there are about 600 openings for these types of jobs in Cheshire & Warrington each year.

There are **more jobs like this in Cheshire & Warrington than the national average** and this is expected to be the case for the next few years, including for jobs such as Chemical Scientists, Laboratory Technicians and Biological Scientists.

Most roles in this pathway are at relatively low risk of automation.

In the last five years, employers in Cheshire & Warrington were as likely to repeatedly advertise these roles as the national average.

In this time, there have been around 9,500 job postings for this type of role in Cheshire & Warrington. The average number of times a role gets advertised in Cheshire & Warrington has increased from 4 in 2016 to 8 in 2021. This may indicate that **employers are more recently finding these roles harder to fill.**

The most advertised roles in Cheshire & Warrington are for Science, Engineering and Production Technicians, and Engineering professionals.

Life Sciences
Skills Gaps and Upskilling

EMPLOYER NEED	PRIORITY FOR EXISTING WORKFORCE (SKILLS GAPS/UPSKILLING)	PRIORITY FOR THE FUTURE WORKFORCE	LOCAL PROVISION[*1]
Quality Assurance Level 4	Apprenticeship Quality Practitioner Level 4	Apprenticeship Quality Practitioner Level 4	No
Engineering Level 6 – Control Technical Support Engineer	Apprenticeship	Apprenticeship	No
Validation Level 6 – Bio Pharmaceutical	Degree Apprenticeship	Degree Apprenticeship	No
Manufacturing Skills Levels 2 to 6 specifically in bio pharmaceutical environment	Apprenticeship Level 4	Apprenticeship Level 4	No
Software Engineering (for automation)	Short course	Apprenticeship Level 2	Yes
Drug discovery training	Short course	Short course	No
Computer Science Degree Apprenticeship	Apprenticeship	Apprenticeship	No
Laboratory Technician Apprenticeship	Apprenticeship Level 3	Apprenticeship Level 3	Yes
Higher Numeracy (A Level upwards)	Short course	A Level	No
Statistics Level 3 upwards	Short course	Incl in Higher Maths	No
Analytical skills to Level 4	Apprenticeship/Short Courses	Apprenticeship	No
Leadership and Managerial	Short course	16-19 full time additionality	No
Basic IT skills (Outlook, Word, Excel and other Office programmes)	Short course	16-19 full time additionality	Yes
Digital based on employer need	Short course	Short course	No
IT Skills relevant to software used	Short course	Short course	No

Sector 4

Digital
- Cross Cutting

Sector 4
Digital - Cross Cutting

Digital skills are recognised as a cross-cutting theme within our LSIP, but we also recognise the importance of the sector alone.

The Information and Communication sector employed 19,000 people in Cheshire & Warrington in 2022. The sector employed a lower percentage of the workforce than is the case nationally. The average wage per job in the sector was £41,000 and it contributed 4% to Cheshire & Warrington's GVA.

There are about the same number of jobs in this sector in Cheshire & Warrington as the national average.

Over the next ten years, about a third of jobs will need to be filled by new entrants because of retirements and similar.

All Digital jobs have a very low exposure to the risk of automation.

19,000
people were employed in the digital sector in Cheshire & Warrington in 2022

Through feedback received directly from employers within the sector, we note that:

- Relevant sector experience is difficult to find in applicants.

- Programming is included in more generalist qualifications, e.g., maths and physics and is therefore not often cited on an applicant's CV, however this is key in recruiting.

- As the market develops and salaries change, it will be more difficult to attract the right candidates.

- Up-to-date knowledge is critical as the sector continues to change at pace.

- Candidates need to demonstrate their ability to build, including providing source code during the selection process.

- Financial constraints limit who is trained and on what.

- Employers recognise that digital and creative technologies are essential for their business.

- Skills shortages in foundation IT skills and digital literacy were the most conducive to being addressed through short, flexible training courses.

Through feedback received directly from Providers, we have found that:

- Short courses for older existing workers are being developed in conjunction with employers, including Essential Digital Skills at Level 1 and Level 3. However, not all are completing the end point assessment; they want the skill but not the qualification.

- Student interest does not match employer need meaning course uptake can be low.

- Cybersecurity courses at Level 3 do not match employer requirement. Students will need to go on to HE to gain this.

- There is a gap for Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs) in this sector, but there are a lack of tutors and assessors to deliver this. Providers are now considering sharing resources.

- Coding is not offered due to lack of uptake.Electrical Engineering is promoted at college but needs additional promotion in schools.

- Lack of course uptake is a barrier to running successful targeted courses.

- There are less Level 3 females moving straight into industry; they tend to move on to Higher Education (HE) and HNC.

Key **Digital** Occupations

The top ten occupations employed in the Information and Communications sector in Cheshire & Warrington are set out in the table below.

These account for almost 60% of all employment in the sector. Hourly wages for these occupations range **from £12.97** (IT User Support Technicians) **to £27.96** (Information Technology and Telecommunications Directors).

