Buckinghamshire Local Skills Improvement Plan

AUGUST 2023

SUPPORTING
BUSINESSES
IN BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE
SKILLS HUB

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE
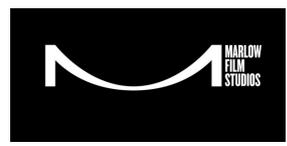BUSINESS FIRST

YOUR LOCAL
GROWTH HUB

Businesses involved in the development of the Buckinghamshire LSIP

ADROIT SERVICES — AMAZING BATHROOMS

The 50 plus — Services for those aged 50plus and others

SFE Services — Air Conditioning Refrigeration

MORGAN SINDALL — PROPERTY SERVICES

AECOM

GallifordTry plc

Balfour Beatty

ALIGN

CLoSE UK

citb

HS2

FLANNERY PLANT HIRE

EKFB

Gibbs Gears

H&S — The Professional Decorating Company

NH CC — You Build. We Support.

Flying Test Systems

FTI COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS

City Farm Systems

Innovation in Miniature — LEE PRODUCTS LTD

LUNAZ DESIGN

FLARE BRIGHT

MB Martin-Baker

Sterling thermal technology

FOAM ENGINEERS — INNOVATE · DESIGN · MANUFACTURE

B.C. ELECTRICAL TECHNIQUES LTD

3WD THREE WAY DISPLAYS

European Astrotech

FCC Environment

TOTALCARBIDE

plastron — space for the next generation

Giggabox

CTV OUTSIDE BROADCASTS — An EMG Company

FinalPixel

RESOURCE PRODUCTIONS

Hatstands Broadcast & Media Productions Limited.

CUBE

Walt Disney Studios

HIGH FLIERS Films plc

amazonstudios

BOUNDLESS — Part of FremantleMedia UK

FoxWylie

LUMINOSITY LIGHTING SERVICES LTD

THE GANG — Digital Marketing Agency

ScreenSkills

atl

BFI

BBC

AED Rent

MARLOW FILM STUDIOS

alcom IT — WITH US IT WORKS

mhelix — advanced camera stabilisation solutions

PINEWOOD

ryland TECHNOLOGY LTD.

DMC

my WEALTHCLOUD

FEEDBACK

REAS

ScopeMaster

UP RISE UP

Buckinghamshire Council

NEOSKILL

NASTEK

FRAMEWORK DIGITAL LTD

delilah

SAS

Buckinghamshire Health & Social Care Academy

skillsforcare

mencap — The voice of learning disability

NHS Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust

COSTAIN

iPRO solutions

All Spring Media

Highland All Terrain Ltd

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This Local Skills Improvement Plan 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

As Managing Director of Buckinghamshire Business First (BBF), the Employer Representative Body (ERB) for Buckinghamshire, I am delighted to present the Buckinghamshire Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP).

The Buckinghamshire LSIP builds on work carried out by BBF and the Buckinghamshire Local Enterprise Partnership (BLEP) over the last two years on the Buckinghamshire Local Skills Reports to identify the main skills and labour market needs of employers in the county.

In line with the Local Skills Report, the LSIP focuses on the construction, digital, engineering, film and TV and health and social care sectors, given their growth and employment potential. All of the sectors are experiencing significant recruitment problems and are suffering from applicants lacking work readiness and digital literacy. They also recognise the need to upskill their workforces for net zero.

The LSIP process has provided an opportunity for employers and learning providers to come together to examine their skills challenges and identify ways that they can collaborate on tackling them going forward.

I am delighted that, as a result of the process, sector employer groups have now been established that will allow employers, learning providers and other key stakeholders to continue their collaboration as they take forward the activities outlined in the LSIP.

The LSIP outlines a range of interventions to attract more people into each priority sector. In some sectors, this will mean establishing new areas of provision, increasing apprenticeship opportunities and employers coming together to work with Buckinghamshire College Group, Buckinghamshire New University, the University of Buckingham, the National Film and Television School and other education and training providers to help design and deliver relevant courses. The LSIP also sets out plans to expand Skills Bootcamps in the county to provide those out of work or working in other sectors with an opportunity to undertake targeted training to enter a range of occupations. There are also proposals to pilot work readiness solutions in the health and social care sector and to build on the work of the Bucks Skills Hub to pilot new approaches to engage young people and give them an opportunity to experience job roles in specific sectors. These are exciting opportunities that have the potential to benefit many job seekers and employers.

Finally, the LSIP sets out activities that can bring specialist learning providers together to help upskill and address the skill gaps in the current workforce, thereby removing barriers to growth for businesses and growing the local economy.

As it moves from its development to implementation phase, the LSIP presents an opportunity to align different initiatives and potential funding streams to help provide a holistic approach to tackling the skills needs of employers in the county and increase their individual impact.

Philippa Batting
Managing Director,
Buckinghamshire Business First

Introduction

Since September 2022, Buckinghamshire Business First (BBF) has been working with employers, education and training providers and key stakeholders in the county to develop the Buckinghamshire LSIP.

The work builds upon research undertaken by BBF and the Buckinghamshire Local Enterprise Partnership (BLEP) on behalf of the Buckinghamshire Skills Advisory Panel (SAP) to develop the Local Skills Reports for Buckinghamshire in 2021 and 2022. This research included feedback from over 800 employers. This research included data provided by over 800 businesses and feedback from 435 businesses including 74 businesses who generously gave up their time to attend LSIP working groups. In addition, 22 education and training providers have been involved in the development of this report.

This report provides a summary of the findings of the research and consultations and the associated plan for the county. Further details can be found in the following annexes:

- Annex A: Local Context
- Annex B: Background and Method
- Annex C: Sectors and Cross-sector Theme Plans

Skills Structure in Buckinghamshire

On 5th September 2022, Buckinghamshire Business First (BBF) was designated as the Employer Representative Body for Buckinghamshire to develop the LSIP for the county.

BBF has been a key part of the skills system in Buckinghamshire since the establishment of the Buckinghamshire Skills and Employment Board in 2013. From 2019, it facilitated the Buckinghamshire Skills Advisory Panel (SAP). The Department for Education (DfE) supported SAPs with grant funding primarily to produce high quality analysis of local labour markets and publish Local Skills Reports, which set out the local skills strengths and needs and how the SAP proposes its area addresses its key priorities.

Buckinghamshire Local Skills Report

BBF collaborated with BLEP to produce two Local Skills Reports in 2021 and 2022.

