



Apprenticeship Strategy and Action Plan 2022-2024

Introduction

The LLEP Apprenticeships Strategy and Action Plan is focused on three goals:

Goal 1: Increase the number of people taking up apprenticeships and traineeships.

Goal 2: Increase the number of LLEP SME businesses employing an apprentice.

Goal 3: Support employers and providers to work effectively together to increase the uptake of

Higher and Degree apprenticeships between 2022/2023 and 2023/24 academic years.

The strategy and approach that the LLEP will take is across five strands:

- Support for employers, especially SMEs.
- Raising awareness of apprenticeships, traineeships and T levels to young people (especially those aged 16-18) and adults, with better links to careers in the curriculum and starting apprenticeship conversations with adults.
- Enhanced contact with area providers.
- Support for business intermediaries.
- Increasing degree apprenticeship numbers locally, particularly in STEM subjects.



20-point Action Plan:

Challenge: Challenge: encouraging more employers, especially SMEs, to utilise apprenticeships to support new and existing Raise the parity and take-up of apprenticeships across pipeline of talent. all ages. Create an area focused apprenticeship provider forum 12. Raise awareness of apprenticeships across LLEP area schools, young people and adults Create an online area provider matrix of provision 13. Support area schools and colleges with professional Series of update webinars for local business development sessions on embedding apprenticeship intermediaries on area offer awareness into careers and links to curriculum Create a LLEP summary of Plan for Jobs 14. Undertake complimentary work with ASK (Apprenticeship Create a LLEP area apprenticeship guide for employers Support and Knowledge) and Careers & Enterprise and increase apprenticeships promotion across the Company (CEC) Team to promote apprenticeships and LLEP Business Gateway Growth Hub (BGGH) T Levels in schools Webinar for levy payers/new levy transfer offer 15. Raise awareness of the apprenticeship option for adults Increase awareness to area employers of levy transfer 16. Increase the take up of apprenticeships, particularly in offers, (e.g. from Asda, Leicester City council and other STEM related roles levy payers who can pledge a transfer of unspent apprenticeship levy) 17. Support with the business case and promotion of the degree apprenticeship offer to Leicester and 8. Build and embed apprenticeships promotion across all Leicestershire employers and individuals LLEP, BGGH, Leicester Employment Hub and skills partner events 18. Recruit new members to increase LLEP area apprentice representation in the East Midlands Apprenticeships 9. Enhanced promotion of T Levels and Building the Ambassador Network (EMAAN) including that of young Workforce of the Future Guide to employers llep.org.uk/buildingtheworkforce apprentices 19. Source live apprenticeship vacancy update for 10. Increase employer representation on East Midlands Apprenticeship Ambassador Group (EMAAN), currently schools, colleges, careers and job search four employers for LLEP area support partners 11. Increase provision of apprenticeships, particularly in 20. Coordinate a SEND schools apprenticeships STEM related roles. awareness offer

Apprenticeship Strategy and Action Plan

Apprenticeships, T Levels (the Government's new technical training offer) and traineeships offer employers excellent skills support to get ahead and develop talent in this competitive environment, helping to drive productivity and prosperity whilst creating a sustainable workforce.

A key skills action from the LLEPs Economic Growth Strategy is to improve the quality, number and take-up of apprenticeships, hence we have created this Apprenticeships Strategy, which sets out the key area challenges, and actions that help to address these issues. We are also keen to maximise awareness of the new T Levels Technical education offer. The LLEP Local Skills Report highlights apprenticeships and the shortage of qualified staff particularly in Digital Skills – hence the strategy will also align with our Digital Skills Partnership. The strategy can contribute towards overcoming the demand for staff with relevant industry experience in areas like Zero Carbon, and support local authority area commitments to social value, a living wage, and equality and diversity.

An area goal is for apprenticeships and T Levels to be recognised as of **equal parity to academic routes**, (and an alternative routeway to university), and a prestigious pathway to a successful career across all sectors of the economy. This will support our aim for all apprentices to get the very best career opportunities through high quality education and training.

