



Worcestershire's Local Skills Improvement Plan 2026 - 2029

Produced by



This Local Skills Improvement Plan has been approved by the Secretary of State in accordance with the requirements of section 1 of the Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022, and the relevant published statutory guidance.

Contents

	Executive summary	1
1	Introduction	1
2	Strategic and economic context.....	2
3	Local Skills Needs	9
4	Agreed changes/actions	15
	Health and Social Care	15
	Construction	17
	Manufacturing and engineering.....	18
	Everyday employability	20
	Business resilience	22
	Annex A: Skills needs.....	24
	Annex B: Agreed actions	53
	Annex C: Background and methodology	73

Executive summary

Worcestershire's Local Skills Improvement Plan Get In. Get On. is focused on a simple aim: ensuring people have the skills they need to get into work and progress their careers. To achieve this, the plan focuses on two main areas:

- **Supporting people to get into work:** focusing on those entering employment for the first time, including young people and those furthest from the labour market. Employers have been clear about the technical skills and workplace behaviours they expect from new entrants, and the LSIP sets out how providers and system partners will work together to meet these expectations. This is primarily delivered through education and training providers, working closely with employers to ensure pathways reflect real workplace needs.
- **Supporting people to get on at work:** focusing on those already in employment, helping them to progress, upskill and reskill. The emphasis is on employer-led training, reflecting feedback from businesses on the importance of in-work development, supervisory capability, and accessible progression routes. Where training is delivered in-house, employers may need support to build their own capability (e.g. through “train the trainer” approaches) to effectively develop their workforce.

Responding to local need

The priorities reflect the insight of hundreds of employers, local providers and partners, alongside detailed analysis of Worcestershire's labour market. Our activity is focused on:

Priority sectors:

Strengthening pipelines in the county's three largest employing sectors - Health & Social Care, Construction and Manufacturing - where employers report the most significant recruitment and progression challenges and where skills shortages present risks to local economic growth.

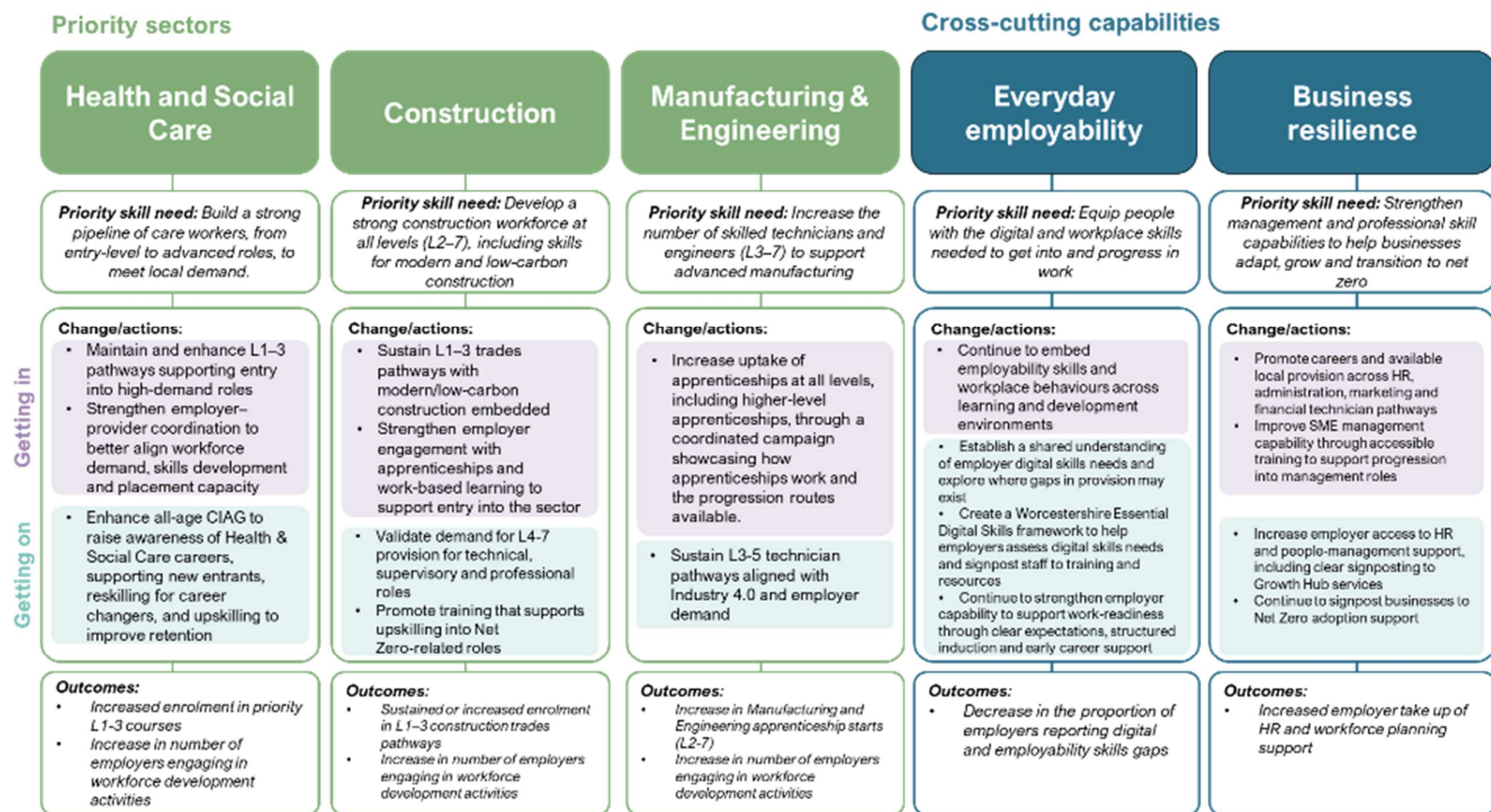
Cross-cutting skills priorities that underpin success in every sector:

Digital and employability skills: responding to employers' consistent messages about gaps in digital confidence and workplace readiness. The focus is on the core capabilities employers expect people to demonstrate when entering work and progressing in their roles.

Business skills and Net Zero readiness: supporting employers to build the management skills essential for productivity, workforce planning and future readiness.

What will be different

By strengthening pathways into work, supporting progression in priority sectors, embedding the capabilities employers consistently emphasise, and ensuring training is shaped by employer need, the LSIP will help more residents access good jobs and enable businesses to meet their future workforce demands. Together, these changes will help more residents access good jobs, support progression into higher-skilled roles, and ensure Worcestershire's businesses have the workforce they need to thrive.



1 Introduction

Worcestershire's Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) 2026–2029 provides a clear, employer-led assessment of the county's current and future skills needs and the actions required to address them. Developed in line with statutory guidance issued by the Department for Education and Skills England, the LSIP focuses on the technical skills, capabilities and progression pathways that are most critical to supporting Worcestershire's economic growth over the next three years.

The LSIP is intended for employers, further and higher education providers, independent training providers, Worcestershire County Council, and wider partners involved in shaping post-16 technical education, workforce development and employment support. For employers, it sets out the skills they have identified as essential for recruiting and developing their workforce. For providers, it offers a focused, evidence-based framework to inform curriculum planning and investment decisions. For system partners, it supports alignment between skills, economic development, employment and inclusion strategies.

This LSIP builds on the progress made during the previous cycle, where Worcestershire partners strengthened employer engagement, improved their shared understanding of labour market pressures, and introduced tools such as *Think Skills Worcestershire* to increase awareness of the local training offer and demonstrate demand for digital and professional skills provision. These foundations provide a strong starting point.

However, employers have been clear that more targeted action is needed to address persistent gaps in technical skills, digital and employability skills, and management capability. This refresh responds directly to those messages and aligns with updated statutory expectations, with a sharper focus on priority occupations, technical pathways, and the system-level changes that will deliver the greatest impact.

A shared framework for delivery

Above all, the LSIP is a shared endeavour. It reflects the commitment of hundreds of employers and partners who have contributed evidence, insight and challenge throughout its development. The actions and outcomes set out in this plan will only be delivered through continued collective effort and a shared belief that investing in Worcestershire's people is fundamental to the county's long-term economic strength.

The LSIP is a live document, evolving as Worcestershire's economy changes through technological shifts, demographic trends, new investment and national policy developments. As employer needs change and new opportunities emerge, the plan will be updated and refined to remain responsive, aligned with Skills England's priorities, and focused on strengthening the county's long-term economic resilience.

Taken together, this LSIP provides a clear, employer-endorsed and evidence-driven framework for skills development across Worcestershire, ensuring the workforce is equipped for today's jobs and prepared for the opportunities of the future.

2 Strategic and economic context

An evolving governance and strategic context

Worcestershire is currently progressing Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), which will replace the existing two-tier system of a County Council and six District Councils with unitary authority arrangements by April 2028. Two proposals are under consideration: a single county-wide unitary authority (“One Worcestershire”) and a two-unitary model covering North and South Worcestershire. Both proposals would replace existing arrangements and would change how strategic functions related to economic development and skills governance are organised locally. The LSIP is therefore designed to remain robust across governance scenarios, providing a county-wide, employer-led framework that supports continuity through transition, while remaining adaptable to new governance structures once confirmed.

Alongside changes to governance, the local delivery and funding landscape is also evolving, shaping the context within which skills priorities can be taken forward. The conclusion of UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) activity, reductions in the Adult Skills Budget and the absence of a devolved single settlement limit the scope for locally commissioned and highly responsive skills provision. As a result, local partners have fewer discretionary levers available to respond to identified skills needs. This reinforces the importance of a focused and pragmatic LSIP, prioritising actions that can have the greatest impact and that are within the influence of local employers, providers and partners.

Within this governance and delivery context, the LSIP has been developed to align with and support delivery of key local strategies and national priorities. The county-wide strategies set out below provide the wider economic, employment and health context within which skills priorities have been identified, and highlight where skills act as a critical enabler of growth, inclusion and productivity across Worcestershire.

Table 1. Summary of local strategies and LSIP alignment

Strategy	Aims	LSIP Alignment
Worcestershire’s Plan for Growth	Sets the priority sectors for Worcestershire, including cornerstone sectors (business administration and professional services, construction, and health and care) and opportunity sectors with potential for high growth (Advanced Manufacturing, Cyber Security, IT and Defence and Horti/Agri tech).	Shapes skills priorities around both priority sector verticals and cross-cutting skills needs, supporting productivity, digital adoption and the development of talent pipelines required to deliver housing, infrastructure and wider growth ambitions.

	Identifies strategic objectives around productivity, innovation, digital adoption and infrastructure delivery.	
Get Worcestershire Working Plan	Focuses on reducing economic inactivity, supporting youth transitions and reducing NEET levels, alongside improved coordination across employment, health and skills services.	Aligns actions around a Getting In and Getting On framework, supporting targeted entry routes for young people and inactive groups, alongside clearer progression and upskilling pathways for adult cohorts already in work.
Work and Health Strategy	Positions health as a core economic issue, recognising its impact on labour supply and workforce sustainability, particularly in sectors experiencing workforce fragility.	Reinforces inclusive, employer-led progression pathways that support participation, retention and workforce sustainability across priority sectors.

Worcestershire's economy and sector structure

Worcestershire has a diverse economy, with limited structural change between the 2023–2026 and 2026–2029 LSIP periods. Total economic output has continued to increase, with GVA growing from £15.24bn in 2021 to £16.1bn in 2023, equivalent to average annual growth of around 3%.

The county continues to be characterised by a strong manufacturing base, alongside significant contributions from health and social care, wholesale and retail, construction, and professional and business services. This mix reflects a balance between foundational sectors that support large volumes of employment and activity, and more specialist areas that contribute to productivity, innovation and export activity.

The following graphics summarises the scale, concentration and relative importance of key sectors in Worcestershire, highlighting where the county demonstrates particular strength or strategic alignment.

Health and Care				
				
Employs 36,000	Business 980	GVA £1.55bn	LQ 0.95	GI score 2.0

Health and Care is the largest employing sector across Worcestershire, making up 14% of total employment and one of the biggest contributors to the economy at 10% of total GVA. Almost a quarter of the population are aged 65 and over, driving the need for social care and health professionals. Caring roles already are among the roles with highest number of vacancies with demand set to continue as the population continues to age and more people are living with multiple and complex health conditions.¹

Manufacturing				
				
Employs 28,500	Business 1,625	GVA £2.34bn	LQ 1.44	GI score 0.0
Manufacturing remains a cornerstone of the local economy, accounting for 15% of GVA and 11% of employment. Advanced manufacturing is identified in the Plan for Growth as a key opportunity sector, with local employment (4%) exceeding both regional (3.5%) and national (2.2%) levels. Both manufacturing and advanced manufacturing demonstrate a clear local specialism, underlining the sector's competitive strength.				

Construction				
				
Employs 10,500	Business 3,670	GVA £1.11bn	LQ 0.95	GI score 0.5
Construction accounts for 14% of all businesses (the second largest sector by business base) and provides a stable foundation for the local economy, contributing 7% of GVA and 5% of employment. Recognised within the IS-8 (+2) framework, the sector plays a critical role in delivering the essential infrastructure for growth and the clean energy transition, as well as national house building targets.				

¹ Location Quotients (LQ) demonstrate the relative concentration of employment and businesses compared to the national average. A score of 1 indicates concentration equal to the national average, with 1.25 indicating a significant specialism.

The Growth Index (GI) is a bespoke Metro Dynamics measure of sector change from 2018 to 2023, aggregating five-year trends in employment, business counts, GVA, productivity and concentration (LQ), with additional weighting where growth exceeds the GB average to demonstrate relative growth across metrics.

Professional Business Services				
				
Employs 28,960	Business 5,580	GVA £1.53bn	LQ 0.89	GI score 0.0
Worcestershire is home to a wide range of financial, business and professional service firms, spanning accountancy, insurance, legal services, management consultancy, recruitment and business support activities. While the sector is broad and varied locally, it represents a smaller share of employment and GVA than seen nationally, reflecting a lower level of sector concentration. Nonetheless, it remains an important part of the county's economy, accounting for over a fifth of all businesses and 11% of total GVA.				

Cyber Security and IT				
				
Employs 7,000	Business 1,415	GVA £0.53bn	LQ 0.69	GI score -0.5
The IT sector is a relatively small contributor to Worcestershire's economy, accounting for around 3% of employment and showing lower levels of business concentration compared to national averages. This explains its lower location quotient locally. However, digital capability will become increasingly important as a cross-cutting enabler, particularly with the continued emergence of AI and automation technologies.				

Sources: ONS Business Register and Employment Survey (2025); ONS UK Business Counts (2025); ONS Regional Gross Added Value (balanced) by industry (2025)

As evidenced in Table 2, Worcestershire also shows clear alignment with the Industrial Strategy growth sectors (IS-8), most notably advanced manufacturing, where the county demonstrates a high level of specialisation relative to the national average, underlining its structural importance to the local economy. Other IS-8 sectors, including life sciences and clean energy, contribute at a smaller scale but provide an important platform to support national ambitions around innovation, health and the transition to net zero. In parallel, professional and business services and digital and technologies play a critical enabling role across the local economy, underpinning productivity, innovation and delivery across both Industrial Strategy and foundational sectors through management, professional, digital and technical capability embedded across supply chains.

Table 2. Volume and specialism of IS-8 sectors in Worcestershire

Sector	Employment (2024)	Businesses (2024)	LQ ² (2024)
Advanced Manufacturing	11,000 (4.2%)	375 (1.4%)	1.94
Life Sciences	1,125 (0.4%)	30 (0.1%)	1.22
Professional and Business Services	29,000 (11.0%)	5,440 (20.9%)	0.78
Digital and Technologies	13,500 (5.1%)	2,220 (8.5%)	0.73
Creative Industries	7,500 (2.9%)	1,990 (7.7%)	0.61
Financial Services	3,750 (1.4%)	475 (1.8%)	0.43
Defence	5 (0.0%)	5 (0.0%)	0.03
Clean Energy Industries	15,364 (5.9%)	830 (3.2%)	

Source: ONS Business Register and Employment Survey (2025); ONS Business Counts (2025)

Notes: Sector definitions from the Industrial Strategy Sector Definitions List. DBT do not provide a definition for clean energy. We have used estimates produced by Midlands Net Zero Hub for the Clean Energy Industries. As these are regional estimates which use a methodology produced by kMatrix, we cannot calculate an LQ comparing to national figures.

Business base and employer operating environment

Worcestershire's economy is characterised by a high concentration of small and micro-businesses, with around 98% of firms employing fewer than 50 people. While business density remains high compared to national averages, the local business base has contracted sharply since 2022, at a faster rate than seen nationally or regionally, with business numbers falling by 9.5% between 2022 and 2025, compared to 1.2% nationally and 2.4% regionally.

Engagement with employers highlights that many businesses are operating in an uncertain environment, facing rising costs, limited capacity and constrained investment horizons. These pressures disproportionately affect SMEs and have a direct bearing on skills demand, employer engagement with training and the prevalence of short-term, reactive workforce planning. This context is critical for the LSIP, reinforcing the need for employer-led, flexible and accessible approaches to skills delivery that reflect limited business capacity.

