



Progress Report June 2025

Cheshire & Warrington Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP)

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▶ Please also note you can find additional information regarding LSIP activities, including our Roadmap, within our separate annexes.

01

Purpose of the Report

It is that time of year again where we have the opportunity to update employers, providers and stakeholders on the collaborative achievements of our Cheshire & Warrington Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) that have been conducted by our LSIP team and enabling partners over the past twelve months.



For those of you where this may be the first time engaging with us, the Cheshire & Warrington LSIP was approved by the Secretary of State for Education in August 2023. It is a three-year plan with the primary purpose of placing employers at the heart of the skills system in our local area.

LSIPs were developed to support employers in articulating their skills needs whilst brokering links with Post-16 technical education providers and shaping current and future provision. We continue to engage with our local employers to broker relationships with providers, and ensure they continue to share their voice on what is important in terms of skills to support their organisations and business growth, which further benefits our economy. Beyond this, we are also providing support in establishing links between employers and organisations, such as the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), to support those looking for new opportunities and harnessing skills.



In our last Annual Progress Review ([link here](#)), we reported that all our activities as part of our Roadmap (Annex A), associated with our five themes were on track to deliver. The key to this continuous successful delivery of our LSIP is collaboration between our fantastic LSIP team and our enabling partners, who have continued to work alongside us.

May I therefore take this opportunity to thank:

- ▶ Our local businesses and employers
- ▶ Further Education Providers
- ▶ Association of Colleges
- ▶ Careers and Enterprise Company
- ▶ Chamber of Commerce Network
- ▶ Cheshire & Warrington Careers Hub
- ▶ Cheshire & Warrington Learning Provider Network
- ▶ DWP
- ▶ Employer and Sector Representative bodies
- ▶ Enterprise Cheshire & Warrington
- ▶ Higher Education Providers
- ▶ Institute of Employability Professionals
- ▶ Institute of Technology
- ▶ Local Authorities
- ▶ National Careers Service
- ▶ Northern Skills Network
- ▶ Recruitment Agencies
- ▶ The Cheshire & Warrington Pledge Partnership
- ▶ Warrington Skills Partnership

Twelve months on we are proud to report further on the positive impact our LSIP is having on Cheshire & Warrington. This report provides you with the opportunity to: understand the activities that have been taking place; see the importance of the voice of business; look at how we are supporting skills for the benefit of your organisations; understand matters affecting our local area; and highlight how you can still get, and continue to be, involved.



Victoria Goodwin

People On Demand Lead, SharpFutures CIC
Chair, Cheshire & Warrington Local Skills Improvement Plan

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Summary of the LSIP

Our LSIP delivery, covering Cheshire & Warrington, continues to focus around our five key themes: Technical Skills; Accessibility; Employability Competencies; Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance; and Educational Professionals. You can find out the full details of our LSIP here, but to provide you with a summary:



With Technical Skills, we have been focusing on the priority sectors of Manufacturing, Life Sciences and Health and Social Care. Now, just because we have priority sectors doesn't mean we are not considering all the other sectors operating in Cheshire & Warrington. We consider these via our cross-cutting technical skills of Digital and Low Carbon (or you may call this "green skills" or "skills associated with Net Zero"), as well as the other four themes of our LSIP.

Then we have our theme of Accessibility. It is easier to define this theme via four threads: accessibility of information (supporting employers in finding the information they need); accessibility of training, provision and funding (one method of assisting with this is via our LSIP brokerage service); accessibility for those considered to be at a disadvantage (we want everyone to have access to the same opportunities); and accessibility of support in assessing future skills needs (as we understand the challenges faced sometimes in knowing what your business needs in the long-term).





Our third theme looks at Employability Competencies, which you may also refer to as employability, soft or transferable skills. What we are trying to achieve is ensuring that employability competencies are embedded further in curriculum for our future workforce, as well as ensuring there are opportunities for our existing workforce to strengthen their own skills.

For Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance, we are addressing concerns that careers guidance may not reflect local opportunities and progression routes available. We want to ensure those of influence have sufficient access to information regarding local opportunities. Then we are looking at how more opportunities for meaningful experience within the workplace can be created, and the application of what is taught in curriculum within the workplace.

Finally, our LSIP is also looking at the priority theme of Educational Professionals. We recognise the importance of ensuring there are enough educational teaching professionals to deliver the training required to meet business need. There is also the aspect of ensuring they are equipped with the up-to-date knowledge and understanding of the priority sectors and how this can be applied to develop the skills of the future workforce.



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Strategic & Economic Context Update



General Information

The Cheshire & Warrington LSIP covers the local authority areas of Cheshire West and Chester, Cheshire East and Warrington.