From April 2023 responsibility for skills strategy in the county will transfer from the SAP to a new Skills Strategy Board under Buckinghamshire Council's Place Based Strategy Board structure. See fig.1 below.
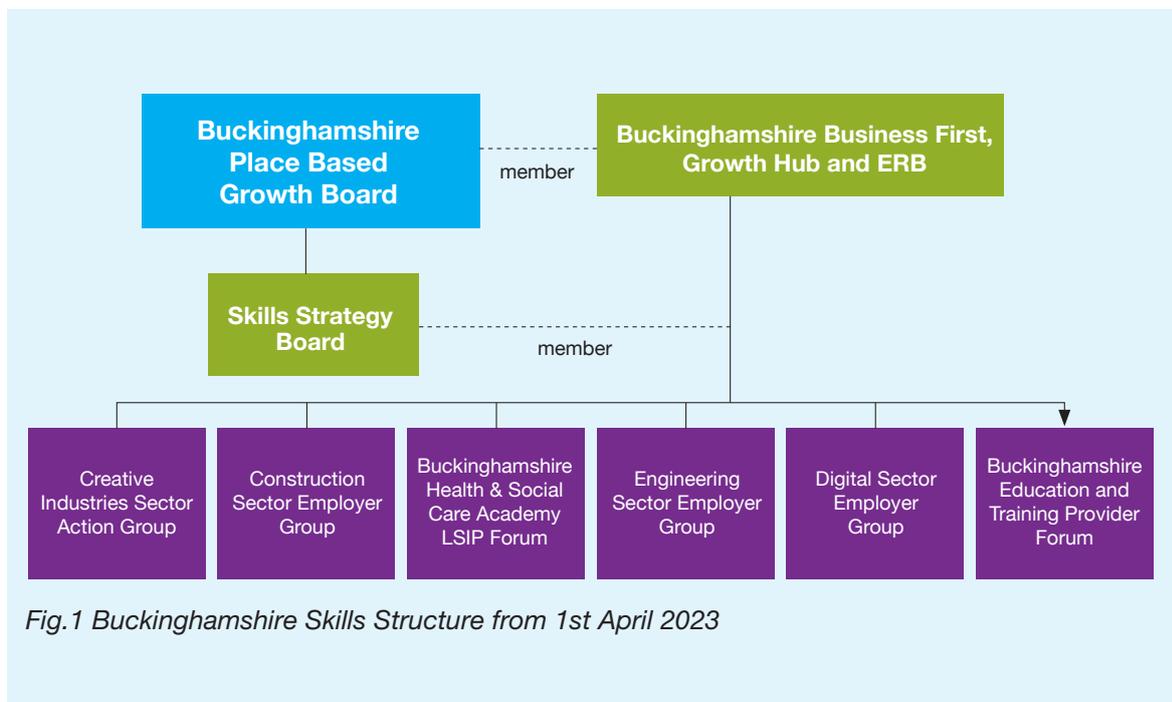

Fig.1 Buckinghamshire Skills Structure from 1st April 2023

As the ERB for Buckinghamshire, BBF is a member of the Skills Strategy Board and will retain its role in co-ordinating the employer and training providers groups outlined in fig. 1 to drive forward the LSIP. The Creative Industries, Construction and Health and Social Care groups have been active for the last few years. Two new employer groups have been formed for the engineering and digital sectors reflecting the priority sectors in the LSIP. BBF has also formed the Buckinghamshire Education and Training Provider Forum to facilitate the employer-provider collaboration that will be needed to ensure the success of the LSIP.

Buckinghamshire Business First (BBF) is a business led, business focused community for new, established and growing businesses across Buckinghamshire. It is the authoritative voice of the local business community, providing support and advice to the county's 34,000 businesses. It has a membership of around 14,800 businesses, which collectively employ approximately 70% of the local workforce.

BBF is the Growth Hub for Buckinghamshire and in this role it delivers a wide range of business support activity including business growth programmes; grant funding schemes; leadership and management initiatives; programmes to reduce carbon emissions; and advice and support on a vast range of topics by way of regular workshops and events.
www.bbf.uk.com

In addition, BBF is the home of the **Buckinghamshire Skills Hub**, which:

• Manages the Buckinghamshire Enterprise Adviser Network and Careers Hub (which seeks to improve careers advice in schools, and links local businesses with schools to inspire young people about careers)
• Runs the annual Bucks Skills Show and Confident Futures Show
• Provides workforce development support to local businesses.
   www.bucksskillshub.org

BBF also manages the DMO (Destination Management Organisation) for the county - Visit Buckinghamshire and the Chilterns. **www.visitbuckinghamshire.org**

Part 1: LSIP Priorities

This section sets out what the Buckinghamshire LSIP is seeking to achieve and how it fits with the strategic local context.

1.1 County Profile

Situated in the South East of England, Buckinghamshire neighbours London and is located close to the UK's main international gateway at Heathrow. Sub-regionally, Buckinghamshire sits within both the Oxford to Cambridge Pan Regional Partnership and the Thames Valley economic areas.

Fig. 3: Map of Buckinghamshire

There are no major urban conurbations within Buckinghamshire, with the county's two largest towns, High Wycombe and Aylesbury, having populations of approximately 124,000 and 89,000 respectively. Much of the county is rural.

The geographic areas covered by Buckinghamshire LEP and the unitary Buckinghamshire Council are coterminous. The county has five parliamentary constituencies: Aylesbury, Buckingham, Beaconsfield, Chesham and Amersham and Wycombe.

Source: Buckinghamshire Council, 2021.

The local economy

Buckinghamshire's economy has stagnated in recent years. GDP and productivity growth have been slow, and the county has slipped down the rankings. Most recently, the economy was hit harder by the Covid-19 pandemic than the national average, and recovery has been comparatively slow. Whilst there are multiple reasons for the local economy's recent poor performance, the availability of people and skills is cited by local employers as a contributory factor.

Structurally, Buckinghamshire's economy is dominated by the service sector, which provides 85% of all local employee jobs.[1] At a broad sectoral level, the health and social work sector provides the most jobs within the county (many of which are part-time), followed by: administration and support; education; professional, scientific and technical; and retail. Whilst not one of the largest sectors, the wholesale sector provides nearly twice as many jobs locally than nationally. Local wholesale specialisms include: the wholesale of pharmaceutical goods, machinery and equipment, computers and software. Other sectors providing more jobs locally than nationally include information and communication; construction; and motor trades.

As identified in the Buckinghamshire Local Industrial Strategy the county has world-class economic assets and strong growth potential in the areas of: film and TV; high-performance engineering; space and medtech.[2]

A key feature of the Buckinghamshire economy is the dominance of small businesses. 42% of all employees working in Buckinghamshire work for companies employing fewer than 50 people, compared to 32% nationally. In addition, self-employment levels in Buckinghamshire are higher than average. Self-employment is particularly common within construction and film and TV, two of Buckinghamshire's key sectors. Larger companies tend to be concentrated in the south of the county, particularly in locations within easy reach of the M40 and Heathrow Airport.

Buckinghamshire's labour market is one of the least 'self-contained' in England. Around a third of residents work for non-Buckinghamshire employers (including those in London, Oxford, Milton Keynes, Slough and Reading), whilst just under a third of those working in the county live elsewhere.