Labour market dynamics

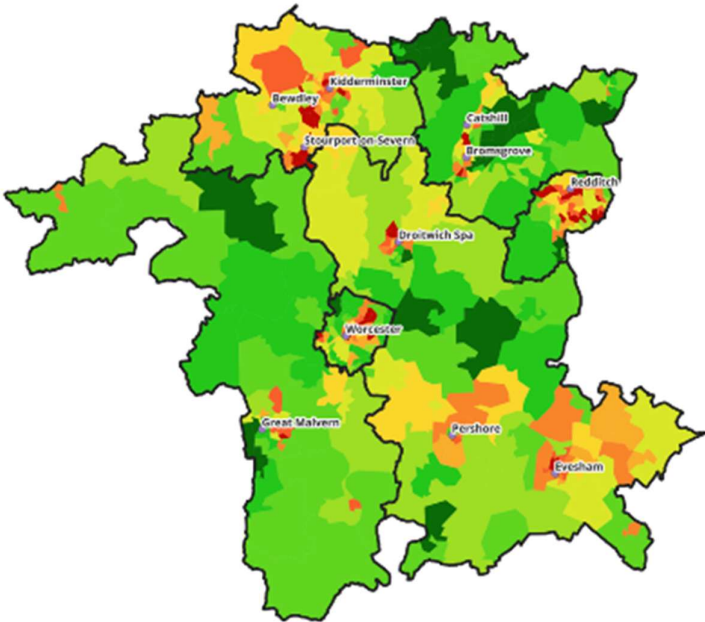
Overall, Worcestershire has a well-qualified workforce, providing a strong foundation for productivity and progression across the local economy. 46% of working-age residents are qualified to degree level or above (RQF4+), above the West Midlands average (43%) and broadly in line with the national picture (47%), alongside a lower-than-average share with no qualifications (6%). This qualification profile is reflected in the county's occupational structure, with a higher-than-average share of employment in managerial, professional and associate professional roles (56%), alongside a strong presence in skilled trades and

² Location Quotients (LQs) help to proxy how specialised a sector is compared to nationally by comparing the proportion of employment the sector makes up of the total economy compared to nationally. An LQ of 1 means that the sector makes up the same proportion of employment compared to nationally. An LQ of 1.25 or above signifies the sector makes a larger contribution locally, and therefore displays a relative specialism.

administrative occupations aligned to our strong manufacturing, construction and business services base.

However, headline attainment masks significant spatial variation across the county. The *Education, Skills and Training* domain of the 2025 Index of Multiple Deprivation highlights pockets of disadvantage, with 28% of neighbourhoods in Worcestershire falling within the 30% most deprived nationally for education, skills and training. This reflects persistent barriers to attainment, progression and participation in specific communities, reinforcing the importance of targeted, place-based approaches alongside county-wide skills priorities.

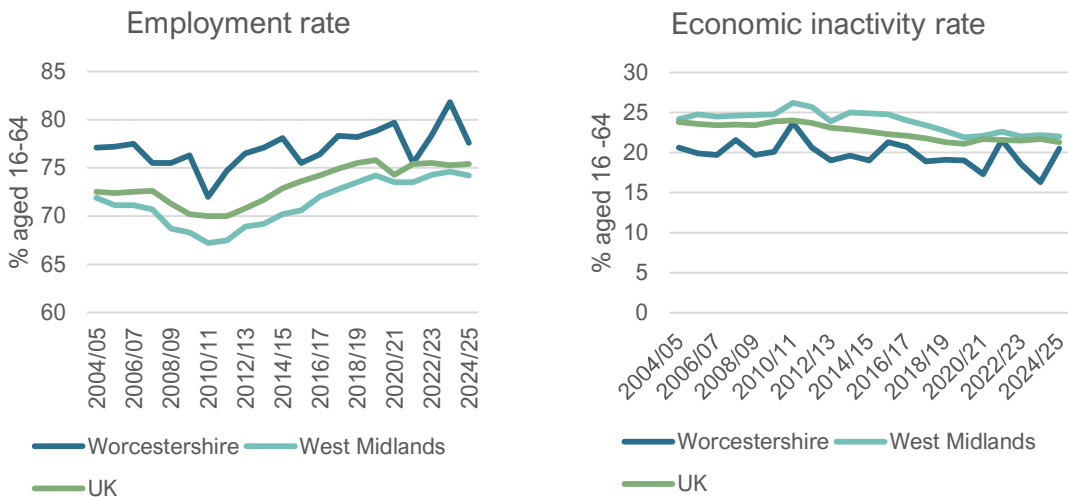
Figure 2. Education, Skills & Training Index of Multiple Deprivation domain (2025)



Source: MHCLG English indices of deprivation 2025

Worcestershire has historically maintained a high employment rate, consistently above regional and national comparators, but recent easing and rising inactivity (See Figure 2) point to an increasingly tight labour market.

Figure 2. Employment rate and economic inactivity rate over time 2004/05 – 2024/25



Source: ONS Annual Population Survey (2025)

Total employment levels have been trending downward since 2017, and jobs density has fallen in recent years, indicating fewer jobs per working-age resident than previously.

Economic inactivity, while historically low compared to regional and national benchmarks, has risen sharply in the most recent period, alongside an increase in the number of 16-17 years olds Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET).

Apprenticeships play a central role in responding to these conditions. Apprenticeship achievements in Worcestershire increased from 1,640 in 2019/20 to 1,980 in 2023/24, equivalent to average growth of around 5% per year, while the achievement rate rose from 459 to 539 per 100,000 population, remaining above both regional and national benchmarks. Over the same period, apprenticeship participation increased more modestly, from 2,059 to 2,141 learners, remaining broadly in line with regional and national rates.

Apprenticeships play a central role in Worcestershire's labour market, supporting entry into employment, progression in work and the development of higher-level occupational pathways. Apprenticeship achievement rates in Worcestershire are strong relative to regional and national averages, with achievement per 100,000 population exceeding both benchmarks. Achievements have increased steadily since 2019/20, reflecting a recovery following the pandemic and sustained employer engagement with apprenticeship delivery. This pattern indicates that strong performance has been driven less by expansion in participation and more by changes in the composition of delivery. Growth has been concentrated in advanced and higher-level apprenticeships, while intermediate-level achievements have declined in line with national trends. This suggests a structural shift in how employers are using apprenticeships, increasingly as a mechanism to upskill and progress existing employees, build higher-level capability and support productivity, rather than as an entry-level recruitment route alone.

Together, these labour market dynamics require a dual focus: targeted Getting In activity to support entry where participation is weakest, and a strong emphasis on Getting On to enable progression, upskilling and productivity within an increasingly constrained workforce.

3 Local Skills Needs

This section sets out Worcestershire's current and future skills needs and explains how priority areas for action have been identified. It draws on a combination of labour market evidence, strategic economic documents (per the previous section), and direct engagement with employers, providers and stakeholders.

In line with statutory guidance, the LSIP focuses on those skills needs that are most critical to the local economy and where coordinated action across the skills system can have the greatest impact. It reflects both sector-specific requirements and the cross-cutting capabilities that underpin workforce entry, progression and productivity.

How priorities have been identified

The LSIP priorities have been developed through a structured process, bringing together strategic documentation, data analysis and employer insight to move from a broad set of potential priorities to a focused and deliverable framework.

The starting point for the analysis was Worcestershire's existing strategic priorities:

- Cornerstone sectors: including Health and Care, Construction, and Business and Professional Services, and
- Opportunity sectors: such as Advanced Manufacturing, Cyber Security and IT, and Agri-tech.
- Economic objectives relating to productivity, digital adoption, infrastructure and inclusion.

These local priorities are set in the context of national priorities, including the Industrial Strategy and the transition to Net Zero, which were also considered to ensure alignment with wider policy direction and future workforce demand. This provided a broad set of sectors and capabilities that are important to Worcestershire's economy and could form the basis for LSIP prioritisation.

Applying a consistent evidence base

A structured evidence base was developed to assess the relative importance and skills challenges of these sectors. This included analysis of employment, business base and GVA; sector specialisation and competitive strength; growth trends and future demand signals; occupational demand and vacancy pressures; and skills gaps identified through national and regional research.

This analysis enabled a consistent comparison across sectors, highlighting where Worcestershire demonstrates scale, specialism or growth potential, and where skills pressures are most acute. Alongside sector analysis, wider labour market evidence was used to understand workforce characteristics, participation, progression and the balance between entry-level and higher-level skills demand. This evidence was complemented by wider desk research and engagement with employers and stakeholders, including workshops, one-to-one discussions and ongoing LSIP Board input.

Figure 3 below is an extract from the evidence base, providing a high-level overview of Worcestershire's key sectors, bringing together data on employment, business base, GVA, sector rankings and growth dynamics, alongside a short narrative on their economic role and potential. It establishes a consistent base to highlight where the county demonstrates scale, specialism and growth strength, and to inform decisions on priority sectors for the LSIP.

Figure 3. Worcestershire Priority Sector Summaries

Health & Care				Professional Business Services				Construction				Manufacturing				Cyber Security and IT				Agri/Horti tech			
																							
Employs 36,000	Business 980	GVA £1.55bn		Employs 28,960	Business 5,580	GVA £1.53bn		Employs 10,500	Business 3,670	GVA £1.11bn		Employs 28,500	Business 1,625	GVA £2.34bn		Employs 7,000	Business 1,415	GVA £0.53bn		Employs 2,750	Business 1,600	GVA £0.17bn	
The largest employing sector across Worcestershire, making up 14% of total employment and one of the biggest contributors to the economy, making up 10% of total GVA. Almost a quarter of the population are aged 65 and over, driving the need for social care and health professionals. Caring roles already are among the roles with highest number of vacancies with demand set to continue as the population continues to age and more people are living with multiple and complex health conditions				Worcestershire is home to a wide range of financial, business and professional service firms, spanning accountancy, insurance, legal services, management consultancy, recruitment and business support activities. While the sector is broad and varied locally, it represents a smaller share of employment and GVA than seen nationally, reflecting a lower level of sector concentration. Nonetheless, it remains an important part of the county's economy, accounting for over a fifth of all businesses and 11% of total GVA.				Construction accounts for 14% of all businesses (the second largest sector by business base) and provides a stable foundation for the local economy, contributing 7% of GVA and 5% of employment. Recognised within the IS-8(+2) framework, the sector plays a critical role in delivering local growth priorities, including Wychavon New Town, while also supporting national housebuilding targets and the infrastructure required for clean energy transition.				Manufacturing remains a cornerstone of the local economy, accounting for 15% of GVA and 11% of employment. Advanced manufacturing is identified in the Plan for Growth as a key opportunity sector, with local employment (4%) exceeding both regional (3.5%) and national (2.2%) levels. Both manufacturing and advanced manufacturing demonstrate a clear local specialism, underlining the sector's competitive strength.				The IT sector is a relatively small contributor to Worcestershire's economy, accounting for around 3% of employment and showing lower levels of business concentration compared to national averages. This explains its lower location quotient locally. However, digital capability will become increasingly important as a cross-cutting enabler, particularly with the continued emergence of AI and automation technologies.				Agriculture is used as a proxy for the scale of Agri-Tech in Worcestershire. It represents the county's strongest sector specialism, with employment around 1.5 times more concentrated than nationally. Whilst in absolute terms the sector is relatively small, its local strengths remains important, particularly where they intersect with adjacent sectors such as advanced manufacturing.			
Volume: 1 st (out of 18)	Value: 4 th (out of 16)	LQ	Growth	Volume: 2 nd (out of 19)	Value: 5 th (out of 17)	LQ	Growth	Volume: 11 th (out of 18)	Value: 6 th (out of 16)	LQ	Growth	Volume: 2 nd (out of 18)	Value: 2 nd (out of 16)	LQ	Growth	Volume: 13 th (out of 18)	Value: 11 th (out of 16)	LQ	Growth	Volume: 17 th (out of 18)	Value: 16 th (out of 18)	LQ	Growth

Sources: Sources: ONS Business Register and Employment Survey (2025); ONS UK Business Counts (2025); ONS Regional Gross Added Value (balanced) by industry (2025)

Overview of skills challenges

Worcestershire benefits from a relatively well-qualified workforce and historically high employment rates. However, recent trends point to increasing labour market pressure, including rising economic inactivity, declining employment levels and job density, increasing demand for higher-level skills, and a shift towards progression and upskilling within the existing workforce.

The local economy is also characterised by a high proportion of small and micro businesses. This shapes employer behaviour, with many businesses operating with limited capacity to engage in training and workforce planning, and often focusing on short-term recruitment needs rather than longer-term skills development. This reinforces the need for a skills system that is flexible, employer-led and focused on both entry into work and progression within it.

Across Worcestershire's economy, a consistent set of skills challenges is evident. These reflect both structural labour market conditions and the evolving needs of employers as technologies, business models and workforce expectations change.

Employers highlighted persistent recruitment challenges in key sectors, gaps in digital capability and workplace readiness, the importance of leadership, management and workforce planning, and the need for more accessible and flexible training routes. These insights provided critical context to the data, helping to validate where skills gaps are most significant and where they are having the greatest impact on business performance and growth.

Cross-cutting skills gaps

Employer engagement highlights a consistent set of cross-cutting skills gaps across sectors. Digital capability is increasingly seen as a fundamental requirement across the workforce, with employers reporting gaps ranging from basic digital confidence and use of workplace systems through to more advanced capabilities linked to automation, data and cyber security. Digital skills are no longer confined to specialist roles but are embedded across a wide range of occupations.

Employers also continue to report gaps in employability and workplace behaviours, particularly among those entering the workforce. These include communication, teamwork, problem-solving and adaptability. Practical exposure to the workplace is seen as critical in developing these behaviours and ensuring individuals are work-ready.

Leadership and management capability is also a consistent area of concern. Employers highlight gaps in people management, supervisory capability and workforce planning. Weak management capacity can impact productivity, staff retention and the effective use of skills within businesses, making this a key priority for both business performance and workforce development.

Future and emerging skills needs

Looking ahead, employers anticipate growing demand for skills linked to AI, automation and digital transformation, as well as increasing importance of Net Zero and sustainability, particularly in sectors such as Construction and Manufacturing. There is also a continued

shift towards higher-level technical and professional roles, alongside the need for adaptable, transferable skills that enable individuals to respond to change.

These trends point to an increasing need for a workforce that combines technical expertise with strong core capabilities and the ability to adapt to new technologies and ways of working.

Prioritisation and refinement

The LSIP Board used this combined evidence base to prioritise those areas where skills needs are most significant in scale or impact, where sectors are critical to Worcestershire's economy and future growth, where there is a clear role for local partners to influence change, and where action is likely to deliver measurable outcomes over the next three years.

This process resulted in a focused set of priority sectors and cross-cutting capability areas, moving from a broad set of potential priorities to a clear and deliverable framework.

Three sectors have been identified as priorities for the LSIP: Health and Social Care, Construction, and Manufacturing and Engineering. These sectors represent a significant share of employment and economic activity, face persistent and well-evidenced skills shortages, and are critical to Worcestershire's economic resilience and future growth.

- **Health and Social Care** is the largest employing sector in Worcestershire and plays a critical role in supporting both economic activity and population wellbeing. Demand for services is expected to continue rising, driven by an ageing population and increasing complexity of care needs. Employers report significant challenges in recruiting and retaining staff, particularly in social care roles, alongside gaps in digital capability. The key skills challenge is to build and sustain a strong workforce pipeline, from entry-level roles through to more advanced and specialist positions, while improving retention and progression within the sector.
- **Construction** is a key enabling sector, supporting housing delivery, infrastructure development and the transition to Net Zero. It has a large business base and plays a central role in delivering local and national growth priorities. Employers report ongoing shortages across construction trades, alongside growing demand for site management and technical roles, and increasing requirements for skills linked to modern methods of construction and low-carbon technologies. The key skills challenge is to develop a workforce at all levels, combining traditional trade skills with emerging technical and sustainability-related capabilities.
- **Manufacturing and Engineering** is a cornerstone of Worcestershire's economy, with strong levels of specialisation and a significant contribution to GVA. Advanced manufacturing presents a key opportunity for productivity growth, driven by innovation and the adoption of new technologies. Employers report skills gaps in engineering roles, including mechanical, electrical and maintenance engineering, as well as challenges in recruiting skilled technicians. There is also increasing demand for skills linked to automation, digital systems and Industry 4.0. The key skills challenge is to increase the supply of skilled technicians and engineers, while supporting the adoption of new technologies and higher-level skills within the existing workforce.

Alongside sector-specific needs, two cross-cutting capability areas have been identified as priorities across the Worcestershire economy.

- **Digital and employability skills** underpin both entry into work and progression within it. Employers consistently emphasise the importance of individuals being able to demonstrate core workplace behaviours alongside the ability to use digital tools effectively. These capabilities are relevant across all sectors and occupations and are critical to improving workforce readiness, productivity and adaptability.
- **Business capability and Net Zero readiness** are also central to future workforce development. Strengthening leadership, management and workforce planning capability enables firms to grow, adapt and invest in their workforce. There is also growing recognition of the need to build skills related to Net Zero and sustainability, particularly in sectors where regulatory and market pressures are increasing. These capabilities are essential to improving business resilience and aligning skills development with future economic and environmental priorities.