Overall Cheshire & Warrington has an economy of £37.7 billion, a population of nearly one million and circa 41,000 VAT registered businesses. Therefore, the region is regarded as the strongest performing economy in the North, with strong connections to Liverpool, Manchester, North Wales and the Midlands, and close to international airports and freeports.¹



**£37.7
billion**

Total economy of
Cheshire & Warrington



**1 million
people**

live in Cheshire &
Warrington



Labour Supply

For January 2024 – December 2024, the Labour Market Profile for Cheshire & Warrington is as follows:

	CHESHIRE & WARRINGTON (%)	NORTH WEST (%)	GREAT BRITAIN (%)
Economically Active	81.5	76.5	78.6
In Employment	79.6	73.4	75.5
Unemployed	2.2	4.0	3.8
Economically Inactive	18.5	23.5	21.4
Claimant Count (as at March 25)	2.6	4.5	4.2

In comparison to the Labour Supply data we shared within our Annual Progress Review 2024, the percentage of those identified as economically inactive has increased by 0.8%. Nationally, there has been an increase in the number of people with work-limiting health conditions. The largest increases were observed among younger people (aged 16 to 34) whose main health condition was mental health, and older people (aged 50 to 64) whose main health condition was musculoskeletal. Many people also have not just one, but several conditions, which is a key driver of economic inactivity.

In addition, it is worth noting that our local area is at high retirement risk, with all three local authority regions being above the national average for areas of comparable size.

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Other Statistics

The following information spans the period from 1st July 2024 to 31st March 2025 for Cheshire & Warrington, and has been collated based on unique job postings:

T O P T E N			
INDUSTRIES HIRING	SECTORS HIRING	OCCUPATIONS IN DEMAND	MOST IN-DEMAND SKILLS REQUESTED BY EMPLOYERS
Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	Engineering jobs	Engineer	Communication
Professional, scientific and technical activities	Teaching Jobs	Manager	Management
Human health and social work activities	Hospitality and Catering Jobs	Social Care Worker	Clients
Accommodation and Food Services	Accounting and Finance Jobs	Teaching Assistant	Solutions
Financial and insurance activities	Sales Jobs	General Nurse	Customer Service
Transportation and storage	Healthcare and Nursing Jobs	Lorry Driver	Assertiveness
Information and communication	IT Jobs	Project Manager	Wellbeing
Administrative and support service activities	Trade and Construction Jobs	Healthcare Support Worker	Engineering
Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	Logistics and Warehouse Jobs	Assistant	Sales
Arts, entertainment and recreation	Social work Jobs	Chef	Healthcare



Devolution

Cheshire & Warrington completed its Government consultation for Devolution in April 2025, with its decision pending, and is part of the Devolution Priority Programme. Further consultation is ongoing with business and residents.

Devolution would bring together the councils of Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, and Warrington Borough. If fully approved, the first Mayoral election would take place in May 2026.

The benefits of Devolution are regarded as bringing unprecedented powers and budgets for Mayors and allowing decisions on local investment to be made locally.

Currently Devolution has no direct impact on this LSIP. When Devolution takes place, the LSIP model will come under joint ownership between the designated Employer Representative Body (in our local area's case South Cheshire Chamber of Commerce and Industry) and the new Strategic Authority (which can also be known as the Combined Authority).



Skills England and Priority Sectors

As detailed in our summary section previously, the priority sectors of our LSIP are Manufacturing, Life Sciences and Health and Social Care, as well as the cross-cutting themes of Digital and Low Carbon (including green skills).

Our priority sectors for the LSIP also sit within the eight growth sectors identified via the Government's Industrial Strategy that is in development (Advanced Manufacturing; Clean Energy Industries; Creative Industries; Defence; Digital and Technology; Financial Services; Life Sciences; and Professional and Business Services), as well as construction and health and social care that are deemed as priority sectors within Government.



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Other Factors Affecting Our Region

As the drive towards net-zero accelerates, Cheshire & Warrington is at the forefront of this transformation. Several industrial decarbonisation projects are leading the way bringing innovation and economic growth to the sub region

The **Regional Skills Pilot** in Cheshire West is part of a government-backed initiative aimed at **boosting green skills training** and supporting workers in transitioning to clean energy jobs. Cheshire West and Chester Council has received **£1 million in funding to help local people access opportunities** in industries like renewable energy, welding, electrical engineering, and construction.

The pilot ran from February to May 2025. Final plans were submitted to the Government in June for approval to move on to Phase 2. This timeline aligns with broader efforts **to support workforce transitions into clean energy and net-zero industries.**

A key feature of **the pilot is the Energy Skills Passport**, a tool designed to help workers identify the qualifications needed for specific roles, particularly for those moving from oil and gas into renewable energy. The initiative is being delivered by Enterprise Cheshire & Warrington, in partnership with North West Net Zero Hub and Net Zero North West. This effort aligns with a broader North West Net Zero Industrial Cluster plan, **which aims to unlock £30 billion in clean energy projects, remove 40 million tonnes of carbon annually, and create thousands of jobs.** The LSIP is part of the Steering Group and has given direct insight and comment to those carrying out the work.