Recruitment difficulties and skills shortages are a key concern for many Buckinghamshire employers. Contributory factors include:

- **A reduced pool of labour since the Covid-19 pandemic** – more people than normal taking early retirement; some people (particularly those with health conditions) leaving the labour market due to Covid-19 fears; an increase in long-term health issues and some non-UK nationals returning home.

- **A skills mismatch** – data from the 2019 national Employer Skills Survey suggests that there is a greater mismatch between the type of skills sought by local employers and the skills held and jobs sought by local residents than elsewhere in the country.

- **Attracting talent** – proximity to London, the high cost of housing, a perceived lack of vibrancy of Buckinghamshire's urban centres and poor transport access to rural locations all contribute to the recruitment difficulties of local employers.

- **Retaining talent** – Buckinghamshire exports a high proportion of its skilled residents, both young people who leave the county for university and do not return, and residents who commute out of the county (often to London) for higher paid 'better' jobs.

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[1] Source: Business Register and Employment Survey, ONS, 2021
[2] Source: Buckinghamshire Local Industrial Strategy, Buckinghamshire LEP, July 2019

1.2 Buckinghamshire skills strategy

The Buckinghamshire Skills Advisory panel articulated the ultimate skills ambition for Buckinghamshire's as being:

"Buckinghamshire employers, learning providers and other stakeholders collaborate effectively to ensure the current and future workforce are equipped with the skills required of the local economy, which in turn raises productivity and creates 'good jobs' for all"[3].

Employers and individuals place high value on learning and development, and the economy creates 'good jobs' at all levels

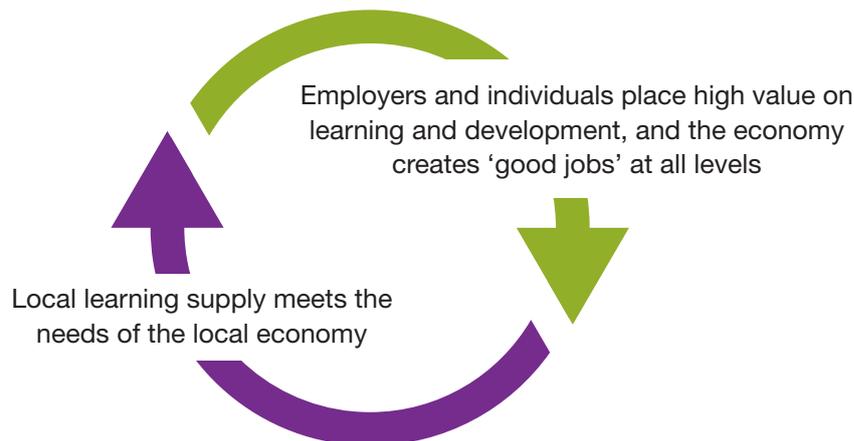Local learning supply meets the needs of the local economy

Fig.3: Skills ambition

Buckinghamshire's latest Skills Strategy was published in 2017 and covers the period 2017 to 2022. A refreshed strategy is currently in development. In the meantime, the core themes of the current Strategy remain relevant. These being:

- Developing the future workforce by improving the work preparedness of young people and helping them make informed career choices
- Addressing skills gaps through continuous professional development
- Developing a pipeline of talent for priority growth sectors
- Supporting recruitment into, and skills development within sectors experiencing recruitment difficulties/skills shortages.

A 'skills and inspiration revolution' sits at the heart of Buckinghamshire's long-term Local Industrial Strategy (LIS), which recognises that people, and the skills they have, are a key driver of productivity. To facilitate long-term local economic growth, Buckinghamshire LEP has targeted its skills-related investments towards sectors it is seeking to grow in Buckinghamshire over the next 10 years, to help create the required talent pipelines. These 'strategic growth sectors' are: space, creative, high-performance technology and health (medtech).

More recently, the Buckinghamshire Recovery and Growth Proposal set out plans for the creation of an accelerated skills delivery system for recovery, retraining and economic growth ambitions. The aim being for unique integrated partnerships to be used as a testbed for the development of rapid pathways into careers for the future.

1.3 Priority sectors and cross-sector skills themes

## Criteria for establishing priority sectors and skills themes for the LSIP

Extensive research has been undertaken by Buckinghamshire LEP over the last four years to deepen local understanding of the labour market and skills landscape. The SAP research identified priority sectors for skills investment along with cross-cutting skills needs.

To inform the development of the Buckinghamshire Local Skills Improvement Plan, further research was undertaken in 2022 to narrow down these priorities and focus in on key skills challenges where changes were deemed to be needed to make local post-16 technical education or training more responsive and closely aligned to local labour market needs. This included reviewing data on skills needs at an occupational level (where practical) to enable alignment to Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) occupational routes and pathways.

In addition to reviewing existing analysis and local strategies (including the Buckinghamshire Local Industrial Strategy 2019), a mapping exercise was undertaken using the latest available data to establish employment levels, employment growth and skills gaps to identify the key priorities for local intervention.

The priority sectors and cross-sector themes identified are presented below:

Sectors

Engineering	Digital
Construction	Health & Social Care
Film & TV	

Cross-sector themes
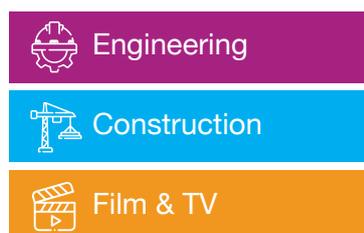
| Digital Literacy |
| Green: Net Zero |
| Work Readiness |

More detail on the methodology and data sources used to establish the priority sectors is set out in Annex B.

Issues for consideration

In setting priorities, the SAP acknowledged that the LSIP cannot do everything and must focus on the areas where the biggest impact can be made. It also recognised that not all labour shortages are caused by shortcomings in post-16 technical education and training. However, it recommended that some key local issues must be taken into consideration:

- Developing learner demand as well as understanding employer skills needs – but LSIP is not a school initiative
- How the LSIP relates to other initiatives such as Levelling Up – Opportunity Bucks.

> **Opportunity Bucks**
> Opportunity Bucks is a Buckinghamshire Council led programme that aims to improve opportunities for people in the county. The programme focuses on 10 wards in Buckinghamshire where people are experiencing most hardship. Economic profiles for each ward have been produced by the Buckinghamshire Local Enterprise Partnership. Each profile includes information on the characteristics of residents, employment by occupation, industry and businesses in the local area.
>
> Moving forward, the LSIP which will be looking closely at how changes to post-16 technical education and training can contribute to achieving the outcomes of the Opportunity Bucks programme. **Opportunity Bucks | Buckinghamshire Council**
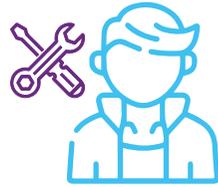
Buckinghamshire priority sectors and cross-sector skills themes

Construction

31%
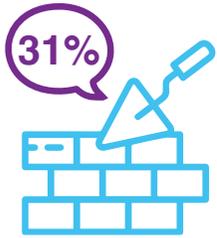
Strong employment growth
of 31% was recorded in the five-year period between 2016 and 2021

6.8%

The construction sector employs
16,000
people in Buckinghamshire and accounts for 6.8% of the county's total number of employees.

