

# South East LEP Skills Strategy 2018 - 2023

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SOUTH EAST  
LOCAL ENTERPRISE  
PARTNERSHIP

An employer led partnership approach to skills  
for a flourishing, inclusive economy



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This strategy is supported by a suite of documents and evidence, which will be added to our website, [southeastlep.com](http://southeastlep.com):

- South East LEP Skills Evidence Base – LEP wide information
- District and sector profiles
- District tables for key data
- The impact of Brexit – supporting paper
- The Digital economy – supporting paper
- Construction and its importance to the SELEP area (CITB report)
- Celebrating Skills – overview of current capital and ESF investments



This image: University of Greenwich, Medway campus.



# 1. Foreword from our Chair

It is an exciting time for the South East LEP, the largest LEP in the country. Our size and location mean we are an area of national and international significance and instrumental to keeping goods and services moving in the UK. Our productivity impacts on the national picture.

## Significant growth across the South East

Across our LEP area, stretching from Harwich, through Ramsgate and Dover all the way to Peacehaven there are so many tangible examples of growth:

- Public Health England's forthcoming relocation
- A new entertainment resort in North Kent
- One of Amazon's largest warehouses at the Port of Tilbury
- Bradwell Power Station development
- Enterprise zones at Newhaven and North Kent
- Airport growth at Southend, Stansted, Gatwick.

## Skills demand

Demand for skills in the South East is strong, sectors like health and care have current shortages, set to increase with an ageing and growing population. This year so far, our LEP area has advertised over 7,500 nursing vacancies, nearly 8,000 programmers and web developers and over 4,000 care worker positions. Our sectors are advertising a range of skills needs from entry level to post graduate. Our LEP area will see up to 300,000 new homes to

2030, requiring a skilled construction workforce on a significant scale.

## The challenge

Although our skills levels are improving this is in the context of some challenging statistics:

- Nearly 180,000 people with no qualifications
- 33% of people have a degree level qualification compared to 38% nationally
- Nearly 42,000 people are claiming out of work benefits
- 178,400 workless households

## Size and scale

The South East LEP is an area of both significant opportunity and significant scale. Our area is diverse, home to the longest coastline in England (by LEP area), large rural areas and urban concentrations and enjoying a close relationship with London.

Our communities are among the most prosperous but also most deprived nationally, we have world-beating interna-

**"This is an area with national and international significance; quite simply it is instrumental to the UK's success."**

tional companies as well as burgeoning SMEs and a high proportion of self-employment.

We have a population of 4.2 million, set to grow to nearly 5 million by 2039 the largest population of any LEP (see section 6). That's a population bigger than Croatia, Panama, Georgia and Lithuania and double the size of countries like Estonia and Cyprus.

- The nearly 170,000 enterprises in the South East LEP area employ 1.9 million people and for virtually all sectors the South East LEP has far greater numbers of employees than most other LEP areas outside London
- For virtually all sectors the South East LEP has far greater numbers of employees than most other LEP areas outside London. There are over 100,000 in manufacturing, 42,000 in finance and 222,000 in health and social work.
- Our creative and IT sector is flourishing and influential on an international level
- We are seeing growing success and economic impact of our wine industry
- The South East is an area of diversity, home to the longest coastline in England, large rural areas and urban concentrations and a close relationship with London
- Our communities are among the most prosperous but also most deprived nationally
- Home to world beating international companies as well as burgeoning SMEs and a high proportion of self employment



## Delivering skills in the South East

We are doing much already. We are supporting young people into employment, helping adults overcome barriers to employment and helping people in employment to develop further skills. We have invested £100m in 29 skills capital projects and ESF programmes which are already delivering apprenticeships, employment training and growth. We have also invested nearly £15m new Local Growth Funding to skills projects across our patch, such as the Canterbury Christ Church University EDGE Hub.

We operate a joined up approach through Local Skills Boards with representatives from business, multi-sector, Further and Higher education

brought together to identify and solve skills shortages in our economy. We will continue to support strong partnerships between education and employment.

There is much more to do and I am pleased to introduce our shared approach to building a first class, local skills system, aligned to the government's Industrial Strategy.

This is an employer led strategy. The focus and areas for action have been determined by economic growth and will be overseen by employers through a SELEP skills advisory panel formed made up of our skills board chairs.

**Christian Brodie, South East LEP Chair**

## 2. View from our local boards

The South East LEP works closely with local partners and deliverers in East Sussex, Essex, Kent, Medway, Southend and Thurrock to ensure their expertise and local knowledge is part of the decision making process.

Our Skills Advisory Group, formed of colleges, universities, local authorities, training providers and voluntary sector representatives has been the driving force for this skills strategy.