Summary of priorities

Taken together, this analysis identifies a focused set of priorities for the Worcestershire LSIP: three priority sectors: Health and Social Care, Construction, and Manufacturing and Engineering, and two cross-cutting capability areas: digital and employability skills, and business capability and Net Zero readiness.

These priorities reflect where skills needs are most acute, where they have the greatest impact on the local economy, and where coordinated action across employers, providers and partners can deliver meaningful change. Crucially, the analysis also highlights that these skills needs are not uniform in nature, and require different types of response from the local skills system.

A consistent theme emerging from both the evidence and employer engagement is the distinction between skills needed to support entry into work, and those needed to support progression within it.

For those entering employment for the first time, including young people and those furthest from the labour market, the priority is to ensure individuals develop the technical skills, digital capability and workplace behaviours required by employers. In these cases, the primary locus of change sits within the education and training system, with providers working closely with employers to shape pathways and learning environments that reflect real workplace needs.

For those already in work, the challenge is to support progression, upskilling and reskilling within the existing workforce. Employers consistently highlight the importance of in-work development, supervisory capability and workforce planning, particularly in response to technological change, productivity pressures and the transition to Net Zero. Here, the primary locus of change sits with employers, supported by providers and system partners, to strengthen workforce capability and enable progression into higher-skilled roles.

This distinction provides a clear framework for coordinated action, focusing effort on the points in the system where intervention can have the greatest impact: supporting people to

get into work, and supporting people to get on at work. It enables partners to align activity around clearly defined roles and responsibilities, ensuring that interventions are targeted, practical and deliverable.

The following section sets out the changes and actions required to address these priorities, structured around this 'Getting in' and 'Getting on' framework.

4 Agreed changes/actions

This chapter sets out the strategic changes and actions required to strengthen Worcestershire's skills system over the 2026–2029 period. These actions flow directly from the priority skills needs identified through employer provider insight and labour market evidence. They describe the system-level shifts partners need to make in order to improve pathways, address skills gaps and support workforce progression across the county.

For each priority skills need, we provide a short rationale, outline the high-level strategic actions required, and highlight any cohort-specific considerations. These actions are intentionally high-level: they describe *what needs to change*, rather than prescribing *how* change will be delivered.

The detailed activities that will bring these actions to life - such as employer engagement approaches, targeted learner outreach and promotion of provision - are set out in Annex B. Alongside the actions, we also include a small number of high-level outcomes that provide a clear sense of the progress we expect to see over the LSIP period. These outcomes do not capture everything that will be delivered; instead, they offer a direction of travel and signal the types of system-level improvements that will demonstrate progress against the identified skills needs. More detailed indicators, measures and milestones are also included in Annex B, which will act as a live performance framework over the LSIP period.

Health and Social Care

Priority skills need: Ensure a pipeline of skilled workers, from entry-level to advance practice, to meet local care demand(s).

As set out in Chapter 3, demand for health and social care workers in Worcestershire is rising, with persistent recruitment and retention pressures, particularly within adult social care. Provision is well-established locally, but sustaining and expanding delivery is increasingly dependent on system-level factors, including placement capacity, employer engagement and clear progression pathways.

Getting in

The adult social care workforce in Worcestershire is ageing, with relatively low participation from younger people, presenting challenges for maintaining a sustainable pipeline of new entrants. Entry-level roles, particularly at Levels 1–3, therefore remain critical to meeting workforce needs.

Evidence from engagement indicates that alongside qualifications, values, behaviours and aptitude for caring roles are important for entry into patient-facing work. However, awareness of the full range of careers and training routes within Health and Social Care is poorly understood, both among learners and employers. Entry-level roles are more visible than the wider career trajectory, and understanding of vocational routes - including T Levels, apprenticeships and other technical qualifications - is variable.

While local provision at Levels 1–3 is strong, providers consistently report that the availability of high-quality placements is a critical dependency in sustaining and expanding provision locally. Placement capacity may constrain future learner numbers, the viability of T Levels and V levels, and the ability to grow entry routes in line with demand.

Change/actions:

- Maintain and enhance L1–3 pathways supporting entry into high-demand roles
- Strengthen employer–provider coordination to better align workforce demand, skills development and placement capacity

Getting on

Alongside recruitment, retention and progression within the sector remain ongoing challenges. While direct care roles account for a large share of employment, there is increasing demand for senior care workers, managers and regulated health and care professionals.

Strengthening clear progression pathways into senior, supervisory and nursing roles is therefore increasingly important, both to support workforce retention and to build capacity within the sector. Engagement highlights that progression routes are not always visible or well understood and that employer awareness of available training pathways beyond entry-level is inconsistent.

Although Level 4–5 provision is growing locally, progression is constrained by employer capacity to release staff, limited placement availability for advanced roles, and variable engagement in shaping provision. Without clearer, locally anchored progression routes, Worcestershire risks continued churn and pressure across the workforce.

Change/actions:

- Enhance all-age CIAG to raise awareness of Health & Social Care careers, supporting new entrants, reskilling for career changers, and upskilling to improve retention

Outcomes

- Increased enrolment in priority L1-3 courses
- Increase in number of employers engaging in workforce development activities

Construction

Priority skills need: Develop a strong L2-7 construction workforce pipeline, including skills for modern and low-carbon construction.

Construction is critical to Worcestershire's housing delivery, infrastructure investment and Net Zero ambitions. Entry-level provision is well established locally and has been strengthened through recent capital investment in specialist facilities. However, employers report that workforce renewal and progression are increasingly constrained by practical barriers to entry, uneven engagement with training routes, and limited progression into supervisory and management roles.

Getting in

Entry-level routes at Levels 1–3 are critical to sustaining the construction workforce in Worcestershire. There is strong provision at these levels, supported by recent capital investment in specialist facilities, including the Green Technologies Centre at Kidderminster College, funded in part through the Local Skills Improvement Fund, which has strengthened local capacity for modern and green construction skills.

However, stakeholder engagement suggests that the extent to which employers are able and willing to engage with entry-level routes at scale remains a barrier to securing a sustainable pipeline of new entrants. A key constraint is access and location: construction roles are often site-based and dispersed across rural or semi-rural areas, requiring independent travel. This limits participation for some young people and career-changers and narrows the pool of potential entrants. Stakeholders also report uneven employer engagement with apprenticeships and placements, particularly among smaller firms managing cost pressures, supervision requirements and continuity of work.

Change/action:

- Sustain L1–3 trades pathways with modern/low-carbon construction embedded
- Strengthen employer engagement with apprenticeships and work-based learning to support entry into the sector

Getting on

While Level 3 and Level 4+ provision exists, stakeholder engagement highlights low awareness among employers and residents of progression routes within construction, particularly from trade roles into supervisory, site management and project management positions. As a result, progression is often informal or reactive rather than supported through structured training.

Progression is further constrained by low employer take-up of higher-level training, driven by funding limitations, limited release for study and weak incentives to invest in upskilling. These challenges are exacerbated by short-term project cycles, tight margins and a mobile workforce, which reduce the perceived return on investment in higher-level training. At the same time, employers consistently report gaps in supervisory, site management and project

management capability, alongside rising skills requirements linked to regulatory change, including the Building Safety Act and modern methods of construction.

Change/action:

- Validate demand for L4-7 provision for technical, supervisory and professional roles
- Promote training that supports upskilling into Net Zero-related roles

Outcomes:

- Sustained or increased enrolment in L1–3 construction trades pathways
- Increase in number of employers engaging in workforce development activities

Manufacturing and engineering

Priority skills need: Increase the number of skilled technicians and engineers (Level 3-7) to support advanced manufacturing

Manufacturing remains a cornerstone of Worcestershire's economy, accounting for a significant share of employment and GVA and demonstrating a clear local specialism, particularly in advanced manufacturing. While provision exists across the skills system, employers report that workforce renewal and progression are increasingly constrained by challenges in attracting new entrants, low awareness of routes into and through the sector, and limited take-up of higher-level training.

Getting in

Entry-level and technician routes at Levels 2–3 are critical to sustaining Worcestershire's manufacturing and engineering workforce, particularly given an ageing workforce and ongoing shortages in technical and engineering roles. Apprenticeships represent the principal work-based route into the sector, with delivery centred on colleges and independent training providers. Automotive and manufacturing pathways show particularly strong learner demand locally, including entry-level provision at Kidderminster College and Heart of Worcestershire College, with recruitment exceeding expectations in some courses.

However, stakeholder engagement indicates that individuals entering the sector are not always aware of the range of manufacturing and engineering careers available locally, or of apprenticeships as a key entry route for both young people and adults seeking to retrain. This limits take up of entry-level opportunities despite employer demand and contributes to persistent recruitment pressures in technician and operative roles.

Change/action:

- Increase uptake of apprenticeships at all levels, including higher-level apprenticeships, through a coordinated campaign showcasing how apprenticeships work and the progression routes available.

Getting on

While Level 3 and Level 4+ provision exists, stakeholder engagement suggests that appreciation of apprenticeships as a tool for upskilling the existing workforce remains limited. In the context of an ageing workforce, greater use of higher and degree apprenticeships is needed to support progression into senior technical, production management and leadership roles, rather than continued reliance on external recruitment in a competitive labour market, which risks weakening succession planning and future capability.

Change/action:

- Sustain L3-5 technician pathways aligned with Industry 4.0 and employer demand

Outcomes:

- Increase in Manufacturing and Engineering apprenticeships starts (L2-7)
- Increase in number of employers engaging in workforce development activities

Everyday employability

Priority skills need: Equip people with the digital and workplace skills needed to get into and progress in work

Digital capability has become an increasingly critical, cross-cutting requirement across all sectors, as businesses adopt automation, data-driven systems and the use of AI in day-to-day operations. Alongside this, employers consistently emphasise core employability and workplace skills as essential foundations for effective participation, productivity and progression in work.

Getting in

Employers seek greater confidence that entry routes consistently develop the workplace skills and behaviours expected, including communication, interpersonal skills, organisation, time management and basic digital capability. These skills are embedded across curriculum, but we know that workforce readiness is shaped as much by workplace practices as by education and training. Clear onboarding, expectation-setting and day-to-day reinforcement play a critical role in developing employability skills at entry level. Previous LSIP activity has sought to address this by reinforcing the role of employers in shaping workforce behaviours, including through the Upskill Your People campaign and provider-led responses such as Heart of Worcestershire's 5Cs framework, which makes employability skills explicit and consistently reinforced.

Change/action:

- Continue to embed employability skills and workplace behaviours across learning and development environments

Getting on

As digital tools and AI-enabled systems become embedded across roles, employability increasingly underpins progression as well as entry. Employers play a central role in developing these capabilities through induction, management practice and ongoing workforce development. However, engagement highlights a lack of shared understanding of what “everyday digital skills” mean in practice, limiting consistent expectations and targeted upskilling for the existing workforce.

A train-the-trainer approach can support this shift by strengthening the capability of managers and supervisors to develop digital, AI-enabled and employability skills in-house, embedding these as part of business-as-usual practice and supporting progression, retention and long-term workforce resilience across sectors.

Change/action:

- Establish a shared understanding of employer digital skills needs and explore where gaps in provision may exist
- Create a Worcestershire Essential Digital Skills framework to help employers assess digital skills needs and signpost staff to training and resources

- Continue to strengthen employer capability to support work-readiness through clear expectations, structured induction and early career support

Outcomes:

- Decrease in the proportion of employers reporting digital and employability skills gaps

Business resilience

Priority skills need: Strengthen management and professional skill capabilities to help businesses adapt, grow and transition to Net Zero.

Business resilience increasingly depends on the strength of professional, management and people-related skills across organisations, including our strong SME base. As businesses face continued cost pressures, labour market competition, digital change and the transition to Net Zero, employers highlight the importance of core professional functions in enabling effective decision-making, workforce planning and sustainable growth.

Getting in

Professional skills are central to business resilience, making it important to maintain a strong Level 3–5 pipeline into roles such as HR, finance, administration and marketing. These technician and associate-level roles provide the operational backbone for workforce planning, financial control and compliance, and often form the route into more senior professional and management positions, particularly as businesses adapt to digital change, growth pressures and Net Zero requirements.

Employers also consistently report management skills gaps as well as demand for flexible provision. While leadership is required at all levels, effective management requires a distinct skillset, particularly in people management, communication, workforce planning and operational decision-making. Progression into first-line management roles is often informal, leaving new managers under-prepared. Strengthening support for those transitioning into these roles is critical to improving retention, reducing reliance on external recruitment and building long-term organisational resilience.

Change/action:

- Promote careers and available local provision across HR, administration, marketing and financial technician pathways
- Improve SME management capability through accessible training to support progression into management roles

Getting on

Getting on is about equipping business leaders and managers with the skills, knowledge and tools needed to run agile and adaptable businesses. As organisations respond to digital change, growth pressures and Net Zero requirements, employers need the capability to understand their current and future skills needs and to shape workforce development accordingly.

Partners are already responding to this need and have developed a range of **tools, support** offers and funding routes to help businesses strengthen workforce planning and adaptation. For example, the Worcestershire Growth Hub provides a Workforce Planning Tool, while support and funding are also available to support Net Zero transition. Engagement suggests that the challenge is not the absence of provision, but ensuring that existing tools are

accessible, well-understood and used effectively, particularly by smaller firms with limited internal capacity.

Change/action:

- Increase employer access to HR and people-management support, including clear signposting to Growth Hub services
- Continue to signpost businesses to Net Zero adoption support

Outcomes:

- Increased employer take up of HR and workforce planning support

Annex A: Skills needs

Occupational Demand Analysis

Using ONS' SIC/SOC employment matrix, which provides an estimate for national employment by 4 digit SOC and 5 digit SIC code, and applying this to Worcestershire using employment estimates from the ONS Business Register and Employment Survey, we can proxy for the types of roles which are currently the highest employing by sector. To add to this, we have used Lightcast data to see which types of role are forecasted to have the highest employment by 2030.

Health and Social Care

Table 3. Health and Social Care occupations in demand

SOC code	Occupation	Estimated employment (2024)	% sector employment (2024)	% employment 2030 projections	Change
6135	Care workers and home carers	6,569	17.97%	19.44%	
2237	Other nursing professionals	2,498	6.84%	6.91%	
6131	Nursing auxiliaries and assistants	1,864	5.10%	8.61%	
2211	Generalist medical practitioners	1,611	4.41%	3.24%	
2212	Specialist medical practitioners	1,138	3.11%	3.16%	
4216	Receptionists	885	2.42%	2.01%	
9223	Cleaners and domestics	694	1.90%	1.36%	
4159	Other administrative occupations n.e.c.	691	1.89%	2.35%	
6136	Senior care workers	646	1.77%	2.02%	
2232	Community nurses	615	1.68%	2.25%	
4211	Medical secretaries	591	1.62%	1.51%	
6111	Early education and childcare assistants	590	1.61%	2.07%	
2233	Specialist nurses	545	1.49%	1.96%	
2461	Social workers	542	1.48%	1.51%	
1232	Residential, day and domiciliary care managers and proprietors	504	1.38%	0.81%	
3229	Welfare and housing associate professionals n.e.c.	454	1.24%	1.62%	
6133	Dental nurses	448	1.23%	1.88%	
2234	Nurse practitioners	426	1.16%	1.46%	
3560	Public services associate professionals	404	1.11%	0.75%	
2221	Physiotherapists	362	0.99%	1.14%	

Source: Source: *Employment by occupation and industry section A-S, UK: 2021 to 2023; ONS Business Register and Employment Survey (2025), Lightcast (2026)*. Notes: If occupations are projected to see an increase of 0.5pp, change is highlighted in green, between -0.5pp and 0.5pp in amber and a 0.5pp decline in red.

Care workers and nurses are the highest current employing occupations which is projected to continue, with nursing assistants projected to make up a higher proportion of employment within the overall health and care sector.

This is a reflection of Worcestershire's ageing population, with demand for nursing and caring services expected to increase, with more people living with multiple and complex health conditions.

Based on lightcast data, the proportion of employment GPs make up is projected to fall somewhat, but nonetheless will remain a crucial role within the sector as one of the top 5 employing roles in health & social care,

Digital transformation will continue to drive change in health & social care and some anticipated falls in the proportion of employment in administrative/supporting functions including receptionist is likely linked to increasing use of AI to automate repetitive tasks.