WORK IN PROGRESS
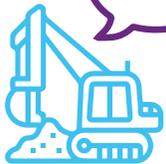
Pinewood Studios expansion which is expected to create
3,000 construction jobs
over a three year period

22.9%

Approximately
9,300 self-employed people
in Buckinghamshire work in the construction sector, accounting for 22.9% of all self-employed people in the county

Severe lack of
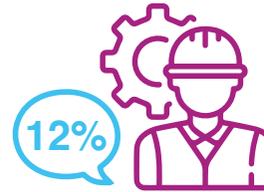**young people**
choosing a career in Construction

Ageing
workforce

Large infrastructure
projects
in the county including HS2, East-West Rail, housebuilding and Pinewood Studios expansion

The construction sector employs approximately 25,300 people work in Buckinghamshire, representing 7% of all employees working in the county and 23% of all self-employed residents. Between 2016 and 2021, the number of construction sector employees grew by 33%, largely due to large infrastructure projects in the county such as HS2, East West Rail and house building programmes. All construction sub-sectors are reporting skill shortages in a wide range of occupations. There is a need to attract more people into the sector through full-time college provision, apprenticeships and expanding Skills Bootcamps. There is also a need for higher level provision to address skill shortages in civil engineering, town planning and quantity surveying.

Engineering

There are approximately
28,000
people employed in core engineering occupations, equivalent to about 11% of Buckinghamshire's employee workforce

12%

Severe lack
of Further Education and Higher Education provision

SHORTAGE

Lack
of locally-based apprenticeships providers

Severe
shortage
of experienced teachers

SHORTAGE

HS2 activity has been a significant driver of
employee growth
for engineering occupations
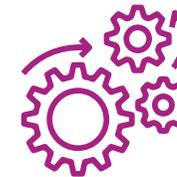
There are approximately
12,000 people
employed specifically in the industry of high performance engineering in Buckinghamshire

The engineering sector employs approximately 28,000 people in Buckinghamshire, representing 11% of the workforce with a further 15,000 employed in related occupations. There has been strong employment growth for core and related occupations of 6% and 14% respectively. Further growth is expected from developments at the Silverstone Technology Cluster and Westcott Venture Park. There is an urgent need for mechanical, electrical and environmental engineers but there is a critical lack of provision in the county to train new entrants either through apprenticeship or in full-time 16-18 programmes.

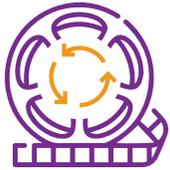# Buckinghamshire priority sectors and cross-sector skills themes

Film & TV

Large numbers of freelancers

Confusing **entry** routes

The sector has experienced significant **employee growth** in the last five years in Buckinghamshire

New and proposed studios to create up to **13,000 new jobs**

13,000

Need to attract a more **diverse workforce**

1.3%

The Film & TV sector employs an estimated **3,000 people** in Buckinghamshire and accounts for 1.3% of the county's total number of employees

Existing funded **training routes** don't work for all employers

Skills shortage at **experienced level**

Health and Social care

27,000

Health and Social care sector employs 27,000 people in Buckinghamshire and accounts for 11.1% of the county's total number of employees

Severe **staff shortages** at all levels

Good local training provision for clinical roles

Significant issues with work-readiness and digital literacy for non-clinical roles

Severe lack of young people choosing a career in Health & Social Care

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The Film & TV sector employs an estimated 3,165 people in Buckinghamshire. This is a relatively small proportion of Buckinghamshire's employee workforce, but at 41%, the sector had the highest employment growth in the last five years of any sector in Buckinghamshire. The expansion of Pinewood Studios and the potential growth, if approval is given, for Marlow and High Wycombe Film Studios is likely to mean that this growth will continue. The sector is suffering from a large number of specific skill shortages across production, post-production, VFX and virtual production. Given the nature of the sector and its reliance on freelance workers, full-time college provision and apprenticeships are less effective progression routes into the sector. Sector employers have identified the need to develop a Film and TV Skills Hub to bring together the provision of short-courses, Skills Bootcamps and a virtual and physical platform to bring together employers and productions with freelancers and jobseekers.

The Health and Social care sector employs 27,000 people in Buckinghamshire, which makes it the joint largest sector by number of employees in the county. Between 2016 and 2021, the sector recorded 7.7% employment growth which equates to an additional 2,000 workers. The sector is experiencing significant labour shortages at all levels, owing to a lack of sufficient applicants. Given the number of volunteers in the sectors, a pilot to develop and verify work readiness skills has been identified, which has the potential to be rolled out into other sectors.

Buckinghamshire priority sectors and cross-sector skills themes

Digital Sector

Approximately
12,000 people
work in digital occupations in Buckinghamshire, which is equivalent to 5% of the employee workforce

Intense competition for
skills
from neighbouring areas

Sector is approx.
30% larger
than national average

Recent slight fall in
employment
due to specific local factors

Cross-sector skills themes

Green: Net Zero

1 in 5 jobs
will be affected by transition to green economy

1,350 heat pump
installers needed

Cross sector skills
The technical knowledge and skills that enable professionals to effectively use green technologies and processes

Work readiness

Employers
report Higher Education leavers poorly prepared for work

The drive to Net Zero:
2,800
direct jobs will be needed in Buckinghamshire by 2030

26%
of all job postings for non-digital occupations since 2016 required a digital skill where listed

Digital literacy

45%
of employers expect need for new digital skills over next 12 months

NET ZERO

Digital skills are critical for delivering
net zero

Approximately 12,000 people work in digital occupations in Buckinghamshire. This is equivalent to 5% of Buckinghamshire's employee workforce. Despite a recent fall in employment, Buckinghamshire still has a larger than average digital sector, with particular specialisms in audio technology and digital manufacturing. Skill shortages have been reported across a number of occupations, including data analyst, software and app developers, cyber security, and those working in AI, There is a need to increase the number of people considering digital careers and expanding the number of apprentices on digital programmes in the county. There is also a need to ensure that the current workforce remain ahead of new trends and technology, including Ai and automation.

Cross-sector skills themes research suggests a quarter of all occupations in Buckinghamshire will be affected by the drive for Net Zero. The key areas are: green construction, the drive for Net Zero and Green Agriculture & Forestry.

Work readiness – all employers report that education leavers are not work-ready.