Additionally, there has been ongoing consultation and engagement with SELEP's federated business and skills boards who will play a leading role in delivering against the vision and priorities.

Key:

Business Boards

Skills Boards



### Team East Sussex and Skills East Sussex

"Developing a skilled workforce is a top priority for East Sussex and is embedded in our economic and community activity. Having piloted exciting initiatives such as 'STEAMfest' and 'Open Doors' which provide young people with direct experience of local businesses and with the launch of our 'Industry Champion' badge for businesses that promote careers in their sector, we are committed to working with SELEP to do more."

From award winning wine grown in our beautiful landscape to the £54 million Devonshire Park transformation of Eastbourne Town Centre, this is a special and exciting place to live, learn and work. We look forward to working with partners across the LEP to deliver the skills strategy."

Graham Peters, SELEP Vice Chair, Chair Team East Sussex,  
Catherine Tipton, Jacobs, Chair Skills East Sussex



## SELEP Skills Advisory Group

"We are thrilled to have a vision and priorities set out for the next five years. We're really grateful for the extensive engagement and input from colleagues across the LEP area to ensure that this strategy truly reflects our shared aspirations. Most importantly we look forward to delivering against our ambitions over the next five years and working with employers, partners and government to achieve this."

**Graham Razey**, Principal and Chief Executive East Kent College Group, Chair SELEP Skills Advisory Group.



## Kent and Medway Economic Partnership and Kent and Medway Skills Commission

"As businesses, we welcome the focus on employer led skills in the strategy. We are home to the Eurotunnel and Port of Dover, our international connectivity is excellent and our strong tourism finance, creative, agri-tech, logistics, manufacturing, life science and ICT sectors require the right skills in order to grow. Through our Sector Guilds we are already seeing close working relationships forming between education and industry and we're looking forward to working with SELEP partners in order to do more."

**Paul Winter**, Wire Belt Co Ltd, Chair Kent and Medway Skills Commission

**Geoff Miles**, Maidstone Studios Ltd, SELEP Vice Chairman, Chair Kent and Medway Economic Partnership



## Essex Employment and Skills Board (ESB), Opportunity South Essex and Essex Business Board

"We welcome the approach outlined in the skills strategy to respond to the opportunities and challenges growth presents. The ESB has pioneered a range of initiatives to bring employers and educators closer, from industry taster days for college tutors to STEM programmes in schools and local careers information for adults and young people."

With committed employers, across all of our businesses from construction and manufacturing to health and IT; such as Stansted Airport, DP World, Coast Digital, Countryside Properties and Konica Minolta. It's superb to be able to work with SELEP to do more and a marvellous example of businesses, the education sector and the LEP working together to deliver more for the people and businesses of Essex."

**Adam Jones**, Teledyne e2v, Chair Essex Employment and Skills Board

**David Rayner**, Birkett Long LLP, Chair Essex Business Board



"As businesses across South Essex, we are regularly experiencing skills shortages at first hand. There needs to be an increased focus on essential, employability skills alongside technical skills. We would welcome further local control of skills funding to ensure the needs of our priority sectors are met. With significant growth happening across our geography, from London Southend Airport and our sea ports to advanced manufacturing, construction and finance, there are a wide range of exciting opportunities. We are keen to continue working with government, SELEP and the Essex Employment and Skills Board to ensure that we are ready for these."

**Kate Willard**, Stobart Group, Chair Opportunity South Essex



# 3. Vision and priorities

The skills strategy consultation and supporting documents outlined in the contents page, have clearly outlined the need in the SELEP area and provided a direction of travel. With consensus from partners, a vision and set of principles and priorities have been agreed to help inform our work and structure our action planning going forward.

These are as follows, with further sections outlining the background to determining these areas of focus. It should be noted that the South East LEP is also developing its strategic economic plan which will deliver against related areas such as business support, investment and innovation. There will be continued alignment between the two strategies.

## SELEP's vision for skills

To help deliver a flourishing and inclusive economy across the biggest LEP area in the country equipping employers, adults and young people with the skills, conditions and aptitudes required for significant growth today and tomorrow.

## SELEP's skills principles

To achieve our vision we will continue to use evidence, consultation and partnership to understand, respond and deliver across our combined geography; East Sussex, Essex, Kent, Medway, Southend and Thurrock.

We will continue to develop innovative responses to the skills challenges facing the SELEP area. We would like to pilot new initiatives and expand our delivery in partnership with government.