Table 4. Qualification levels for occupations in demands

SOC code(s)	Occupation(s)	Level/type of qualification	% of employment (2030)
6135, 6131	Care workers and home carers, Nursing auxiliaries and assistants	- Health and Social Care (L1-3) including Prevention and Control of Infection in Health Care settings - Mainly L1-3 including T-level provision - Some higher level provision L4 Diploma in Adult Care	27%
2211, 2212, 2233, 2234	Health Care professionals (medical practitioners, specialist nurses)	- Higher level provision requiring degree level qualification example being L6 clinical medicine, neurological rehabilitation, physiotherapy, physician associate studies, mental health nursing, - L7 apprenticeship routes including advanced clinical practitioner, specialist occupational health nurse - L5 certificate in Primary Care and Health Management - L6/7 available in Healthcare Management	10%
2237, 2232	Other nursing professionals and community nurses	Higher level provision – L5 Nursing associate apprenticeship, L6 degree in nursing and specialist nursing (clinical nursing practice, adult nursing, child nursing, community nursing, palliative care nursing)	9%

		L7 apprenticeships – community nurse specialist practitioner	
4211, 4216, 4159	Administration/support function (Medical secretaries Receptionists Other administrative occupations n.e.c.)	Mainly L1-3 including diploma in Medical Administration	7%
6136	Senior Care workers	Level 5 aligned to leadership/Care manager routes	2%

Source: UK Standard Skills Classification

Construction

Table 5. Construction occupations in demand

SOC code	Occupation	Estimated employment (2024)	% sector employment (2024)	% employment 2030 projections	Change
5319	Construction and building trades n.e.c.	890	7.47%	2.31%	
5315	Plumbers & heating and ventilating installers and repairers	887	7.45%	3.77%	
5316	Carpenters and joiners	884	7.42%	5.07%	
5241	Electricians and electrical fitters	862	7.24%	5.42%	
1122	Production managers and directors in construction	649	5.45%	5.71%	
9129	Elementary construction occupations n.e.c.	465	3.90%	4.18%	
5322	Floorers and wall tilers	341	2.86%	1.02%	
5313	Bricklayers	296	2.48%	1.86%	
5323	Painters and decorators	286	2.40%	1.01%	
2455	Construction project managers and related professionals	260	2.18%	1.87%	
4159	Other administrative occupations n.e.c.	245	2.05%	2.58%	
2121	Civil engineers	187	1.57%	2.52%	
1251	Property, housing and estate managers	187	1.57%	0.83%	
5321	Plasterers	178	1.49%	1.01%	
8151	Scaffolders, staggers and riggers	168	1.41%	2.34%	
5330	Construction and building trades supervisors	166	1.39%	1.89%	
5314	Roofers, roof tilers and slaters	163	1.37%	1.83%	
2453	Quantity surveyors	161	1.35%	1.41%	
9121	Groundworkers	155	1.30%	0.77%	
8159	Construction operatives n.e.c.	153	1.28%	1.87%	

Source: Employment by occupation and industry section A-S, UK: 2021 to 2023; ONS Business Register and Employment Survey (2025), Lightcast (2026)

Lightcast data indicates that around half of the current top employing occupations within construction will see a decline in the proportion of employment they make up of total employment. What is more important than the absolute projections numbers is the fact that

these types of roles are expected to continue to remain the highest employing in 2030, including those relating to trades which currently and are expected to remain the highest employing in Worcestershire.

With the drive to increase housebuilding to meet Government targets, it is likely that demand will increase across construction trades. Civil engineers are projected to make up more of employment, likely explained by the need for specialised design expertise to assist with infrastructure development including the push for clean power. There is provision available locally relating to green jobs including courses relating to installation of heat pumps but currently market demand is low.

Construction managers are also projected to make up more of employment driven by the need to plan and oversee increased construction activity.

Table 6. Qualification levels for occupations in demands

SOC code(s)	Occupation(s)	Level/type of qualification	% of employment (2030)
5315, 5241, 5316, 5313, 5321, 5323, 5314, 5319	Trades based Plumbers, electricians, Carpenters and joiners, brick layer, plasters, painters and decorators, roofers, construction and building trades nec	• Mainly L1-3 qualifications covering general qualification in Construction and the Built Environment • Specific L1-3 courses covering carpentry and woodwork, plumbing, painting and decorating, bricklaying	22%
1122, 2455, 5330	Production managers in construction, Construction project managers and Construction supervisors	• Higher level courses through L4-6 in project controls and Construction Operations and Site Management. • L7 diploma in Construction Project Management	10%
9121, 9129	Groundworkers and elementary construction occupations	• L1-3 in groundworks and construction operations	5%
2121, 2453	Civil engineers and quantity surveyors	• Higher level provision relating to Civil Engineers and Quantity Surveyors; L4-5 (Construction design and build technician, Architectural	4%

		Technology, Quantity Surveying). - Degree routes (L6) in building services engineering, civil engineering, architectural engineering and quantity surveying - L4-5 provision in Modern Methods of Construction; Future Homes Design and Construction - L7 apprenticeship architect and diploma in civil engineering	
--	--	--	--

Source: UK Standard Skills Classification

Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering

Table 7. Advanced Manufacturing & Engineering occupations in demand

SOC code	Occupation	Estimated employment (2024)	% sector employment (2024)	% employment 2030 projections	Change
1121	Production managers and directors in manufacturing	667	6.02%	6.70%	
3556	Sales accounts and business development managers	432	3.90%	3.68%	
8142	Assemblers (vehicles and metal goods)	333	3.00%	4.39%	
5223	Metal working production and maintenance fitters	298	2.69%	2.54%	
4122	Book-keepers, payroll managers and wages clerks	262	2.36%	1.41%	
8143	Routine inspectors and testers	221	2.00%	1.81%	
8160	Production, factory and assembly supervisors	206	1.86%	1.33%	
8141	Assemblers (electrical and electronic products)	200	1.81%	1.71%	
4159	Other administrative occupations n.e.c.	192	1.73%	1.93%	
8120	Metal working machine operatives	190	1.72%	3.07%	
2134	Programmers and software development professionals	180	1.63%	1.93%	
3113	Engineering technicians	179	1.62%	1.11%	
9252	Warehouse operatives	175	1.58%	2.25%	
5221	Metal machining setters and setter-operators	175	1.58%	1.81%	
5241	Electricians and electrical fitters	167	1.50%	2.02%	
2129	Engineering professionals n.e.c.	157	1.42%	2.52%	
2440	Business and financial project management professionals	154	1.39%	0.67%	
3552	Business sales executives	149	1.35%	2.77%	
2127	Engineering project managers and project engineers	145	1.31%	0.61%	
2122	Mechanical engineers	145	1.31%	1.09%	

Source: Employment by occupation and industry section A-S, UK: 2021 to 2023; ONS Business Register and Employment Survey (2025), Lightcast (2026)

Increased digitisation and automation will continue to change the make-up of Advanced Manufacturing & Engineering - robotics, advanced materials, additive manufacturing and CNC all increasingly areas of consideration. This may in turn help to explain the increased need for production managers and programmers and decline in the proportion of employment made up by some operative roles.

However operatives will remain key to support growth in the sector, with an expected rise in employment in those working in metals. Cross cutting function such as finance and sales will also continue to be important in helping to support growth within the sector.

Table 8. Qualification levels for occupations in demands

SOC code(s)	Occupation(s)	Level/type of qualification	% of employment (2030)
8142, 8120, 9252,	Production Operatives and Process Roles Assemblers (vehicles and metal goods), Metal working machine operatives, warehouse operatives	- L1-3 in manufacturing/engineering – includes specialist provision in electrical and electronic engineering and mechanical engineering; metal processing and allied operations; engineering toolmaking as examples - L3 apprenticeships – engineering fitter Maintenance and operations engineering technician	10%
1121, 2127	Production managers and directors in manufacturing, Engineering project managers	From L3 Introduction to Manufacturing and Production Management to higher level qualifications inc L5/6 Diploma in Manufacturing and Production Management, L6 apprenticeship in manufacturing manager to L7 Senior Strategic Manufacturing and Production Management	7%
3113, 2129, 2122, 5223	Technical and Engineering Professionals Engineering technicians, engineering professionals nec, mechanical engineers, metal working production and	- L3 through to higher level - L4 automation and control engineering, L4 lead engineering maintenance technician apprenticeship, L5 mechanical engineering (mechatronics and smart manufacturing) - Degree routes available (L6) in electrical and mechanical engineering and mechatronics and robotics	7%

	maintenance fitters		
8143, 8160	Routine inspectors and testers, Production, factory and assembly supervisors	L3-4 provision including engineering surveyor, quality practitioner	3%

Source: UK Standard Skills Classification

Professional Business Services

Table 9. Professional Business Service occupations in demand

SOC code	Occupation	Estimated employment (2024)	% sector employment (2024)	% employment 2030 projections	Change
4122	Book-keepers, payroll managers and wages clerks	1,337	5.88%	4.45%	
3571	Human resources and industrial relations officers	1,080	4.75%	4.52%	
2412	Solicitors and lawyers	825	3.62%	2.64%	
1136	Human resource managers and directors	643	2.82%	1.90%	
2431	Management consultants and business analysts	630	2.77%	2.46%	
6135	Care workers and home carers	603	2.65%	1.86%	
2421	Chartered and certified accountants	586	2.58%	2.12%	
4159	Other administrative occupations n.e.c.	538	2.36%	3.37%	
1131	Financial managers and directors	420	1.85%	2.42%	
2422	Finance and investment analysts and advisers	389	1.71%	1.31%	
1132	Marketing, sales and advertising directors	377	1.66%	1.62%	
4215	Personal assistants and other secretaries	341	1.50%	1.18%	
3554	Marketing associate professionals	337	1.48%	1.33%	
2314	Primary education teaching professionals	320	1.41%	0.87%	
2440	Business and financial project management professionals	305	1.34%	1.30%	
9252	Warehouse operatives	287	1.26%	1.21%	
7219	Customer service occupations n.e.c.	264	1.16%	1.01%	
1259	Managers and proprietors in other services n.e.c.	246	1.08%	0.56%	
3556	Sales accounts and business development managers	241	1.06%	1.79%	
2419	Legal professionals n.e.c.	230	1.01%	1.08%	

Source: Employment by occupation and industry section A-S, UK: 2021 to 2023; ONS Business Register and Employment Survey (2025), Lightcast (2026)

Increasing use of automation technologies in businesses will change many roles and responsibilities, eliminating some heavily administrative or repetitive roles while also creating a net gain of new roles in areas like artificial intelligence, machine learning, and robotics. National research has highlighted increasing demand for professional and managerial roles, with a decline in administration roles.

The top employing occupations within professional services are expected to stay the same in Worcestershire in the coming years, with continued demand for core services covering bookkeepers, audit and accountancy; lawyers and solicitors; HR and people management; and consultancy.

Specifically within people professions, which are projected to be one of the highest employing roles in the sector in Worcestershire, employer representative feedback has raised the need for people analytics and related AI capabilities but also the ability to manage these systems, including data safeguarding/protection.

Table 10. Qualification levels for occupations in demands

SOC code(s)	Occupation(s)	Level/type of qualification	% of employment (2030)
3571, 2431, 3554, 3556	Human resources officers, Management consultants, marketing associate professionals, Sales accounts and business development managers	- L3/4/5 awards and diplomas in HR practice, recruitment, marketing inc digital marketing, sales strategy - Various degrees including Human resource management, staff development, marketing and advertising	10%
4122, 2421, 2440	Book-keepers, payroll managers and wages clerks, Chartered and certified accountants, Business and financial project professionals	- L1-7 depending on extent of expertise required. For example, accounting route starts with L1/2 awards in book-keeping and accounts, L3/4 certification(AAT/IAB)/apprenticeships, L5 extended diploma through to L7 accountancy or taxation professional apprenticeship - Degree routes (L6) in bookkeeping, accounting and financial reporting - L7 accountancy or taxation professional apprenticeship	8%
1136, 1131, 1132	HR managers and directors, financial managers and directors, Marketing and sales director	- L4/5 diplomas/awards Sales and Marketing Management - Degree routes (L6) in sales management and advertising, apprenticeship in business to business sales professional and marketing manager along with various shorter L6 awards in leadership and management in sales, strategic sales management and developing - L7 business strategy and strategic marketing courses and more generic leadership and management courses - L7 apprenticeship – Senior HR Professional, L&D professional	6%
2412, 2419	Solicitors and lawyers, Legal professionals n.e.c	Typically higher level qualifications although some L3 awards	4%

		- Degrees inc legal practice and property law and business law degrees - L7 diplomas and apprenticeships – Solicitor or chartered legal executive litigator and advocate	
4159, 7219	Other administrative occupations n.e.c., Customer service occupations n.e.c.	- L1-4 in business administration - L1-4 starting from Introduction to Customer Service to L4 Award/Diploma in Customer Service	4%

Source: UK Standard Skills Classification

Cyber security and IT

Table 11. Cyber security and IT occupations in demand

SOC code	Occupation	Estimated employment (2024)	% sector employment (2024)	% employment 2030 projections	Change
2134	Programmers and software development professionals	1025	15.04%	17.33%	
2132	IT managers	393	5.76%	7.16%	
2139	Information technology professionals n.e.c.	368	5.41%	6.72%	
1137	Information technology directors	351	5.15%	4.29%	
2133	IT business analysts, architects and systems designers	229	3.36%	6.17%	
2131	IT project managers	205	3.01%	2.07%	
3556	Sales accounts and business development managers	195	2.86%	2.19%	
3132	IT user support technicians	166	2.43%	2.92%	
2491	Newspaper and periodical editors	151	2.21%	1.15%	
1132	Marketing, sales and advertising directors	143	2.10%	1.99%	
5242	Telecoms and related network installers and repairers	130	1.91%	1.92%	
2492	Newspaper and periodical journalists and reporters	125	1.84%	1.82%	
3416	Arts officers, producers and directors	123	1.81%	1.10%	
7219	Customer service occupations n.e.c.	122	1.79%	1.01%	
3131	IT operations technicians	112	1.64%	1.85%	
2142	Graphic and multimedia designers	97	1.43%	0.49%	
3552	Business sales executives	95	1.39%	1.41%	
2432	Marketing and commercial managers	87	1.28%	0.91%	
5244	Computer system and equipment installers and servicers	87	1.27%	2.62%	
2135	Cyber security professionals	84	1.23%	1.53%	

Source: Source: *Employment by occupation and industry section A-S, UK: 2021 to 2023; ONS Business Register and Employment Survey (2025), Lightcast (2026)*

Programmers and IT professionals are currently the highest employing roles in Worcestershire. National research has highlighted the occupations that are projected to need the greatest additional employment between 2025 and 2030 are occupations related to digital (programmers, analyst and IT managers) within the Industrial Strategy priority sectors.

Reflecting national forecasts, Lightcast estimates for Worcestershire indicate increasing employment made up by programmers and software development professionals, IT managers and professionals.

IT business analysts, architects and systems designers, and Computer system and equipment installers are expected to make up more of total employment in the IT sector in Worcestershire, a reflection that without the necessarily hardware in place, companies won't be able to use software skills of their workforce.

Table 12. Qualification levels for occupations in demands

SOC code(s)	Occupation(s)	Level/type of qualification	% of employment (2030)
2134, 2139, 2133, 2135	IT professionals Programmers and software development professionals, Information technology professionals n.e.c, IT business analysts, architects and systems designers, cyber security professionals	- L3/4/5 diploma/certificates in computer science, programming and coding practices, cyber security management and operations - L4 in software developer apprenticeship, DevOps engineer - L6 degree routes in programming, software engineering, computer sciences - L6/7 apprenticeship in high integrity software engineer, game software programmer	31%
2132, 1137, 2131	Managers and directors IT managers, Information technology directors, IT project managers	- L4/5 awards/certificates in Information Management, IT infrastructure management services - L6 degree routes in information management, knowledge and information systems, business information technology - L6/7 apprenticeships as digital and technology solutions professional (business analyst, IT consultant and cyber security)	13%
3132, 3131, 5244	IT technicians and support IT user support technicians, IT operations technicians, Computer system and equipment	- L2/3 certificates/diplomas in ICT systems and principles and ICT systems support - L4 diploma in Professional Competence for IT and Telecoms Professionals - L5 diploma in IT infrastructure management services - L6/7 qualifications including specialist apprenticeships digital	7%

	installers and servicers	business and enterprise systems architecture specialist	
--	--------------------------	---	--

Source: UK Standard Skills Classification

Agri/Horti Tech

Table 13. Agri/Horti Tech occupations in demand

SOC code	Occupation	Estimated employment (2024)	% sector employment (2024)	% employment 2030 projections	Change
5111	Farmers	2,795	29.23%	7.06%	
9111	Farm workers	859	8.98%	11.32%	
8111	Food, drink and tobacco process operatives	855	8.94%	10.51%	
1211	Managers and proprietors in agriculture and horticulture	491	5.13%	2.30%	
1121	Production managers and directors in manufacturing	213	2.22%	2.62%	
9132	Packers, bottlers, canners and fillers	173	1.80%	4.35%	
5112	Horticultural trades	154	1.61%	2.54%	
4122	Book-keepers, payroll managers and wages clerks	143	1.49%	1.55%	
7111	Sales and retail assistants	133	1.39%	0.96%	
5119	Agricultural and fishing trades n.e.c.	113	1.19%	2.21%	
5432	Bakers and flour confectioners	112	1.17%	1.40%	
8143	Routine inspectors and testers	104	1.09%	0.65%	
4159	Other administrative occupations n.e.c.	101	1.06%	1.77%	
6129	Animal care services occupations n.e.c.	101	1.06%	0.61%	
9252	Warehouse operatives	101	1.06%	3.22%	
4133	Stock control clerks and assistants	99	1.03%	0.86%	
9119	Fishing and other elementary agriculture occupations n.e.c.	97	1.02%	1.53%	
5223	Metal working production and maintenance fitters	84	0.88%	1.00%	
8214	Delivery drivers and couriers	84	0.88%	1.19%	
8211	Large goods vehicle drivers	77	0.80%	4.18%	

Source: Source: *Employment by occupation and industry section A-S, UK: 2021 to 2023; ONS Business Register and Employment Survey (2025), Lightcast (2026)*

Farmers/ Farm workers are the highest employing role within the sector and this is projected to continue. Other Agriculture/horticulture specific roles include managers in agriculture and horticulture, horticultural trades, animal care services and fishing and other elementary agriculture occupations.