Digital literacy is critical requirement in almost all occupations and regarded by employers as an aspect of work-readiness

Part 2: Taking forward the LSIP priorities

This section outlines the skills priorities identified by employers during the LSIP process and sets out the current provision in each of the priority sectors and cross-sector areas.

2.1 Summary of LSIP Priorities

The following table summarises the skills priorities identified through the LSIP process. At annex C, they are outlined against the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) occupational maps.[4]

Table 1: Summary of LSIP priorities by priority sector

Construction	Skill shortages		Skill gaps	
Construction Infrastructure roles	• Labourer • Steel fixer • Civil engineer	• Scaffolder • Plant operator • Site Supervisor	• Supervisory skills • Management skills • Environmental impact/	• net zero awareness • Environmental impact/ • net zero management
Construction Trades roles	• Electrician • Carpenter • Plumber • Bricklayer	• Painter & Decorator • Plasterer • Gas Engineer	• Heat pump and Air Conditioning installers • Heat pump installation • Heat pump maintenance • Supervisory skills	• Management skills • Environmental impact/ net zero awareness • Environmental impact/ net zero management
Professional services	• Civil Engineer • Structural Engineer • Town Planners • Surveyors		• Supervisory skills • Management skills • Environmental impact/net zero awareness	• Environmental impact/ net zero management
Building services	• Electrician • Carpenter • Plumber • Gas Engineer	• Heat pump and Air Conditioning installers • Heat pump installation • Heat pump maintenance	• Supervisory skills • Management skills • Environmental impact/net zero awareness	• Environmental impact/ net zero management • Heat pump installation • Heat pump maintenance
Engineering	**Skill shortages**		**Skill gaps**	
Engineering sector professional roles	• Mechanical Engineer • Electrical Engineer • Environmental Engineer		• Supervisory skills • Management skills • Environmental impact/net zero awareness • Environmental impact/net zero management	

4 A skills *shortage* is generally considered to refer to a lack of suitably skilled or qualified individuals to fill job vacancies, a skills *gap* is usually used to describe the difference between the skills the holder of a job has and the skills they need to perform the job to the requirements of their employer.

Digital sector	Skill shortages		Skill gaps
Digital Sector professional roles	• Data analyst • Software and app developers • Website developers • Digital content developer	• Cyber security • Help desk support • AI Scientist • AI Analyst • Digital content officer	Skill gaps have been identified in a range of specific technical areas in order to keep apace with new technology.

Agriculture	Skill shortages		Skill gaps
Agriculture professional roles[5]	• General farm worker • Farm Manager		• Environmental impact/carbon awareness • Environmental impact/carbon management • Environmental technical knowledge in relation to existing schemes such as ELMs. • Technical skills in relation to new technology and digitalisation

Film & TV	Skill shortages		Skill gaps
Production	• 2D & 3D Animator • Production Assistant • Production Manager • Assistant Director • Production Accountant • Camera Operators • Grip • Costume Designer • Wardrobe • Prop Maker • Hair Stylist	• Makeup Artist • Sound Technician • Video Recordist • Lighting Technician • SET Construction Technician • Storyboard Artist • Stunt Co-ordinator • Location Manager	Skill gaps have been identified across all occupational areas, given the need for many new entrants to gain more experience, but also to have knowledge and skills around new technology. It has also been identified that line managers need greater support in people management skills to help businesses become good employers.
Post production	• Edit Assistant • Edit Producer	• Editor	
VFX	• Edit Assistant • Edit Producer • Editor • 2D Artist • Junior VFX Artist	• Technical Director • VFX Supervisor • VFX Production Management	
Virtual production	• Virtual Production Supervisor	• Virtual Producer	

[5] Note: Whilst the agriculture sector is not a priority sector, it plays an important role within Buckinghamshire in terms of net zero reduction and the broader skill shortages could undermine its pursuit of net zero and greater environmental sustainability.

Cross-sector Skills themes

- **Net Zero** – Skills to manage and increase awareness of net zero has been identified in the agriculture, construction, digital and engineering sectors.
  - Managing net zero. Includes: developing plans, implementing plans, monitoring plans, reporting and communicating, taking corrective action
  - Increasing awareness of net zero: Includes: understanding net zero, understanding how energy can be reduced, understanding own actions to reduce energy use

In addition, heat pump installation and maintenance has been identified as priority skills in the construction sector.

- **Digital literacy** – Digital literacy has been identified as a key aspect of work readiness and lacking in those entering the sector and those within it. Digital literacy skills include:
  - Using mobile and computer hardware
  - Using key software packages
  - Undertaking basic tasks such as finding information, entering data and communicating

- **Work readiness** – work readiness, digital literacy and careers information and advice have been identified as critical gaps across all key priority sectors. For many employers, work readiness is seen as essential and without it technical skills cannot be effectively developed. The majority of employers consulted gave the view that it is the basic attitudes to work that is often missing. Digital literacy skills have been included in the model and include: using mobile and computer packages, using key software packages and undertaking basic data information tasks. The diagram below identifies the specific work readiness skills that employers have identified as issues and should be considered as a model that can be developed to use to address the need in the county.
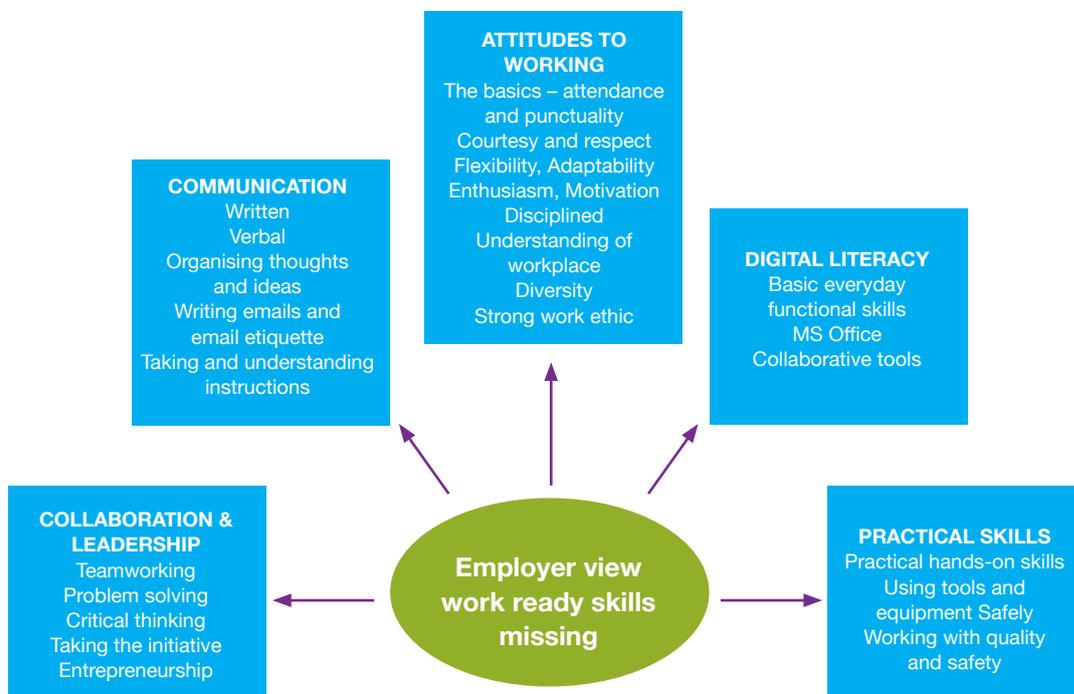