EMPLOYER NEED	PRIORITY	LOCAL PROVISION*1
Programmers and Software Development Professionals (4048)	Apprenticeship/Degree	No
Information Technology and Telecommunications Professionals (966)	Apprenticeship/Degree	No
IT Specialist Managers (107)	Degree	No
IT Business Analysts, Architects and Systems Designers (2082)	Apprenticeship	Yes
Sales Accounts and Business Development Managers (558)	Apprenticeship/Bootcamp	Yes
Information Technology and Telecommunications Directors (227)	Degree/Bootcamp/Short course	No
IT Project and Programme Managers (732)	Apprenticeship/Degree	No
Web Design and Development Professionals (787)	Apprenticeship/Short course	No
IT User Support Technicians (1891)	Apprenticeship	No
IT Operations Technicians (1073)	Apprenticeship	No

Source Lightcast Analyst Jan 2023

Digital
Skills Gaps and Upskilling

EMPLOYER NEED	PRIORITY FOR EXISTING WORKFORCE (SKILLS GAPS/UPSKILLING)	PRIORITY FOR THE FUTURE WORKFORCE	LOCAL PROVISION*1
PHP and WordPress upskilling	Short course	16-19 full time additionality	No
Coding specific apprenticeship	Project 4.0 – coding and Advanced Manufacturing Skills	Apprenticeship/Short Course	Yes
Digital Marketing apprenticeship	Apprenticeship	Apprenticeship Levels 3 and 4	Yes
Graphic Design apprenticeship	Apprenticeship	Apprenticeship Level 2	Yes
Social Media apprenticeship	Apprenticeship	Apprenticeship	No
Developer Level 5	Apprenticeship/ Degree	Apprenticeship/ Degree	No
Digital Skills Trainers Level 3	Apprenticeship Level 4	Apprenticeship Level 4	No
Use of all types of software (Mac/MS and iPhone/Android)	Short course	Short course	No

NB *1 Confirmation of provision available locally is as accurate as possible but could be subject to change.

Priority Sector 1
❖ Manufacturing ❖

Priority Sector 2
• Health & Social •

Priority Sector 3
• Life Sciences •

Priority Sector 4
• Digital •

Priority Sector 5
• Low Carbon •

Sector 5

Low Carbon
(Including Green Skills)
- Cross Cutting

Sector 5 ● Low Carbon
(Including Green Skills) - Cross Cutting

The Government's Net Zero agenda is driving changes to the way businesses operate. These changes require a review of the skills which will be needed.

Almost half (46.4%) of Cheshire & Warrington's jobs are in industries, which will be significantly impacted by the low carbon agenda. These industries will need to reshape what they do in terms of production processes, energy consumption and reduction in emissions. This will require significant reskilling of the existing workforce.

The **current number employed** in the 'Low Carbon and Renewable Energy Economy' (LCREE) in Cheshire & Warrington is estimated to be **circa 4,000.** These numbers are set to grow. Ecuity has forecast a fourfold growth to 15,000 employed in the LCREE in Cheshire & Warrington by 2030. However, this growth could be more significant if the project portfolio developed by **Net Zero North West** is delivered. This includes significant **low carbon hydrogen projects** delivering change at scale including **HyNet and Protos projects,** and **Project Vanguard.** Many of the initial jobs created will be in construction as LCREE grows. The Construction Industry Training Board **(CITB)** believes the areas presenting the **greatest challenges are in retrofit and in heat pumps.**

46.4%
of all jobs in Cheshire & Warrington are in industries likely to be significantly impacted by the low carbon agenda

15,000
people forecast to be employed in the Low Carbon and Renewable Energy Economy by 2030 in Cheshire & Warrington

Through feedback received directly from employers within the sector, we note:

- Reskilling and/or upskilling the majority of the workforce is a current challenge, e.g., the move to electric car batteries or the move to hydrogen.

- Contractors are already finding it hard to maintain a steady workforce, with many employed on short-term contracts and a significant proportion reaching retirement age.

- The Cluster Plan will require focus on skills and this activity is already taking place, predominantly in conjunction with the University of Chester.

- Low Carbon and Green Skills to be embedded into existing training as standard. Particularly in construction, there is a need for greater integration of construction and green/renewable technology courses and training made available in the local area.

- There is a view that there are many Government targets to meet and that individuals should be skilled in more than one of these areas to retain employment once a target is met in one field.

Through feedback received directly from Providers, we note that:

- Courses are often provided as an add-on or enhancement to another course.

- The green agenda is generally believed to be embedded within manufacturing courses.

- Providers are working together to maximise opportunity, e.g., working with Cadent on the Sustainable House.

Low Carbon *(including Green Skills)*
Occupations, Skills Gaps and Upskilling

EMPLOYER NEED	PRIORITY FOR WORKFORCE (INCLUDING SKILLS GAPS AND UPSKILLING)
Housing Energy Efficiency	• Installation of loft insulation. • Solid wall insulation. • Cavity wall insulation. • Floor insulation. • High efficiency glazing.
Solar photovoltaics	Level 3 Electrical Installations qualifications will be required to install grid connected solar.
Nuclear	Construction workers that have non-nuclear specific skills (including highly skilled roles in, for example, welding), as well as civil contractors and mechanical engineers.
Anaerobic Digestion (AD)	• Specialist grid-connection engineers. • Operators who ensure grid connections are safe.
Low carbon heat pumps	Training and upskilling the 133,000 existing Gas Safe engineers in the country.
Carbon capture, utilisation and storage (CCUS) and hydrogen	• Construction and operation of scale pilot projects for hydrogen production (e.g., HyNet). • Construction and operation of CCUS infrastructure in high emitting industrial clusters.
Electric Vehicles (EV)	Construction and operation of EV charging infrastructure and the transition in manufacturing.
Active travel equipment and infrastructure	Construction and operation of: • walking schemes and networks. • cycling infrastructure schemes and networks. • and traffic calming schemes.
Natural Capital	Creating, maintaining, or restoring non-woodland ecosystems (e.g., wetlands); woodland ecosystems; saltmarshes and peatlands for carbon sequestration; and parks and urban green space.