Many of the other top employing roles relate to manufacturing or play a supporting role such as large goods vehicle drivers. Of these manufacturing roles, apart from production managers, most tend to be lower skilled types of roles including food, drink and process operatives, packers, bottlers, canners and fillers, and warehouse operatives

Table 14. Qualification levels for occupations in demands

SOC code(s)	Occupation(s)	Level/type of qualification	% of employment (2030)
-------------	---------------	-----------------------------	------------------------

9111, 5111	Farm Workers; Farmers	• L1 -3 in agriculture up to L3 Extended Diploma in Agriculture • L4 qualifications including apprenticeship as assistant farm manager, and certificate in Agroecological System Design: Sustainable Farming and Business Practices • L6 degrees in agricultural machinery, agricultural sciences	18%
8111, 9132, 9252	Manufacturing operatives Food, Drink and Tobacco Process Operatives, Packers, Bottlers, Canners and Fillers, Warehouse operatives	• L1-3 including L2 apprenticeship as food and drink operations and L3 Diploma for Proficiency in Food Manufacturing Excellence	17%
5112, 5119	Horticultural trades, Agricultural and Fishing Trades n.e.c.	• L1-3 in Horticulture • L4-5 Diploma in Horticulture practice • L6 degree in horticulture, exotic plants and crops and crop protection	5%
8211	Large Goods Vehicle Drivers	• L2-3 in driving goods vehicles/ logistics operations	4%
1121	Production Managers and Directors in Manufacturing	• L4-6 including L4 apprenticeship in process leader, L4 awards in Food safety management for Manufacturing and L6 degrees in food science, food and beverage production • L6 apprenticeship in food industry technical professional	3%
1211	Managers and Proprietors in Agriculture and Horticulture	• L4 Diploma in Agriculture Business Management • L6 degree in Farm Management • L6 in horticulture, agricultural sciences, crop protection, nutrition and production and land management	2%

Source: UK Standard Skills Classification

Overview of Skills Challenges

Since the previous LSIP, ongoing engagement with employers has highlighted a consistent set of skills gaps across the local economy. Digital skills are repeatedly identified as a priority area, spanning baseline digital confidence and the effective use of workplace systems, such as CRM platforms and the Microsoft Office suite, through to more advanced capabilities in AI and automation, and cyber security. Digital capability is no longer regarded as a specialist requirement. Rather, employers increasingly recognise it as a fundamental competency required across almost all sectors.

Employers also continue to emphasise gaps in employability and interpersonal skills among particularly young people either looking to move into their first job or at an early point of their career. Core behaviours highlighted include effective written and verbal communication, confidence, and the ability to work collaboratively within teams. Practical exposure to workplace environments remains critical in enabling learners to understand employer expectations and to develop the behaviours and attitudes required to succeed in employment.

In addition, leadership and management skills gaps are consistently cited, particularly in relation to people management, supervisory capability and succession planning to support workforce progression. Weak management capacity can exacerbate wider workforce challenges, including poor staff retention, issues relating to workplace culture, and the under-utilisation of technical skills. Addressing leadership and management capability is therefore a high priority, both to strengthen business resilience and to foster organisational cultures that actively promote workforce development and upskilling.

A number of sector-specific gaps continue to be identified, most notably within Health and Social Care, Construction, and Manufacturing, notably within Worcestershire's key sectors of Health & Social Care, Construction and Manufacturing. Below presents a brief summary of the gaps/ areas identified within these sectors.

- Health & Social Care: challenges filling and retaining Social Care roles and gaps in basic digital confidence and effective use of CRM systems
- Construction: shortages in construction trades and site/project management
- Manufacturing: gaps in engineering capability, including mechanical, electrical, maintenance and service engineers, and machinery operation

Looking ahead, employers across sectors anticipate growing demand for skills linked to AI, automation and wider digital transformation. This reflects a shift away from basic digital literacy towards more applied, productivity-enhancing digital capability. Employers also anticipate that 'core skills' and behaviours including effective communication, teamwork, resilience and flexibility, will remain essential, providing a critical foundation which enable individuals to operate effectively and adapt within an increasingly digitally enabled working environment. Similarly management is recognised as a key capability to help adapt to future technological, regulatory and market changes, rather than viewing it solely as an immediate or short-term skills gap.

An emerging theme from ongoing employer engagement relates to sustainability and Net Zero awareness. While engagement with these issues varies across the business base, employers are increasingly recognising the need to reduce their environmental impact. This is particularly evident within the Manufacturing and Construction sectors, where demand is growing for skills linked to retrofitting and low-carbon technologies, including specialist roles such as heat pump installation.

Identified Skills Priorities

As set out in the Strategic and Economic Context, Construction, Health & Social Care, Business & Professional Services, Manufacturing, Cyber Security & IT, and Agri-Tech are central to the local economy, representing large volumes of jobs and significant potential for high-value future growth.

Drawing on the evidence sources listed at the start of the Local Skills Needs section, discussions with our LSIP board, and assessment of local and national strategic priorities, we have identified three priority skills needs areas in the sectors of Construction, Health & Social Care, and Manufacturing & Engineering. These priorities reflect both the scale of existing skills gaps and the significance of these sectors to Worcestershire's future economic resilience.

There are a number of cross cutting needs, which were explored in the first LSIP, which continue to remain highly relevant. Often described as soft skills, local engagement continues to reiterate the importance of digital and employability skills across a wide range of occupations and are increasingly recognised by employers as fundamental to workforce readiness and productivity. Similarly, the need for effective management capabilities has been echoed during engagement, along with growing recognition to build our Net Zero readiness in order to play our part in wider national Net Zero aims.

Construction

Construction is a cornerstone sector within Worcestershire's economy, providing a stable foundation for employment, business activity and economic output. The sector accounts for around 14% of all businesses, contributes approximately 7% of total GVA, and employs around 5% of the workforce. Construction also plays a critical role in enabling wider economic growth by supporting housing delivery, infrastructure investment and the transition to low-carbon development.

Across the West Midlands, the sector continues to experience a structural labour shortfall. CITB³ analysis indicates that recruitment will need to increase by more than 7,000 workers annually to meet projected service demand to 2028. This pressure is expected to intensify as the industry supports national objectives to deliver 1.5 million additional homes by the end of Parliament and to construct the infrastructure required to achieve 95% clean power by 2030 and Net Zero by 2050.

³ CITB Construction Skills Network Labour Market Intelligence Report, West Midlands, 2024-2028

Therefore demand for Construction services is expected to rise in the coming years, including in Worcestershire, where housing targets now sit at almost 4,000 homes annually. Although not included in the first wave of seven New Towns recently announced by Government to be taken forward during this parliament⁴, Wychavon District Council remain committed to delivering Wychavon New Town⁵, with Wychavon New Town still set to be part of the Government's New Homes Accelerator programme and to receive specialist support from Homes England. 10,000 homes along with a new town centre, primary and secondary schools, GP and healthcare centre and employment land have been proposed, with initial planning applications recently submitted for 5,500 homes to be delivered by 2041.⁶

Alongside increasing demand for Construction services, the sector is undergoing structural change. The growing emphasis on Modern Methods of Construction (MMC), retrofit, and low-carbon technologies is reshaping the skills profile required across the workforce. Construction employers increasingly require workers, supervisors and professionals who can understand sustainability requirements, and implement energy-efficient and low-carbon solutions such as solar panels and air source/ground source heat pumps, as evidenced by updates to the Future Homes Standard which will require most newly built homes to be equipped with solar panels and heat pumps from 2028.⁷

Identifying skills priorities

National and regional research has indicated that some of the most acute skills shortages currently lie within housebuilding trades (this includes Bricklayers, Glaziers and Fitters, Carpenters and Joiners), as well as in professional roles including Architects and Civil Engineers.⁸ These challenges are reflected locally in Worcestershire, where employers report sustained difficulty recruiting across housebuilding trades, construction management, and professional roles.

Given ambitious national targets, demand is expected to rise across a range of housebuilding trades, and in professional roles such as Surveyors and Civil Engineers, to support housing and infrastructure projects. Skills England's Assessment of Priority Skills to 2030 identifies a number of housebuilding trades (Carpenters and Joiners, Construction and Building Trades n.e.c. and Electricians and Electrical Fitters) as well as construction professionals such as Production Managers and Directors in Construction, and Civil Engineers, among the top 20 occupations across the economy projected to experience the greatest increase in employment. Complementing this, CITB regional analysis for the West Midlands forecasts

⁴ Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Local Government Seven new towns proposed to kickstart housebuilding push [23 March 2026]

⁵ Wychavon District Council Commitment to Wychavon Town remains [23 March 2026]

⁶ Homes England Plans for 5,500 homes at Wychavon Town move forward [15 January 2026]

⁷ Department for Energy Security and Net Zero Government to make "plug-in solar" available within months [24 March 2026]

⁸ This includes Skills England Sector Skills Needs Assessments Construction (2025); CITB Focusing on the Skills Construction Needs Labour Market Intelligence Report West Midlands 2024-2028

sustained demand across a broad range of construction roles, including site-based trades and construction professionals such as Site Engineers and Surveyors.

Drawing together national and regional research, and local labour employer engagement, three occupational groupings have been identified as critical to meeting Worcestershire's construction skills needs over the 2026–2029 period:

- Trades -based roles
- Production Managers in Construction and Supervisors
- Construction Professionals

Trades Based

Trades-based occupations form the backbone of the construction workforce and represent the largest share of employment within the sector. Demand for roles such as Carpenters and Joiners, Plumbers, Electricians, Bricklayers, Plasterers, Roofers, Painters and Decorators, and General Construction Operatives remains consistently high.

Lightcast projections indicate trades-based roles will account for approximately 22% of total sector employment by 2030. This demand is reinforced by local housing delivery targets and the need to retrofit existing housing stock to meet energy efficiency and carbon reduction requirements. Given the required scale of housing and infrastructure delivery, including the possible development of Wychavon New Town, it is essential that Worcestershire has a skilled workforce which can support both local and national housing ambitions.

In addition to core construction competencies, employers are increasingly seeking workers with the ability to install and maintain low-carbon technologies, including air and ground source heat pumps, solar PV, and other energy-efficient systems.

Ensuring a strong and sustainable pipeline into trades-based roles remains essential to supporting the delivery of local development priorities, and national housing and Net Zero objectives.

Construction Managers

Demand for Construction Managers, Site Supervisors and Project Managers is expected to grow over the coming years as the scale of construction projects increase. These roles are critical to the effective delivery of housing and infrastructure schemes and are becoming increasingly important as MMC, off-site manufacture and low-carbon construction methods are adopted more widely.

Employers report challenges recruiting individuals with the combination of technical knowledge, leadership capability and digital competence required to manage modern construction projects. In Worcestershire, these roles are projected to account for a growing share of construction employment of 10% by 2030.

Strengthening progression routes from trade-based roles into supervisory and management positions is therefore a key priority, both to improve retention and to ensure long-term workforce resilience.

Construction Professionals

Although Construction Professional roles make up a smaller proportion of overall sector employment, they play a critical enabling role in delivering housing, infrastructure and regeneration projects, including providing a vital role in assessing the viability of projects and providing technical oversight.

National evidence suggests that demand for these roles will continue to rise, particularly as planning, environmental regulation, digital design and sustainability requirements become more complex. Skills linked to off-site manufacture, digital design, and low-carbon development are becoming increasingly important within professional roles.

Bringing this evidence together, Worcestershire's Construction skills priority is to develop a strong and resilient construction workforce pipeline from entry-level trades through to higher-level professional roles, ensuring that provision supports both immediate workforce shortages and longer-term structural change within the sector.

This includes sustaining high-quality Level 1–3 pathways into construction trades, strengthening progression into supervisory and management roles, and expanding access to higher-level Construction provision between Levels 4–7. There is a clear need to embed skills linked to MMC, retrofit and green construction, ensuring the local workforce is equipped to support housing delivery, infrastructure investment, and Worcestershire's contribution to national Net Zero ambitions.

Health & Social Care

Health & Social Care is the largest employing sector in Worcestershire, accounting for 36,000 jobs and around 14% of total employment, and it contributes around a tenth of total GVA in Worcestershire. The sector's importance is reinforced by demographic pressures: Worcestershire has a relatively high share of older residents, with almost a quarter of the population aged 65 and over driving sustained demand for health and care services.⁹

As the population continues to age, the demand for care services is expected to grow, with increasing numbers of residents living with multiple and complex health conditions. Skills for Care model that, if the adult social care workforce grows proportionally to the projected number of people aged 65 and over in the population, then 360,000 new posts would be required by 2035.¹⁰

Across the IS-8(+2) sectors, Skills England's projects that Care Workers and Home Carers will see the greatest additional rise in employment across all occupations nationally to 2030, emphasising the need to develop and maintain a skilled workforce capable of meeting both current and future care.¹¹

However, the sector continues to experience persistent workforce shortages. Vacancy data indicates that caring and nursing roles are among those with the highest levels of demand

⁹ ONS Population Estimates (2025)

¹⁰ Skills for Care The state of the adult social care sector and workforce in England 2025

¹¹ Skills England Assessment of Priority Skills to 2030

locally.¹² These pressures are expected to intensify over the coming years as demand for healthcare services grows and service models evolve, including a continued shift towards community-based care and increasing use of digital tools and automation to support productivity, as set out in the NHS 10-Year Plan. Both of these shifts are seen as crucial in allowing workers to spend the most time possible caring for their patients.

Identifying skills priorities

Caring occupations stand out as key gaps to fill nationally and locally. In Worcestershire, Skills for Care estimate that there are 16,000 Adult Social Care posts across the county and despite a reduction in vacancies, there remains 650 vacant posts.¹³ Three quarters of the Adult Social Care workforce across England are estimated to provide direct care, but there is an increasing need for managerial and regulating professionals, which make-up around 12% of the total workforce.¹⁴ A consistent challenge reported nationally and locally is retaining staff and supporting progression into senior roles, contributing to gaps across the workforce.

There is also a need to ensure a skilled pipeline of Nurses and Health Professionals to provide care needed for our increasingly ageing population. The 10-Year Health Plan for England reiterates the need to implement AI and other automation solutions to help drive productivity and to utilise data to provide better care services, whilst also moving care from hospitals to communities, therefore emphasising the need for more community nurses and health care support workers.

Drawing together national and local evidence, employer engagement and future service direction, two occupational groupings are identified as critical to Worcestershire's Health & Social Care skills needs over 2026–2029:

- Caring and Nursing Professions
- Senior Care Workers

Caring and Nursing Professions

Caring and Nursing Professions form a substantial proportion of Worcestershire's Health & Social Care workforce and will remain central to meeting rising demand. This includes rising demand to care for those with multiple and complex needs. National engagement undertaken by Skills England as part of the Health & Social Care Sector Skills Needs assessment highlights a pronounced shortage of specialist care staff, including those with expertise in supporting individuals living with dementia.¹⁵

Lightcast projections indicate that Care Workers and Home Carers alone are expected to represent around one-fifth of total employment within Worcestershire's Health & Social Care sector by 2030, while Nursing Auxiliaries, Community Nurses and Other Nursing

¹² ONS Labour Demand Volumes by Standard Occupation Classification (SOC2020)

¹³ Skills for Care A summary of the adult social care sector and workforce in Worcestershire 2024/25

¹⁴ Skills for Care, The state of the adult social care sector and workforce in England 2025

¹⁵ Skills England Sector Skills Needs Assessments Health and Adult Social Care (2025)

Professionals are projected to comprise just under a fifth of sector employment. This aligns with the direction of travel set out in the NHS 10-Year Plan, where healthcare services will increasingly shift from hospitals to community settings, where Community Nurses and support staff will have a crucial role to play. Healthcare workers are also increasingly expected to implement digital solutions that reduce administrative burdens and enable staff to spend more time delivering care, reinforcing the need for digital capabilities alongside clinical and caring skills.

Senior Care Workers

In addition to frontline roles, Worcestershire faces persistent challenges in developing and retaining staff in senior care positions. National and local engagement highlights that workforce pressures are driven not only by entry shortages but also by progression and retention challenges within the sector.

Although vacancies nationally for Senior Care workers are slightly lower than 7% across the Social Care sector at 4.3%, Registered Manager positions face much higher vacancy rates of around 11%.¹⁶ These pressures are reinforced by the Adult Social Care Workforce Survey¹⁷, which shows that 57% of providers in the Midlands experience staff retention challenges, particularly within domiciliary care services.