Fig. 4 Potential work-readiness model for Buckinghamshire

2.2 Summary of existing provision, gaps and barriers

The largest providers of post-16 technical education and training in Buckinghamshire are: Buckinghamshire College Group which currently has campuses in Aylesbury, Amersham and High Wycombe, and Buckinghamshire New University for higher education provision which has campuses in High Wycombe, Aylesbury and Uxbridge.

Employers also engage with a number of institutions from outside of the county to address their recruitment and development needs. Those in the north of the county tend to work with Milton Keynes College, which plays an important role in terms of engineering provision and digital skills across the whole county. Whilst employers, in the construction and engineering sectors in particular, have links with Brunel University, Uxbridge College and the College of North West London, amongst others.The University of Buckingham, a private university, provides digital skills and is engaged with sector employers. There are also national apprenticeship providers operating in Buckinghamshire. A full list of providers operating in Buckinghamshire is provided in Annex A. Buckinghamshire Adult Education provides a range of adult education courses, including digital literacy. Whilst they support apprenticeship provision, none of these are in the priority sectors identified by the LSIP.

Across all priority sectors, there are insufficient numbers of people developing their skills through full-time or work based technical education pathways. Anecdotally, employers believe that the preponderance of grammar schools in the county negatively impacts the number of students who start on a technical pathway at the age of 16.

There are a low number of apprenticeships in the county. In 2021/22, there were 2,710 apprenticeship starts in Buckinghamshire. This is an improvement on 2019/20, when there were 2,270 starts, but a fall of 250 compared to 2016/17, where the number of starts was 2,960. It is still significantly lower than the national average, see Table 2 below.

Table 2: Apprenticeship starts per 1,000 residents of working-age[6]

	2015/16	2021/2022
Buckinghamshire	8.5	7.9
England	14.6	9.8

[6] Source: Apprenticeship starts – DfE, Mid-year population estimates – ONS

Table 3: Summary of the main provision being delivered in Buckinghamshire by sector

Sector	Overview of current full-time provision [7]	Overview of apprenticeship provision	Overview of gaps, barriers and challenges
Construction [8]	Buckinghamshire College Group offers a range of level 2 construction courses	Apprenticeships are offered across: • Building Services • Design, Surveying and Planning Standards • Onsite Construction Standards	• Transport difficulties for apprentices to get to construction sites • The lack of provision of the Diploma in Refrigeration and Air-conditioning at levels 2 and 3 in Buckinghamshire • Lack of specific higher-level provision for civil engineers, chartered surveyors and town planners
Digital [9]	Buckinghamshire College Group offers a range of level 3 courses, as well as the T Level Technical Qualification in Digital Production, Design and Development and the T Level Technical Qualification in Digital Support Services Buckinghamshire New University offers a range of degrees, including software engineering and artificial intelligence, as well as masters programmes.	Apprenticeships are offered across: • Digital Business Standards • Digital Production, Design and Development – Standards • Digital Support and Services – Standards	• Lack of tailored, short courses for those entering and in the sector
Film and TV [10]	Buckinghamshire College Group offers a range of level 2 and 3 courses in creative media, hair and make-up and musical performance. New courses in 2023/24 include live action and animation, special effects and make-up. Buckinghamshire New University provides degrees in Media Production, Film and TV Production and Film Production, as well as MAs in Screenwriting and filmmaking. The National Film and Television School provides a range of higher level provision.	There are a number of film and TV-related apprenticeships, but with very low numbers. These include junior content producer and broadcast production assistant.	• The preponderance of freelancers makes it difficult to upskill • Emerging technology and the need to upskill the workforce • The lack of access to train in situ for those under 18 • The rules and structure of the apprenticeships in the sector
Engineering [11]	There is currently no provision in Buckinghamshire offered by Buckinghamshire College Group. However, Milton Keynes College (Innovation & Technology Centre) delivers courses in aeronautical engineering at level 3 and a range of courses in engineering at level 3, HNC and HND levels.	Apprenticeships are offered across: • Engineering, Design and Development Standards • Engineering, Manufacturing, Process and Control	• Lack of sufficient apprenticeship provision in Buckinghamshire • Lack of full-time provision at further education • Lack of higher level provision for specific areas, such as aerospace and robotics • Changes made to the electrical engineering standard compared to the old framework has reduced its relevance to some employers

[7] RCU Vector 2021/22 data

[8] A fuller breakdown of full-time courses and apprenticeships in construction can be found at annex C

[9] A fuller breakdown of full-time courses and apprenticeships in digital can be found at annex C

[10] A fuller breakdown of full-time courses and apprenticeships in film and TV can be found at annex C

[11] A fuller breakdown of full-time courses and apprenticeships in engineering can be found at annex C

Sector	Overview of current full-time provision	Overview of apprenticeship provision	Overview of gaps, barriers and challenges
Health and Social Care	**Buckinghamshire College Group delivers:** • T Level Technical Qualification in Health (L3) 20 • T level Occupational Specialism – Supporting Healthcare – Supporting the Adult Nursing Team (L3) 20 • Technical Certificate in Health and Social Care (L3) 50 • Technical Level in Science – Laboratory Science (L3) 10 • Extended Diploma in Health and Social Care	Apprenticeships are offered across: • Senior Healthcare Support Worker • Nursing Associate • Dental Nurse • Registered Nurse • Psychological Well Being Practitioner • Paramedic	Discussions with employers have not revealed any major deficiencies in provision for professional or clinical staff. However, there are major issues with work-readiness for non-clinical staff including significant issues with digital literacy.
Agriculture	There is no full-time provision in the county	There are a number of providers outside of the county providing apprenticeship programmes	• Lack of apprenticeship provision in Buckinghamshire • Lack of applicants for apprenticeship places

Part 3: Delivering the LSIP priorities

In order to address the skills priorities set out in section two and annex C, a number of interventions have been identified. These have been identified and scoped by specific groups of employers and learning providers. These groups will form the basis of new Employer Sector Groups for each of the priority sectors, which will oversee and support the implementation of the LSIP.