Covid-19 lockdowns have had a large impact on apprenticeships in the UK and affected the launch of T Levels, a new level three technical option, meaning less access to workplace opportunities with employers.

The **Governments 'Plan for Jobs'** includes a number of employers incentives linked to additional funding for traineeships, apprenticeships and the Kickstart (a government scheme offering

young people six months paid work placements). Apprenticeships can be both a driver for social mobility and the means of developing the skills we need to rebuild the economy after lockdowns. The Sutton Trust report on apprenticeships and levelling up emphasises how apprenticeships can help to level up: Degree-Apprenticeships-Levelling-Up.pdf (suttontrust.com)

Apprenticeships need to work for all employers, who can now access **new apprenticeships standards**, designed by employers for employers. Employers know better than anyone what skills an employee needs to do a job, so groups of employers design the standards, or develop new ones.

The **apprenticeship levy**, a monthly tax on big businesses set at 0.5% of their annual wage bill was designed to offer a new stimulus for apprenticeship places in both the public and private sectors, but not all employers have been able to maximise use of their levy. Recently there has been some success in supporting area employers with the transfer of Asda's levy (any sector) in the LLEP area, along with Leicester City Council (health and social care) and the University of Leicester (voluntary and community sector). Accessing further unspent Apprenticeship Levy via the new online **levy transfer offer** could also help to support local apprenticeships activity.

Why does the LLEP area need a strategy and action plan?

We know that lockdowns have had a large impact on apprenticeships in the UK and have also affected the launch of T Levels. Leicester City was badly hit due to being in a lockdown longer than many other areas and has higher than average numbers of 18-24-year olds, who are more likely to work in hard hit sectors like hospitality or in-store retail and who may have had apprenticeships withdrawn.



Area data

The Federation for Industry Sector Skills and Standards (FISSS) has identified that the apprenticeship sector is more exposed to disruption than the general economy as the youngest workers and those with the least qualifications are least likely to work from home. In Leicester and Leicestershire, 16-24-year olds account for 50% of Apprenticeship starts (latest ESFA data, December 2021). The Prince's Trust report, Facing the Future, in March 2021, also highlights the potential long term difficulties for young people: Facing the future: employment prospects for young people after coronavirus (princes-trust.org.uk)



Higher than average 18-24 population, particularly in the city of Leicester

LLEP Area	10.6%
Leicester	14.6%
Leicestershire	8.7%
England	8.4%

A recent survey by the Association of Colleges points to the damage to education during the pandemic suggesting

77% of 16 to 18 yearolds are performing below normal expectations effectively between one and four months behind. www.aoc.co.uk

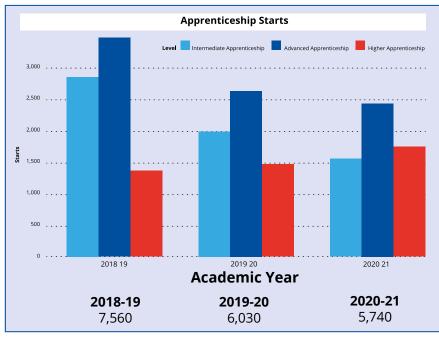
Analysis of the pre-pandemic workforce nationally by the Trades Union Congress found:

- Of 4,352,000 UK workers aged 25 and under, 890,000 work in either accommodation and food, or arts, entertainment and recreation.
- So 20% of workers aged 25 and under work in these two sectors, compared to 6% for workers older than 25
- Workers aged 25 and under are therefore three times more likely to work in one of the two sectors where jobs are at greatest risk.

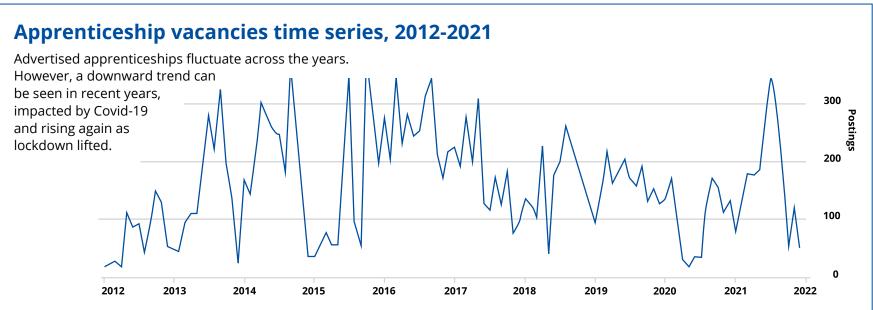
www.tuc.org.uk



Declining numbers of apprenticeships even pre-Covid in the City were exacerbated by Covid (see Apprenticeship starts). This would look even more stark if broken down by city and county.



