A MODEL LOCAL SKILLS PLAN

A REPORT BY THINK

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CONTENTS

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DISCLAIMER

The views and opinions expressed in this report are those of the author and do not necessarily state or reflect those of the Gatsby Charitable Foundation.

1. INTRODUCTION

The publication of a first set of local skills improvement plans (LSIPs) in 2023 marked a significant development in the technical education policy landscape in England. Described in the Department for Education's (DfE) statutory LSIP guidance as "[setting out] the key priorities needed to make technical education and skills provision more responsive to the changing needs of employers",[1] LSIPs are the first attempt by DfE to introduce statutory employer-led plans to technical education provision since the Training and Enterprise Councils over 20 years ago.

There has been no planning of this kind – employer-led or otherwise – of post-16 technical education and training since the closure of the Learning and Skills Council in 2010.[2] There have been various skills strategies in local areas but these have been relatively high level with no statutory requirement placed on providers to implement them, unlike that established via the Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022 in relation to LSIPs.[3] This is especially significant because some LSIPs set relatively granular priorities for both skills shortage occupations and upskilling (skills gaps).

In recent months the government has confirmed its intention to support the planned refresh of LSIPs. This is set to start in autumn 2025, with revised LSIPs published in 2026 (to coincide with the end of the first three-year LSIP cycle). The English devolution white paper[4] states:

- In future LSIPs will be jointly owned by employer representative bodies (ERBs) and strategic authorities (SAs).
- The process for developing an LSIP should start with the SA setting sectoral priorities.
- ERBs and SAs must work together on all stages of the LSIP, and both must be content with the LSIP before it can be forwarded to the Secretary of State for approval.
- LSIPs are expected to clearly link to local growth plans (to be developed by SAs), the national industrial strategy, as well as Skills England's assessment of skills needs.
- The appointment of an ERB by DfE will require the approval of an SA (such as where the geography of an LSIP is being changed to align with that of an SA).

Ministers seem clear that they want further education (FE) to move away from the competitive, learner-demand driven model and towards a more coordinated and managed system. This was outlined in a speech by the skills minister, Jacqui Smith, to the Association of Colleges conference in November 2024. She described how the current "hands-off" approach to the market has "failed". She told the conference:

> *My vision is for a framework of local coordination between providers, responding to local skills needs, informed by national skills priorities. By bringing together local*

1 DfE (2022) *Local skills improvement plan: statutory guidance for the development of a local skills improvement plan*.

2 Our enquiries suggest that the prior absence of any kind of national or statutory local plan for skills is a peculiar feature of post-16 education and training in England – such plans are commonplace in the skills systems of other developed economies.

3 The Act confirmed the function of the LSIP, the status of the ERB and the statutory duty placed on post-16 "relevant providers" (such as colleges, universities and training providers) to cooperate with LSIP development and to "have regard" to LSIPs when making decisions about technical education provision. For FE institutions, the Act sets out a further duty, requiring that they review how well provision meets local needs and that actions taken in response must be published on their website. See UK Parliament (2022) *Skills and post-16 education act 2022*.

4 Ministry of Housing Communities & Local Government (2024) *English devolution white paper*.

> *skills improvement plans with local growth plans. And linking these with the sectoral national workforce plans set out by the industrial strategy.*[5]

The upcoming publication of a new DfE post-16 strategy is expected to set out in more detail how government expects the post-16 system to evolve in accordance with the minister's vision.

Government seems committed to using plan-led approaches to driving economic growth, shaping the supply of skills and supporting workforce development. But in the two decades since statutory, employer-led local skills plans were last a feature of the landscape, the collective memory of how such arrangements might best operate has largely been lost.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

There is an opportunity to learn from LSIPs to date to develop a model local skills plan, the structure and content of which is intended to help ERBs, SAs, Skills England and others ahead of the process to refresh LSIPs beginning later this year.

Anticipating that local skills plans, properly implemented, were likely to be an essential component of the way forward under the then new government elected in July 2024, in late summer 2024 we agreed a project proposal with Gatsby built around the following objectives:

1. Produce a straightforward model for a local skills plan, in consultation with two LSIP areas.
2. Understand how data published by government can be best used in local skills plans, developing recommendations for DfE and Skills England about improving the availability of data to support local skills plans.
3. Provide a replicable model for other ERBs to use for gathering published technical education provision data that is relevant to LSIP priorities.
4. Create a plan for sharing (including training if required) the data and the model local skills plan.

In doing so, we are building on a series of projects we have delivered over the past two years that focused on LSIPs. Through this body of work, which has included providing analysis of LSIP content, delivering support to ERBs developing LSIPs, and considering the implications for policy and practice arising from the LSIP experience to date,[6] we have developed considerable knowledge about local skills planning in England. Previous outputs include a 2023 toolkit for ERBs (covering the what, why and how of LSIP development) as well as a note on the future of local skills planning (summer 2024) that drew on consultations with a wide range of ERBs following our work in the first half of 2024 to support LSIP implementation.

5 DfE (2024) *Skills Minister's keynote address to the Association of Colleges.*

6 The five Gatsby-supported projects that focused on LSIPs were:
- late 2022 – a review of trailblazer LSIP reports
- Jan-Oct 2023 – LSIP support project assisting ERBs with LSIP development, including a toolkit
- late 2023 – a review of published LSIP reports
- spring 2024 – LSIP implementation support to ERBs and consultation on local skills planning
- late 2024 – developing and testing a model local skills plan, with ERBs and local stakeholders

2. APPROACH

A four-stage method was developed to deliver the project's objectives:

STAGE 1: DESK REVIEW AND ERB RECRUITMENT

The project began with a brief review of previous outputs from our work on LSIPs. We created a summary of the key strengths and weaknesses of LSIP reports to guide the development of the model skills plan. A summary of these findings is presented in the next section of this report.

In parallel to this, work was undertaken to recruit two ERBs that would work with the project team to develop and refine the model local skills plan. ERBs responsible for two LSIPs agreed to participate in the project:

- Hull and East Yorkshire, which has a mix of the large rural economy of the East Riding and the north bank of the Humber estuary in and around Hull, with its concentration of port/logistics, chemicals, manufacturing and offshore industries. The ERB is the Hull and Humber Chamber of Commerce.
- Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, which has a diverse economy with no single large urban centre. It is largely service-focused but with concentrations of employment in sectors such as hospitality and construction, and an eclectic mix of distinctive sub-sectors (space, critical minerals, marine). The ERB is the Federation of Small Businesses.

We would like to express our thanks to both ERBs for their time and contributions to this project.

STAGE 2: DATA COLLECTION AND REVIEW

A substantial amount of data is published by DfE and others that is relevant to technical education in England – certainly more than when employer-led skills plans were last a feature of the FE and higher education (HE) landscape. However, our experience of LSIPs to date indicates that data on the demand for and supply of skills has not been a consistent feature in the evidence base used to determine LSIP priorities.

The project team undertook extensive work to identify relevant labour market data for the two LSIP areas we worked with. This desk-based exercise sought to develop and then populate a series of tables presenting data about:

- sectors within an LSIP area, including gross value added, employee headcount, forecast change in employment and location quotient, to identify sectoral and sub-sectoral job concentrations
- key occupations within selected priority sectors in an LSIP area, including employee count, vacancy advertising and changes in hours worked
- technical education delivery to residents of the LSIP area that is relevant to LSIP priority sectors and occupations, including development of a simplified search tool to identify provision relevant to LSIP priorities
- the impact of technical education provision, such as learner progression to employment by sector, apprenticeships and salaries

The purpose of this activity was twofold. Firstly, it was used to identify the range of data now publicly available about the labour market and, through consultation with ERBs and stakeholders, understand the data sources that might best sit in a replicable model local skills plan. Second, the project aimed to identify gaps in available data that Skills England might seek to resolve to support effective local skills planning.

STAGE 3: DEVELOPMENT AND TESTING OF THE MODEL LOCAL SKILLS PLAN

A structure for a model local skills plan was then drafted, drawing on the learning gathered from our work on LSIPs to date (summarised following review at stage 1) and incorporating data resources developed in stage 2 of this project.

Progress in developing the draft model local skills plan structure, including emerging data evidence, was shared with the two partner ERBs via regular keep-in-touch calls. This led to workshops with each ERB, the purpose of which was to:

- gather feedback from attendees about LSIP implementation to date – successes, difficulties and key learning from their perspective
- share and discuss a draft model skills plan structure to identify how this might be strengthened based on their experience
- review draft labour market data on occupations, delivery and impact, to identify the strengths and weaknesses and consider how it could support the development and delivery of LSIP priorities

A face-to-face workshop with Hull and East Yorkshire LSIP was held in October 2024 and an online workshop with Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly LSIP, including stakeholder partners, took place in December 2024. Feedback from both sessions informed the outputs in this report.