"For Cheshire and Warrington to remain competitive and inclusive, it's vital that employers and industry leaders actively shape the region's Local Skills Improvement Plans. Their insight ensures that training provision reflects the real technical skills needed across key sectors such as advanced manufacturing, digital, and life sciences. But it's not just about identifying skills gaps—it's also about making training more accessible to everyone in our communities. Whether it's through flexible learning routes, local partnerships, or support for underrepresented groups, accessibility must be at the heart of skills development. By working closely with colleges, training providers, and stakeholders, businesses can help build a workforce that is both highly skilled and reflective of the region's diverse talent. This collaboration is key to driving innovation, supporting growth, and creating opportunities that benefit both employers and individuals across Cheshire and Warrington."

Paul Colman

LSIP Project Director and CEO South Cheshire Chamber of Commerce and Industry

The four threads outlined earlier demonstrate the needs of employers.
The following table details the actionable priorities to meet employer need.

EMPLOYER NEED	ACTIONABLE PRIORITY
Accessibility of information for employers	• Provide an 'employers area' within the LSIP website • Ensure information is detailed in employer friendly language • Work with providers to ensure information for employers is easily accessible
Accessibility of training, provision and funding	• Investigate and enable opportunities for flexible course provision • Provide a prospectus of provision for employers via the LSIP website • Provide advice on Levy Transfer for businesses wishing to pledge their levy, and for SMEs wishing to access to levy transfer opportunities
Accessibility for those considered to be at a disadvantage	• Understand current support available • Establish awareness raising activities • Supporting businesses to engage with young people • Monitoring of Destination Data • Promotion of the Cheshire & Warrington Opportunities Portal • Establishing a system where key partners can provide support more freely due to barriers caused by GDPR • Ensure support on to entry level pathways
Accessibility of support in assessing future skills needs	• Establish details on upcoming developments and changes which could impact on employer skills needs • Develop a template for employers to identify their future recruitment and skills needs (Training Needs Analyses) • Support for achieving outcomes from the Training Needs Analyses • Brokerage service for employers • Case studies of positive outcomes to be promoted

Key Takeaways for Employers

Simplifying Access to Skills and Support

ENABLING PARTNERS

- Chamber of Commerce Network
- LEP
- Local Authorities
- Employer Representative Bodies
- FE/HE Providers

- FE/HE Providers
- Chamber of Commerce Network

- Cheshire & Warrington Pledge Partnership
- FE/HE Providers
- DWP/JCP
- Local Authorities
- Warrington Skills Commission

- Chamber of Commerce Network
- LEP
- JCP/DWP
- Recruitment Agencies
- Cheshire & Warrington Provider Network

Simplified Training and Funding

Employers will be able to view local training options in one place, explore flexible delivery, and get support with Apprenticeship Levy transfers.

Better Access to Information

A new employer section on the LSIP website will offer clear, relevant guidance in plain language.

Tools to Plan Future Skills

Support includes templates for identifying future skills needs, brokerage services, and real-world case studies.

Support for Inclusive Employment

Help is available to engage young people and disadvantaged groups, with improved data sharing and entry-level pathways.

Join the conversation, get in touch at: **LSIP@sccci.co.uk**

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Theme
03
Employability Competencies

Through the engagement methods used to develop these priorities, the table below highlights the Employability Competencies employers cite as essential to their business.

EMPLOYER NEED	ACTIONABLE PRIORITY
FOR FUTURE AND EXISTING WORKFORCE	
Numeracy	These skills are already covered in Apprenticeships/FT 16 to 19 and Adult Education Budget. Government funded Multiply programme enables shorter, targeted approaches for 19+ existing employees and job seekers. Numeracy skills to be incorporated in all occupational programmes and short course programmes for existing employees to be considered.
MS Office skills	These essential skills required by business to be incorporated into occupational programmes.
Leadership and managerial	Management workshop/Bite size and modular provision/Up-skilling Apprenticeships
Personal productivity	Management workshop/Bite size and modular provision/Up-skilling Apprenticeships to cover: organisation; time management; planning; prioritisation; organisation; and delegation. Some of these skills are already covered in Apprenticeships/FT 16 to 19, however there is a need to ensure they are incorporated into all occupational programmes and that a short course programme for existing employees is considered.
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Awareness	All levels workshop/Bite size and modular provision/Up-skilling Apprenticeships/ Everyday training.
Emotional Intelligence and Resilience (self-assessment and self-regulation)	• Ensuring this is recognised within business. • Support in managing expectations when desired outcomes are not reached. • Consideration to specific requirements within Health & Social Care sector. • All levels workshop/Bite size/modular provision/Up-skilling Apprenticeships.
Communication skills	These skills are already covered in Apprenticeships/FT 16 to 19. We want to ensure they are incorporated into all occupational programmes and that a short course programme for existing employees is considered.
Literacy	These skills are already covered in Apprenticeships/FT 16 to 19. Incorporation into occupational programmes and short course programmes for existing employees to be considered.
Problem Solving	All levels workshop/Bite size and modular provision/Up-skilling Apprenticeships.