3.1 Overview of proposed interventions

Fig. 5: Overview of proposed interventions:

Careers and early years interventions

Employers from all sectors have identified the need for additional careers and early years intervention in order to address the negative perception of technical and vocational education and to encourage more people to enter their respective sectors. Activities include expanding the functionality of the Buckinghamshire Skills Hub and piloting employer days to address the difficulty of some employers to offer work placements.

Sector Employer Groups

Through the LSIP process employers in each sector have agreed to form Employer Sector Groups. These groups will not only manage and support the implementation of the LSIP in their sectors, but they will also help galvanise and co-ordinate employer engagement to help take forward activities such as co-design and co-deliver and careers and early years engagement.

Full-time provision

In all sectors, employers and learning providers have identified areas where new courses should be introduced or existing provision be enriched through greater co-design and delivery between the college and university. The aim in all sectors is to have clear progression pathways, a better appreciation of the career opportunities in a particular sector and the requisite skills and knowledge to enter the sector, as well as to have developed the required work readiness skills that employers are seeking.

Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships are seen by all sectors as a critical pathway for people to develop the skills and knowledge required to pursue a career in specific occupational areas. Currently, there are insufficient numbers of apprenticeships, which is a combination of employer engagement, a lack of applicants and specific barriers, such as the lack of public transport which makes it difficult for apprentices to reach their employer.

Short courses

There is a need for a range of short courses to support professional development and address skill gaps. These include specific technical skills, as well as cross-sectoral skills such as management and leadership and managing and increasing awareness of energy reduction and net zero. These short-courses need to be delivered at times that are convenient for freelancers and owner-operators.

Bootcamps

Skills Bootcamps offer free, flexible courses of up to 16 weeks for adults over 19. They offer an ideal way for people seeking to progress their careers in their current industry sector, or for those seeking to move to a new sector, to train for a new role. Bootcamps have been identified as a potential solution in the construction, digital and the TV and Film sector in order to target and train people working in other sectors. A successful bootcamp is already in operation for plant operators in the construction sector.

Additional Interventions

In developing the LSIP for Buckinghamshire it is important that we ensure all sections of the community are represented and seek to align initiatives with other interventions taking place in the county such as initiative aimed at SEND people and levelling up plan through Opportunity Bucks.

3.2 Summary of potential interventions by sector

Table 4: Summary of potential interventions by sector

Sector	Skills Bootcamps	Changes or enrichment to full-time provision	Apprenticeships	Short courses
Construction	• Continuation of the Skills Bootcamp for plant operators • Expansion of bootcamps in other areas, potentially including scaffolders, steel fixers, brick layers, carpenters and plumbers	• Increase the collaboration between employers and co-design and deliver T-levels and other full-time programmes to increase the practical skills and work readiness of students • Develop higher level provision in the areas of civil engineering, chartered surveying and town planning • Build the capacity of industry practitioners to support lecturers to provide technical training	• Stimulate employer demand to take on apprentices • Promote apprenticeship opportunities • Develop higher level provision in the areas of civil engineering, chartered surveying and town planning	• Identify or develop a range of short courses for delivery to the existing workforce. This should include technical areas, including heat pump installation and maintenance, net zero management and awareness and supervisory and management skills. • Introduction of Diploma in Refrigeration and Air-conditioning at levels 2 and 3
Digital	• Development and delivery of a Skills Bootcamp to develop appropriate coding and technical skills for those wishing to enter the sector	• Increase the collaboration between employers and co-design and deliver T-levels and other full-time programmes at Buckinghamshire College Group to increase the practical skills and work readiness of students	• Stimulate employer demand to take on apprentices • Promote apprenticeship opportunities	• Hold periodic sessions between higher education institutions, employers and other stakeholders to identify emerging trends and their impact on potential skill areas • Identify or develop a range of short courses for delivery to the existing workforce, offered by a range of learning providers. These are likely to be at higher levels.
Film and TV	• Development and delivery of Skills Bootcamps in a number of areas hair and wigs, props, prosthetics, sound and light	• Increase the collaboration between employers and learning providers to: – Co-design the way courses are designed and delivered – Provide guest lecturers – Develop real life projects, case studies and assignments – Donate equipment and materials – Offer master classes • Pilot the simulation of work placement elements of full-time courses given the restrictions for those aged under 18	• Pilot more flexible broader ranging apprenticeship models that meet the needs of the industry and young people	• Identify or develop a range of short courses for delivery to the existing workforce, potential workforce and freelancers. This needs to include new technological approaches and ideally reflect a competency framework that can be agreed on.

Sector	Skills Bootcamps	Changes or enrichment to full-time provision	Apprenticeships	Short courses
Engineering		• Introduce a broad based engineering course for those aged 16-18 • Develop progression pathways at higher levels to reflect higher level specialisms in mechanical, electrical and environmental engineering, including aerospace and robotics. • Increase the collaboration between employers and learning providers to: – Co-design the way courses are designed and delivered – Provide guest lecturers – Develop real life projects, case studies and assignments – Donate equipment and materials – Offer master classes • Build the capacity of industry practitioners to support lecturers to provide technical training	• Stimulate employer demand to take on apprentices • Promote apprenticeship opportunities • Build the capacity to offer apprenticeships in mechanical and electrical engineering at levels 3 and 4 at higher levels, including in aerospace and robotics • Increase provision of apprenticeship pathways • Make available off-job training facilities in Westcott and Silverstone to ensure that core and practical skills can be developed • Engage engineering apprentices to increase their motivation and retention, such as through mentor events, competitions, master classes etc.	• Identify or develop a range of short courses for delivery to the existing workforce • Review the Electrical Engineering Apprenticeship and provide feedback to the IfATE
Health and Social care				• Pilot the volunteering skills record as a means to address work readiness skills
Agriculture			• Promote apprenticeships to employers and young people and ensure that apprenticeship opportunities are visible within Buckinghamshire	