Since lockdown lifted, the number of apprenticeship vacancies has picked up, but the overall trend is still lower than previous years.



Apprenticeship starts 2020-21

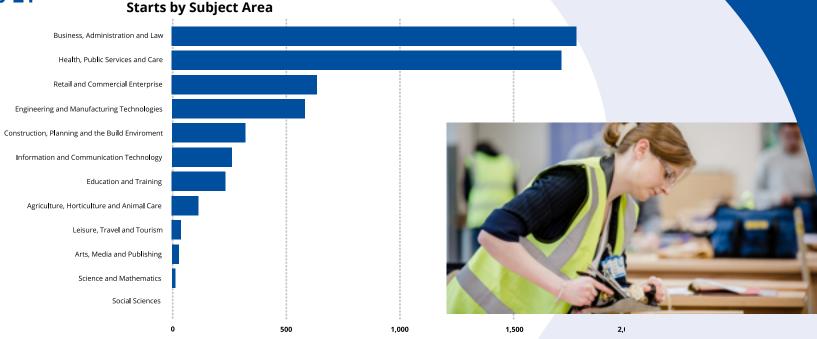
The most popular subject areas were:

- Business, Administration and Law
- Health, Public Services and Care

Followed by:

- Retail and Commercial enterprise
- Engineering and Manufacturing technologies

Engineering and Manufacturing has been identified as a **skills priority** in the LLEP area, needing an ongoing supply of skilled employees, to support the success of the area skills plan. The LLEP has fewer apprentices in Health, Public Services and Care than nationally. This sector has a high number of advertised vacancies and labour demand.



Other challenges

There can be a lack of knowledge around the scope and range of apprenticeships amongst potential learners, parents, carers, and cohorts with additional barriers such as looked-after children or those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). There can also be some confusion amongst employers on their role within the apprenticeship arena, some of whom also feel that the process of securing an apprentice is complex and long-winded, especially for busy micro employers.

There is some lack of school involvement, exacerbated by lockdowns; for example, with Gatsby Benchmark 7, only 33% of area schools had managed to offer meaningful encounters with training providers (up to July 2021), and there is uncertainty amongst some training providers due to some apprenticeship reforms.

There are also **apprenticeship 'myths'**, such as

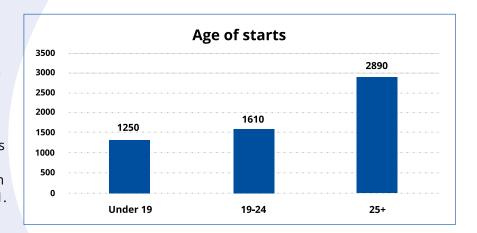
- Apprenticeships are only for 16-18-year olds
- You can't be an apprentice if you are already in work
- Apprenticeships are for those that can't go to university
- Apprenticeships are only for people who will do trades, e.g. construction, hair dressing

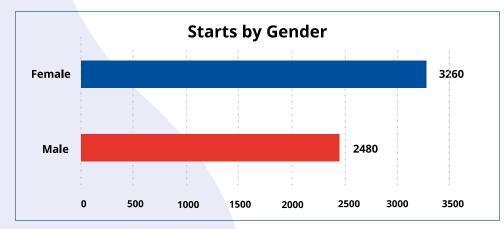
Starts

Apprenticeships are badly paid and 'proper' jobs pay more

The LLEP area has a lower than national overall apprenticeship take up, and the largest gaps are in the most popular areas – engineering, health and social care