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Key Takeaways for Employers

Core Skills Employers Need

ENABLING PARTNERS

- FE/HE Providers
- Secondary Education
- Independent Training Providers
- Local Authorities
- Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations
- Warrington Skills Commission
- Cheshire & Warrington Provider Network

Essential Skills Built into Training

Core areas like numeracy, literacy, MS Office, and communication are being embedded into all occupational and short courses to support both new and existing staff.

Focus on Leadership and Productivity

Bite-sized, flexible training will support leadership, time management, planning, and delegation skills—key for growing in-role talent.

Improved Support for Emotional and Social Skills

Educators and careers professionals will gain industry exposure and up-to-date information on local roles, especially in emerging sectors and technical skills.

Practical, Modular Delivery

Employers can expect more targeted, accessible training options through apprenticeships, short courses, and modular learning that fit around work schedules.

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Careers Education, Info, Advice & Guidance

Due to anticipated recruitment challenges, Theme 4 addresses developments needed in CEIAG. There are a range of aims within this theme:

- Build a future talent pipeline through career exploration activities, showcasing the opportunities available within Cheshire & Warrington.

- Link with theme 5 and ensure Educational Professionals have the required knowledge of what opportunities are available so that they can better advise the future workforce.

- Facilitate careers guidance for those that wish to have a change of career.

- Acknowledge interests in certain areas among young people, such as climate change, to establish targeted careers inspiration activities.

- We consider priorities outlined within the other key themes.

- Identify inequality situations within industry and aim to address them through CEIAG.

EMPLOYER NEED	ACTIONABLE PRIORITY
Careers exploration activities and progression pathways that inspire and support young people.	Facilitate opportunities to enable future workforce to see opportunities available locally.
Align careers inspiration activity with strong interests among young people.	• Engagement with young people to better understand their career aspirations • Allow opportunities for employers to engage with young people, for example via Career Days or Industry Days • Provide impartial information on opportunities available • Experience of the workplace • Consider alternative channels for providing guidance, such as via social media
Increase knowledge and awareness amongst CEIAG Providers and Educational Professionals.	• Industry placement days • Opportunities to be created for employers to provide information on new and emerging jobs, at Career days for example. This is particularly relating to our Technical Skills priorities • Provide info on the range of employers operating locally • Provide information on opportunities available locally
Facilitate opportunities to enable future workforce to see opportunities available locally.	• Career Days • Experience of the workplace

Key Takeaways for Employers

Careers and Future Talent Development

Bridging the gap between education and opportunity

ENABLING PARTNERS

- Chamber of Commerce Network including Young Chamber
- Employer representative bodies.
- Sector representative bodies.
- Secondary/FE/HE Providers
- Independent Training Providers
- Local Enterprise Partnership.
- DWP/JCP
- The Cheshire & Warrington Pledge Partnership
- Employers
- Careers and Enterprise Company

Inspiring the Next Generation

A dedicated Taskforce will drive careers exploration and progression activities to help young people see local opportunities and build future talent pipelines.

Engaging Young People in What Matters to Them

Employers will be encouraged to take part in Career Days and offer real-world insights, with activities aligned to areas young people care about, like climate change.

Better Support from Educators and Advisers

Educators and careers professionals will gain industry exposure and up-to-date information on local roles, especially in emerging sectors and technical skills.

Local Opportunities Made Visible

More hands-on experiences and local employer engagement will help the future workforce understand what's available right on their doorstep.

Join the conversation, get in touch at: **LSIP@sccci.co.uk**

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Educational Professionals
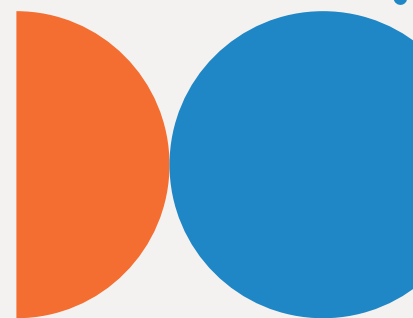
LSIP engagement activity has identified two key threads relating to Theme 5 - Educational Professionals:

▶ Ensuring the capacity of Educational Professionals to meet skills demands.

▶ Ensure Educational Professionals have sufficient understanding of opportunities within local sectors.