Bringing this together, Worcestershire will focus on addressing the workforce requirements across core caring and nursing roles, continuing to ensure strong Level 1-3 provision and promoting clear pathways for progression, which will be essential to strengthening the workforce.

Manufacturing & Engineering

Overview

Manufacturing remains a crucial component of the local economy, accounting for 14.5% of total GVA, second only to Real Estate, and 11% of total employment, again second behind only Health & Social Care.¹⁸ The sector employs approximately 28,500 people and supports a large and diverse business base, ranging from precision engineering, the manufacture of metals and machinery, paper and plastic products, motor vehicles and computer, electronic and optical products.

Worcestershire exhibits a clear local specialism in Manufacturing, with a Location Quotient (LQ) of 1.44, meaning the county is almost 1.5 times as specialised in Manufacturing than compared to nationally, emphasising the importance of Manufacturing as a driver of economic value and productivity.

Advanced Manufacturing has been identified in Worcestershire's Plan for Growth as a key opportunity sector to help grow the economy, and more widely as one of the eight priority

¹⁶ Skills for Care The state of the adult social care sector and workforce in England (2025)

¹⁷ Department for Health and Social Care Adult Social Care Workforce Survey: April 2025 report

¹⁸ This refers to broad industrial groups as recognised by ONS Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) codes

sectors identified to help power growth nationally in the National Industrial Strategy. Of the IS-8 priority sectors¹⁹, Advanced Manufacturing displays the highest local specialism, 1.75 times as specialised as nationally. Although smaller in employment terms, representing 4% of total employment in Worcestershire, there is potential to grow these Advanced Manufacturing strengths, underlining the county's potential to support wider national growth objectives.

Despite our manufacturing strengths, the sector faces sustained workforce pressures driven by an ageing workforce and persistent skills shortages in technical and engineering roles. National research by Skills England in the Advanced Manufacturing Skills Assessment²⁰, highlights Metal Machining Setters and Setter Operators; Design and Development Engineers; and Engineering Professionals as roles with highest skill shortages within the sector.

Locally, engagement aligns with these findings, with most significant gaps emerging in engineering capability including Mechanical and Electrical, Maintenance and Service Engineers, and Machinery Operatives. There also gaps cited locally in relation to digital transformation including Software Developers.

This alludes to the technological change which is already shifting skills requirements. National research points to the increasing influence of Robotics, Advanced Materials, Additive Manufacturing and Computer Numerical Control (CNC) Manufacturing, with Industry 4.0 continuing to reshape the occupational profile of the sector over the coming years, with the need for knowledge across emerging technologies and processes, and data-driven production become more widespread across the sector.

This is recognised in Skills England's Assessment of Priority Needs to 2030 with Programmers and IT Business Analysts among the top 3 occupations projected to see the fastest rise in employment across IS-8(+2) sectors to 2030 nationally. Engineering Professionals are also projected to be amongst the top 15 occupations projected to see the fastest rise in employment.

Identifying skills priorities

Drawing together national evidence, local labour market intelligence and employer engagement, three occupational groupings are identified as critical to Worcestershire's Manufacturing & Engineering skills needs over the 2026–2029 period:

- Skilled Trades and Technical Operatives
- Engineering Professionals

¹⁹ The IS-8 sectors have used definitions as set out in the National Industrial Strategy which can be found using this [link](#). DBT do not provide a definition for clean energy. We have used estimates produced by Midlands Net Zero Hub for the Clean Energy Industries. As these are regional estimates which use a methodology produced by kMatrix, we cannot calculate an LQ comparing to national figures.

²⁰ Skills England Sector Skills Needs Assessments Advanced Manufacturing (2025)

- Production Management and Leadership

Skilled Trades and Technical Operatives

Skills Trades and Technical Operatives continue to form the core of Worcestershire's Manufacturing workforce. Demand for these roles continues to be high, as evidenced by Worcestershire having a higher proportion of vacancies in Skilled Metal, Electrical and Electronic Trades than seen nationally²¹.

Occupations such as Metal Working Machine Operatives, Maintenance Fitters, Machinists, Setters and Electronic Trades specialists are integral to the county's Manufacturing ecosystem, and from national research have been highlighted as some of the roles with the biggest skills shortages.

Assemblers, Metal Working Production and Maintenance Fitters, and Metal Working Machine Operatives alone are projected to account for around 10% of employment in Worcestershire in 2030 within Manufacturing, highlighting the continued importance of ensuring there is a skilled pipeline of workers across these roles. An ageing workforce remains a significant risk factor, reinforcing the importance of accessible pathways, including apprenticeships, to replace retiring workers and retain technical knowledge within the sector.

Engineering Professionals

Demand for Mechanical, Electrical and multidisciplinary engineering skills remains high, driven by the region's strong engineering base and the continued adoption of Advanced Manufacturing technologies. However, local employers consistently report difficulty recruiting individuals with strong engineering capabilities. These occupations underpin design, production, testing and maintenance functions and are central to the performance of the sector.

National research similarly identifies engineering occupations as among those with the largest skill shortages in the sector. As Worcestershire's strong Manufacturing base continues to integrate Industry 4.0 technologies, including Automation, Robotics, Additive Manufacturing and CNC Manufacturing, the demand for highly skilled engineers with core engineering knowledge and the ability to implement emerging technologies and tools will continue to grow.

As the sector continues to evolve, demand is also expected to grow for software-enabled engineering skills, including programming and data-driven process optimisation, to support productivity and competitiveness.

Production Management and Leadership

Production Managers in Manufacturing are currently the highest employing occupation within the Manufacturing sector, and this is projected to remain the case in the coming years. While Skilled Trades Machine Operatives remain essential over the next three years,

²¹ ONS Labour Demand Volumes by Standard Occupation Classification (SOC2020)

increasing automation are placing greater emphasis on production management, workflow optimisation and supervisory capability.

This reiterates the need for operational leadership, workforce planning, and continuous improvement methodologies to support the adoption of new technologies, the effective management of multi-disciplinary teams, and the improvement of productivity within Manufacturing settings. National research and local employer engagement has also emphasised the importance of cross cutting skills in finance and sales to continue support growth in production.

Bringing this evidence together, Worcestershire's Manufacturing & Engineering skills priority is to strengthen the pipeline of Level 3–7 technicians, engineers and production leaders required to sustain and grow advanced manufacturing activity. This requires maintaining strong entry-level and technician pathways, and supporting progression into higher-level engineering and leadership roles aligned with Industry 4.0.

Digital and Employability Skills

Digital and employability skills continue to be among the most prominent themes emerging from employer engagement, reiterating their importance as reported in the previous LSIP. Engagement with employers indicates that gaps in digital confidence, effective communication, teamwork and workplace behaviours remain among the most consistently cited challenges affecting workforce readiness, productivity and progression.

Digital Capability

Digital capability is no longer regarded as a specialist or sector-specific competence. Employers increasingly view it as a baseline requirement across the majority of occupations. Local engagement highlights persistent gaps in the confident use of common workplace software, including the Microsoft suite, spreadsheets, CRM, booking, and case-management platforms - particularly in care, business services and customer-facing roles.

Worcestershire is not unique in facing these challenges. An estimated 7.3 million working adults nationally lack the minimum digital capabilities required for employment²², presenting a significant barrier to productivity. Almost one-third of skills-shortage vacancies nationally are linked to insufficient digital skills, and half of those specifically attributable to a lack of basic digital skills²³. Strengthening baseline digital confidence across the workforce will therefore be critical over the next three years to ensure residents can access, sustain and progress in employment.

Alongside foundational skills, there is also a growing need for learners and workers to apply emerging technologies, including AI and automation tools. These tools are increasingly being integrated into business processes. National evidence suggest that core AI activities

²² Skills England Sector skills needs assessments Digital and Technologies (2025)

²³ UK Government Digital Inclusion Action Plan: First Steps (2025)

could represent approximately 12% of the workforce, around 3.9 million jobs by 2035, with a further 9.7 million jobs expected to incorporate AI adjacent responsibilities²⁴.

Local employer engagement reflects a growing awareness of AI's potential to enhance productivity, particularly through the automation of repetitive and administrative tasks, and increasingly within analytical and technical functions such as data analysis and coding. This underlines the importance of ensuring learners develop awareness of emerging technologies, while managers and business leaders build the capability to adopt, manage and integrate these tools effectively within their organisations.

Employer engagement has also highlighted growing demand for skills in software programming and development, as well as data engineering and data analysis. This aligns with national research which forecasts that Programmers and Software Development Professionals, and IT Business Analysts are two of the top three occupations expected to see the highest rise in employment across occupations²⁵.

Cybersecurity has similarly emerged as an increasing area of need through local engagement. As more businesses establish and expand their online presence, employers recognise the importance of having appropriate measures in place to protect digital services, data and systems. In addition, businesses seeking to secure access to supply chains are likely to be required to demonstrate robust cybersecurity practices and credentials, further reinforcing the importance of cybersecurity skills across the workforce.

Employability Skills

Developing common skills and workforce behaviours were identified as one of the five priorities in the 2023 Worcestershire LSIP. Across all sectors, employers continue to consistently identify attitudes, behaviours and transferable skills as a challenge. These needs cut across job roles and industries and are central to employability, progression and productivity, which particularly affect new recruits and education leavers.

Some of the behaviours identified by employers includes written and verbal communication, confidence and team working. This reiterates the importance for learners to get practical experience of a workplace, to know what is expected from them from prospective employers, ahead of leaving an educational or training setting.

Using Lightcast data, we can see the most in-demand common skills across Job Postings in Worcestershire. Communication is by far the most sought after skill, featuring in over a quarter of job postings locally but will be crucial across all kinds of roles. Attention to detail, planning and problem solving also feature extensively as skills required by employers.

Although the nature of work is evolving, as touched upon with the continuing advances of AI and automation tools, national research has confirmed the importance of employability skills over the coming years. The National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) as part of

²⁴ UK Government AI Skills for Life and Work: summary report (2026)

²⁵ Skills England Assessment of priority skills to 2030. This focuses on the IS-8(+2) sectors.

their Skills Imperative 2035 programme, has identified six core 'Essential Employability Skills'²⁶ workers across the UK economy will need to thrive in their jobs in a technology dominated world. These skills are already crucial across all sectors and roles, but NFER consider these skills will become even more vital across the whole economy over the next decade. These cover communication, collaboration, planning and prioritisation, problem solving and creative thinking.

Bringing this together, the Worcestershire LSIP will therefore look to equip workers with the common skills, digital capabilities and workplace behaviours that will promote employability and progression opportunities.

This will be important to support the priorities set out in the Get Worcestershire Working Plan, especially around supporting young people aged 16 to 24 move successfully from education into sustained employment and helping to re-engage adults who find themselves out of the labour market. There is also strong crossover with the Worcestershire Plan for Growth with an emphasis on building digital capability, upskilling and helping to develop a future ready workforce.

Business Resilience

Common cross cutting themes of leadership and management continue to be recognised as gaps which need to be addressed, including in relation to workforce planning and anticipating what future skills needs may look like. Net Zero readiness has also emerged with businesses recognising they will need to think about how they can adapt their services to reduce environmental impact, or in relation to Construction, making sure skills are in place to be able implement retrofit solutions.

Business Skills

Promoting a culture of developing people and talent, alongside strengthening workforce planning capability, were both priorities identified in the previous LSIP and continue to be reported as gaps through employer engagement. Evidence from Lightcast indicates that management is the third most in-demand common skill across job postings in Worcestershire, featuring in approximately 16% of postings.

Employer engagement has reiterated gaps in line management and supervisory capabilities, as well as strategic leadership and change management. Line managers and supervisors play a pivotal role in shaping day-to-day workforce experience, productivity and staff retention. However, employer feedback indicates that individuals in these roles often lack formal training in people management, despite holding significant responsibility for staff performance and wellbeing, particularly where progression has occurred from technical or operational positions. Ensuring that individuals are equipped with appropriate management skills is therefore important not only to support their own career development, but also to

²⁶ National Federation for Educational Research Skills Imperative 2035

enable them to provide effective guidance, support and development opportunities for the staff they manage.

Employer engagement indicates that formal workforce planning remains limited among SMEs, largely due to constraints related to time, capacity and confidence. Some progress has been made through initiatives such as Worcestershire County Council's Strategic Workforce Planning Platform, which provides structured, step-by-step tools to support the development, monitoring and review of workforce plans, and has helped to raise awareness of the importance of workforce planning. However, further effort is required to increase employer engagement with these tools, in order to strengthen businesses' ability to plan for future skills needs and respond effectively to longer-term workforce challenges.

Addressing these critical Business Skills gaps is essential to enabling businesses to move away from reactive recruitment practices towards a more forward-looking approach to workforce planning. This includes developing clearer visibility of medium- to long-term skills requirements and fostering inclusive workplace cultures that actively support upskilling, progression and workforce development.

Net Zero Readiness

Net Zero remains firmly at the forefront of the national policy agenda, as set out in the Clean Energy Jobs Plan, with the ambition for the UK to become a Clean Energy Superpower. Nationally, the low-carbon and clean energy workforce is currently estimated at approximately 440,000 jobs. To meet targets to deliver at least 95% clean power generation and accelerate progress towards net zero by 2050, employment is projected to need to almost double to 860,000 jobs by 2030²⁷. In the West Midlands alone, a projected annual increase in employment of 10% is needed to help meet wider national objectives.

Many of the occupations expected to be in highest demand to support clean energy ambitions are closely aligned with the Construction and Manufacturing sectors. The top two occupations with highest projected levels of employment are in Skilled Construction and Building Trades and Skilled Metal, Electrical and Electronic Trades. These occupational groups cover roles required to deliver clean energy infrastructure and retrofit existing homes and buildings, such as Plumbers, Carpenters, Glaziers and Window Fitters, Electricians and Metal Production Workers. As set out earlier, updates to the Future Homes Standard requiring new homes to have solar panels and heat pumps in 2028 will result in increasing demand for those with skills to be able to install such technologies. In addition, a range of professional and technical roles will be required to plan, deliver and manage clean energy projects, including Production Managers in Manufacturing and Construction, Engineering Professionals and Mechanical and Civil Engineers.

Estimates produced by the Midlands Net Zero Hub indicate that around 15,400 people are currently employed in Worcestershire's Low Carbon and Environmental Goods and Services (LCEGS) sector, contributing approximately £1.8 billion in GVA. To meet Net Zero targets by

²⁷ Department for Energy Security and Net Zero Clean Energy Jobs Plan (2025)

2030, Worcestershire is estimated to require between 1,427 and 8,244 additional workers²⁸, highlighting the need to ensure local provision can help to upskill the workforce to help meet wider national climate ambitions.

While Net Zero has been referenced more frequently by employers since the previous LSIP, engagement suggests that it is still more commonly viewed as a future consideration, rather than being embedded within day-to-day workforce planning. Employers report uncertainty around what Net Zero means in practice, and how it will need to be incorporated into business-as-usual activity as the UK economy continues to decarbonise.

However, a number of local initiatives are already underway to support progress. These include SkillsBoost Worcestershire, which supports organisations with the costs of upskilling their workforce through a 50% training grant. This can include improving net zero skills in a company or can be as broad as having a consultant come in to talk about sustainability for a day, both of which drive demand in the LCEGS sector.

There is also existing Net Zero-related provision within the county, including dedicated Net Zero modules delivered by Heart of Worcestershire and Kidderminster Colleges, and employer-led training initiatives such as those delivered by Worcester Bosch, focused on upskilling workers in areas including heat pump and solar thermal technologies. In order to continue to play our part in achieving wider Net Zero ambitions, and to open up job opportunities in a growing area of expertise it will be important to ensure that businesses are aware of available support and that workers are equipped with the technical skills required to contribute to the transition to a low-carbon economy.