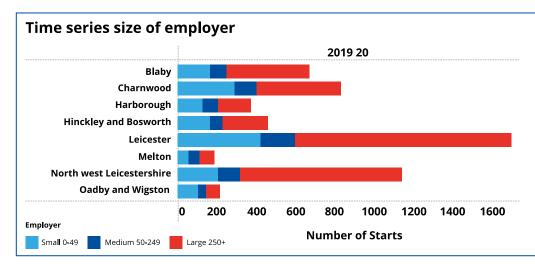




Locally, challenges exist for a variety of issues

- 1 The number of advertised vacancies is lower than other areas due to a large SME population
- 2 People are not applying for apprenticeships (high number of job vacancies, or the apprenticeships are not in areas of interest)
- 3 Not enough employers offer apprenticeships to their existing staff
- 4 The academic route is still more dominant for young people
- 5 Adults are not aware that they can do apprenticeships
- The need to better embed careers in the curriculum with multiple priorities not all teachers fully understand apprenticeships and therefore don't relate the subject to job roles.

Apprenticeships by size of employer



Apprentices by size of business

Most apprentices in the LLEP area are with large employers, with small employers being the second most common group.

There is some anecdotal feedback that smaller employers find the process to secure an apprentice quite bureaucratic, and/or do not have the time to support and mentor an apprentice.

On a positive note, there is a strong centralised offer of apprenticeships support, advertised vacancies and events via the **Leicester Employment Hub** (covering city and county), successful area case studies with local SME's, some success with levy transfer, and increasing promotion of the apprenticeship offer to employers via the **LLEP Business Gateway Growth Hub**

There are new Youth, Construction, Textiles and Ex-Offender Hubs that can all support to promote area apprenticeships, along with a LLEP-led area provider forum. Local colleges, training providers and universities are working very hard to support apprenticeships and expand on offers, again with excellent case studies, contacts and resources. The area Careers Hub has thriving links with every school and college, along with a diverse range of Enterprise Advisers. District and Borough Councils also support with apprenticeships activities as does DWP. In addition, the area ESF skills support offer aims to increase apprenticeship take-up, and the county is offering a new Work & Skills Leicestershire offer that supports people across Leicestershire, and will promote apprenticeships.

The LLEP Action Plan will aim to enhance and build on existing work, and not duplicate.



Next steps:

The following pages summarise the LLEP area objectives and action plan to help to deliver those objectives.

Objective 1: Increase the number of people taking up apprenticeships and traineeships.

Objective 2: Increase the number of LLEP SME businesses employing an apprentice.

Objective 3: Support employers and providers to work effectively together to increase the uptake of Higher and

Degree apprenticeships between 2022/2023 and 2023/2024 academic years.

The strategy and approach that the LLEP will take is across five strands:

- Support for employers, especially SMEs
- Raising awareness of apprenticeships, traineeships and T levels to young people (especially those aged 16-18)
 and adults, with better links to careers in the curriculum and starting apprenticeship conversations with adults
- Enhanced contact with area providers
- Support for business intermediaries
- Increasing degree apprenticeship numbers locally, particularly in STEM subjects





Action Plan (appendix)

The LLEP Skills Team, LLEP Careers Hub, ESFA, Leicester Employment Hub and Leicestershire County Council have set out the following action plan, which identifies a number of key initiatives and actions to be taken forward during 2022-2024 in order to support local businesses with skills, and deliver improved outcomes for young people and adults in Leicester and Leicestershire, enhancing the offer and take up of apprenticeships, traineeships and T Levels. This will build on existing good work from the Leicester Employment Hub, DWP, area skills and ESF providers, colleges and universities, Careers Hub, county and ESFA support.