HyNet is a consortia project, which will **both upgrade existing and develop new infrastructure**. This includes underground pipelines, hydrogen production plants and storage facilities. Activities being carried out range from feasibility studies to large-scale implementations, aiming to support the UK's transition to hydrogen energy and advance industrial decarbonisation. The transition from natural gas to hydrogen requires a **significant shift in skills, particularly in design and construction.**

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The nuclear sector in Cheshire & Warrington is experiencing **significant growth, with jobs in the region increasing by 16% over the past year.** The latest figures show that nuclear employment in the area has risen from 5,838 in 2023 to 6,771 in 2024. **Warrington has reinforced its status as a nuclear industry powerhouse, with jobs increasing from 4,728 to 5,411—a 14% rise.** The Nuclear Skills Delivery Group (NSDG) forecasts a 49% growth in the nuclear sector by 2030, covering both civil and defence roles.⁴

A **further boost for jobs** and investment in the region's economy will also be seen in the **development of a state-of-the-art waste plastics recycling facility by Enviroo,** and the development of the UK's first energy-from-waste facility with carbon capture by Encyclis near Ellesmere Port.

The construction sector already faces a skills shortage, with high demand for project managers, welders, and heavy machinery operators. HyNet alone will require approximately 1,000 construction workers at its peak, making recruitment and retention challenging amid competition from the oil and gas sector. Time is pressing as many of **these roles take years to train**. At the same time, current gas distribution operations will continue, adding extra pressure to an already stretched workforce with **employers competing for the same talent pool**. The sector also has a high number of leavers from operational roles **due to an ageing workforce**. Ensuring key roles such as programme managers, project designers, process engineers, and operational supervisors are filled will be vital to **avoiding labour shortages that could disrupt project progress**.

The Government has set ambitious housing targets for Cheshire, equating to 5,439 new homes per year (Cheshire East: 2,461 new homes per year; Cheshire West and Chester: 1,914 new homes per year; and Warrington: 1,064 new homes per year). These targets are part of a broader national effort to address housing shortages, with local authorities expected to support development while **balancing infrastructure and environmental concerns**.

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What
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Our LSIP delivery has been focusing on 20 priority activities across our core team and enabling partners. We are pleased to report that 9 of these priority activities have been fully completed. For those priority activities that are not fully completed, we are making good progress, and in some cases, further explorative work is taking place to ensure the activities meet our businesses' needs.

A range of delivery mechanisms support the implementation of our activities, details of which are in our Roadmap in Annex A. We rely on collaboration with partners for our achievements to date. The table on page 15 summarises key achievements with enabling partners in delivering employer identified LSIP priorities.

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Theme 1 Technical Skills

YOU ASKED	WE DELIVERED TOGETHER
<p>Specific occupational skills requirements</p>	<p>Local Skills Improvement Fund (LSIF) leading to new facilities and courses across Cheshire College South and West, Reaseheath College, Warrington and Vale Royal College, and Macclesfield College. Full details can be found in Annex A, but some key highlights are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Across the six projects (Green Technology Hub, Vale Royal STEM, Specialist Healthcare Training, Advanced Engineering and Manufacturing, Engineering and Low Carbon tech and Digital Skills Hub) 4,281 learners have undertaken learning using the new facilities and equipment provided from LSIF. 119 Teaching staff have undertaken CPD or cascade training, which has enhanced their knowledge and has enabled them to be equipped with the knowledge of using the technologies available within industry. LSIF has seen the development of an Immersive Learning Environment (building upon the original Skills Development Fund (SDF) funded facility) enabling an improved learning experience for users and a broader range of educational activities. This will continue to be used by students from all sectors and utilised as a learning environment to upskill and develop teaching staff, across partner educational institutes and Independent Training Providers, as well as trainers from industry, in new and emerging digital and immersive teaching technologies. Macclesfield College has completed their capital works, which will support low carbon technologies. Also, at Warrington and Vale Royal College, 15 new courses have been developed, including a new Laboratory Skills bootcamp, working with employers from across Science, Engineering and Health. The development of a Hospital Ward setting at Cheshire College South and West, which enables students to apply their learning in a realistic setting. New equipment has been installed supporting Engineering and Manufacturing at Cheshire College South and West, supporting current courses as well as four new Level 4 Higher Technical Qualification (HTQ) pathways, and will also be used for four new Level 5 HTQ courses that will commence later in 2025. In addition, a bespoke programme in Hydraulics and Pneumatics has been developed. The development of a new Green Technology Hub to support Green Skills development at Warrington and Vale Royal College, supporting T-Level learners, apprentices and other Construction Study Programmes. <p>Beyond LSIF we have seen the sixth wave of Skills Bootcamps, funded by the Department for Education, which have been designed to help employers fill vacancies and upskill their existing staff, as well as assisting local residents move into work or progress in work. We are pleased to report that 38 skills bootcamps are planned which fit within our LSIP priorities for 25/26.</p> <p>Priestley College have responded to our LSIP by launching their Sustainability Honours programme, offering students additional “green skills” modules alongside their study programmes.</p>