Image on facing page: South Essex College construction training



## SELEP's priorities

Working together as educators, local authorities, employers, the voluntary sector, employers and providers we agree our priorities are to:

- Increase apprenticeships and industry relevant qualifications for all ages, particularly in priority sectors and at higher and degree level
- Simplify the skills landscape for employers, stakeholders and individuals
- Build an inclusive economy, creating opportunities for all
- Raise awareness of jobs and growth across the SELEP area and its size, scale, national and international significance

- Foster and support the spirit of pride, entrepreneurship innovation and enthusiasm across the SELEP area to bring about change

## Alignment to SELEP's strategic economic plan

- Increase productivity driven by innovative businesses and people skilled for the future



# SELEP's five year ambition

## Short Term

- A Careers Enterprise Network Linking Education and Industry\*\*
- £37M Capital Programme Delivering Industry relevant training\*\*
- £51m European Social Fund supporting people into and in work\*\*
- Raising the profile and understanding of apprenticeships\*\*
- Piloting an online portal for skills (for adults, young people, employers)\*\*
- Explore and showcase innovative new skills solutions (e.g Virtual Reality)\*\*
- Work with industry bodies to respond to growth\*\*
- Communicate across the South East LEP area – networks, working groups, Growth Hubs\*\*
- Inform delivery & commissioning of national programmes (e.g. National Careers Service)\*\*
- Communicate and share the Skills Strategy locally and nationally\*\*
- Support government initiatives for adults (e.g. Fuller Working Lives, Disability Confident)

\*\* Underway

- Support SMEs to start, skill and upskill (e.g. apprenticeships, T-levels, leadership, start-up support)
- Pilot government initiatives (e.g. digital partnerships, inclusive employment)
- Secure public 'Skills Commitments' with employers across the SELEP area
- Play a leading role in government sector deals (e.g. construction)
- Establish a SELEP wide employer led advisory skills panel \*\*
- Continue to attract capital and revenue funding to deliver growth
- Respond to the opportunities of the government's Industrial Strategy (e.g. national retraining scheme funding)
- Inform and support the introduction of T-Levels
- Expand the Careers Enterprise Network for full coverage across the SELEP Area
- Launch tenders for the remaining European Social Fund funding (to 2023) (covering themes such as leadership, returnships, digital, inclusivity and sectors)
- Work with neighbouring LEPs to tackle common areas of ambition
- Raise awareness of our growth sectors and opportunities
- Tackle the barriers (e.g. tutor and teacher recruitment challenges)

## Medium Term

\*\* Underway

## Long Term

- Achieve greater local control of skills funding to deliver growth determined by employers
- Have the right tools in place to deliver – i.e. a skills portal, Virtual Reality, industry relevant facilities
- Be an established partner to test and provide input to areas of national policy
- Establish a skills system delivering for all regardless of geography or background
- Ensure a proportionate share of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund
- Achieve increased skills levels and productivity across the SELEP area





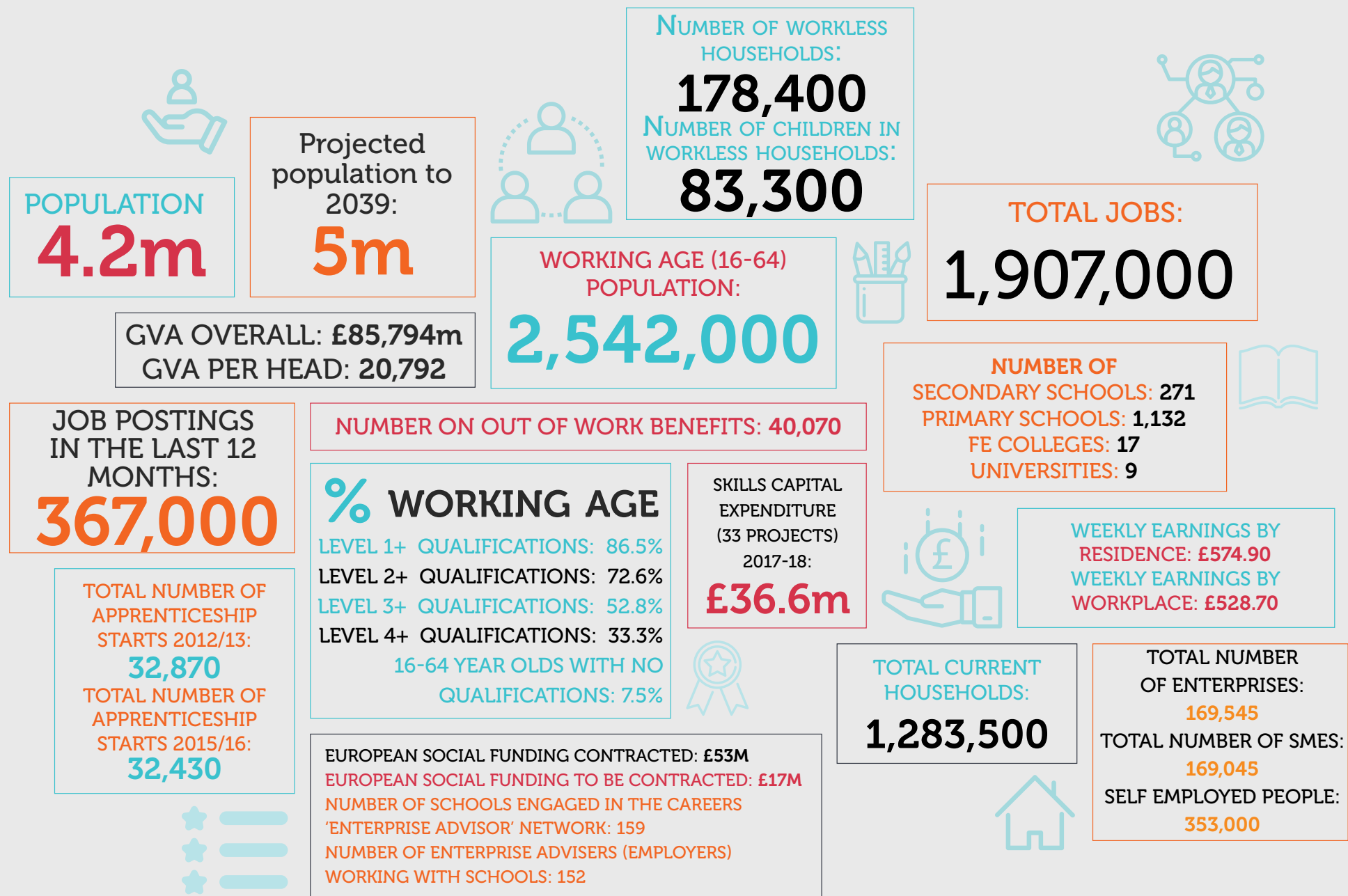
Main image: University of Brighton  
Inset image 1: STEM apprentice  
Inset image 2: University of Greenwich