To develop a plan which is measurable and achievable, the following criteria is applied:

- Actions represent initiatives which are either (a) targeted to deliver additionality or (b) increased outputs compared to existing activity, and therefore targeted to deliver additional outputs for Leicester and Leicestershire
- Actions will have a lead but where possible will identify where support and/or collaboration from other partners will contribute to the achievement of outcomes
- The provider partnership is a forum to share information, good practice, collaboration, and will act as a lobbying group to influence national apprenticeship policy and strategy and local provision
- Timescale for implementation, monitoring, completion and evaluation of all actions and activities is 01 January 2022 - 31 December 2024
- The Action Plan will be reviewed and updated quarterly and will report into the LLEP Skills Advisory Panel





Challenge: Encouraging more employers (especially SMEs) to utilise apprenticeships to support new and existing pipeline of talent

Completed and on track

	Action (a)	Rationale for actions (b)	Activity, support required (c)	Outputs / Measures of Success (d)	Lead Partner (e)	Due Date (f)	Status / action required (g)
1	Create an area focused apprenticeship provider forum	Bring together area providers to work collaboratively	Resource to bring providers together for LLEP updates, ESFA updates and labour market intelligence.	Quarterly meetings New resources	LLEP, Leicester Employment Hub (LEH), Leicestershire County Council (county) Skills providers	Forum now being coordinated	Ongoing from October 2020
2	Create an online area provider matrix of provision	One stop shop summary of local delivery, sectors, levels and provider	Online grid of area provision to support schools, employers, adults, work advisers and providers	Digital matrix	LLEP, AC and SS, providers	June 2021	Draft version ready July 2021
3	Series of update webinars for local business intermediaries (DWP employer leads/area economic officers, growth hub advisers)	Update/embed on new Govt initiatives and encourage business intermediaries (Bl's) to promote to local employers	Arrange dates, mini 'Plan for Jobs' slide pack to present. AC to lead.	6 inputs over year 2x Business Gateway Growth Hub (BGGH) 2x DWP 2x Local Economic Development Officers (LEDON)	LLEP, ESFA, LEH, providers	Initial inputs Sept 2020	Updates done in 2020 for DWP, growth hub, to repeat in 2022
4	Create a LLEP summary of Plan for Jobs	To simplify the initiatives for employers	Snapshot of latest Plan for Jobs initiatives for easy use	Save on BG Growth Hub use at events	LLEP	May 2021	Drafted

			In Progress	S			
5	Create a LLEP area apprenticeship guide for employers	To revitalise local employer interest in apprenticeships post Covid	Snapshot, easy use guide for SME employers on benefits of apprenticeships, concisely written.	Guide or flyer for SMEs, jargon free and clear English, highlighting whats in it for the employer	LEH, BG Growth Hub and providers	Ongoing	Growth Hub and SMB looking at this. ESFA also looking at an SME toolkit.
6	Webinar for levy payers	To encourage and support levy transfer to support local skills	Bring employers together to convey benefits/possibilities re levy transfer and support available	Webinar event and four employers to commit to levy transfer	LEH plus County, ESFA, LLEP, DMU, Providers	Ongoing	Levy payer list created and shared with DMU and Employment Hub.
7	Increase awareness to area employers of levy transfer offers, (e.g. from Asda, Leicester City council and other levy payers who can pledge a transfer of unspent apprenticeship levy)	Support businesses to maximise access to unspent apprenticeship levy and to facilitate levy transfer between employers.	LEH campaign for employers and utilise contacts via Provider forum Growth Hub CEC Cornerstones/EAN/Education-Business ESF providers Districts County links SAP members CIPD EMC, IoD, FSB	Promote new levy support service which launched in Sept 2021 Webinars and/or event to raise awareness to local employers of options from levy payers transferring unspent levy funds.	TW, AC, HH, LEDON etc, ongoing, providers.	Ongoing	AC to meet with growth hub re maximising awareness, LEH and providers also to promote
8	Build and embed apprenticeships promotion across all LEH and LLEP employer events,	Raise awareness to businesses of benefits of apprenticeships and incentives, widen offer of available apprenticeships	LEH and LLEP campaign utilise contacts via Provider forum BGGH CEC Cornerstones/EAN/Education-Business Districts/LEDON County links SAP members ESF Providers and DWP EMC, IoD, FSB, CIPD	Develop slides for insertion/key sentences Enhance BG Growth Hub information	LEH, LLEP, LEDON County. Providers SERCO SSW	Ongoing	TW, AC, HH, Case studies and easy use information being collated for BG Growth Hub