STAGE 4: PROJECT OUTPUT AND DISSEMINATION

Refinements to the proposed model local skills plan were made based on the workshop feedback. This also fed the development of a short briefing focused on how policy can best support effective local skills planning, reflecting on (a) the summer 2024 notes on the future of local skills planning, mentioned above; (b) policy developments since, particularly the English devolution white paper; and (c) feedback from our work with ERBs in recent months reviewing the key risks and opportunities facing local skills plans.

This report contains the key project outputs (model local skills plan, including data) but work continues to share the project's conclusions, including a planned workshop with ERBs, SAs and DfE in 2025.

3. LEARNING FROM LSIPS: AREAS FOR FOCUS IN A MODEL LOCAL SKILLS PLAN

TYPE OF PRIORITIES IDENTIFIED IN LSIPS

Our experience of working with ERBs and others on LSIPs, along with evidence drawn from our analysis of LSIP reports, suggests that ERBs have been largely successful in engaging employers and gathering evidence about their workforce upskilling requirements.

However, the picture is more mixed on skills shortages, where employers struggle to recruit to a vacancy. Training for an occupation (such as through apprenticeships) or for sectors and groups of occupations (such as through technical education study programmes) is where the bulk of public investment in technical education is focused. Therefore LSIPs, where the evidence base does not highlight occupational skills shortages, are likely to make a more limited impact on publicly funded technical education provision.

ERBs were rightly led by employer feedback about skills needs when determining LSIP priorities. Many ERBs found that the volume of employer feedback about generic and employability skills tended to outweigh feedback about skills shortage occupations.

Our experience is that any whole economy or large cross-sector research into employer skills needs will likely result in a higher profile for generic and employability skills. This is because, in most places, the sectors with the highest numbers of employers and staff are those where lower skilled occupations dominate, which rely more heavily on generic or employability skills. Employers in sectors where technical skills at Level 3+ are the norm, often respond first by citing skills shortage occupations as their main requirement – but these sectors are smaller in scale in many areas, despite making a greater contribution to productivity growth.

Other factors which influenced the mix of evidence gathered by ERBs and subsequent LSIP priority setting include:

- Some early ERB research and employer engagement did not separate requirements for the new recruitment of skilled people from the upskilling of existing staff. When specific questions about recruitment are not prioritised, employer responses tend to be naturally more concerned with their immediate skill requirements.
- An initial analysis of occupational skills shortage requirements can be derived from data, but ERBs were not provided with either access to or training in how to use Office for National Statistics (ONS) or commercially available data on employer skills demand or DfE data for skills supply. ERBs made progress using a wide range of commercial data sources on demand but much less so on local technical education and skills supply.
- Although the DfE did set out requirements for the content of LSIPs in its statutory guidance, they were relatively high level. There was no standard requirement in terms of detailed content or structure.

There are plenty of examples of LSIPs where there has been good coverage of occupational skills shortages, employee skills gaps and local skills systems issues. It is therefore only a matter of improving guidance, communication and staff development to achieve a complete set of good next LSIPs in 2026.

USE OF DATA IN LSIPS

A substantial amount of data is published by DfE and others that is relevant to the planning and delivery of technical education in England – certainly more than when employer-led skills plans were last a feature of the FE and HE landscape. It includes:

- Recent and forecast changes in the occupational profile of local and regional labour markets from census, Business Register and Employer Survey (BRES) data and labour market forecasting models sometimes used by local authorities, local enterprise partnerships (LEPs) and combined authorities.
- Detailed underlying DfE datasets, reporting technical education learning aim starts by young people and adults in an area, updated quarterly. Similar granular information is also available showing learning aim achievements.
- Patchy data that tracks FE and HE learner destinations (by type of destination, industry, and salary) for FE and HE. This includes information gathered by learner surveys (e.g. Graduate Outcomes) as well as data matching of individualised learner record (ILR) data with HMRC PAYE and DWP benefit records (e.g. Longitudinal Education Outcomes).

The above information should make it possible to feed analyses that can, for example:

- shed more light on the pattern of DfE-funded technical education delivery (16-19 full-time FE, apprenticeships, adult 19+ provision, short courses and HE) as it relates to LSIP priorities in an area
- explore the connection between education and training that is about a sector and the labour market destination of these learners (see for example, the JTL/ECA analysis of low progression rates into apprenticeships from adult 19+ electrical qualifications[7])
- assist providers to understand the likely trajectory of demand for skilled occupations that relate to technical education delivery (though the accuracy of such projections decrease as the labour market geography in use shrinks, time horizons grow and the detail of occupation titles increases)

While many ERBs made good use of data that shows likely demand for skilled occupations in their area, access to information about relevant technical education delivery was much more difficult to secure. In these circumstances, some ERBs made progress by meeting providers and asking for information on programme delivery. We have also supported ERBs to navigate available underlying DfE provision datasets.

While ERBs are strong on employer engagement skills and well used to managing projects funded by public sector grants, they have been hampered by a lack of experience of publicly funded education and training programme delivery, although some have recruited staff with this skill set. The proposal in the recent English devolution white paper that SAs will share relevant data with ERBs is therefore a

7 ECA (2023) *Local electrical workforce and learner populations in England*. A report for the Electrical Skills Partnership by ECA and JTL, pp 18-19.

promising development, as SAs receive the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) Localities Data Cube, which shows all DfE-funded post-16 learning recorded via ILR data.

Taken together, the learnings described above and our past reviews of LSIPs highlight several issues that could be addressed by the development of a replicable model local skills plan. The next section of the report outlines how we think such a report should be structured.

4. A MODEL LOCAL SKILLS PLAN

Outlined below is the proposed structure for a model local skills plan, including commentary. The intention here is to provide a straightforward, replicable approach that ERBs and SAs can follow, which would address issues such as those already identified in this report.

The model plan includes several data tables. A RAG (red, amber, green) rating has been given to each data source, providing a high-level view of the quality of the available data.[8] A more detailed review of the data components of the model skills plan is included in Section 5 of this report.

PART 1: AREA AND THE ECONOMY

Following from an introduction/preface co-signed by the ERB and SA, we suggest that the first chapter of the LSIP should be devoted to providing a digestible overview of the local area, its economy and labour market. It should encompass:

- **The local geography:** A map and perhaps a short description of the area covered by the LSIP, including demography, key population centres, etc. A local growth plan (if in place in an area) may provide such a summary that can be replicated in the LSIP.
- **Local economy including known future developments:** A brief synopsis of data that allows the reader to quickly grasp the features of the local economy and labour market. We expect that in places with SAs, any information required by the LSIP about the local economy will be derived from the local growth plan evidence base. If this is not available, we advise that the LSIP should draw on:
  - Nomis official census and labour market data,[9] providing comparisons with regional and national benchmarks to highlight distinguishing features of the LSIP area, e.g. working age population, workforce, employment by occupation group/industry, qualifications, unemployment and economic inactivity rates, salary levels, local business base.
  - ONS sub-regional productivity data[10] and location quotient data,[11] the latter showing job concentrations by industry relative to national averages.
  - Information should also be shared about key major developments which will have a bearing on future demand for labour, e.g. large-scale civil engineering (such as HS2 or new road schemes), Enterprise Zones, major inward investment activity from UK and overseas sources.
- **Organisations and leadership in the area:** We recommend that a brief overview is provided of the key civic and commercial leadership bodies in the area, such as the SA, local authorities, employer networks (including the ERB), unions and any prominent sector-based networks.

8 RAG ratings are:
- green – high-quality data updated at least annually, ready to use by ERBs and SAs
- amber – some issues that require attention (such as timeliness or geography) but data otherwise reliable
- red – significant issues with quality and/or timeliness of data that need addressing

9 Nomis offers labour market profiles by local authority and LEP, with links to more detailed data if required.

10 Labour productivity data by LEP and local authority area is available from ONS (accessed April 2025) *Regional and subregional labour productivity, UK: 2022*.

11 Location quotient data by travel to work area is available from ONS (December 2021) *Understanding towns: industry analysis*.

- **Key technical education providers:** It would be helpful for the reader to quickly understand the key providers of technical education in the local area. We suggest a simple table could be included which, while not intended to be exhaustive or detailed, provides a useful overview by broad type of delivery. This should include key providers located in the area and any significant providers operating in the area but based outside, ordered by programme type and revenue. This information may be reported by programme type in an organisation's annual financial statements found on their website. If this is not the case, links have been inserted to show where data showing income by type of learning programme can be found. However it should be noted that, for some providers, a significant proportion of their post-16 revenues are for academic rather than technical education. This applies to sixth-form colleges and universities more so than colleges and independent training providers (ITPs).