Bespoke sector interventions

Construction	**Apprenticeship moped and car scheme** A challenge in recruiting and retaining apprenticeships is that many construction sites are not easily accessible by public transport. A moped and/or car scheme could be piloted to assess whether this could address the recruitment and retention problems faced by construction employers.
Film and TV	**Film and TV Skills Hub** Given the range of different national and county-wide partners, as well as the emphasis on freelancers and the range of skills priorities, there is a need to bring everything together to simplify the recruitment and development process for employers and jobseekers. The Buckinghamshire Film and TV Skills Hub would provide a virtual and physical means for employers, productions, studios, freelancers and learning providers to engage with one another to recruit the right people and procure and find suitable training. This could therefore provide one point of contact for recruitment and skills development in Buckinghamshire. Through the Hub, existing stakeholders would work together under one umbrella. This would make it easier for employers, productions and studios to find talent, for freelancers to apply for jobs and for existing provision and interventions to be better aligned to increase the impact of their work. The Hub would also help to grow a pipeline of future talent to address the skill needs of the film and TV sector by enriching and growing provision in further education and through the provision of bootcamps to attract and develop talent currently working in other sectors. The Hub would encompass: **1. A dedicated online portal** This would enable jobs to be posted and applied for, as well as freelancers to post their CVs. It could also be a means to post and find appropriate training and development. The portal would also be the window for other activities taken forward through The Hub. **2. A mechanism to bring together key players to curate and deliver training** The Hub would provide a means for employers, productions and studios to identify training needs to run specific courses and develop additional provision to address specific needs. This could be undertaken through regular meetings of partners. **3. Physical training spaces** A number of training spaces would be branded as The Hub, to allow open courses to be delivered. In some cases, a number of training spaces will need to be developed in particular to house using new technology. These physical training spaces will need to be placed at places convenient for employers and learners. **4. Careers activities** Careers activities would be undertaken through the Hub to encourage all film and TV stakeholders to be using the same resources and navigating back to the portal. Careers activities will need to be scoped to ensure the wide range of opportunities are being promoted across the sector and that these are aligned to career pathways and available learning and development.

3.3 Cross-sector skills theme interventions

Net zero

Net zero has been identified as an important and increasing skills need. However, more needs to be done to promote the importance of net zero and developing green skills within a company's workforce.

In the agriculture, construction, digital, film and TV, and engineering workforces the following two areas require provision to be identified or developed:

- Net zero management
- Net zero awareness

These need to be short courses and not necessarily formally accredited.
In addition, heat pump installation and maintenance have been identified as both skill shortages and skill gaps in the construction sector.

Digital literacy

Buckinghamshire Adult Education delivers the Essential Digital Skills Qualification (ESDQ) at entry level and level 1. The standard on which the qualifications are based reflects the views of employers consulted through the LSIP process of the digital skills they are seeking from new entrants and their existing workforce.

There is a need to further promote the ESDQ to job seekers, employees and employers. However, learners are seeking an effective means to develop essential digital skills and are not necessary seeking a formal qualification. Anecdotally, many students do not undertake the end assessment of the EDSQ and a revised assessment needs to be developed that focuses on continual assessment, rather than an end assessment. Alternatively, a non-accredited course needs to be developed and delivered to allow more people to be encouraged to take up the course.

Work readiness

Work readiness has emerged as a central skill priority facing all sector employers.

- **Buckinghamshire work-readiness model** – The five category model developed through the LSIP process provides a standard by which work readiness skills can be delivered and assessed across the county, and potentially beyond. The model should be expanded to provide a working model where work readiness skills can be assessed and gaps addressed. Students on full-time courses in Buckinghamshire should have work readiness skills built into their programmes, based on the standard.

- **Volunteering Skills Records** – In addition to the development of a Buckinghamshire work-readiness model, the development of the Buckinghamshire Health & Social Care Academy Volunteering Skills Record and pilot will be evaluated as a potential solution that is transferrable across all key priority sectors.

3.4 Careers guidance and early years interventions

The LSIP has emphasised the importance of careers guidance and early years interventions. The Bucks Skills Hub plays a critical role as a single source of careers information and guidance in the county.

It has been acknowledged throughout the LSIP process of the important role the Bucks Skills Hub plays and it is felt that there are opportunities to build on the existing functionality of the Skills Hub portal and build on the activities of the Hub. This could include:

- Increased engagement of schools, parents and young people about the value of technical education
- The articulation of clear and transparent career pathways into and throughout sectors
- Better awareness of the wide range occupations found in priority sectors
- Exploring and potentially developing a series of short employer-led professionally filmed, immersive learning on the variety of career roles in key priority sector areas, that can be used as careers resource in provider settings. This would build on the immersive learning work in health and social care by the HealthTec
- Developing a one stop shop repository and key contacts for priority sectors that is easily accessible, supporting and building on the work of the Bucks Skills Hub
- Developing and making available careers advice and information that is inclusive, accessible and appropriate to meet special needs
- Continuing to organise employer visits and work experience opportunities.

Sector Immersion Days
Many small and micro businesses struggle to offer work experience and it has been suggested that Sector Immersion Days could be piloted in priority sectors. These could provide young people with opportunities to undertake sector related tasks and develop relevant practical skills, as well as provide young people with an opportunity to visit different workplaces and understand the career opportunities and development pathways available. It aims to provide an opportunity to showcase specific sectors, allow the relevant Gatsby benchmarks[12] to be met and for employers who may not be able to offer work experience opportunities to engage with young people.

3.5 Additional Interventions

Workforce skills support
The LSIP process has highlighted the need for employers (particularly SMEs) to be able to access independent expert advice and guidance to help them develop the skills of their staff. The Bucks Skills Hub supports employers across the county to increase the apprenticeship provision and engage with the college and university. Employers are encouraged to offer work placements, supporting the design and delivery of courses, and engage with future talent.

This work needs to be continued and built upon. Additional activities could include linking employers with jobseekers, including those on Skills Bootcamps.

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[12] https://www.gatsby.org.uk/education/focus-areas/good-career-guidance

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

A range of stakeholders and providers who focus on helping people with SEND into employment have been engaged to support the development of the LSIP by providing views and priorities for considerations. Meetings have been held to explore views on the current position on skills training for young people and adults with SEND needs and the ability to access skills training and education, work experience, supported internships, volunteering and employment opportunities. There is a need to develop or improve a series of critical interventions in the following areas:

- Educational pathways at Entry Level 1
- Supported Internship opportunities
- Careers Guidance
- Employer Disability Confident in Job Recruitment, Support and Development
- Developing Work Experience and Job Shadowing
- Work Readiness and volunteering
- Digital Literacy

3.6 Sector Employer Groups

Employer–provider collaboration has been key to the development of this report and will be critical to the success of the LSIP as it moves into years 2 and 3. During the development of the LSIP, employers from the identified priority sectors were invited to a series of sector consultation meetings. Two of these groups were based on existing Sector Employer Groups already established by the Buckinghamshire SAP:

- Construction Sector, Employer Group
- Creative Film & TV Sector Employer Group (formerly Creative Industries Sector Action Group)

Consultations with the Health & Social Care sector were undertaken through the Buckinghamshire Health & Social Care Academy (BHSCA).

Two further groups have been formed based on employers who came together through LSIP consultations with the Engineering and Digital sectors:

- Engineering Sector, Employer Group
- Digital Sector, Employer Group

These are in the process of being formalised into county Sector Employer Groups for the purpose of driving the LSIP activities for their sectors and representing their sectors in county economic and skills activities generally.

Employers for all of these groups have agreed to attend regular meetings, agree terms of reference and have committed themselves to supporting the implementation of the LSIP.

In addition, a Buckinghamshire Education and Training Provider Forum has been established.

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