EMPLOYER NEED	ACTIONABLE PRIORITY	ENABLING PARTNERS
Increased capacity for educational professionals to enable delivery of courses to meet the needs of employers.	• Improve Educational Professionals' knowledge regarding local career opportunities, so they can better inform learners	• FE/HE Providers • Chamber of Commerce Network • Local Authorities • JCP/DWP • Education Development Trust • National Careers Service
Identify means to up-skill Educational Professionals to meet technical course delivery requirements, which are in line with industry.	• Industry placement opportunities • Employers to allow secondment of staff to support training of Educational Teaching Professionals • Introductions to new emerging technologies and access to equipment used within industry • Establish partnerships between departmental leads and industry	• Employers • Chamber of Commerce network • FE/HE Providers • Cheshire & Warrington Provider Network
Improve Educational Professionals' knowledge regarding local career opportunities, so they can better inform learners.	• Industry placement opportunities for staff • Industry days within schools and colleges • Facilitate communications to increase dialogue	• Employers • Sector Representative Bodies • Employer Representative Bodies • FE/HE Providers • Secondary Schools • JCP/DWP

Strengthening Educator Links with Industry

Tackling Skills Gaps in Teaching

Work is underway to increase educator capacity, especially in technical subjects - by supporting secondments from industry and encouraging experienced professionals to move into teaching.

Boosting Sector Awareness in Education

Industry days, placements, and stronger links with employers will ensure educators understand local job markets and can give better careers advice to students.

Up-skilling Educators for Technical Delivery

Employers can play a key role by offering placements, sharing access to equipment, and helping teaching staff stay up to date with new technologies.

Collaborative Solutions Across the Region

LSIPs will coordinate efforts with providers and employers to share ideas and resources—particularly where skills shortages are most urgent.

Join the conversation, get in touch at: **LSIP@sccci.co.uk**

Priority Sector 1 • Manufacturing •

Priority Sector 2 • Health & Social •

Priority Sector 3 • Life Sciences •

Priority Sector 4 • Digital •

Priority Sector 5 • Low Carbon •

LSIP Roadmap for Cheshire & Warrington

To address the priorities set out in this LSIP, the following table sets out the key actions that need to take place. Through this we have identified key partners to help take forward the key actions; methods that can be used to monitor progress; barriers to achieving the priorities; and key activities that can support achieving the priorities.

ACTIONABLE PRIORITY	ENABLING PARTNERS	MONITORING	BARRIERS	KEY ACTIVITIES
Theme 1 - Technical Skills				
As detailed within specific sectors earlier in the document.	• Employers • FE/HE Providers • Independent Training Providers • Careers and Enterprise Company • The Cheshire & Warrington Pledge Partnership • DWP/JCP	Technical Education and Course Uptake. Apprenticeship Placements. Work Placement students.	Lack of desire to enter certain professions. Accessibility of funding. Lack of understanding relating to existing provision. Courses not meeting employer need.	Central LSIP website to aid employer navigation of the skills system. Improve knowledge of technical education available. Enhance careers guidance activities.
Ensuring up to date information linked to the LSIP Priorities is sourced.	• South Cheshire Chamber of Commerce • LEP • FE/HE Providers • Independent Training Providers • Sector representative bodies	Horizon scanning and collaborative work. Further LMI analysis.	Difficulties in bringing together key partners.	Incorporate into LSIP Board activity. Collaborative working with providers and employers to understand future skills requirements.
Establish sector specific working groups to take forward the priorities within each individual sector.	• Employers/Sector Representative Bodies • LEP • Local Authorities • FE/HE Providers • Independent Training Providers	Progress reports. Changes to curriculum.	Inability to make changes to curriculum. Employers not engaging with the process.	Conduct deeper dives into specific issues of importance.

ACTIONABLE PRIORITY	ENABLING PARTNERS	MONITORING	BARRIERS	KEY ACTIVITIES
Theme 1 - Technical Skills				
Map supply of all types of local training provision by qualifications and competencies.	• Chamber of Commerce Network • FE/HE Providers • Independent Training Providers • Cheshire & Warrington Provider Network	Providers engaged with. Production of an online prospectus detailing all provision available.	Large number of providers to engage with. Courses available being presented in different formats. Reliance on FE/HE Providers and ITPs to share the relevant information.	Engagement with all providers to gain details of courses available.
Increase apprenticeship uptake.	• The Cheshire & Warrington Pledge Partnership • DWP/JCP • Employers • FE/HE Providers • Independent Training Providers	Apprenticeship uptake. Employers engaged.	Courses/ apprenticeship standards not meeting employer need. Lack of desire to enter certain professions. Employers unable to commit long-term.	Explore potential for shared apprenticeship schemes. Establish sector specific working groups to address this issue. Increase PR and social media activity regarding the benefits of apprenticeships. Increase careers activity relating to apprenticeships. Encourage employers to raise awareness of their own businesses and opportunities available.

Join the conversation, get in touch at: **LSIP@sccci.co.uk**

Priority Sector 1 • Manufacturing •

Priority Sector 2 • Health & Social •

Priority Sector 3 • Life Sciences •

Priority Sector 4 • Digital •

Priority Sector 5 • Low Carbon •

ACTIONABLE PRIORITY	ENABLING PARTNERS	MONITORING	BARRIERS	KEY ACTIVITIES
Theme 1 - Technical Skills				
Build relationships between providers and employers to support the high level of recruitment intent over the forthcoming 12months.	• Employers • FE/HE Providers • Independent Training Providers • DWP/JCP • The Cheshire & Warrington Pledge Partnership • Chamber of Commerce network • LEP	Unfilled vacancies. Technical Education and Course uptake.	Fewer people entering the labour market with the right skills set. Poor quality of applications. Lack of knowledge of opportunities available. Challenges in engaging employers with the right providers due to number of providers.	Forums to bring together employers and providers. Career Days. Industry Placements. Updates to the Cheshire & Warrington Opportunities Portal to better support employers and job seekers.
Work with providers to identify how provision can be more responsive to employer need.	• Employers • Chamber of Commerce Network • Employer Representative Bodies • LEP • Sector Representative Bodies • FE/HE Providers • Independent Training Providers • Cheshire & Warrington Provider Network	Technical Education course uptake. Changes to curriculum.	Insufficient Educational Teaching Professionals. Employers requiring different needs and unable to satisfy all. Insufficient flexibility of funding. Employers not engaging with the process.	Establish a Working Group within each priority sector and key theme. Working groups to consist of employers and providers. Ensuring the LSIF is responsive to the LSIP.