Table 1. Example table to show overview by broad type of delivery

Provider name	16-19 study programme allocation (£m)[12]	Adult Skills Fund (ASF) allocation (£m)[13 14]	Apprenticeship revenue (£m)[15]	HE (UK tuition fees) (£m)[16 17]	Total (£m)
College W	11.20	6.60	2.90	1.70	22.40
Sixth-form college X	7.70	0.04	0.00	0.00	7.74
Independent training provider Y	0.00	0.00	3.40	0.00	3.40
University Z	0.00	0.00	1.90	82.00	83.90

- **Governance:** We suggest that chapter one should include a brief overview of how the LSIP is governed, including the respective roles and accountabilities of the strategic authority and the ERB (noting the government's plan for joint ownership of LSIPs going forward).
- **Past/current skills plans:** A brief overview of the priorities in existing or recent prior skills action plans (published by LEPs) and the previous LSIP from 2023.

PART 2: SKILLS SHORTAGES, GAPS AND PRIORITIES

Part 2 should feature a summary of the evidence used to identify skills shortages, gaps and system priorities. We suggest that this incorporates four main elements:

- **Identification of LSIP priority sectors**: Including relevant high-level data about the sector and its labour market in the LSIP area.

12 Source: ESFA (updated 2023) *16 to 19 allocation data: 2022 to 2023 academic year*.

13 In areas where ASF is not devolved, DfE publishes allocations data on: ESFA (updated 2023) *16 to 19 allocation data: 2022 to 2023 academic year*.

14 In areas where ASF is devolved, the SA publishes an annual list of ASF allocations by provider. This can usually be found on the SA's website or via a search engine. An example is available at the bottom of the North East Combined Authority web page: North East Combined Authority (accessed 2025) *Adult skills*.

15 Payments to providers from the Apprenticeship Service is reported in final funding values releases from DfE. Data for 2022/23 final funding values is expected in April 2025. The 2021/22 version is available in columns S and T of the ODS file available from ESFA (updated April 2024) *Funding allocations to training providers: 2021 to 2022*.

16 HE revenues for colleges are reported via the ESFA's College Benchmarking Tool, available at DfE and ESFA (updated February 2025) *Financial benchmarking tool for colleges*.

17 University income is available from HESA. HESA (2024) *What is the income of HE providers?*

- **Skills shortages**: LSIP priority occupations where employers have difficulties recruiting due to weak supply of skilled labour.
- **Skills gaps**: LSIP priority skills gaps where employers' existing staff lack the required skills to be fully competent.
- **Pan-sector and skills system priorities**: Encompassing common skills needs and dysfunctions with the skills system that the LSIP wants to address.

The suggested content for each of these four elements is outlined below.

IDENTIFICATION OF LSIP PRIORITY SECTORS

The model skills plan should use standard industrial classification (SIC, which describes the main activity of an employer) to define sectors. In areas with an SA, the recent English devolution white paper states that sector priorities will be determined by the SA so that the LSIP aligns with the local growth plan. Where an SA is not in place, we suggest that the report outlines the rationale for selecting priority sectors, including any criteria used (e.g. productivity data, employment volumes, key developments, prior LEP priorities), as per the guidance in *Developing a Local Improvement Skills Plan*.[18]

At this point, we recommend the inclusion of a table that sets the scene about each priority sector, drawing on the evidence base for the area's local growth plan (where this exists). If this is not in place, the example below shows the kind of data that is available on LSIP geographies, with links to sources.

Table 2. Sector overview example

Sector (SIC code)	SIC division (if required)	Main IfATE route	Employees in employment[19]	Net change and replacement demand 2020-2035[20]	Value added (£m, annual)[21]	Location quotient[22]
Construction (F)	41: Construction of buildings 42: Civil engineering 43: Specialised construction activities	Construction and the Built Environment	41: 2,000 42: 1,000 43: 8,000 Total: 11,000 6% of all jobs (GB: 4.9%)	Net Change: 0 Replacement demand: 9,000	41: 300 42: 150 43: 450 Total: 900	41: 1.17 42: 0.56 43: 1.31

We suggest that relevant Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) route(s) for a sector are identified in Table 2. In most cases there is a reasonable read across from sector (defined by SIC codes) to IfATE route (e.g. construction, engineering, health and science, care services). IfATE routes provide groupings of related occupational standards around which apprenticeships, T Levels, HTQs

18 Farr, J. and Guy, R. (2023) *Developing a local improvement skills plan (LSIP)*. Report to the Gatsby Foundation. p.5.

19 Source: ONS BRES data from Nomis (2023) *Dataset: Business Register and Employment Survey: open access*.

20 Source: DfE (updated August 2024) *Labour market and skills projections: 2020 to 2035*. Download the dataset for LSIP areas for forecasts for net change (total jobs required) and replacement (when someone leaves the workforce) demand by industry.

21 Source: ONS (April 2025) *Regional gross value added (balanced) by industry: city and enterprise regions*. Table B3 2022.

22 Source: ONS (2021) *Understanding towns: industry analysis*. Location quotient data by travel to work area (anything above 1.2 can be considered a specialism).

and a growing proportion of technical education programmes are designed.[23] Occupational standards are designed by groups of employers with support from IfATE. The design of technical education programmes around these standards means that providers can quickly understand the provision that may be required in response to an occupational skill need.

The mix of occupations found at employers in a sector will usually incorporate some which are unique to the sector (such as bricklayers or roofers in the construction sector), as well as occupations which are found across multiple sectors (such as finance, management and sales). This means that more than one route may be of relevance to the skills needs of a sector. If we use the construction sector as an example, clearly the key trade occupations are unique to the sector – these provide work for the bulk of the sector's workforce. But if construction employers also identified shortages of finance, sales or management staff, then occupations in other routes may be relevant, such as business administration; legal, finance and accounting; or sales, marketing and procurement.

Having established the sectoral focus of the LSIP, we can now turn to presenting evidence about the key skills priorities that the LSIP will seek to address.

SKILLS SHORTAGES

Drawing on the evidence, the plan should outline key skills shortage occupations.[24] Quantitative evidence can be summarised as per Table 3, which uses an example of skills shortage occupations in the engineering and manufacturing sector. Section 5 of this report has more detailed commentary on the adequacy of available data in understanding skills needs and evidence on related technical education provision.

Table 3 includes information on skills shortage occupations and related technical education supply. For the former, it is advisable to connect SOC data (around which all labour market data is collected and reported) with the occupational standards used in IfATE's routes (around which requirements technical education programmes are built). Helpfully, IfATE has mapped its occupational standards to four-digit SOC codes.[25]

Following this, data should be added to highlight technical education provision that is relevant to the priority occupations. Section 5 covers the practical steps required to identify this data. The data is intended to (a) highlight relevant provision and the providers who are delivering it, and (b) help the ERB and SA understand the scale of supply relative to employer needs.

We suggest that, for each priority sector, Table 3 should be followed by a bullet-point synopsis of primary evidence gathered through engagement with employers (who generate demand for skills), supplemented with feedback from providers and other local stakeholders as appropriate. The primary evidence used to inform commentary in the LSIP on skills needs could include, but is not limited to:

23 See IfATE (accessed 2025) *Occupational maps*. The search function drop-down allows a search for occupational standards by SOC code (4 digit).

24 ERBs and SAs should distinguish between skills shortages (difficulties filling vacancies arise from a lack of available skills, requiring a training response) and labour shortages (whereby vacancies go unfilled due to poor pay, conditions and/or a lack of basic 'employability skills'). The latter tend to be more common in occupations that have low barriers to entry and where occupational competence can be reached quickly, usually by learning on the job.

25 IfATE (2023) *What are the occupational maps?* Section 7: Are standards mapped to SOC codes?

- the results of surveys of employers
- evidence gathered from 1-2-1 interviews
- feedback from focus groups and LSIP events

Advice on gathering evidence of employer labour market needs is included in the LSIP toolkit.[26] While there is value in sharing insights from the available data with employers, we do not recommend using SIC/SOC codes and titles with employers because employer engagement, including the communication of findings, needs to remain 'business friendly'. However, initial desktop labour market data analysis can be used to inform lines of enquiry for LSIP research activity, providing a focus for the research that should help to yield stronger evidence about skills needs from employers and other stakeholders.

