

Skills Strategy for Cambridgeshire

2016-2021

The Strategy for Skills in Cambridgeshire (and Peterborough detailed in the Peterborough Skills Strategy) and detailed action plan take into account the views and needs of businesses, education and learning providers and other local stakeholder organizations and citizens to help increase and develop both our existing and future workforce by:

- Identify higher level skills needs and gaps in Cambridgeshire (and Peterborough) businesses with a sample of key areas such as advanced manufacturing, life sciences and the creative industries; providing targeted skills training support for small to medium-sized businesses.
- helping young people aged 16-24 into training and employment by building greater links with employers and schools and colleges and increasing the number of apprenticeships and traineeships;
- providing a package of measures to support the unemployed, vulnerable adults and those aged 50 plus back into the jobs market.
- enhancing opportunities through lifelong learning by improving adult English and Maths skills and encouraging greater focus on training in areas where there are high numbers of low skilled residents.

Background

The Challenge

Cambridgeshire is a world leader in science and technology, with unparalleled levels of cutting edge research, growth businesses and highly skilled jobs. The area is already a significant net contributor to the UK economy.

Creating an area that is internationally renowned for its low-carbon, knowledge-based economy - Cambridgeshire will enhance its position as a global leader in knowledge and innovation, further developing its key sectors including life sciences, information and communication technologies, creative and digital industries, clean tech, high-value engineering and agri-business. Further growth will not be achieved if we don't also acknowledge the growing gap in the need for construction skills and skills needed to support the developing infrastructure of the area.

Achieving a skills base that matches business needs - ensuring young people are sufficiently prepared for work and prioritising skills development where it is needed most i.e. in areas where there are genuine skills barriers to economic growth.

Skills are vital for our future both in terms of economic growth and wellbeing but also for us to grow our social capital. UKCES analysis of projected growth for the proportion of the workforce in the Eastern region shows a significant change in the need for higher-level qualifications: table 1 below shows there will be a strong increase in demand for people with higher-level qualifications, including those with post-graduate qualifications; and, correspondingly, those with no or low-level qualifications will find it increasingly difficult to find employment.

Qualification level	Percentage share		Forecast % change
	2012 actual	2022 projection	
QCF 7-8 (post-grad) Masters and Doctorial level	9.1	14.6	+ 73.6%
QCF 4-6 University degree level	27.6	33.1	+ 29.1%
QCF 3 A Level	19.9	17.6	- 5.0%
QCF 2 A-C GCSE level	22.1	19.9	- 3.3%
QCF 1 D-F GCSE level	15.2	11.3	- 20.3%
No qualification	6.1	3.5	- 38.4%

The Greater Cambridge and Greater Peterborough skills stakeholders will consider if further refinement of their local skills strategies will be required after the conclusion of the Area Reviews to ensure that post-16 providers are delivering the skills that local employers require.

The challenge across Cambridgeshire including under the City Deal is to ensure that young people are given information that helps them understand the employment opportunities and ensuring they have access to appropriate learning that progresses them in to employment.

Cambridgeshire NEET has reduced steadily over the last 4 years comparing favourably to National, Eastern Region and Statistical Neighbour averages. However young people in at risk groups are disproportionately represented in the NEET cohort. This is especially the case for young people with SEND, young people looked after and teenage parents. Over 50% of the NEET cohort have qualifications below level 1 and the majority have significant challenges relating to mental health.

Participation in learning has increased, comparing favourably with national averages and employment without training has decreased. Offers of learning ,monitored through the September Guarantee are increasing steadily, however lack of practical and more tailored

opportunities at level 1 and below have meant that some young people are without a place come September.

Independent school data is not included in the table below.

	Nov 2015 Performance	2014/15 Actual	2013/14 Actual	2012/13 Actual
16 – 19 NEET	3.4%	3.6%	4.3%	5.1%
16 – 19 Unknown	2.3%	2.5%	2.2%	3.4%
Year 12 In learning	95.9%	94.1%	95.4%	94.2%
Year 13 In Learning	90.9%	89.3%	90.9%	88.3%
Year 12 in Jobs Without Training	.8%	1.2%	1.2%	1.5%
Year 13 in Jobs Without Training	4.3%	5.6%	3.8%	4.9%

Although having generally very high levels of skills, Cambridgeshire also demonstrates some of the **highest levels of skills inequalities** with pockets of skills deprivation evident in a number of communities. Failure to invest in skills will increase demand for services, adding increasing pressure to already tight budgets.