YOU ASKED	WE DELIVERED TOGETHER
<p>Building upon and establishing employer and provider relationships to support your needs and drive forward our technical skills priorities.</p>	<p>Our LSIP team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have contributed to the Regional Skills Pilot and Hydrogen Skills Alliance Skills Framework. Supported the Origin HR Forum through agenda design, influencing HR Professionals on local training provision and fostering holistic relationships with our colleges and Independent Training Providers. Are members of CITB's Liverpool City Region and Cheshire Employer Network, and thus able to influence. Hold regular discussion on addressing skills and training challenges with Skills For Care. Have established a Life Sciences Working Group in partnership with Cogent Skills. Have supported the re-launch of Cheshire & Warrington Learning Provider Network (CandWLPN). Continue to contribute to the independent network of the National Retrofit Hub, focusing on enabling the delivery of retrofit at scale. Have conducted over 200 business engagements to support their needs. Are increasing relationships between education and business to influence curriculum planning, content, and delivery. Feed into a collaboration task force, which has been established to address the anticipated growth in specialist workforce across the gas distribution network, sharing limited resources and ensure consistency in training. Ensure contribution into existing networks such as: The Warrington Skills Partnership; Regional Skills Pilot; Business Advisory Board; Chester Business Club; North West Business Leadership Team People and Skills Group; HMPPS North West Construction Group; CITB LCR and Cheshire Group; CIMSPA Local Skills Advisory; Cheshire Business Group; and Enterprise Cheshire & Warrington's Into Work and Opportunities Portal Steering Groups.
<p>Support in navigating the skills system</p>	<p>We are ensuring ongoing development of our LSIP Website, providing information on: Post-16 training; apprenticeships; careers and recruitment activities; engagement with young people; upskilling; inclusion; work experience; an employer dashboard, using ILR (Independent Learning Record) data, showcasing Apprenticeship and Adult provision; and influencing curriculum.</p>

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Theme 2 Accessibility

YOU ASKED	WE DELIVERED TOGETHER
Accessibility of information for employers	Local Skills Improvement Fund (LSIF) leading to new facilities and courses across Cheshire College South and West, Reaseheath College, Warrington and Vale Royal College, and Macclesfield College. Full details can be found in Annex A, but some key highlights are as follows:
Accessibility of training, provision and funding	<p>Our LSIP team broker relationships between employers and providers, and providing support in accessing funding, to ensure your training and skills needs are met. To date we have supported over 55 employers with this. We have also provided support for levy transfer. For example, we have guided Encirc through the process of transferring some of their apprenticeship levy funds to iMap, a small social care provider based in West Cheshire.</p> <p>In addition, we collaborate with providers and sit as members of the Colleges' Employer Engagement Boards to ensure employer input into curriculum.</p>
Accessibility for those considered to be at a disadvantage	<p>The DWP Youth Task Force in Cheshire & Warrington is a collaborative initiative aimed at helping young people aged 16–24 overcome barriers to employment, education, or training, and we attend all meetings in our 3 Local Authority areas. The Task Force delivers targeted support, shares best practice, and coordinates resources to ensure that young people in the region have the opportunities and guidance they need to achieve positive outcomes.</p> <p>Employers (e.g. Cadent, Balfour Beatty) have launched Recruitment and Diversity Initiatives, aimed at attracting diverse candidates from various backgrounds. These include removing entry barriers; modularised development packages; and diverse recruitment channels.</p> <p>Meeting our LSIP's priorities, The Cheshire & Warrington Pledge Partnership hosted 'Your Future' (their first SEND Specific Careers fair), bringing 269 students from 15 SEND schools and colleges, meeting with 50 exhibitors. In addition, they have: conducted CPD sessions for employers on supporting young people with various barriers, such as SEMH (social, emotional and mental health) needs and disabilities; and focussed on inclusive recruitment, supporting care leavers, veterans, and job seekers with disabilities.</p>
Accessibility of support in assessing future skills needs	We actively engage with businesses about their requirements and adding value in how to address their needs, signposting to relevant providers and courses. Examples of businesses we have worked with include, but not limited to, Rhino Safety and Enviroo.