While we suggest that ERBs focus on skills shortage vacancies as a priority, it would be desirable for ERBs and SAs to also consider highlighting occupations where demand is in decline. Here, emerging task-based analysis of occupations can be used to identify the related occupations that may provide future opportunities for those currently employed in declining industries and occupations. Such analyses will be of major importance in areas where the anticipated closure of major local employers (e.g. a steelworks), or advances in technology (e.g. automation removing or significantly changing certain roles), appear likely to lead to reductions in employment opportunities in once common occupations and sectors.

26 Farr, J. and Guy, R. (2023) *Developing a local improvement skills plan (LSIP)*. Report to the Gatsby Foundation. p.7.

Table 3. Priority skills shortage occupations: engineering and manufacturing sector in an LSIP area example

OCCUPATIONS			DEMAND INDICATORS				RELEVANT TECHNICAL EDUCATION PROVISION 2022/23[27]			
Occupation (SOC)	SOC code	Linked IfATE occupational standard(s) and route	Employees in employment (SOC4, local)[28]	'Occupations in demand' category (SOC4, national)[29]	Change in usual hours worked (SOC4, regional)[30]	Vacancies posted, 12 months (SOC4, local)[31]	Starts 16-18	Starts 19+	Starts apprenticeship	Starts HE (enrolments)
Electricians and electrical fitters	5241	Route: Engineering & Manufacturing • L3 Maintenance & operations technician – electrical technician Route: Construction & the Built Environment: • L3 Installation & maintenance electrician	1,658	Elevated demand	2.5%	155	T Level: 12 in Design & Development for Electrical Engineering (College W) L3 Diploma: 3 in Advanced Electrical Installation (College W)	L3 Diploma: 12 in Advanced Electrical Installation (College W)	95 Installation & maintenance electrician (65 at ITPY, 30 at College W)	n/a L3 occupation
Welding trades	5213	Route: Engineering & Manufacturing • L2 Welder • L3 Pipe welder • L3 Plate welder	500	Not in demand	-2.8%	35	n/a	L3 Extended NVQ: 7 in Fabrication & Welding (College W)	1 Plate welder L3 apprenticeship start (out of area college)	n/a L3 occupation
Engineering professionals n.e.c.	2129	Route: Engineering & Manufacturing: various L6/7 e.g. robotics, control systems, nuclear	770	Elevated demand	1.1	45	T Level: 15 in Design and Development for Engineering and Manufacturing (College W)	n/a	5 across various L6/7 standards (all out of area providers)	275 engineering undergraduate degree course enrolments at university Z
Sales directors	1132	Route: Sales, Marketing & Procurement • B2B sales professional	128	Not in demand	1.5	70	n/a	n/a	3 B2B sales professionals (out of area HE provider)	85 sales and marketing management undergraduate degree course enrolments at university Z

27 Guidance on sourcing and identifying relevant provision is available in the next section of this report.

28 Source: ONS (May 2023) *Occupations of those in employment, by local area, working pattern, employment status and disability status, England and Wales, Census 2021*, for each local authority.

29 Source: DfE (updated October 2024) *Calendar year 2024: occupations in demand*.

30 Source: ONS (December 2024) *Earnings and hours worked, region by occupation by four-digit SOC: ASHE Table 15*.

31 Source: ONS (April 2025) *Labour demand volumes by Standard Occupation Classification (SOC 2020), UK*.

SKILLS GAPS

For skills gaps, the plan should, for each priority sector, describe a set of priorities based on evidence gathered about the skills needs of existing staff. This could include those arising from:

- new technologies
- regulatory requirements or changes
- changes to workplace processes
- basic skills (numeracy, literacy)
- transferable 'employability' skills (teamwork, problem-solving, etc.)
- skills required to enable those who are technically competent to advance in their careers (management, finance, project management, etc.)

Unlike skills shortage occupations, there is currently scant secondary data about the nature and scale of skills gaps beyond employer surveys and research already undertaken by industry groups such as the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) and Make UK, usually on a national basis. The bulk of evidence around skills gaps locally will, for the time being, be derived from primary research undertaken by the ERB and SA. This may generate evidence that is suitable to present in a table, broadly as follows:

Table 4. Priority sector skills gaps, engineering and manufacturing (suggested)

Gap or issue (identified from evidence)	Type	LSIP survey data	Interview feedback	Focus group feedback	National evidence
Problem-solving skills	Transferable, employability	[highlights from any LSIP survey of sector employers]	[key and common themes from employer interviews]	[further points from focus groups, including whether effective solutions are available]	[from trade bodies, industry groups etc. where available]
Management and leadership	Career progression	[highlights from any LSIP survey of sector employers]	[key and common themes from employer interviews]	[further points from focus groups, including whether effective solutions are available]	[from trade bodies, industry groups etc. where available]

PAN-SECTOR AND SKILLS SYSTEM PRIORITIES

If a small number of system issues are identified (such as dysfunctions with learner advice and guidance; difficulties with tutor recruitment and retention; lack of employer/provider fora), this could be summarised in a set of bullet points that describe the problem, its drivers and the relevant evidence gathered (such as from employers and providers). If a larger number of issues are identified, we recommend adopting a table on similar lines to Table 4, providing an accessible format for the reader.

FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT – IMPACT OF PROVISION

The final component of part 2 of the model local skills plan relates to the impact of technical education provision. We recommend that this should be included so that ERBs, SAs and other stakeholders can understand the extent to which relevant technical education provision addresses the skills shortage occupations identified within the LSIP.

However, as Section 5 of this report makes clear, the quality and consistency of data tracking the destinations of learners completing technical education programmes, with sector/occupation, is patchy and should be treated with caution. Therefore, we recommend that this data be improved (by Skills England working with SAs as appropriate) because it would allow SAs and ERBs to understand the extent to which technical education provision actually improves the supply of skills that employers need. This will lead to better and more targeted LSIP actionable priorities.

If improvements are made to the consistency of learner destination data, it should be possible to combine this with existing learning aim start and achievement rate data, so that ERBs and SAs can develop tables such as Table 5 for their local skills plan evidence base.

Table 5. Impact of technical education provision (destinations)

LSIP priority occupation	Relevant learning aim and level	Type of programme	Learning aim starts by local residents	% achievement rate (national average)	% sustained employment only (national)	% sustained employment and learning (national)	% sustained apprenticeship (national)	Sector of those in 'employment only' (national)	Earnings after 1 year (national)
Insert LSIP priority occupation									
Insert LSIP priority occupation									

Despite the data quality concerns expressed above, we have used this experimental information to present an example of Table 5 using the available data for electricians.

Table 6. Impact of technical education provision (destinations) – electrician example

LSIP priority occupation	Relevant learning aim and level	Type of programme	Learning aim starts by local residents	% achievement rate (national average)	% sustained employment only (national)	% sustained employment and learning (national)	% sustained apprenticeship (national)	Sector of those in 'employment only' (national)	Earnings after 1 year (national)
Electricians and electrical fitters L3	L3 Diploma in Advanced Electrical Installation	16-18 FE	2	69.0	53	22	Not reported	22% retail 11% ICT 11% construction	Not reported
	L3 Diploma in Advanced Electrical Installation	19+ adult	8	75.0	0	0	0	Not reported	No data
	L3 Installation and Maintenance Electrician	Apprenticeship, all age	97	57.1	94	0	0	Not reported	£33K (2019)

PART 3: DELIVERING THE LOCAL SKILLS PLAN PRIORITIES

The final part of the model local skills plan should describe the steps that will be taken to bring about change that effectively and sustainably respond to the LSIP priorities identified in part 2.

Again, we suggest that the plan is organised by sector in accordance with the LSIP priorities, however there will also be a requirement for a set of broader actions to address pan-sector and skills system priorities that emerge.

We suggest that an adapted version of the LSIP progress review report format should be used for Table 7 so that the plan clearly states, for each sector (and for pan-sector and skills system priorities):

- the LSIP priority
- the actions being taken to address the priority
- the outcomes expected from each action
- the timescale for delivery of the action
- the owner of each action

An illustrative example of the plan (described as a roadmap in many 2023 LSIPs) as it relates to one priority is shown below.

Table 7. Action plan example

Sector	Priority	Actions	Expected outcomes	Timescale and milestones	Owner and partners involved
Engineering and manufacturing	Increase the supply of certified electricians in the local labour market	[List actions to be taken to improve achievement rates, raise progression to apprenticeships from classroom-based provision, and grow the demand for electrical apprenticeship and courses among employers and learners]	% increase in apprenticeship starts % increase in the number progressing from courses to apprenticeship % increase in the volume of electrical programmes	By 2027	College W, working with ITP Y and the ERB

The plan can then be appended by further columns, providing an update on progress and next steps, to capture relevant information for annual progress reports and monthly/quarterly monitoring by the ERB, SA and DfE.