ACTIONABLE PRIORITY	ENABLING PARTNERS	MONITORING	BARRIERS	KEY ACTIVITIES
Theme 2 - Accessibility				
Raise awareness of LSIPs and their purpose to support understanding of skill requirements.	• Chamber of Commerce Network • The Cheshire & Warrington Pledge Partnership	Number of employers engaged.	Need for national communications.	PR and Social Media activity. Engagement events. Creation and utilisation of a dedicated LSIP website.
Raise awareness amongst employers of the value of different types of recruitment and training programmes.	• Chamber of Commerce Network • The Cheshire & Warrington Pledge Partnership • FE/HE Providers • Independent Training Providers • Recruitment agencies • DWP/JCP • Employers • Sector Representative Bodies	Number of employers engaged.	Lack of employers willing to engage. Potential cost implications.	Investigate mechanisms for incentivising training through subsidy and flexible course provision.
Address barriers to investing in skills and training.	• Chamber of Commerce Network • The Cheshire & Warrington Pledge Partnership • Sector representative bodies • FE/HE Providers • Independent Training Providers • Local Authorities	Employer feedback.	Employers not engaging in the process.	Employer engagement activities, including in-person, virtual and social media engagement.
Increase awareness of the ability for levy transfer.	• Chamber of Commerce Network • The Cheshire & Warrington Pledge Partnership • FE/HE Providers • Independent Training Providers	Apprenticeship uptake. Percentage of employers taking on apprentices.	Insufficient staff in the workplace to support apprentices.	PR activity. Employer engagement activities. Utilisation of the dedicated LSIP website to explore levy matching opportunities.

ACTIONABLE PRIORITY	ENABLING PARTNERS	MONITORING	BARRIERS	KEY ACTIVITIES
Theme 2 - Accessibility				
Provision of business support advice and guidance to diagnose digital skill needs and signpost digital training provision.	• Chamber of Commerce Network • LEP • Local Authorities • Cheshire & Warrington Provider Network	Uptake of advice and digital skills analysis. Uptake of digital training.	Employers unclear as to the impact of the digital agenda on their business. Information available is not in a user-friendly language. Lack of funding relating to the Local Digital Skills Partnership.	Establish 'Digital Hub' to support this priority.
Training Needs Analysis (TNA) for employers.	• Chamber of Commerce Network • JCP/DWP • Local Authorities • LEP • Recruitment Agencies • Employers	Employers engaged. Review of TNAs completed. Annual LSIP reviews.	Employers considering short-term skills needs only.	Support in identifying future skills needs including development of a TNA questionnaire. Brokerage service. Production of case studies demonstrating the benefits of TNAs and the impact of the LSIP.
Support employers in understanding the implications of matters that affect business, for example Low Carbon.	• Chamber of Commerce network • Local Authorities • LEP • Sector representative bodies • Net Zero North West	Methods employers use to make changes to their business to address key matters.	Employers unclear as to the impact of the Net Zero agenda on their business. Information available is not in a user-friendly language.	Provision of information in a 'user friendly' language.
Provision of support for those considered to be at a disadvantage.	• The Cheshire & Warrington Pledge Partnership • FE/HE Providers • JCP/DWP • Local Authorities	Course uptake. Number of people accessing support. Destination tracking data.	Restrictions in sharing information due to GDPR.	Map current support available. Programme of awareness raising activities.

ACTIONABLE PRIORITY	ENABLING PARTNERS	MONITORING	BARRIERS	KEY ACTIVITIES
Theme 3 - Employability Competencies				
Specific Employability Competencies detailed within Theme 3.	• Secondary schools • FE/HE Providers • VCS Sector • Employers • Careers and Enterprise Company • Independent Training Providers (ITPs) • The Cheshire & Warrington Pledge Partnership	Changes to curriculum. Improved employer feedback.	Differences of opinion as to what are key employability competencies. Lack of funding. Not recognised as necessary actionable priorities within the national LSIP approach.	Further incorporate these skills into all occupational programmes. Design a short course programme for existing employees.
Further embed employability skills, interpersonal skills and work experience into curriculum.		Employer feedback. Changes to curriculum. Job vacancies filled.	Lack of knowledge on transferrable skills. Lack of application of employability skills.	Discussions with education and training providers on methods to achieve this priority. Engagement with employers around their specific needs.
Establish mechanisms to increase the exposure of learners to the world of work.	• Secondary schools • FE/HE Providers • Employers • Careers and Enterprise Company • Cheshire & Warrington Pledge Partnership	Work experience placements. Career events.	Lack of work experience placements available. Lack of knowledge of opportunities available.	Establish a working group. Explore the potential of an Employability Skills Passport. Experience of the workplace activities, such as employers speaking in educational settings, employer open events and sector-based learning days.