			In Pro	gress			
9	Enhance promotion of the Building the Workforce of the Future Guide (BTWOTF)	Restart promotions of BTWOTF activities	Work with partners/BGGH to restart promotion of experience of the workplace benefits post Covid	Guide created, update in 2022 and include apprenticeships, and marketing campaign	LLEP and partners in guide	Ongoing	Enhance promotion, some promotion started July 2021, promoted at LBF
10	Increase representation on EMAAN group, currently four employers for LLEP area	The East Midlands Apprenticeship Ambassador Network (EMAAN): employers whose aim is to engage new apprenticeship delivery in the East Midlands. https://emaan.org/	Options to increase Add to BGGH and LEH websites Promote at all LEH and BGGH employer events LEH campaign Levy payers Provider forum CEC Cornerstones/EAN/ Education-Business Districts County links SAP members STEM Ambassadors DWP ESF providers EMEG, Glen Parva CLEAR	Increase to 7 reps in 2022 and to 12 reps in 2023	LEH, LLEP , Careers Hub County, All area providers SERCO Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing AC, TW, GM, HH Provider Forum, planning started re increasing promotion and links to school/young person ambassador work. Resources for marketing campaign to launch Apprenticeship Week 2022
11	Increased provision of apprenticeships, particularly in STEM related roles.	Many roles across sectors need STEM skills	Target STEM employers, link to LEBC STEM Ambassadors Include link to Space Park, logistics, Digital Skills Partnership, CLEAR, manufacturing, sport	Measure will include cross check of data from 2021 against 2022 and 2023	Colleges, inward investment link, Growth Hub, universities	Ongoing	Discussions started with local university.

Challenge: Raise the parity and take-up of apprenticeships across all ages

In Progress

	Action (a)	Rationale for actions (b)	Activity, support required (c)	Outputs / Measures of Success (d)	Lead Partner (e)	Due Date (f)	Status / action required (g)
12	Raise awareness of apprenticeships across LLEP area schools, young people and adults	Increase numbers of people who consider apprenticeships as an option	Update of 'The Real Deal' LEH guide, print and cascade across schools, partners Apprenticeship Insight Days Link to CEC Careers Hub, Youth Hub and Charnwood CEC Hub Use of Apprenticeship Support and Knowledge for Schools (ASK) service Map out which providers support schools with apprenticeship activities and promote this offer Adult flyer or resource	Updated guide and launch event Destination data from LA's Movement on BM7 School work via CEC re better awareness of ASK offer and local provider offer Enhanced information on apprenticeships as an option for adults	ASK CEC Employer Engagement Coordinator Enterprise Adviser Network LLEP LEH Youth Hub DWP Providers	Ongoing	Planning and activity with ASK, CEC Team and Ambassador Network. Promotion of NAW 2022 events to schools. Further activity to follow. Info in both adult and YP World of Work
13	Support area schools and colleges with professional development sessions on embedding apprenticeship awareness into careers and links to curriculum	Enhance teacher's knowledge of the apprenticeships/ traineeships option	Work with schools CEC and Education-Business Links group (LEBC, Leicestershire Cares etc) group to promote apprenticeships, link in with free ASK offer Develop a greater awareness of apprenticeship provision at all levels within school curriculum staff. Develop apprenticeship Insight Days Rolling offer of Apprenticeships and T Level activities	Teacher CPD, ASK support, local provider grid, EE EC work Effective Transitions work World of Work films and CPD link to apprenticeships	LLEP and LEH, CEC Enterprise Adviser Network, ASK, STEM Ambassadors Providers	Ongoing	Planning re activity in progress Provider network support Cornerstone employers Glen Parva Links to large sites of employment like EMEG and Mercia Park