Finally, we suggest that a model local skills plan should include information about how its implementation will be managed. This should clearly show (potentially via a diagram, with descriptions) the respective roles of LSIP working groups and oversight functions.

5. USE OF DATA IN LOCAL SKILLS PLANNING

SKILLS ENGLAND AND THE ROLE FOR DATA

The creation of Skills England forms one of the key pillars of the government's policy agenda on skills. Its stated aims are to:

- *work to form a coherent national picture of where skills gaps exist and how they can be addressed, working closely with the Industrial Strategy Council and the Migration Advisory Committee*
- *unify the skills landscape to ensure that the workforce is equipped with the skills needed to power economic growth, by bringing together Mayoral Combined Authorities and other key local partners, large and small businesses, training providers and unions*
- *shape technical education to respond to skills needs, including identifying the training accessible via the Growth and Skills Levy*
- *advise on the highly trained workforce needed to deliver a clear, long-term plan for the future economy.*[32]

High quality data about the demand for, and supply of, skilled labour is central to each of these objectives. Skills England is expected to play the lead role in enhancing available data that can be used to inform the development of skills priorities, be they at a national or local (LSIP) level. Government's plan to publish a refreshed set of LSIPs in summer 2026 therefore represents an opportunity to ensure that best use of available data to support high-quality local skills plans.

The good news is that, compared with when employer-led skills plans were last an established feature of the post-16 landscape, there is now a substantial set of published data assets available for use. As shown in the content of Table 2 and Table 3, this relates to:

- More detailed profiles of occupations in local and regional labour markets, the former via census and BRES data. Forecasts of employer demand for staff by sector within each LSIP area are also now available.
- Detailed underlying DfE data is now published which shows all technical education learning aim starts by young people and adults in an area. This information is updated on a quarterly basis, encompassing all study programme, adult and apprenticeship learning recorded on the ILR. Similar granular information is also available showing learning aim achievements.
- An emergent and partial set of data that tracks career and further learning destinations (by type of destination, industry and salary) of FE and HE learners. This includes information gathered by learner surveys (e.g. Graduate Outcomes) as well as by matching ILR data with HMRC PAYE and DWP benefit records (e.g. Longitudinal Education Outcomes).

32 DfE (updated February 2025) *Skills England.*

SKILLS DEMAND DATA

In the course of developing this project, limitations have been identified in relevant publicly available labour market data that relate to the age, frequency or sample size used to produce labour market data. These are flagged in the RAG assessment in Table 8 for each data source used in the model local skills plan tables outlined in the previous chapter of this report.

Following review with the two ERBs with whom we have shaped the model skills plan, the following tables provide comment on the key limitations of the data used in the model local skills plan. For each indicator, a high-level RAG rating for data quality is included, reflecting those applied to Table 2, Table 3 and Table 6 in the report.[33]

Table 8. Sector overview (from Table 2)

Indicator	Source	Geography	Date	Comment	Data quality RAG rating
IfATE route/ SIC code	ONS/IfATE	n/a	n/a	It would be helpful if Skills England could produce a mapping of SIC code industries (including divisions) to routes, enabling ERBs and SAs to make a consistent link between SIC data and technical education routes under which occupational standards (to which technical education products are developed) are built. However it should be noted that occupations in a sector will not all sit within the same route – employers may identify pan-sector occupations as priorities (such as in finance, management, admin etc.), rather than just the occupations that are specific to that sector.	Mapping from SIC to route for sector-specific occupations required by Skills England.
Employees in employment	ONS BRES	LEPs, local authorities, combined authorities	2023	Local authority/combined authority geography should be sufficient for LSIPs given plans to align geographies with SAs. Sample sizes means the reliability of employment figures deteriorates at sub-regional level.	Updated annually, large BRES sample size (c90,000 employers).
Net change and replacement demand	National Foundation for Educational Research	LSIP	2020-35	Projected recruitment by industry and employment. LSIP-specific workbooks cover 22 industrial sectors and two-digit SOC. Any move to increase the granularity of SOC projections (to 4 digit) on sub-regional geographies would be very welcome (noting that quality/reliability concerns have prevented this to date). We note the use by providers, SAs and ERBs of paid-for labour market forecasting models with 'black box' methodology, offering detailed forecasts (SOC4) within small geographies over long timescales – which has led to questions about the reliability of such forecasts.	Two-digit SOC at LSIP geographic unit limits the utility of these projections.

33 RAG ratings are:
- green – high-quality data updated at least annually, ready to use by ERBs and SAs
- amber – some issues that require attention (such as timeliness or geography) but data otherwise reliable
- red – significant issues with quality and/or timeliness of data that need addressing

Value added	ONS	LEP area	2022	Estimates based on the location of the workplace, presented in current basic prices; but adjustments will be required to align data to LSIP geographies in some areas.	Updated annually, ONS estimates use a complex but well developed method.
Location quotient	ONS	Travel to work areas	2019	Data last published in late 2021 (based on 2019 information) is now quite old. This appears to be one-off analysis by ONS that would be useful to repeat on an LSIP workplace location basis, rather than town/city travel to work geographies (because some LSIP areas contain multiple travel to work geographies).	Data is from 2019. Geography needs aligning to LSIPs and local growth plans.

Table 9. Skills shortage occupations (from Table 3, demand)

Indicator	Source	Geography	Date	Comment	Data quality RAG rating
SOC code to IfATE occupational standard	IfATE	n/a	n/a	The mapping of 4-digit SOC codes to IfATE occupational standards on the occupational maps is very helpful, particularly the ability (via the drop-down search menu on the IfATE website) to search standards by SOC code.	Completed by IfATE.
Employees in employment	ONS census	Local authority	2021	The census appears to be the only source of data showing the number of people working in an occupation (4-digit SOC code) within local geographies (rather than regional or national). This data will now not be updated until 2031, by which time substantial changes in the occupational structure of local labour markets may have occurred. Estimates of employees by SOC4 occupations by NUTS/ITL3[34] geographies are available (drawn from the Annual Population Survey), but for most NUTS geographies (which are smaller than LSIP geographies) data is available only for a minority of SOC4 occupations.	Data is from the 2021 census and will not be repeated until 2031. Therefore this data is of declining value until the next census release in 2032.

34 NUTS stands for nomenclature of territorial units for statistics and ITL stands for international territorial level. The NUTS system was used by the UK when it was a member of the European Union to classify regions for statistical analysis. The ITL system replaced NUTS to maintain comparability of regional statistics.

Occupations in demand	Skills England	National	2024	Draws on a basket of measures to determine which occupations nationally are in 'critical', 'elevated' or 'not in high' demand. However regional variations mean that what might be true nationally may not be the case within an LSIP area. There will also be debate about the basket of seven weighted key performance indicators (KPIs) used to inform the analysis, for example, not all occupations draw on international migrants (visa application density is one KPI); other indicators are very reliant on the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) (see below); not all jobs are advertised online (online job vacancies form another KPI).	This is useful national context, though the method appears weighted towards ASHE.
Change in usual hours worked	ONS	Regional	2024	Part of the ASHE dataset, this is a proxy for demand (a similar proxy could be used measuring salaries). The principal drawback is that while data is now available at 4-digit SOC, the geography is regional. This works for London and possibly north-east England, but not for large polycentric regions with multiple travel to work areas (everywhere else).	Geography is regional and not LSIP or local authority.
Vacancies posted	ONS	Local authority or mayoral combined authority	2024	Using Textkernal online job adverts data, which is reported at 4-digit SOC code level and is updated monthly. The major caveat is that sectors do not recruit using the same methods, meaning that vacancies in some industries (such as construction and logistics) tend to be less likely to be advertised, compared to others.	Four-digit SOC code, local geography, updated monthly – however caveat (see left) needs noting.

SKILLS SUPPLY DATA

Recent years have seen a significant improvement in the availability of data showing post-16 technical education delivery funded by DfE. Combined authorities have been able to access such information for over a decade via the ESFA Localities Data Cube, which they receive every year – but this comes with strict rules forbidding access to the Cube by other organisations. The plan in the English devolution white paper for SAs to share data with ERBs should, we hope, remove this blockage.

In the meantime, DfE has for the past few years published large, underlying datasets that capture every post-16 learning aim reported via the ILR. While this omits data from school sixth forms, it otherwise includes every 16-18, adult 19+ and (via a similar, separate publication) apprenticeship learning aim start. This provides very helpful insight into the mix and balance of technical education delivery to residents of an area (local authority or mayoral SAs).