The number of young learners is falling. By 2015 there were 470 or 3% fewer 16-17 year old county residents than there were in 2009. This will require more young people to remain in education and training post 16 and for a greater proportion to achieve at Level 3 in order to meet the projected growth in demand by employers for new entrants at this level. In addition older learners will need to keep their skills up to date until they reach retirement.

The generally high levels of skills and earnings in the south and west of the county mask underlying pockets of poverty, and this is compounded by the relatively low accessibility of employment and training opportunities in rural areas. A higher proportion of Fenland's working age population has no qualifications than seen nationally. Across England, 12% of adults have no qualifications. This proportion is lower across all districts in Cambridgeshire except Fenland, where 14% of the population has no qualifications.

The Vision

The vision for skills is to improve the skills of young people and adults across Cambridgeshire (and Peterborough) so that we support a fairer society and are proud of our productive contribution on a competitive world stage.

PRIORITY ONE: Identify higher level skills needs and gaps in Cambridgeshire (and Peterborough) businesses with a sample of key growth sectors such as advanced manufacturing, life sciences and the creative industries; providing targeted skills training support for small to medium-sized businesses.

We will develop our local economy for the benefit of all by:

- Looking at data for the formation of skills conclusions to ensure that we are meeting the needs of businesses both now and in the future.
- Ensure local skills providers are offering an HE pathway and "home growing" teachers to support the Higher Level apprenticeship development.
- Provide clarity on what the demand is for higher level skills.

How we will measure success

- We will closely monitor economic indicators such as the employment rate and the new business registration rate to assess the state of Cambridgeshire's economy and our progress in this objective.

Key actions for 2016/17 and beyond

- We will work with Partners to match skills provision with local business needs and employment opportunities, so that the workforce has the skills to compete in the labour market. We will use our data and knowledge to help schools and colleges to understand the local employment and skills market.
- Promote ways of working with local employers to schools and academies. Support and encourage the local business community to play a role in shaping and or delivering elements of learning in schools, to better meet local business needs.

- Showcase existing best practice in school/employer partnerships, encouraging and facilitating the proliferation of best practice to other areas by:
using existing partnerships for facilitation, in particular the LEP, the Learning and Skills Board and 14-19 educational partnerships.
- Connect businesses to local employment and skills programmes activity by:
Working with providers of key employment programmes such as the Work and Health Programme providers to promote and improve engagement
Support National Apprenticeship expansion of Apprenticeships by 3 million between 2017 and 2020.
- Contribute to the Government's agenda regarding the increased participation of apprenticeship programmes within the county by:
adopting a policy of apprenticeships being a preferred route of progression and a considered route of recruitment, within the Local Authority Workforce Development strategy within the County Council's Workforce Strategy.
- Advocating, through supply chain procurement and influence, the methodology of employing apprentices to develop the skills base of the local economy.
- Working closely with our partners in the Local Enterprise Partnership, to help new and existing businesses to expand and grow, and to increase employment opportunities in the county.
- Offer support for SME's and Levy payers.

PRIORITY TWO: helping young people aged 16-24 into training and employment by building greater links with employers and schools and colleges and increasing the number of apprenticeships and traineeships;

Our key outcomes

- Young people achieve highly in education
- Improved skills for young people, so that people are better prepared to get jobs
- Narrowed the gap in attainment at 19 between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged groups, whilst widening access to higher education and higher level skills.
- Build opportunities for employers to engage with schools and champion the work of their sector to future employees.
- Work with the LEP projects and Signpost to Skills services to help schools plan the job awareness of their young people.

- Work on the Accelerating Achievement County project to offer support to improved opportunities for the most vulnerable young people.
- Developing mechanisms to promote with schools and academies, the value of working with local employers in order to prepare their young people for the workplace.
- Targeting economic development activity and promoting apprenticeships in key growth sectors.