Theme 3 Employability Competencies

YOU ASKED	WE DELIVERED TOGETHER
<p>The following employability skills were cited as being essential for your business:</p> <p>Numeracy; MS Office Skills; Leadership and Managerial; Personal Productivity; Equality, Diversity and Inclusion awareness; Emotional Intelligence and Resilience; Communication skills; Literacy; and Problem Solving.</p>	<p>Responding to our LSIP:</p> <p>MS Office Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reaseheath College, under LSIF, we have seen the development of a facility utilising existing outdoor education facilities to develop skills including resilience and confidence, leadership and management, whilst developing a dedicated teaching space to develop digital skills including numeracy, literacy, MS Office Skills and industry specific CAD and Project Management systems. Warrington and Vale Royal College provision ensures inclusion of MS Office, Leadership training and emotional intelligence, and MS Excel and Leadership and Management training (UKSPF funded). Macclesfield College ensure basic MS Office skills are delivered to all Business Administration learners.
	<p>Employability Skills</p> <p>The Careers Hub have been raising awareness of Skills Builder to all institutions to inform a common language of skills, with 22 Schools participating.</p>
	<p>Supporting this agenda, The Cheshire & Warrington Pledge Partnership delivered 24 cohorts of an Employment Readiness Programme for 930 sixth form and college students. This culminated in 5 Mock Assessment Centres, bringing together 125 employers actively looking for apprentices and 401 young people from 35 schools and colleges being put through a formal off site assessment centre.</p>
	<p>Cheshire College South and West have introduced their "Core Skills for 2030" employability programme, which runs alongside study programmes.</p>
	<p>Reaseheath College have reviewed and updated their Career Ready programme to account for employer feedback.</p>
	<p>Warrington and Vale Royal College use employer feedback to embed the six top employability skills for each sector into their curriculum.</p>
	<p>We have supported Petty Pool College with their employer links, including Digital training and will be supporting their Neuro-Inclusion Conference for businesses in July 2025. Our work has been greatly appreciated by the College including that the LSIP has been instrumental in helping the College shape and strengthen their curriculum. (Full quote available in Annex B.)</p>

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Theme 4 CEIAG

YOU ASKED	WE DELIVERED TOGETHER
<p>Careers exploration activities and progression pathways that inspire and support young people</p>	<p>Activities our LSIP team have supported include:</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> South Cheshire Chamber's Young Members Network held 6 events with 24 businesses engaged (equating to 1008 business hours). West Cheshire and North Wales Chamber of Commerce's Young Chamber Programme (23/24 academic year) held 21 events with 3128 pupils engaged (equating to 226 business hours). Engagement with Seetec and DWP via the Cheshire & Warrington Learning Provider Network, as well as promoting Compass (a free online tool designed to provide support in understanding and improving careers education and guidance (CEG) practices). Delivered a Year 7 education activity on "How AI is Changing Jobs". Supported The Cheshire & Warrington Pledge Partnership Mock Assessment Centres. Supported employer engagement for various events, including STEM Careers Leaders (which also links with our Educational Professionals Theme) and Made In Crewe Advanced Manufacturing events in June 2025.
	<p>We have also seen:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Colleges have worked with employers to hold careers events and industry experience days. In addition, The Cheshire & Warrington Pledge Partnership held three apprenticeships and jobs fairs across each local authority area, attracting 2,294 attendees. They also organised 6 town-wide careers fairs with 300 exhibitors and 6,281 attendees.
<p>Increase knowledge and awareness amongst CEIAG Influencers.</p>	<p>We have ensured that data presented is challenged to ensure appropriate context. For example this activity has taken place at: In To Work Board meetings; Opportunities Portal input; and Lightcast information for DWP.</p>

Facilitate opportunities to enable future workforce to see opportunities available locally