ACTIONABLE PRIORITY	ENABLING PARTNERS	MONITORING	BARRIERS	KEY ACTIVITIES
Theme 3 - Employability Competencies				
Embed Microsoft applications and social media into school curriculum.	• Secondary Schools • FE/HE Providers • Independent Training Providers • Cheshire & Warrington Provider Network • Cheshire & Warrington Pledge Partnership • Employers	Changes to curriculum.	Curriculum already designed and changes may not be possible.	Map what is already taking place within curriculum. Work with Secondary education and FE/HE providers to make changes to curriculum or provide additional courses to tackle this issue. Work with other LSIPs to address the national concerns that there is a need to reboot the digital skills system.
Understand that employability competencies are applicable to both the existing and future workforce.	• FE/HE Providers • Secondary Education • Independent Training Providers • Local Authorities • VCS organisations • Warrington Skills Commission	Changes to curriculum. Increased provision for those already in work. Course uptake.	Difficulties in changing habits of the existing workforce. The relevance of curriculum within the current workplace is not necessarily understood. Limited flexibility with current curriculum.	Changes to curriculum to demonstrate the application of what is taught. Careers in the curriculum activity, i.e., employers' contribution in the classroom. Increased provision for those already in work and promotion of existing provision to employers. Formation of partnerships between education leads and employers to support demonstration on how key skills are applied and transferable within employment.

ACTIONABLE PRIORITY	ENABLING PARTNERS	MONITORING	BARRIERS	KEY ACTIVITIES
Theme 4 – Careers Education, Information, Advice & Guidance (CEIAG)				
Career inspiration activity and progression pathways that inspire and support young people.	• Chamber of Commerce Network • Cheshire & Warrington Pledge Partnership. • Secondary Schools • FE/HE Providers • Independent Training Providers (ITPs) • Employers • Careers and Enterprise Company • Employers • Sector Representative Bodies • Recruitment Agencies • JCP/DWP	Types and volume of career inspiration activity that has taken place. Number of employers engaged that work within the relevant sectors. Industry placement days.	Lack of engagement between employers and providers. Lack of interest in local opportunities available. Insufficient CEIAG professionals to deliver activities.	Establish a working group for this theme to develop activity programmes. Careers inspiration activity linked with the strong interests of young people, e.g., relating to Climate Change and Digital skills. Increase local knowledge amongst CEIAG Providers and Educational Professionals.
Facilitate opportunities to enable future workforce to see opportunities available locally, as well as supporting those seeking a change of career.		Industry Placement Days. Career Events. Statistics relating to work experience activities. Website analytics.	Lack of interest in local opportunities available. Knowledge needs to be improved regarding organisations with opportunities available.	Establish a working group for this theme to develop activity programmes. Career inspiration activities and events. Employer/Industry open days. Experience of the workplace activities. Promotion of the Cheshire & Warrington Opportunities Portal.
Expanding existing partnerships between providers and businesses to enhance opportunities, share resource and expertise.		Employers engaged. Volunteers recruited.	Lack of employer time. Failure to engage beyond existing relationships. Lack of engagement.	Development of a Framework outlining standardised methods of working. Brokerage service between providers and employers. Social media and PR campaigns to encourage employers to volunteer time.

ACTIONABLE PRIORITY	ENABLING PARTNERS	MONITORING	BARRIERS	KEY ACTIVITIES
Theme 5 - Education Professionals				
Establish partnerships between employers and departmental leads (link with Theme 4).	• Chamber of Commerce Network • FE/HE Providers • Independent Training Providers • Cheshire and Provider Network • Cheshire & Warrington Pledge Partnership • Sector Representative Bodies	Employers engaged. Partnerships formed.	Limited employer time available. Failure to engage beyond existing relationships.	Social media and PR campaigns. Employer engagement activity.
Establish a system whereby employees who are seconded into education gain sufficient support and training.	• Chamber of Commerce Network • FE/HE Providers • Independent Training Providers (ITPs)	Employers engaged. Number of staff seconded.	Limited employer time available. Cost of upskilling training and who takes responsibility.	Appoint an ITP to lead on upskilling of industry professionals into learning assessors and teachers. Engagement with employers to support the process. Social Media and PR activity.

ACTIONABLE PRIORITY	ENABLING PARTNERS	MONITORING	BARRIERS	KEY ACTIVITIES
Theme 5 - Education Professionals				
Identify means to increase capacity within the existing skills system to ensure there are sufficient educational professionals to enable course delivery.	• FE/HE Providers • Chamber of Commerce Network • Local Authorities • JCP/DWP • Careers and Enterprise Company • Independent Training Providers (ITPs)	LMI. Feedback from FE/HE Providers and Independent Training Providers.	Salaries do not reflect those within industry. Lack of interest in choosing this career path. Employers unable to support educational gaps.	Work with other LSIPs, where this is also considered a priority, to establish solutions. Identify a provider that can lead on increased training. Social media and PR campaigns. Raise awareness of the benefits of this career path, particularly targeting industry professionals considering retirement/change of career leading up to retirement. Employers to second employees to assist with course delivery. Prioritise sectors based on vacancy gaps/engagement with providers to understand their shortages.
Industry placement opportunities for educational teaching professionals.	• Chamber of Commerce Network • FE/HE Providers • Independent Training Providers (ITPs).	Feedback from employers and the educational teaching professional. Number of staff seconded. Providers engaged. Number of placements completed.	Provider is unable to release staff to take up these opportunities. Employers unable to accommodate industry placement days. Language barriers between industry and education.	Employer engagement activity. Social Media and PR campaigns. Establishment of a brokerage service between employers and providers.