Access to this information has enabled those ERBs who have engaged with it to:

- identify the curriculum offer in the local area that is relevant to LSIP priorities
- baseline existing relevant provision – identifying what is being delivered and who by
- subsequently support engagement by ERBs with providers about how to address LSIP priorities, equipped with information about what is being delivered

Analysis of technical education provision requires, in the main, the searching of learning aim titles for keywords that relate to an LSIP priority. Other than within apprenticeships (where the title of the apprenticeship matches the occupational standard), this can be an imprecise art – so ERBs and providers are advised to work with providers to confirm any data gathered via the ESFA Localities Data Cube or DfE's underlying datasets. This is summarised below:

Table 10. Limitations of searching learning aim titles

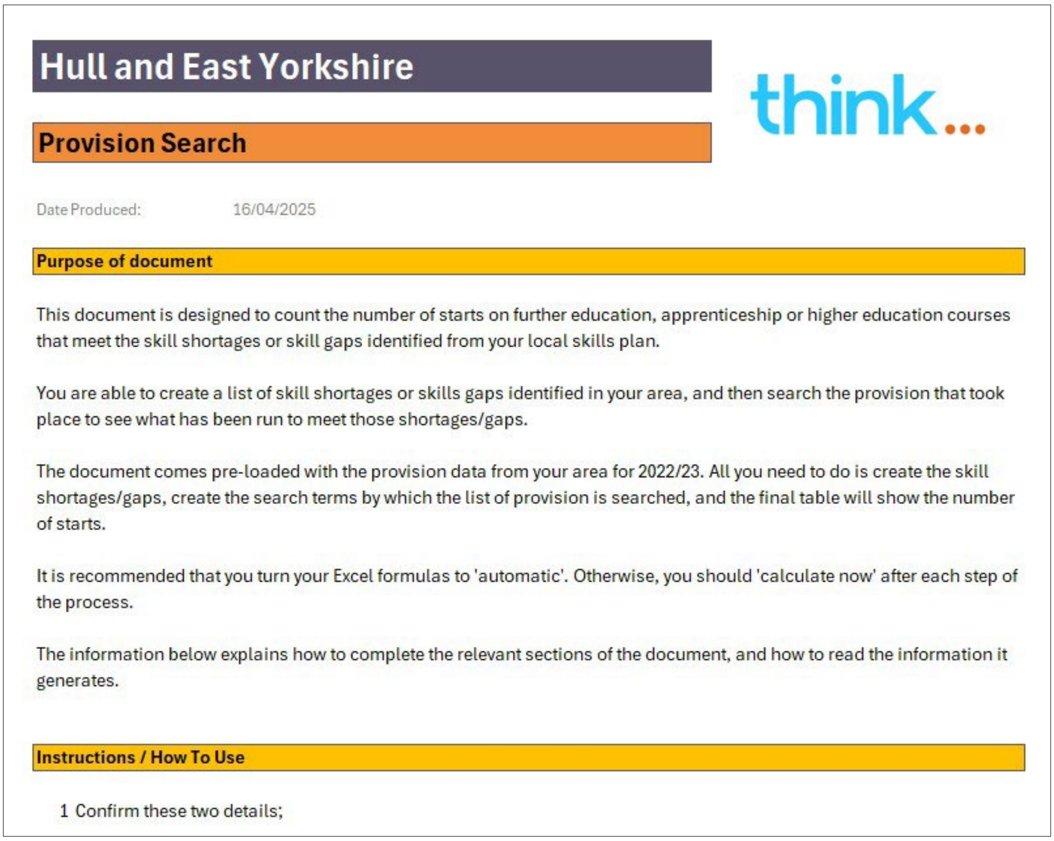
Type of delivery	Source files – learning aim starts data	Limitations	Data quality RAG rating
16-18 FE	FE and skills underlying data	'Best fit' of learning aim titles with LSIP priorities, mainly occupations. No data on employability/behavioural aspects highlighted by employers.	Issues aligning learning aim titles with occupational standards.
Adult 19+	FE and skills underlying data	'Best fit' of learning aim titles with LSIP priorities, occupations and workforce development.	Issues aligning learning aim titles with occupational standards.
Apprenticeships	Apprenticeship underlying data	Aligns wholly with occupations as described in the IfATE occupational maps.	Full alignment of learning aim titles with occupational standards.
Short courses	FE and skills underlying data	'Best fit' of learning aim titles with LSIP priorities. Sifted by learning aim title. No full cost provision data available. Some short courses have generic titles.	Issues aligning learning aim titles with occupational standards.
HE	FE and skills underlying data Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) 2022/23	HESA data covers the vast majority of provision but is limited in its detail – no learner data by residence; only shows degree-awarding provider; subjects, not course title data.	See left.

INTRODUCING A PROVISION SEARCH TOOL

Sifting the detailed DfE underlying datasets is a time-consuming and laborious task. For instance, the FE and skills underlying dataset contains almost three million rows of data. This requires using pivot tables and different modes of Excel due to the fact that, in its standard format, Excel can only display 1.05 million rows of data at a time.

To simplify this task we set out to develop an education and training provision search tool that allows users to search learning aim titles, matching descriptions of LSIP skills shortage occupations and gaps.

Figure 1. Screengrab of the Post-16 Provision Search tool



Hull and East Yorkshire

Provision Search

think...

Date Produced: 16/04/2025

Purpose of document

This document is designed to count the number of starts on further education, apprenticeship or higher education courses that meet the skill shortages or skill gaps identified from your local skills plan.

You are able to create a list of skill shortages or skills gaps identified in your area, and then search the provision that took place to see what has been run to meet those shortages/gaps.

The document comes pre-loaded with the provision data from your area for 2022/23. All you need to do is create the skill shortages/gaps, create the search terms by which the list of provision is searched, and the final table will show the number of starts.

It is recommended that you turn your Excel formulas to 'automatic'. Otherwise, you should 'calculate now' after each step of the process.

The information below explains how to complete the relevant sections of the document, and how to read the information it generates.

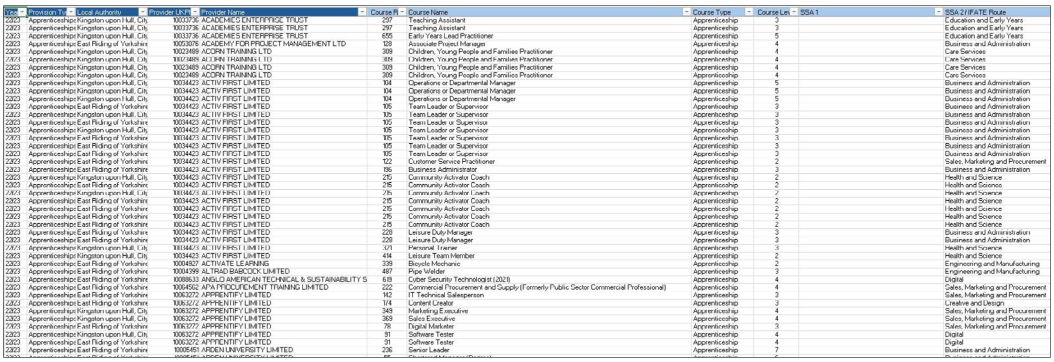
Instructions / How To Use

1 Confirm these two details;

With this model, users can add LSIP skills shortages and, having designated search terms, it then scours the available DfE underlying data (apprenticeships, FE and skills – around 4.5 million rows of data, combined) and HESA data for provision delivered to residents of the LSIP area that may be relevant.

The Post-16 Provision Search tool, using the skills shortages identified in the Hull and East Yorkshire LSIP is available. Figure 2 shows the model in use.