²⁸ Midlands Net Zero Hub Worcestershire Low Carbon and Environmental Goods and Services Sector Study 2023/24

SIC-SOC Classifications of identified skills needs

LSIP Occupation name	Definition within the LSIP report	Relevant SOC Code(s)	LSIP sector name	Relevant SIC Code(s)	Mapping Limitations / Further Information
Carers and Nurses	Care workers and home carers, Nursing auxiliaries and assistants, Other nursing professionals and community nurses	6135, 6131, 2237, 2232	Health and Social Care	86.10; 86.20; 86.90; 87.10; 87.20; 87.30; 88.10; 88.90	This occupational grouping reflects high-volume frontline roles within Health & Social Care, forming a core component of the sector's current and projected workforce demand
Health Care Professionals	Medical practitioners, specialist nurses	2211, 2212, 2233, 2234	Health and Social Care	86.21; 86.22; 86.90	This occupational grouping comprises professional clinical roles that are central to the diagnosis, treatment and management of care needs, reflecting sustained and specialist workforce demand across Health and Social Care
Senior Care Workers	Senior Care Workers	1232, 6136	Health and Social Care	87.10; 87.20; 87.30; 88.10; 88.90	This occupational grouping represents senior and supervisory care roles that are integral to workforce progression and retention – crucial challenges to work towards tackling in the care sector
Trades- based Construction	Plumbers, electricians, Carpenters and joiners, brick layer, plasters, painters and decorators, roofers, construction	5241, 5314, 5315, 5316, 5313, 5319,	Construction	41.20/1; 41.20/2; 43.21; 43.22; 43.31;	This occupational grouping reflects high-volume, site-based construction trades that form the backbone of the sector's workforce, representing a

	and building trades nec, elementary construction occupations	5321, 5323, 9129		43.32; 43.33, 43.34/1, 43.91	sustained source of employment demand linked to housing delivery, infrastructure investment and retrofit activity
Construction Managers	Production managers in construction, Construction project managers and Construction supervisors	1122, 2455, 5330	Construction	41.20/1, 41.20/2; 42.1; 43.12; 70.22/9; 71.11/1	This occupational grouping reflects management and supervisory roles within Construction that are essential to workforce progression, project delivery and the effective oversight of increasingly complex construction activity
Advanced Construction Roles	Civil engineers and quantity surveyors	2121, 2453	Construction	42; 43.13; 71.11/2; 71.12/2, 71.20, 74.10	This occupational grouping represents advanced professional roles in Construction that underpin project viability, regulatory compliance and technical assurance, reflecting ongoing demand for high-level specialist skills across the sector
Production Operatives and Process Roles	Assemblers (vehicles and metal goods), Metal working machine operatives, warehouse operatives	8120, 8142, 9252	Manufacturing & Engineering	25.61; 25.62; 27.90; 28.41; 33.12	This occupational grouping reflects high-volume, shop-floor and process-based roles that underpin production activity across Manufacturing and Engineering, forming a consistent source of employment demand

Manufacturing Managers	Production managers and directors in manufacturing, Engineering project managers	1121, 2127	Manufacturing & Engineering	Cuts across SIC codes 10-33 (Manufacturing); 70.22/9	This occupational grouping represents management and supervisory roles that are central to workforce planning, production efficiency and the adoption of advanced manufacturing processes, reflecting ongoing demand for leadership capability within the sector
Engineering Professionals	Engineering technicians, engineering professionals nec, mechanical engineers, metal working production and maintenance fitters	2122, 2129, 3113, 5223	Manufacturing & Engineering	62.01; 62.02; 71.12/1; 71.12/9; 71.20; 74.90	This occupational grouping reflects professional and technical engineering roles that are critical to the design, operation and maintenance of manufacturing and engineering activity, representing sustained demand for specialist skills that underpin productivity, innovation and technological adoption across the sector

Annex B: Agreed actions

Priority 1: Health and Social Care

Change/action	Activity	Lead	Partners Involved	Timescales	Expected output(s)	Monitoring & measurement
Maintain and enhance L1-3 pathways supporting entry into high demand roles	Delivery of specialist health career pathways and progression routes (Level 2 → Level 3 → HE) Provision of clinical skills training and NHS placement opportunities	Worcestershire Sixth Form College	NHS (Worcestershire Royal Hospital, Alexandra Hospital) Universities / employers (via professional programmes and taster days)	Ongoing provision	Students progressing into health degree pathways (medicine, nursing, etc.) Completion of Level 2 and Level 3 Health & Social Care qualifications Increased exposure to NHS careers through placements	Progression rates to HE (health degrees) Retention rates (noting T-Level drop-out challenge) Placement participation numbers
	Delivery of health & social care pathways across multiple FE providers	Pershore College		Ongoing provision	Students progressing through Level 1–3 and T-Level pathways Increased work experience readiness	Course enrolment levels (steady demand ~18–20 students per course)

					(DBS-enabled placements)	
	Delivery of Health & Social Care bootcamps, SWAPs and short-term training pathways Providing entry routes into social care employment and career switching	Kidderminster College Worcestershire County Council	Employers (offering guaranteed interviews) Job centres Training providers Care providers	Ongoing / rolling delivery – April 2026 - Bootcamps: up to 6 weeks SWAPs up to 6 weeks	Adults achieving Level 2 Care Certificate Job interviews secured for participants	Job outcomes following bootcamps / SWAPs Completion rates Progression into employment Drop-off rates / attendance issues in SWAPs
	Implementation and promotion of Quality Assured Care Learning Service (QACLS) accreditation	Skills for Care (National delivery) Department of Health and Social Care (commissioner)	Local training providers (seeking QACLS accreditation) Adult social care employers Education/training providers	Ongoing / rolling programme	Increased number of QACLS-accredited training providers Delivery of approved courses (incl. Oliver McGowan training) Increased employer uptake of LDSS-funded training	Number of providers achieving QACLS accreditation Uptake of LDSS-funded courses Volume of staff completing accredited training

			DHSC (policy + funding linkage via LDSS)		Expanded non-apprenticeship training offer	Employer participation rates (non-apprenticeship training)
Strengthen employer–provider coordination to better align workforce demand, skills development and placement capacity	Explore approaches to strengthen employer–provider engagement on workforce needs Continue to run the Health and Wellbeing forum with a focus on the LSIP and sector skills needs	ERB ERB	Health and Wellbeing Forum Local training providers Skills for care Employers Worcestershire County Council Active H&W Partner guest speakers Employers	TBC 2 per year	TBC More businesses being aware of how to connect with local provision, the importance of work experience and how to attract new talent.	Number of employers engaging in curriculum design/workforce development initiative Attendance numbers at events and counting the number of referrals the chamber make into partner organisations

Enhance all-age CIAG to raise awareness of Health & Social Care careers, supporting new entrants, reskilling for career changers, and upskilling to improve retention	Delivery of ICS Facilitator Skills Training programme Development of system-wide facilitation capacity across health and social care	Hereford & Worcester Integrated Care Board (ICB)	NHS Trusts Local authorities Adult social care providers Primary care / GP practices VCSE sector Care homes & hospices	Launch: Summer 2026 Ongoing annual commitment (linked to facilitation requirement)	Trained facilitators across the ICS Delivery of at least 3 development sessions per facilitator per year System-wide learning and collaboration sessions	Number of trained facilitators Number of sessions delivered annually Feedback from participants / organisations
	Coordinate the introduction of Lifelong Learning Entitlement to support modular and flexible higher-level skills	TBC	Training providers	Launch: Sept 2026 Courses available: from Jan 2027	Increased uptake of Level 4–6 training Flexible retraining opportunities for adults Greater access to HE and technical skills	Uptake of LLE funding Enrolments in modular learning Adult learner participation rates
	Design and deliver a coordinated Health & Social Care careers promotion campaign, using employer-led case studies, targeted	TBC	Employers (case studies, content) Schools Training providers	Campaign scoping autumn 2026	Increased interest in social care careers Better understanding of career pathways and progression	Student engagement levels Applications to health & care courses

	digital and social media content to showcase progression routes, real roles, and local opportunities					
--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Priority 2 : Construction

Change/action	Activity	Lead	Partners Involved	Timescales	Expected output(s)	Monitoring & measurement
Sustain L1–3 trades pathways with modern/low carbon construction embedded	Continue to deliver L1–3 construction provision in areas of confirmed learner demand	Training providers	Training providers Employers	Ongoing	L1–3 construction courses delivered in areas of confirmed demand	Increase/sustained course enrolments; retention/completion
	Promote uptake of the FE Teacher Industry Exchange	CTEC (Dudley College)	FE Construction employers	Expected launch: autumn 2026	Industry exchange placements completed between FE teachers and construction employers	Number of industry professionals participating

	Map current and future planned L1-3 construction provision to identify gaps and opportunities to use shared facilities	TBC	Training providers	September 2026	Completed provision mapping	Shared system understanding of duplication and gaps in provision
Strengthen employer engagement with apprenticeships and work based learning to support entry into the sector	Establish the Construction and trade forum to support employer engagement in workforce planning	ERB	Employers Providers CITB	June 2026	Creation of meaningful mechanisms for engaging with local construction businesses	Number of construction business engaging with discussions on workforce development
	Engage employers in shaping the development and relevance of construction-adjacent V Levels	TBC	Construction employers Providers ERB	V level launch, September 2028	Number of employer co-designed courses	Number of employers engaged in course co-design
Validate demand for L4-7 provision for technical, supervisory and	Engage with construction employers to test demand for L4-7 training routes	TBC	Providers Construction employers	Delivery expected in 2027	Employer demand assessment for Level 4–7 construction training routes	Number of construction employers engaged in demand-testing discussions

professional roles						
Promote training that supports upskilling into Net Zero roles	Develop consistent progression messaging to raise learner awareness of retrofit career opportunities and embed into existing communication channels	TBC	Providers Worcestershire County Council	Scoping expected in 2027	Set of retrofit careers progression messages aligned to existing construction and employability pathways Shared messaging toolkit for providers and partners to use consistently	Learner progression into retrofit/MMC courses or roles Employer feedback on demand for retrofit roles

Priority 3: Manufacturing and Engineering

Change/action	Activity	Lead	Partners Involved	Timescales	Expected output(s)	Monitoring & measurement
Increase uptake of apprenticeships at all levels, including higher-level apprenticeships, through a coordinated campaign showcasing how apprenticeships work and the progression routes available.	Continue delivery of Skills Expo, Generation STEM and Women into Engineering/IT activities to promote manufacturing and engineering careers pathways and apprenticeship opportunities	WCC	Schools, employers, colleges, Careers Hub	Delivery ongoing	Continued engagement activity and visibility of engineering careers and apprenticeship routes	Participation numbers; employer engagement; participant feedback
	Continue delivery of primary STEM engagement activity across schools to strengthen early awareness of technical and apprenticeship pathways	WCC	Schools, employers	Delivery ongoing	Sustained STEM outreach activity	Number of schools engaged; pupil participation

	Explore the best routes to engage manufacturing and engineering businesses in apprenticeship and workforce development discussions	ERB	Manufacturing forum Employers Providers, PEIs, trade associations	Manufacturing forum engagement, summer 2026	More meaningful employer engagement mechanisms	Number of businesses engaged; number participating in workforce discussions
	Develop a coordinated campaign explaining how apprenticeships work, including progression routes from Level 2–5 and higher-level opportunities	TBC	Providers, employers, Careers Hub	Scoping from January 2027	Shared apprenticeship communications and pathway resources	Increased awareness; apprenticeship enquiries and applications
	Explore mechanisms for wider apprenticeship levy transfer across manufacturing and engineering employers	TBC	Providers, Chamber, large employers	TBC – new future activity (2027+)	Increased levy utilisation and apprenticeship starts	Number/value of levy transfers; apprenticeship starts supported

	Explore collaborative approaches to recruit and retain specialist trainers for engineering apprenticeship provision	TBC	Employers, colleges	TBC – new future activity (2027+)	Increased delivery capacity	Number of trainers recruited; expanded provision capacity
	Engage employers in shaping apprenticeship and technical course content aligned to operational manufacturing environments	Providers	Employers, GTA, WCC	TBC – new future activity (2027+)	More employer-informed provision	Number of employer co-designed modules/courses
	Explore partnerships with external providers and institutions (e.g. Dudley College, PEIs) to widen recruitment and progression opportunities	TBC	External providers, PEIs, employers	TBC – new future activity (2027+)	Broader apprenticeship and talent pathways	Number of partnerships established; learner referrals

Continue delivery of skills bootcamps and technical upskilling provision linked to manufacturing and engineering sectors Continue employer-led training and workforce programmes already operating within major businesses	Providers	Employers	Ongoing	Continued technical workforce development activity	Learner participation; completion rates	Learner participation; completion rates
	Major employers (e.g. Bosch)	Providers	Ongoing	Continued in-company technical skills development	Employer participation; staff development outcomes	Employer participation; staff development outcomes
	Develop a shared strategic understanding of future manufacturing and engineering workforce requirements	TBC	Employers, providers, Growth Hub	TBC	Shared workforce intelligence and planning framework	Production of workforce analysis and forecasting
	Create a strategy to place employers centrally in shaping technical curriculum and Industry 4.0 skills delivery	TBC	Employers, providers	TBC – new future activity (2027+)	Employer-led curriculum framework	Number of employers involved; curriculum changes implemented

	Explore development of short-course AI, digital and Industry 4.0 training for school leavers and entry-level workers	Providers	Employers	TBC – new future activity (2027+)	New flexible technical training offer	Number of short courses developed; participation levels
	Explore opportunities to address gaps in Level 4 apprenticeship and higher technical provision within Worcestershire	GTA	Providers, employers, WCC	September 2026 onwards	Expanded higher-level technical pathways	Number of Level 4+ pathways available
	Explore shared facility approaches and collaborative delivery models to overcome capacity and specialist equipment constraints	Providers	Employers, districts	TBC – new future activity (2027+)	Improved access to specialist technical facilities	Shared facility usage; reduction in provision gaps

	Develop more business- and plant-specific technical training provision (e.g. Siemens kit and operational systems) aligned to real industrial environments	TBC	Employers, providers	TBC – new future activity (2027+)	Context-specific technical delivery	Employer satisfaction; learner progression
	Explore stronger engagement with external innovation, manufacturing and technical education networks	TBC	PEIs, trade associations, employers	TBC – new future activity (2027+)	Stronger external collaboration and knowledge exchange	Number of external partnerships and initiatives

Priority 4: Everyday employability

Change/action	Activity	Lead	Partners Involved	Timescales	Expected output(s)	Monitoring & measurement
Continue to embed employability skills and workplace behaviours across learning and development environments	Support employer awareness of, and participation in, the Modern Work Experience pilot	Careers Enterprise Company	Cornerstone Employers ERB	Launch September 2026	Work experience placements	Number of work experience opportunities offered
	Develop employer-informed communications for careers leads on workplace readiness and employer expectations	ERB	Worcestershire County Council Employers	TBC – new future activity (2027+)	Communication materials	Number Employers engaged to define key workplace readiness expectations
	Increase engagement with the Teaching Encounters programme to improve understanding of local employment	Careers Enterprise Company	Schools Employers	TBC	Teaching Encounters placements delivered with local employers	Number of Teaching Encounters placements delivered

	opportunities and employer expectations					
Establish a shared understanding of employer digital skills needs and explore where gaps in provision may exist	Undertake targeted employer research to understand digital skills needs	ERB	Providers Employers Worcestershire County Council	TBC – new future activity (2027+)	Briefing paper detailing findings of employer engagement	Number of employers engaged in the research Use of findings to inform provision review and Worcestershire digital skills framework
	Develop sector-based case studies to showcase digital skills and career pathways across priority sectors	TBC	TBC	TBC – new future activity (2027+)	X number of case studies that highlight how digital skills are used in real roles	Number of case studies produced
	Use employer digital skills research to map how existing provision aligns with identified needs and highlight gaps	TBC	Providers	TBC – new future activity (2027+)	Digital skills provision mapping and gap analysis summary	Completion of a provision mapping exercise using employer research findings

Create a Worcestershire Essential Digital Skills framework to help employers assess digital skills needs and signpost staff to training and resources	Co-design a digital and AI framework	TBC	Cornerstone employers Schools Employers	TBC – expected scoping autumn 2026	Essential Digital Skills Framework, employer self-assessment tool and signposting resource.	Framework developed and published Number of employers engaging with or using the framework
Continue to strengthen employer capability to support work-readiness through clear expectations, structured induction and	Design and deliver the New Energy Emerging Talent campaign to increase employer awareness of the benefits of employing young people	Worcestershire County Council	Promoted by partners	Design campaign, summer 2026 Campaign launch, autumn 2026	TBC	TBC

early career support	Develop and deliver employer-facing communications on qualification reforms	TBC	Herefordshire and Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce Worcestershire County Council Providers	TBC	Employer-facing communications materials explaining qualification reforms and implications for employers	Number of communication activities delivered (e.g. briefings, events, resources published)
	Promote the INclusive Worcestershire Leaders programme	Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership	Worcestershire Growth Hub ERB Professional Services Forum	Ongoing	100 Worcestershire businesses assessed as INclusive Worcestershire Leader	Number of businesses who meet the Eight Expectations for Excellence benchmarks

Priority 5 : Business Resilience

Change/action	Activity <i>What?</i>	Lead <i>Who?</i>	Partners Involved <i>Who else?</i>	Timescales <i>When?</i>	Expected output(s) <i>What will be delivered?</i>	Monitoring & measurement <i>How will we know if we have been successful?</i>
Promote careers and available local provision across HR, administration, marketing and financial technician pathways	Launch Think Skills Worcestershire to promote local skills pathways into business and professional service careers	Worcestershire County Council	Herefordshire and Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce Professional services forum	TBC	Delivery of online platform showcasing	TBC
Improve SME management capability through accessible training to support progression into management roles	Deliver leadership and management skills bootcamps	Worcestershire Growth Hub	Worcestershire County Council	TBC	Number of courses delivered	Learner starts Completion rate
	Coordinate a coherent offer of management focused tailored learning	TBC	Adult Skills Fund providers	TBC	Mapped and coordinated management training offer across Adult Skills Fund providers	Completion of a mapped overview of management-focused provision (yes/no)

Increase employer access to HR and people-management support, including signposting to Growth Hub services	Review and relaunch workforce planning toolkit	Worcestershire County Council	Promoted by partners	Review completed by June 2026 Toolkit relaunch September 2026	Production of refreshed online toolkit	Number of businesses engaging with the workforce planning toolkit
	Promote and deliver the business grants for HR and leadership and management consultancy	Worcestershire Growth Hub	Worcestershire County Council	TBC	Administering of grant funding	Number of businesses accessing grants
Continue to signpost businesses to Net Zero adoption support	Identify Net Zero training opportunities linked to the delivery of place-based decarbonisation pilots	MNZM	Worcestershire County Council Worcestershire Growth Hub	Pilot completed by March 2027	1 x engagement event at Redditch Moons Moat 1 x engagement event at Worcester Blackpole/Berkley	Number of businesses training opportunities identified

	Develop an understanding of SME awareness of Net Zero adoption requirements and the support needed to enable adoption	MNZM	ERB	TBC – new future activity (2027+)	Clear recommendations on priority support needs for SMEs	Number of SMEs engaged in the research Clear identification of awareness levels, gaps and support needs (yes/no)
	Continue to promote available Net Zero grant and advisory support	Worcestershire Growth Hub	Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce	Ongoing	Signposting of businesses	Number of businesses signposted to support

Annex C: Background and methodology

Evidence base

The priority skill needs identified here are derived from a combination of publicly available labour market data from the ONS; national and regional research and current and future skills needs including Skills England publications; sector body research and engagement; employer and stakeholder engagement; SIC/SOC analysis; and Lightcast.