Join the conversation, get in touch at: **LSIP@sccci.co.uk**

Final Words

We have taken care throughout the development of this LSIP for Cheshire & Warrington to ensure we accurately represent the views of local employers and identify their future skills needs. Although LSIPs are intended to be a three-year plan, we believe this to be the start of longer-term initiatives to ensure that employers are at the heart of the local skills system.

Initially, LSIPs were expected to focus on the post-16 technical skills needs of employers. Engagement with employers and stakeholders, however, has demonstrated that there are further areas that also need to be considered. Together, by addressing all the priorities detailed within this LSIP, **we aim to ensure that our existing and future workforce are equipped with the necessary skills to meet the needs of business and the local economy.**

As we move into Stage 2 of the LSIP, we will focus on **collaboration** with enabling partners to ensure we all commit to the clear actions we have set out. We want to ensure **we provide meaningful opportunities for all;** develop essential new skills, whilst upskilling the existing workforce; share best practice; utilise opportunities to make sure skill-sets are not lost due to retirement; and **further develop partnerships between providers and employers for the long term benefit of our people and our economy.**

Through this plan, we have outlined activities that we want to push forward to help achieve our priorities. We will also ensure we **respond to employer demand;** support employers in better articulating their skills needs; monitor local labour market information; match employers' needs with available provision; facilitate discussions with employers and providers, stimulating demand and access to a range of funding streams to support their business; build on the success of other skills projects such as the Skills Development Fund; and **provide further opportunities for partner collaboration via the LSIF process, for the benefit of the sub region.**

We will **commit to transparency** as we move forward with the second stage of the LSIP, whilst also showcasing our achievements. Opportunities will continue for employers to feed into the process and **ensure the LSIP remains reflective of their needs.**

Lastly, **we would like to show our appreciation to all who have engaged** in this process to date, and we look forward to **continuing and building upon the positive relationships** developed as we move forward with the LSIP for the benefit of Cheshire & Warrington.

Get in touch

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Priority Sector 1
• Manufacturing •

Priority Sector 2
• Health & Social •

Priority Sector 3
• Life Sciences •

Priority Sector 4
• Digital •

Priority Sector 5
• Low Carbon •

The Cheshire & Warrington LSIP Team

Paul Colman
Project Director

As Chief Executive of the South Cheshire Chamber of Commerce, I bring over 25 years' experience representing the local business community.

My role involves keeping businesses informed with the latest developments, while facilitating valuable networking and knowledge-sharing opportunities. I actively represent South Cheshire on a wide range of local and regional boards and committees, as well as within the nationally accredited British Chambers of Commerce network.

Crewe and South Cheshire are at a pivotal moment, with a real opportunity to transform the area by building on the strength and diversity of its economy. To unlock this potential, it's vital that we address the region's skills needs. My involvement in the LSIP ensures that the voice of business is central to shaping education and training provision – aligning it with employer demand, supporting future workforce development, and driving inclusive economic growth for the region.

Sarah Emes-Young
Project Manager

Sarah is responsible for driving the overall LSIP project, leading the team to ensure successful delivery to set targets. Sarah also leads on business engagement within the LSIP team.

Sarah's background is in Human Resources leadership, predominantly in manufacturing and supply chain environments within the North West of England and North East Wales. She gets the skills challenges faced by business and can confidently support with innovative solutions, including tapping into her wide network of contacts and exercising her workplace rebel behaviours.

Julie Shawcross
Skills Consultant

Julie Shawcross is a seasoned professional with expertise in leading high-performing Bid Teams across the apprenticeship, training, skills, and employability sectors.

Her experience as Chair of the Cheshire & Warrington Learning Provider Network, helps her to lead collaboration among FE providers across the sub-region, driving strategic thinking and meaningful engagement with employers and communities. to strengthen education and workforce development.

"I am proud to support the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP), a vital initiative for aligning education and training with the needs of our local economy. The LSIP is an important opportunity to ensure learners gain the right skills and training providers stay responsive to changing workforce demands."

Maria Davison
Skills Consultant

Maria Davison brings a wealth of experience spanning an early career in retail management and over two decades in Further Education, where she held a range of teaching and senior leadership positions.

Throughout her career, she has worked closely with employers to address workforce development needs and drive skills-based initiatives. Since the inception of the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP), Maria has played a key role in providing strategic skills consultancy, fostering stakeholder collaboration, and ensuring alignment with regional priorities. As Skills and Policy Director at the West Cheshire and North Wales Chamber of Commerce, she continues to champion skills development and policy engagement across the region.

Hannah Crookes
Skills Consultant

Join the conversation, get in touch at: **LSIP@sccci.co.uk**