-  The Careers Hub has convened a meeting with the 3 Local Authority Participation Managers and Further Education to discuss retention of learners to support Risk of NEET (Not in Education Employment or Training) work across the local area.
-  Each of the 3 Local Authorities have commenced development of their Risk of NEET Strategy underpinned by a local area action plan.
-  Education, Local Authorities and DWP have been and are continuing to analyse participation and NEET data to ensure positive destinations and continuous improvement in approach and interventions, thus reducing Youth Unemployment.
-  All 3 Local Authorities have reviewed their data sharing agreements with schools and colleges, and each Local Authority has agreed to share data packs with schools regarding their Post-16 learners and their destinations. This will enable the schools to analyse their data and review their careers provision and inclusion support.
-  All Post-16 pathways are being promoted to young people and their Parents/ Carers/Trusted Adults and Educators.
-  Working with Young People/Parents/Carers and Trusted Adults raising awareness of the support available to participate in Education Employment Training.
-  Careers Education is being embedded across whole school/college to improve outcomes for young people and ensure the curriculum is developed to support the skills and qualifications needed for the local economy.
-  The Careers Hub have been leading on the development of the Equalex framework, where the objective is to ensure that, in the future, young people receive 50 hours of high-quality work experience. To support readying this system, 3 providers have been commissioned to test and trial new modern opportunities for work experience focused on our 3 growth sectors: Net Zero (Speakers for Schools) Ellesmere Port/ Chester; Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering (All About Futures) Crewe; and Life Sciences (Youth Fed) Macclesfield and Warrington. The offer will be available to 120 young people and 10 Teacher Encounters for each project between May–July.
-  The Careers Hub has commissioned activity to support raising awareness of Apprenticeship and Technical Education pathways: for Key Stage 4, 100 students from 10 Schools and 10 employers were involved in a Mock Assessment Day; and for Key Stage 5, 400 students from 20 Schools participated in the Explore Programme and a further 200 in the Mock Assessment Centre.
-  A Cheshire & Warrington video has been commissioned to raise awareness of pathways, skills and the sectors across our local area: focusing on current and future opportunities. The video will be made available via Enterprise Cheshire & Warrington's platform and shared to raise awareness of the full opportunities across the region as well as the skills needed by employers.
-  The Independent Training Provider Project for Advanced Manufacturing, funded by the Careers and Enterprise Company, focused on three elements: Up-skilling of Independent Training Providers with compass+ and an Internal Leadership Review for quality careers education; 120 Young People experiencing a progressive model of work experience in the sector; and 10 Teacher Encounters across the sector.
-  The Careers Hub have commissioned a progressive model of work experience including, but not limited to, Interactive resources for Year 7 and 8 to introduce the industry and give valuable LMI data led by employers and Year 10 have a workplace experience, being led by All about STEM. This was a carousel day where they met Independent Training Providers, employers and apprentices from industry.
-  Workshops have taken place with Higher Horizons to identify Higher Education routes into the STEM related careers.
-  Reaseheath College have employed an Education Partnerships Manager, to improve local school engagement and offer wider career-based activities.

Theme 5 Educational Professionals

It is within this theme that our priority activity that is currently not on track to delivery, within the timescales of this LSIP, sits: Identify solutions to increase capacity within the existing skills system, ensuring there are sufficient educational professionals to enable course delivery.

The reason for this is due to the national challenges around this agenda, and agreement to look at potential collaborative initiatives across all 38 LSIP areas. However, our enabling partners have continued to explore and conduct initiatives to address this priority:

YOU ASKED	WE DELIVERED TOGETHER
Increased capacity for educational professionals to enable delivery of courses to meet the needs of employers.	<p>Initiatives have been implemented by our colleges to advertise jobs in Further Education to enable targeting industry experts.</p> <p>The Department for Education and Gatsby-funded Industry Associate Pilot, being delivered by The Edge Hill University and five colleges across the Northwest, was presented to the LSIP. This Pilot focuses on developing a 12-week training programme designed to support industry professionals transitioning into roles within Further Education. The project is set to go live in September 25, with support of our LSIP and Cheshire & Warrington Learning Provider Network.</p>
Identify means to up-skill Educational Professionals to meet technical course delivery requirements, which are in line with industry.	<p>Locally, the Careers Hub has offered SENDCo (Special Educational Needs Coordinator) training across all three Local Authority areas, supporting 36 staff. Plans have also been put in place to offer Designated Teachers introductions into Quality Careers Education, supporting the distribution of leadership across a setting.</p>
Improve Educational Professionals' knowledge regarding local career opportunities, so they can better inform learners.	<p>The Careers Hub has developed an educational workforce development calendar, distributed to the school network every half term, detailing national, regional and local CPD available to all staff within an educational setting.</p> <p>In addition, they have delivered 6 specific Teacher Encounters, covering 60 staff from educational settings, to align their understanding of careers with the economy and support them to embed learning across the curriculum.</p> <p>They also meet with Careers Leaders termly, and have also held a Careers Leaders Conference, with over 100 attendees to prepare for new statutory guidance around Gatsby Benchmarks and Work Experience.</p>

Sept 2025

Gatsby Foundation led
Industry Associates Pilot
launches - bringing
industry expertise into
education

Want to use your industry
knowledge to enhance
local education?

Get in touch with the LSIP team today!

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What still needs to be achieved?

Our LSIP delivery has not ended yet, and therefore we now wish to take the opportunity to detail our intentions to ensure complete delivery by August 2026, as well as other activities that align with our LSIP's objectives.