How we will measure success

- We will look at the percentage of young people aged 16 – 19 who are not in education, employment or training to assess our success in supporting young people to stay in learning.

Key actions for 2016/17 and beyond

Develop a stronger education industry community by:

- Undertake an audit of Post 16 work experience opportunities in order to understand the sector, promote opportunities for 19-24 year olds and develop best practice.
- Develop joint protocols for pre and post education industry links in order to differentiate the experience and promote the contributions each makes to developing a skilled and motivated workforce (to include programme based employer placements, volunteering, traineeships DWP work experience and school and FE programmes).
- Measure wider impact of pre 16 education/industry links on progression into Apprenticeships in order to promote further interventions and understand what works and why.
- Review post 18 information and advice pathways to “Apprenticeship Proof”.
- And ensure no direct negativity is being transmitted and opportunities to promote positive messages are capitalized.
- Increase the number of employers willing to offer opportunities to young people with disabilities including building successful transitions/pathways to traineeships and apprenticeships.
- Share best practice from local employer engagement programmes.
- Survey young people undertaking apprenticeships to establish how they found out about opportunities and what underpinned their decision making in order to inform future marketing and promotional activities.

- Investigate use of social media to promote recruitment and retention of apprentices.
- Establish data sharing protocols with training providers to enable them to contact YP directly to promote Apprenticeships.
- Run training for key workers on post 16 learning opportunities.

PRIORITY THREE: providing a package of measures to support the unemployed, vulnerable adults and those aged 50 plus back into the jobs market;

Our key outcomes

We will support and protect people when they need it most by:

- Developing pathways to employment including through IAG, Children's centre workshops, work and health programme initiatives. Ensuring synergy with ESF/DWP Job seekers project and looking for synergy with a range of other local initiatives BBO, Community Grants, CALF etc.
- Engaging the voluntary sector and other providers to support deprived communities, to reach the learners farthest from learning provision.
- Ensuring there are opportunities for all communities to give feedback on the delivery of learning services and engage in the design of the delivery of learning.
- Focus the Community Learning funding on people who are disadvantaged and least likely to participate, including in rural areas and people on low incomes with low skills.

How we will measure success

We will seek to measure success through the following indicators:

- Comparison with the profile of engaged learners.
- Review of learner wider outcomes.
- Feedback from learners.
- Feedback from employers.
- Progression data.

Key actions for 2016/17 and beyond

- Engage more hard to reach learners by working with Voluntary sector and Social Enterprise partners on engagement strategies for local learners.
- Work with providers to encourage them to support progression for learners.
- Facilitate the production of a map of all providers and the entry and progression routes to and between those providers.
- Support the Building Better Opportunities (BBO) work and use the data to provide a gap analysis.

PRIORITY FOUR: enhancing opportunities to improve English and Maths skills and encouraging greater focus on training in areas where there are high numbers of low skilled residents;

Our key outcomes:

- Improved access to learning and progression into employment, bringing new opportunities and improving lives, whatever people's circumstances.
- Enhancement in the social and economic well-being of individuals, families and communities, through development of routes back into learning with support for adult literacy and numeracy.

How we will measure success:

- Employer feedback demonstrates new applicants have the right skills for the job.
- Improved digital, financial, literacy and/or communication skills.
- Parents/carers are better equipped to support and encourage their children's learning.
- Improved/maintained health and/or social well-being.
- Improved confidence and willingness to engage in learning.

Key actions for 2016/17 and beyond`

Commission, deliver and support learning in ways that contribute directly to these objectives, including:

- using the Community Learning and Skills Partnerships to bring together key providers and relevant local agencies and services.
- evolving planning and accountability to a local level, with local people involved in decisions about the learning offer.
- involving volunteers and Voluntary sector and Social Enterprise groups.
- ensure English and Maths is embedded in all the priorities.

A dialogue with partners is key to the successful delivery of this strategy and we will work closely with all partners to improve outcomes across Cambridgeshire.

Appendix 1
Action Plan

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