	In Progress									
14	Undertake complimentary work with ASK (Apprenticeship Support and Knowledge) and Careers Education Company (CEC) Team to promote apprenticeships and T Levels in schools	BM7 22% across all schools in the LLEP area	Work with ASK and local apprenticeship providers including LLEP ITP group to deliver a [virtual] apprenticeships career fair, focus on key sectors, STEM and digital	Ongoing via new ECs Also better promote what area providers are doing re events	ASK, CEC, LLEP, skills providers and colleges Pathways offer	Ongoing	New EC role to support, enhanced promotion via schools news, resources Several events NAW 2022			
15	Raise awareness of the apprenticeship option for adults	Option to increase skills Option for those made redundant/retrain/new careers post Covid. Help to impart key messages that apprenticeships can be done at any age, both in work or as a way into a sector	Infographic or flyer to promote benefits of apprenticeships for adults. Work with LEH, National Careers Service, ESF, DWP, districts and voluntary and community sector, to promote apprenticeships offer to adults Link to Charnwood CEC Hub and colleges with adult offers Support session for adult advisers	Resource/ Handout/ increased take up Training session for those who help adults	County Work with Futures, DWP, ESF providers	Ongoing	Outline discussions with ESF and wider partners. Training event session for those who support adults planned in 2022. Adult flyer to be collated.			
16	Increase the take up of apprenticeships, particularly in STEM related roles.	Raise awareness to all ages of benefits of apprenticeships particularly in STEM, future proof careers	STEM Ambassador, ASK and CEC events Adult apprenticeship events Link to LLEP World of Work resources and sectors Link to CLEAR, MIRA, Space Park, manufacturing, EZ's, Digital Skills Partnership	Resource, Apprenticeships events Analysis of apprenticeships data	ASK, STEM Ambassadors. LEH and CEC link	Ongoing	Several events in 2022			
17	Support with the business case and promotion of the degree apprenticeship offer across Leicester and Leicestershire	Broaden the range of degree level offers, enabling employers to develop a highly skilled talent pipeline and supporting local people to develop degree level skills	Work with area schools, colleges, providers and universities Maximise awareness of degree apprenticeships offer	Analysis of year-on-year data re degree apprenticeships offer and take up	LEH and universities Pathways – participation plans may have good info to link with – POLARIS data	Ongoing	Initial meetings with area university (DMU) have commenced.			

	In Progress								
18	Recruit new members to increase LLEP area apprentice representation in the East Midlands Apprenticeships Ambassador Network (EMAAN) including that of young apprentices	Currently 1 YAAN representative from Leicestershire. The YAAN* is a national network of current and past apprentices who want to share their apprenticeship story to inspire others. amazingapprenticeships. com/yaan/ east-midlands	New CEC funded area project, with wider support from: Colleges LEH campaign Levy payers Provider forum CEC Cornerstones/EAN Districts County links SAP members DWP ESF providers Large sites like EMEG, Mercia Park and Glen Parva Prison re-build	Increase of YAAN numbers from LLEP area to 12 by 2023	LEH, LLEP, Providers, County New CEC pilot.	Due to launch NAW 2022	Work with CEC and YAAN commenced, mapping out resources, training for ambassadors, launch of offer. Additional support to enhance key messages from Behavioural Insights Team and Skill Advisory Panel member.		
19	Source live apprenticeship vacancy update for schools, colleges, careers and job search support partners	Useful collated sets of live advertised vacancies across all districts and city.	Promotion of area vacancies now re-started post lockdowns. Encourage partners to embed the live vacancy link to their websites. CEC to promote both offers to schools and colleges.	Re-start of promotion across schools and adult skills contacts	ESFA and LLEP	Ongoing	AC-now re-started and circulating widely across schools and those who support adults		
20	Coordinate an apprenticeships offer for SEND schools and colleges	Assess barriers to YP with SEND accessing apprenticeship, also employer and Training Provider barriers.	Effective Transitions Fund: stakeholder groups looking at addressing issues for SEND YP and evaluating the impact. Will include parents and carers too.	Effective Transitions Fund pilot and actions via Careers Hub to lead	ETF work, CEC	Ongoing	Initial discussions with ASK and CEC team, plan to follow.		

This strategy has been created by the LLEP Skills Team, Stewart Smith and Anna Cyhan.



Contact Details

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If you require further information on anything within this publication, please email the LLEP at the address below.

Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership Limited (LLEP) City Hall, 115 Charles Street, Leicester, LE1 1FZ

Tel: +44 (0)116 454 2917 **Email:** admin@llep.org.uk



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