OUR PRIORITY ACTIVITY	WHAT WE STILL NEED TO DO	CHALLENGES
THEME 1 - TECHNICAL SKILLS		
Support smarter ways of working as we see the development of the new Health and Social Care Strategic Board, Life Sciences Group (led by Cogent Skills) and Digital Project with Careers Hub.	Development of a Health and Social Care Strategic Board. Our LSIP team have been in discussion with Skills For Care on how this might work.	<p>National changes proposed to the Integrated Care Board and NHS England will impact on the Health and Social Care meeting landscape. In the meantime, colleges are thinking differently about efficient ways of working and knowledge sharing to reduce the negative impact on time.</p> <p>Progress delayed due to reliance on enabling partners to deliver.</p>

August
2026

Target for full
LSIP delivery

OUR PRIORITY ACTIVITY	WHAT WE STILL NEED TO DO	CHALLENGES
THEME 2 - ACCESSIBILITY		
The NEET project is being led by The Careers Hub and was launched in September 2023. Work has been undertaken to establish common ways of working across the three local authorities, with a goal to release a toolkit into high schools to reduce potential NEET figures.	<p>The toolkit is now anticipated for 25/26 academic year and will be actioned by our enabling partners. However, the LSIP continues to input into Cheshire West and Chester NEET meeting and the Cheshire & Warrington Learning Provider Network have established a NEET group of Independent Training Providers to support Local Authority activity.</p> <p>A standard set of Risk Of NEET Indicator Tool (RONIs) have now been agreed for the 3 Local Authorities, enabling a consistent approach.</p>	Local Authority Data Sharing Agreements have created the delays in progress.
Working with HyNet to consider communications to understand the benefits of the project to support employers in understanding the implications of low carbon on business.	This activity is being led by HyNet, however the LSIP is part of the Origin project and meets regularly via the HR Forum to talk to local businesses in the HyNet area about skills training. We have also encouraged Cheshire & Warrington Learning Provider Network to better understand HyNet objectives and how they could prepare to influence. We maintain being vocal to Cheshire & Warrington's Business Advisory Board, Regional Skills Plan and North West Net Zero on how businesses are not progressing as quickly as expected to meet Government targets.	Delayed progress due to investment decisions.
Full mapping of current support available for those considered to be at a disadvantage to assist accessing provisions and employment.	<p>Work is underway on promotion of disadvantaged groups & alternative talent pools to business.</p> <p>A project is being led by the Integrated Care Board (ICB) to look at this subject. We have also ensured local providers input into the project.</p>	Mapping activity not yet commenced.
Establishing links regarding care leavers but would like to take this further & encourage the private sector employers to sign the Care Leavers Covenant. Similarly, the Armed Forces Covenant & others.	<p>Proposed event Summer 2025, using the Chambers of Commerce network for promotion.</p> <p>West Cheshire & North Wales Chamber has signed the Care Leavers Covenant & has supported requests from 3 care leavers.</p>	Delayed due to consideration around employer offer from Local Authorities & how to sell this under the business "what's in it for me?" question.

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OUR PRIORITY ACTIVITY	WHAT WE STILL NEED TO DO	CHALLENGES
THEME 3 - EMPLOYABILITY COMPETENCIES		
Map where there are gaps in delivering employability skills.	Information has been received from colleges, however the approach needs to be re-considered.	<p>Lack of consistency in information of reporting.</p> <p>Clarification required on what is mandatory training and potential to link with Skills Builder, DWP and other providers.</p>

OUR PRIORITY ACTIVITY	WHAT WE STILL NEED TO DO	CHALLENGES
THEME 4 - CAREERS EDUCATION, INFORMATION, ADVICE AND GUIDANCE		
Establishment of an events calendar to make it easier for employers to see expectations of all providers and partners across the region, to provide more tailored activities and reduce duplication.	<p>Need to reconsider how this can be collated and managed.</p> <p>Potential to deliver with support of Cheshire & Warrington's Business Advisory Board.</p>	Requests for information from providers and partners not completed.



Beyond our priority activities but helping us address our region's needs:

PRIORITY	FOCUS	WHAT WE WILL BE DOING
THEME 1 - TECHNICAL SKILLS		
Low Carbon.	Clean Energy Education.	The LSIP is working in collaboration with Gas Distribution Network (GDN) employers, including HyNet and Cadent, to address key challenges and opportunities for embedding future energy education across education and training programmes. This collaborative approach aims to ensure that the region is equipped with the skills needed to support the transition to a low-carbon energy future.
Addressing the shortage of electricians.	Establishment of an Electro Technical Training and Careers Alliance (ETCA) for the region.	We are working in partnership with Electrical Contractors' Association (ECA) regarding the development of an ETCA for the sub region. The purpose of an ETCA is to increase the number of fully qualified electricians, whilst maximising opportunities for post-qualification upskilling and career progression.
Increase focus on Health and Social Care.	Encouraging more individuals to enter careers within the sector.	Skills For Care have joined our LSIP Board and we will be exploring collaborative activities moving forward. We will be placing emphasis on skills in the Social Care Sector.
Consideration for Construction given Government's priority focus on accelerating new housing and infrastructure.	Raising awareness of targets and ensuring the workforce is in place to deliver those targets.	We are committed to working with providers to ensure this is appropriately targeted and local businesses are aware.
Skills Bootcamps.	Ensuring funding goes towards training employers need, whilst meeting local priorities.	We will continue to support Enterprise Cheshire & Warrington in enabling this and encouraging the marketing of courses to focus more on job outcomes.