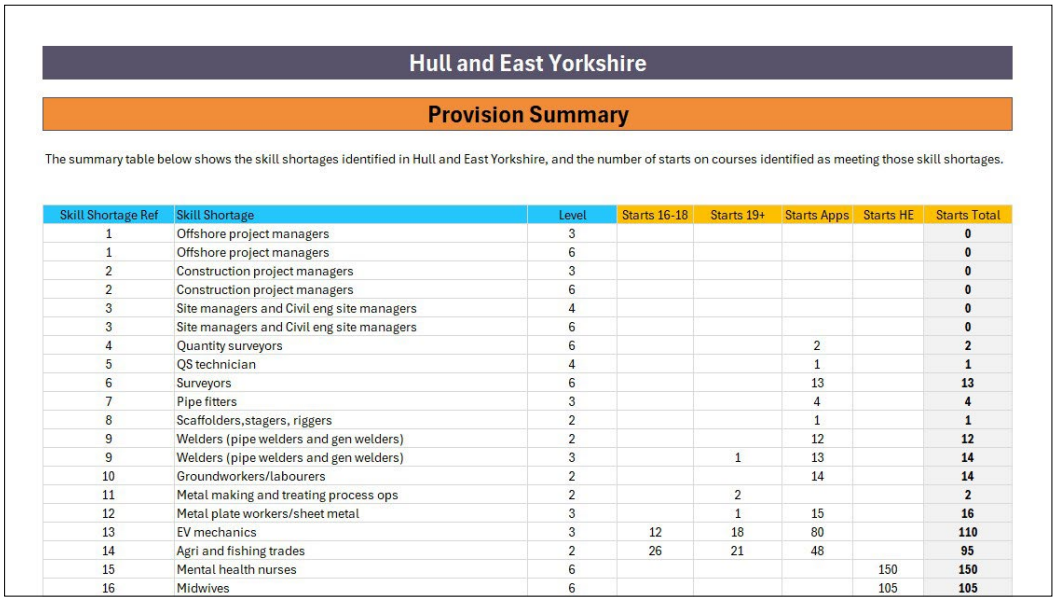
Figure 2. Screengrab of the Post-16 Provision Search in action



Year	Provision Ty	Local Authority	Provider UKPI	Provider Name	Course R	Course Name	Course Type	Course Lev	SSA 1	SSA 2 / IFATE Route
22/23	Apprenticeships	Kingston upon Hull, City	10033736	ACADEMIES ENTERPRISE TRUST	297	Teaching Assistant	Apprenticeship	3		Education and Early Years
22/23	Apprenticeships	Kingston upon Hull, City	10033736	ACADEMIES ENTERPRISE TRUST	297	Teaching Assistant	Apprenticeship	3		Education and Early Years
22/23	Apprenticeships	Kingston upon Hull, City	10033736	ACADEMIES ENTERPRISE TRUST	655	Early Years Lead Practitioner	Apprenticeship	5		Education and Early Years
22/23	Apprenticeships	East Riding of Yorkshire	10053076	ACADEMY FOR PROJECT MANAGEMENT LTD	128	Associate Project Manager	Apprenticeship	4		Business and Administration
22/23	Apprenticeships	Kingston upon Hull, City	10023489	ACORN TRAINING LTD	309	Children, Young People and Families Practitioner	Apprenticeship	4		Care Services
22/23	Apprenticeships	Kingston upon Hull, City	10023489	ACORN TRAINING LTD	309	Children, Young People and Families Practitioner	Apprenticeship	4		Care Services
22/23	Apprenticeships	Kingston upon Hull, City	10023489	ACORN TRAINING LTD	309	Children, Young People and Families Practitioner	Apprenticeship	4		Care Services
22/23	Apprenticeships	Kingston upon Hull, City	10023489	ACORN TRAINING LTD	309	Children, Young People and Families Practitioner	Apprenticeship	4		Care Services
22/23	Apprenticeships	Kingston upon Hull, City	10034423	ACTIV FIRST LIMITED	104	Operations or Departmental Manager	Apprenticeship	5		Business and Administration
22/23	Apprenticeships	Kingston upon Hull, City	10034423	ACTIV FIRST LIMITED	104	Operations or Departmental Manager	Apprenticeship	5		Business and Administration
22/23	Apprenticeships	Kingston upon Hull, City	10034423	ACTIV FIRST LIMITED	104	Operations or Departmental Manager	Apprenticeship	5		Business and Administration
22/23	Apprenticeships	East Riding of Yorkshire	10034423	ACTIV FIRST LIMITED	105	Team Leader or Supervisor	Apprenticeship	3		Business and Administration
22/23	Apprenticeships	Kingston upon Hull, City	10034423	ACTIV FIRST LIMITED	105	Team Leader or Supervisor	Apprenticeship	3		Business and Administration
22/23	Apprenticeships	East Riding of Yorkshire	10034423	ACTIV FIRST LIMITED	105	Team Leader or Supervisor	Apprenticeship	3		Business and Administration
22/23	Apprenticeships	Kingston upon Hull, City	10034423	ACTIV FIRST LIMITED	105	Team Leader or Supervisor	Apprenticeship	3		Business and Administration
22/23	Apprenticeships	East Riding of Yorkshire	10034423	ACTIV FIRST LIMITED	105	Team Leader or Supervisor	Apprenticeship	3		Business and Administration
22/23	Apprenticeships	East Riding of Yorkshire	10034423	ACTIV FIRST LIMITED	105	Team Leader or Supervisor	Apprenticeship	3		Business and Administration
22/23	Apprenticeships	East Riding of Yorkshire	10034423	ACTIV FIRST LIMITED	105	Team Leader or Supervisor	Apprenticeship	3		Business and Administration
22/23	Apprenticeships	East Riding of Yorkshire	10034423	ACTIV FIRST LIMITED	122	Customer Service Practitioner	Apprenticeship	2		Sales, Marketing and Procurement
22/23	Apprenticeships	East Riding of Yorkshire	10034423	ACTIV FIRST LIMITED	196	Business Administrator	Apprenticeship	3		Business and Administration
22/23	Apprenticeships	Kingston upon Hull, City	10034423	ACTIV FIRST LIMITED	215	Community Activator Coach	Apprenticeship	2		Health and Science
22/23	Apprenticeships	East Riding of Yorkshire	10034423	ACTIV FIRST LIMITED	215	Community Activator Coach	Apprenticeship	2		Health and Science
22/23	Apprenticeships	Kingston upon Hull, City	10034423	ACTIV FIRST LIMITED	215	Community Activator Coach	Apprenticeship	2		Health and Science
22/23	Apprenticeships	East Riding of Yorkshire	10034423	ACTIV FIRST LIMITED	215	Community Activator Coach	Apprenticeship	2		Health and Science
22/23	Apprenticeships	East Riding of Yorkshire	10034423	ACTIV FIRST LIMITED	215	Community Activator Coach	Apprenticeship	2		Health and Science
22/23	Apprenticeships	East Riding of Yorkshire	10034423	ACTIV FIRST LIMITED	215	Community Activator Coach	Apprenticeship	2		Health and Science
22/23	Apprenticeships	East Riding of Yorkshire	10034423	ACTIV FIRST LIMITED	215	Community Activator Coach	Apprenticeship	2		Health and Science
22/23	Apprenticeships	East Riding of Yorkshire	10034423	ACTIV FIRST LIMITED	228	Leisure Duty Manager	Apprenticeship	3		Business and Administration
22/23	Apprenticeships	East Riding of Yorkshire	10034423	ACTIV FIRST LIMITED	228	Leisure Duty Manager	Apprenticeship	3		Business and Administration
22/23	Apprenticeships	Kingston upon Hull, City	10034423	ACTIV FIRST LIMITED	321	Personal Trainer	Apprenticeship	3		Health and Science
22/23	Apprenticeships	Kingston upon Hull, City	10034423	ACTIV FIRST LIMITED	414	Leisure Team Member	Apprenticeship	2		Health and Science
22/23	Apprenticeships	East Riding of Yorkshire	10004927	ACTIVATE LEARNING	339	Bicycle Mechanic	Apprenticeship	2		Engineering and Manufacturing
22/23	Apprenticeships	East Riding of Yorkshire	10004399	ALTRAD BABCOCK LIMITED	487	Pipe Welder	Apprenticeship	3		Engineering and Manufacturing
22/23	Apprenticeships	East Riding of Yorkshire	10088633	ANGLO AMERICAN TECHNICAL & SUSTAINABILITY S	619	Cyber Security Technologist (2021)	Apprenticeship	4		Digital
22/23	Apprenticeships	East Riding of Yorkshire	10064562	APA PROCUREMENT TRAINING LIMITED	222	Commercial Procurement and Supply (Formerly Public Sector Commercial Professional)	Apprenticeship	4		Sales, Marketing and Procurement
22/23	Apprenticeships	East Riding of Yorkshire	10063272	APPRENTIFY LIMITED	142	IT Technical Salesperson	Apprenticeship	3		Sales, Marketing and Procurement
22/23	Apprenticeships	East Riding of Yorkshire	10063272	APPRENTIFY LIMITED	174	Content Creator	Apprenticeship	3		Creative and Design
22/23	Apprenticeships	Kingston upon Hull, City	10063272	APPRENTIFY LIMITED	349	Marketing Executive	Apprenticeship	4		Sales, Marketing and Procurement
22/23	Apprenticeships	Kingston upon Hull, City	10063272	APPRENTIFY LIMITED	369	Sales Executive	Apprenticeship	4		Sales, Marketing and Procurement
22/23	Apprenticeships	East Riding of Yorkshire	10063272	APPRENTIFY LIMITED	78	Digital Marketer	Apprenticeship	3		Sales, Marketing and Procurement
22/23	Apprenticeships	Kingston upon Hull, City	10063272	APPRENTIFY LIMITED	91	Software Tester	Apprenticeship	4		Digital
22/23	Apprenticeships	East Riding of Yorkshire	10063272	APPRENTIFY LIMITED	91	Software Tester	Apprenticeship	4		Digital
22/23	Apprenticeships	East Riding of Yorkshire	10005451	ARDEN UNIVERSITY LIMITED	236	Senior Leader	Apprenticeship	7		Business and Administration