- Publicly available labour market data: ONS sources have been used to inform which sectors should form the skill needs priorities including Business Register and Employment Survey; Business Counts; Regional gross value added (balanced) by industry; local authorities by ITL1 region
- National and regional research: this includes Skills England Assessment of priority skills to 2030 and Sector skills needs assessments for the IS-8(+2) sectors; and sector body research including Skills for Care, Construction Industry Training Board and Make UK to outline research on current skills gaps and future demand for skills
- Megatrends: national research has identified megatrends which will impact what employers will need from the workforce in the coming years. This includes wide spread adopting of AI and automation tools, the drive for net zero and climate resilience and continued ageing of the population.
- SIC/SOC analysis: using ONS estimates of employment by 4-digit Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) and 5-digit Standard Industrial Classification (SIC), and applying this to Worcestershire using employment estimates from the ONS Business Register and Employment Survey, we can proxy for the types of roles which are currently the highest employing by sector, and therefore which roles are expected to be most in-demand by sector
- Lightcast: estimates report what roles are estimated to be currently the highest employing and how this is forecast to change in the coming years. We have then used job postings demand, filtering by the highest employing current and future roles, to show the skills most in-demand by employers for these types of role
- Robust employer engagement: undertaken through in-depth interviews with local employers to understand current and future skills needs, perceptions of available provision and barriers to investing in training. Engagement was delivered by the Chamber of Commerce and partners, ensuring a broad mix of businesses by size, sector and geography were included.

Alignment with LSIP Guidance

As summarised in the table below, the development of the Worcestershire LSIP has followed the three-stage process set out in the statutory guidance.

Stage	Activities
1: Identify and articulate skills needs	• Comprehensive labour market analysis: drawing on a wide range of robust datasets including ONS (BRES, Business Counts, GVA), Annual Population Survey, NEET data, vacancy data, Lightcast analytics, and Skills England priority occupation assessments. • Strategy review: review of Worcestershire County Council's economic analysis, sector strategies (Plan for Growth, Get Worcestershire Working, Work and Health Plan) to ensure priority areas are aligned to wider strategic priorities. Review of national policy and strategy to be clear how local priorities contribute to national aims. • 3 stakeholder workshops: Attendees include Herefordshire and Worcestershire Group Training Association, CITB, Worcestershire County Council, Active Herefordshire & Worcestershire, Malvern Business Academy, Careers & Enterprise Company (CEC), Heart of Worcestershire College, Kidderminster College, Wyre Forest District Council, University of Worcester, GLP Training, Work Pays, Skills for Care, CIPD, Worcester City Council, Hewett Recruitment, Pershore College, Wychavon Council, Bromsgrove & Redditch Council. • Employer interviews: 290 in-depth interviews with local businesses across sectors, sizes and locations within Worcestershire to understand local skills gaps, drivers of skills needs, perceived availability of local training solutions, emerging skills needs years 1 -3, and workforce planning practices. • LSIP Board meeting: to review quantitative and qualitative evidence and agree priority areas for the 2026 – 2029 delivery period.
2: identify the changes and actions needed to improve the skills system that it better meets existing and future skills needs	• 1:1 stakeholder engagement including: ○ Strategic partner engagement: regular collaboration with the local authority to align LSIP priorities with the county's strategic aims, including discussion of system-wide challenges such as gaps in provision, low learner take-up, retention issues, workforce pressures, and the need to strengthen employer engagement in co-design. ○ Employment and inclusion partners: ongoing engagement with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), Jobcentre Plus and Seetec Pluss to ensure alignment between skills provision, employment support and labour market demand, and to inform LSIP actions relating to progression, inclusion and access to opportunity.

	○ District council and sector body engagement: regular meetings with district councils to reflect feedback from local business networks and to understand future plans for community-based provision, ensuring activity is complementary and duplication is minimised. Sector bodies including CITB, CIPD and Skills for Care play an integral role through participation in working groups and regular catch-ups, ensuring LSIP priorities reflect changing employer skills needs. ● LSIP Board meeting: collaborative development of the overarching changes and high-level actions required to meet current and future skills needs, including consideration of: provision changes, workforce planning capability, recruitment challenges and employer engagement in co-design. ● Stakeholder workshop: attended by providers, partners and wider stakeholders to co-design the activities that sit beneath the agreed actions and changes, ensuring feasibility, alignment with local delivery capacity and shared ownership of implementation.
3: Drafting the LSIP	● The LSIP has been drafted in line with the statutory format, with LSIP Board members and wider partners given structured opportunities to review, comment on and shape the content throughout the drafting process.

Environmental and Net Zero Goals

Environmental sustainability and Net Zero objectives have been embedded across the Worcestershire LSIP:

Construction priority: embedding low-carbon and clean energy requirements

The construction priority explicitly recognises the growing national and local demand for skills linked to modern and low-carbon construction. The LSIP includes a dedicated change/action to sustain and strengthen the L1–3 pipeline of trades, ensuring that modern and low-carbon construction skills are embedded within core pathways. This aligns with the Clean Energy Jobs Plan, which identifies significant workforce needs across skilled construction and building trades, including roles needed for retrofit, energy-efficient construction and installation of low-carbon technologies.

The LSIP also commits to promoting opportunities for existing workers to upskill into Net Zero-related roles, such as heat pump installation, solar technologies, energy-efficient building methods and retrofit. This ensures the county can respond to growing demand for clean energy infrastructure while supporting progression for those already in the sector.

Cross-cutting priority: Business Skills and Net Zero readiness

Net Zero is also captured as a cross-cutting theme through the business skills priority. The LSIP recognises that employers increasingly need the capability to plan for and respond to

Net Zero requirements, but that awareness, confidence and preparedness vary significantly across Worcestershire's business base. To address this, the LSIP sets out actions to:

- Improve SME leadership and management capability, supporting businesses to anticipate future skills needs, including those linked to decarbonisation.
- Increase awareness of existing Net Zero support, such as programmes delivered via the Worcestershire Growth Hub and Herefordshire & Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce.
- Signpost businesses to grants, advice and training on sustainability and low-carbon practices, helping employers understand how Net Zero will affect operations, supply chains and workforce development

Equality of opportunity

Equality of opportunity has been embedded throughout the Worcestershire LSIP to ensure that all learners, regardless of age, background, or circumstances, can access, progress through, and benefit from the skills system.

The LSIP's dual focus on "Getting In" and "Getting On" ensures that equality considerations are incorporated across the full learner journey:

- **Getting In:** targeted support for those not currently in work, with an emphasis on raising awareness of careers, improving workplace readiness, and ensuring learners understand different training routes. This is particularly important for young people at risk of becoming NEET, those with weaker labour market attachment and adults returning after periods of significant inactivity.
- **Getting On:** strengthening in-work progression through upskilling, retraining and access to higher-level pathways. This supports those who may face progression barriers due to limited qualifications, time constraints, or financial barriers.
This approach helps ensure that people at different life stages can access opportunities that contribute to better pay, stability and long-term career growth.

Provider and employer responsibilities

Equality of opportunity is reinforced by the shared responsibilities of the system:

- **Training providers** continue to embed inclusive approaches to learning, adapt delivery to learners' needs, and ensure that employability and digital skills are consistently developed across programmes.
- **Employers** play an active role in shaping equitable recruitment and progression practices, offering placements, supporting early-career staff and recognising the value of hiring from a broader talent pool.
- **System partners** such as Jobcentre Plus, sector bodies and careers services help identify barriers - such as access to quality careers advice, placement availability or digital exclusion - and form part of the solution to address them.

Alignment to the Get Worcestershire Working Plan

The LSIP is strongly aligned with the priorities set out in the Get Worcestershire Working Plan, with its dual focus on supporting people to *get into work* and *get on at work* providing a clear and complementary framework for delivery.

The actions and activities outlined in the LSIP are designed to support this shared ambition, providing a coordinated set of interventions across employer engagement, skills provision, and workforce development. Collectively, these activities contribute directly to the delivery of the Get Worcestershire Working Plan's short-term priorities: particularly in strengthening youth transitions, improving employer–system integration, supporting inclusive employment outcomes, and expanding access to skills and training (see Table 15).

Importantly, delivery will be informed by a targeted approach, ensuring that support is directed towards those who stand to benefit most. This includes young people at risk of becoming NEET, individuals with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), and those furthest from the labour market or facing multiple barriers to employment. Through effective signposting and integration with wider programmes - such as Connect to Work and other health and employment initiatives - LSIP activities will help ensure that individuals can access the right support at the right time, enabling progression into sustained employment and long-term career development.

Table 15. LSIP and GWWP alignment

GWWP Priority areas	Aligned LSIP activities
Youth Employment and Transitions	• Support employer awareness of, and participation in, the Modern Work Experience pilot • Develop employer-informed communications for careers leads on workplace readiness and employer expectations • Design and deliver the New Energy Emerging Talent campaign to increase employer awareness of the benefits of employing young people • Develop sector-based case studies to showcase digital skills and career pathways across priority sectors
Employer and system integration	• Explore approaches to strengthen employer–provider engagement on workforce needs • Establish the Construction and trade forum to support employer engagement in workforce planning
Inclusive employment and health integration	• Review and relaunch workforce planning toolkit • Promote the INclusive Worcestershire Leaders programme • Promote and deliver the business grants for HR and leadership and management consultancy
Skills development and adult learning	• Launch Think Skills Worcestershire to promote local skills pathways into business and professional service careers • Continue to deliver Skills Bootcamps across priority sectors and employability sectors.

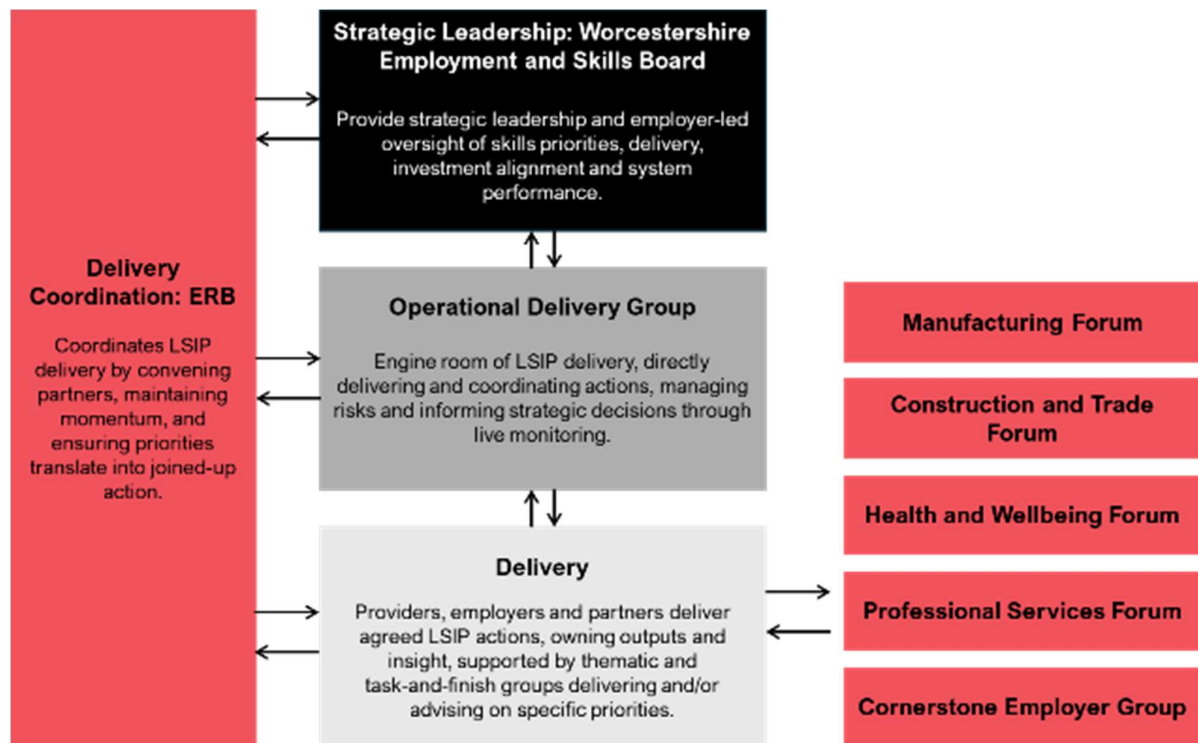
	• Continue delivery of Skills Expo, Generation STEM and Women into Engineering/IT activities to promote manufacturing and engineering careers pathways and apprenticeship opportunities • Develop more business- and plant-specific technical training provision (e.g. Siemens kit and operational systems) aligned to real industrial environments • Implementation and promotion of Quality Assured Care Learning Service (QACLS) accreditation
--	---

LSIP Governance

The development of the Worcestershire LSIP has been overseen by the 2023 - 2026 LSIP Board, which provided the central governance mechanism to ensure the plan was employer-led, evidence-based and responsive to local economic need. The Board acted as the primary forum for strategic oversight during LSIP development, providing direction, scrutiny and challenge.

As the LSIP moves into delivery for the 2026–2029 period, an evolved governance structure has been agreed to strengthen coordination, monitoring and alignment with wider skills system governance across the county. The proposed governance model is summarised in Figure 4.

Figure 4. LSIP governance model



1. Strategic Oversight and Leadership – Employment & Skills Board (ESB)

Strategic oversight and leadership of the LSIP will be provided by the **Worcestershire Employment & Skills Board (ESB)**. The ESB acts as the senior strategic forum, providing direction, challenge and assurance, rather than managing delivery directly.

In this role, the ESB will:

- Set and endorse LSIP priorities, outcomes and success measures.
- Ensure alignment between the LSIP, economic strategy, growth plans and funding decisions.
- Review progress and system-level risks, and resolve issues requiring strategic intervention.
- Hold the system to account for delivery against agreed priorities and milestones.
- Ensure the LSIP remains employer-led and is developed collaboratively with providers and partners.
- Champion and promote skills investment, and articulate Worcestershire's skills priorities to national bodies, funders and government.

Positioning the ESB in this role embeds the LSIP within Worcestershire's wider skills and economic governance, strengthening strategic coherence and accountability.

2. Operational Delivery Group

Operational delivery leadership is provided by a smaller, action-focused group that acts as the engine room of LSIP delivery. This group converts strategic intent into coordinated action and provides the primary forum for monitoring and review.

The group will:

- Directly deliver and coordinate agreed LSIP activities.
- Agree delivery responsibilities, sequencing and critical milestones.
- Identify and manage risks, capacity gaps and interdependencies across the system.
- Collate, interrogate and act on live monitoring information.
- Provide clear, insight-led updates to the ESB, including escalation of issues requiring strategic decisions.

3. Delivery across the system

Delivery activity is led by providers, employers and partners across Worcestershire. Action owners are responsible for implementing agreed LSIP actions and generating the insight required to evidence progress and continuous improvement. Delivery partners will:

- Deliver and own agreed actions, milestones and outputs.
- Provide timely, high-quality data and insight on progress, performance and issues.
- Proactively surface risks, opportunities and solutions.
- Work collaboratively and adapt delivery to maximise system-wide impact.

Where focused action is required, existing sector forums and/or temporary task-and-finish groups may be established to deliver specific programmes of work, refine delivery approaches for particular priorities, or scope new projects.

The role of the ERB

The ERB acts as the convenor, connector and advocate of the Local Skills Improvement Plan. Its role is to enable the LSIP to function as a live, employer-led delivery framework by coordinating partners, sharing intelligence, and ensuring agreed priorities translate into consistent, joined-up action across the system. It operates between strategic leadership and delivery activity, ensuring that employer insight, delivery intelligence and emerging risks are visible, credible and acted upon