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THEME 2 - ACCESSIBILITY		
Increasing employer engagement.	Bringing together education and business.	Develop a programme to support "employer engagement" colleagues within other organisations to better "sell" their offer to business. This will include focusing on language used and ensuring it meets the needs of business. We will also be Increasing activities with the Chambers of Commerce network to support these activities.
Formalising a levy matching service.	Enabling more employers to benefit from the Levy.	Working with the Growth Hub and Chambers of Commerce network to consider how this could work in practice. Promotion of the future Growth and Skills Levy and providing information and advice to local employers.
Supporting NEETs within Cheshire & Warrington.	To reduce the number of NEETs.	Continuation of working with our enabling partners to support projects focusing on NEETs (Not in Education, Employment or Training) within our region.
Addressing our digital needs.	Ensuring Cheshire & Warrington is the most digitally accessible sub-region.	Working with Cheshire & Warrington's Business Advisory Board on developing a 'one-stop shop', which includes online support for the community to access educational pathways and DWP information, along with other activities to be defined.
Ensuring a 'one stop shop' for employers to access information on training and funding.	Further development of our website.	Regular check-ins with business on whether the website meet their needs. Ensuring information available is up-to-date.
Enabling disabled people, those with health conditions and people with complex barriers to employment, to find sustainable work.	Connect to Work Programme.	Supporting our Local Authorities, offering guidance to local business to better understand how they can benefit from this talent pool.

THEME 3 - EMPLOYABILITY COMPETENCIES		
Creation of a standard to ensure the workforce are equipped with the employability and soft skills they need.	Secondary education, whilst also utilising the opportunity to influence post-16 provision.	<p>Collaborative working with the Careers Hub, utilising the Skills Builder framework.</p> <p>Consideration of best practice by other LSIP areas regarding this theme.</p> <p>Working with Cheshire & Warrington's Business Advisory Board to ensure all our local employers understand the opportunities available to engage with education, whilst also increasing our own business engagement.</p> <p>Broker local initiatives led by businesses (e.g. Balfour Beatty) and charities on Employability and Careers Education, Information and Guidance (e.g. The Core, Enginuity, IEP, etc) to providers, to enable more informed choices being made on delivery partners.</p>

PRIORITY	FOCUS	WHAT WE WILL BE DOING
THEME 4 - CEIAG		
Ensuring CEIAG is delivered in a way to best support our workforce, career seekers and business.	<p>Ensuring CEIAG activity is embedded within curriculum.</p> <p>Also to link with the previous priority, under the theme of Employability Competencies.</p>	<p>Continue to ensure CEIAG meets local priorities through assisting more businesses to engage with education.</p> <p>Encourage experience of the workplace, meeting new statutory requirements, whilst educating business on how to do things differently.</p>

PRIORITY	FOCUS	WHAT WE WILL BE DOING
THEME 5 - EDUCATIONAL PROFESSIONALS		
To ensure we have capacity in our local skills system to deliver the training and courses employers need.	Attracting more people into the sector.	<p>Continue to work with our local Further Education and Independent Training providers, and build upon their current activities, in attracting Industry Professionals into the sector.</p> <p>Continue our cross-LSIP activities, identifying how we can share best practice and work collaboratively to address this theme, which we know is a priority within other LSIP areas.</p>

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"From this review of the past twelve months of delivery of our LSIP, you will see the extent to which we have all collaborated across Cheshire & Warrington to meet our desired outcomes. May I therefore take this opportunity to again thank all our enabling partners, particularly those mentioned by our Chair in the purpose of this report. Can I also give special recognition to our local Colleges, and the Cheshire & Warrington Learning Provider Network who have actively engaged with the LSIP, and responded as a collective to the asks of business.

"We, however, are committed to continuing to build upon the collaborative activities and the relationships we have built locally. The work has not yet stopped, and we will continue, together, to ensure full successful delivery of our LSIP. The LSIP team is also committed to support Devolution for Cheshire & Warrington. We will ensure that the LSIP is recognised and is at the forefront of their skills agenda, therefore enabling business to continue to be central to our skills system. We will maintain our commitment to provide the employer voice at the heart of Devolution activity, and ensuring transparency with future plans for our local area."



Paul Colman

LSIP Project Director and CEO

South Cheshire Chamber of Commerce and Industry

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Annexes

Annex A - Priorities and Actions (Roadmap)

Annex B - What the LSIP means to others

Annex C - Case Studies

Annex D - Glossary of Abbreviations

Annex E1 - Economy Overview Cheshire East

Annex E2 - Economy Overview Cheshire West

Annex E3 - Economy Overview Warrington

Get in touch

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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



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