No search function like this will give perfect results given the variability in learning aim titles. The learning aim search works best for apprenticeships and is less effective for young people's study programmes, which tend to have quite generic learning aim titles. In time we hope that qualifications reform will bring learning aim titles more in line with occupational standards, thus making the task of connecting learning aims to local skills plan priorities a little easier. Note that, in the linked example above, we have refined search terms to filter out provision that is irrelevant to an LSIP priority. For example, search terms for delivery related to care workers has been refined to exclude other 'care' programmes such as autocare, equine care, animal care and veterinary care.

Figure 3. Screen grab of the Post-16 Provision Search summary



Hull and East Yorkshire

Provision Summary

The summary table below shows the skill shortages identified in Hull and East Yorkshire, and the number of starts on courses identified as meeting those skill shortages.

Skill Shortage Ref	Skill Shortage	Level	Starts 16-18	Starts 19+	Starts Apps	Starts HE	Starts Total
1	Offshore project managers	3					**0**
1	Offshore project managers	6					**0**
2	Construction project managers	3					**0**
2	Construction project managers	6					**0**
3	Site managers and Civil eng site managers	4					**0**
3	Site managers and Civil eng site managers	6					**0**
4	Quantity surveyors	6			2		**2**
5	QS technician	4			1		**1**
6	Surveyors	6			13		**13**
7	Pipe fitters	3			4		**4**
8	Scaffolders,stagers, riggers	2			1		**1**
9	Welders (pipe welders and gen welders)	2			12		**12**
9	Welders (pipe welders and gen welders)	3		1	13		**14**
10	Groundworkers/labourers	2			14		**14**
11	Metal making and treating process ops	2		2			**2**
12	Metal plate workers/sheet metal	3		1	15		**16**
13	EV mechanics	3	12	18	80		**110**
14	Agri and fishing trades	2	26	21	48		**95**
15	Mental health nurses	6				150	**150**
16	Midwives	6				105	**105**

The model has been further developed so learning aim titles can be identified that relate to skills gaps highlighted by local skills plans (such as through Table 4). Here we have used 'fuzzy' search terms and have focused on certain types of provision which are more likely to be suitable for workforce development purposes (e.g. apprenticeships where the learner has been employed more than 12 months prior, and awards (short courses)).

IMPACT MEASURES (DESTINATIONS DATA)

This report has already highlighted some of the difficulties involved in making use of the patchy post-16 destinations data. We believe that reliable, consistent tracking of learners by occupation and sector would give providers, employers and those leading local skills plans greater insight into which provision is making inroads into local skills shortages.

Currently the 16-18 qualifications dashboard and FE outcomes dashboard (which also includes apprenticeships) show great promise. Both show destination data for learners completing individual learning aims, which is of critical importance to understanding the impact of delivery from different types of provision. But frustratingly, the two dashboards use different metrics. For example:

- Progression for learners to apprenticeships is reported for 19+ learners on the FE outcomes dashboard, but not for 16-18 learners for whom progression to apprenticeships is critical to securing career entry to many technical occupations.
- The employment sector of those entering work after completing their learning aim is recorded for 16-18 learners, but not for 19+ or apprenticeship completers.
- Earnings one year after completion is reported for 19+ and apprenticeship completers, but not for 16-18 learners completing programmes.

Furthermore, low sample sizes (some popular learning aims have matched records for only a few dozen learners nationwide) and the age of the data (the most recent relates to learners who completed in 2018/19) means that though this information is of interest, it is of limited use for local skills planning. To improve this data, challenges must be addressed, such as attrition rates when researchers track learner destinations and the difficulties capturing data on a large cohort of FE learners without the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) or other similar infrastructure in FE.

If learner destinations data are updated – preferably with alignment between 16-18 and 19+/apprenticeships tracking – then data on the impact of provision would certainly merit inclusion in the model local skills plan. In the meantime, only data on achievement rates – reported by learning aim and, in some cases, by provider – appears helpful as the evidential basis for work with employers and providers through the LSIP to improve programme completion rates, particularly in apprenticeships. This is summarised in the table below.

Table 11. Summary of available achievement rates and destination data

Data source	Metrics	Data quality RAG rating
National achievement rate tables – apprenticeships	Achievement rates by learning aim, provider, standard, learner characteristics (age, sex, learners with learning difficulties and disabilities (LLDD), ethnicity, etc.)	Well established, reliable data by provider.
National achievement rate tables – FE and skills	Achievement rates by learning aim, provider, standard, learner characteristics (age, sex, LLDD, ethnicity, etc.)	Well established, reliable data by provider.
16-18 qualifications dashboard	For each learning aim nationally, the proportion of learners completing who sustained: • employment only • employment and learning • learning only • HE • subject (those in sustained learning) • industry (employment only)	Most recent data relates to 2018/19 leavers. Low sample sizes are common. Data is available on a national basis, not by LSIP area or provider. Metrics are not consistent with 19+ and apprenticeships.

FE outcomes dashboard	For each learning aim nationally, the proportion of learners completing who after learning were: • employed • employed and learning • learning • on benefits • on an apprenticeship • in HE • in FE • self employed Median earnings of learners who moved into sustained employment.	Most recent data relates to 2018/19 leavers. Low sample sizes are common. Data is available on a national basis, not by LSIP area or provider. Metrics are not consistent with 16-18 dashboard.

FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

There are several emerging labour market intelligence tools and resources which, in time, will help build a stronger picture of current and emerging skills needs in sectors and across the whole labour market for local skills plans.

We consulted with ERBs and we also discussed ways to improve the labour market intelligence used in local skills plans with academics and researchers at a Gatsby roundtable on labour market data in late 2024. The summary of our findings, below, also highlights where new resources are in development or where existing resources might be improved:

- The use of a common language to convey information about skills needs. Existing strategies, plans and even ministerial speeches do not use the same terms to describe skills needs, for example they commonly confuse skills gaps and skills shortages. Also occupations, skills, tasks and so on are not described consistently. The development and implementation of a new skills taxonomy, like the UK Standard Skills Classification, (which is supported by Gatsby) would give employers, providers, ERBs/SAs, Skills England and others a shared language.

- Better information on the occupational mix of the workforce in industries, which could show, for example, how the occupational mix of priority sectors is evolving. ONS already publishes national data showing the distribution of occupations (SOC) across industries (SIC) but the sample sizes mean that information is suppressed for about half of all potential data points. There is potential for this data to be improved by using HMRC-collected data from employers, such as from company payroll systems. This could include SOCEx (six digit) occupation data, which would provide more clarity on the types of occupations in demand in an area, instead of the current four-digit SOC occupations that apply to multiple IfATE occupational standards.

- While web-scraped data can be used to gather insights into current employer demand, more detailed scraping can be used to spot trends in the specific skills being sought by employers as well as those appearing in candidate CVs (via CV libraries). IfATE's emerging Skills Compass, which uses AI tools to gather and then manage big data on the labour market, is one such tool that could assist with this. Analyses such as this can help on several fronts, such as assisting colleges and providers to adjust training content in line with new and emerging labour market demand, improving the specificity of LSIP priorities, as well as informing the content of IfATE occupational standards.

- Task-level analysis of key occupations with associated skill and knowledge requirements, so that occupations with similar skill sets might be more readily identified. This can help identify where the workers needed to address an emerging skills need might come from, so, in what occupations do people with skills relevant to a local skills need already work? It can also highlight opportunities for workers who may be facing redundancies by identifying occupations with similar skills into which they could be redeployed. The UK Standards Skills Classification has developed a total of 3,325 skills concepts by analysing tasks and sources, including existing job profiles and international taxonomies, which are then validated (supported by AI) against job advert content and data from CV libraries.

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