# 4. Geographical context







FURTHER BREAKDOWN, ANALYSIS AND BENCHMARKING OF THESE STATISTICS IS AVAILABLE IN THE ACCOMPANYING EVIDENCE BASE AND DISTRICT TABLES

# A large and diverse geography

SELEP, is the largest of 38 Local Enterprise Partnerships nationally. The SELEP geography includes East Sussex, Essex, Kent, Medway, Southend and Thurrock and covers 35 local authority areas, including 29 districts, with a total population of 4.2 million. SELEP borders Greater London, Cambridge, Hertfordshire, West Sussex and Suffolk and includes one of the largest coastlines in the country.

## The SELEP area is diverse

Made up of rural, coastal, urban, wealthy and deprived populations. It is impossible to singularly categorise the SELEP area, the various geographies that make up the whole require different understanding and approach. From areas such as Jaywick in Essex, the most deprived ward in the country, to Wealden, which has amongst the highest earnings nationally, low-level unemployment and high qualification levels. This diversity makes the area applicable to a wide range of government policy.

## Home to world-leading companies

Including household names such as Ford, Saga, London Stansted Airport, P&O Ferries, Konica Minolta, Eurotunnel, Royal Opera House, Turner Contemporary, Maidstone Studios, DP World and Amazon, to name a few, as well as a wide range of small and start-up businesses in sectors such as digital, creative and construction. The SELEP area is soon to be home also to Public Health England, a new power station at Bradwell, an entertainment resort and expansion at a number of our ports and airports.

## Nationally and internationally important

The SELEP area is nationally and internationally important –home to key sea and airports and important road and rail infrastructure key to the UK's economy and supply chain and providing a gateway to the world and the rest of the UK. This area is vital and instrumental in keeping people, goods and services moving and enabling international trade.

Overall, SELEP has lower than average skills levels and although these are improving, rates of improvement fall behind the national average in all but one level. Generally, SELEP falls within the bottom half of LEPs for skills levels. As a diverse and large area, SELEP has areas well above and well below the national average.

- Nearly 190,000 (7.5%) adults in the SELEP area have no qualifications, the 3rd highest proportion of any LEP nationally after London and Leeds
- 90,000 people in employment do not have a qualification
- 237,000 have a level one only
- participation in further education has also fallen in recent years

## Forecasts for significant growth

The SELEP area will see significant housing and infrastructure growth, with up to 300,000 new homes projected for completion by 2030. This is coupled with nationally important infrastructure schemes such as the Lower Thames Crossing. This has clear consequences for both the construction sector and sectors serving a growing population, such as health, tourism and care.

Forecasts suggest significant population growth increasing population in the SELEP area to nearly 5 million by 2039. This will include a sizeable ageing population, impacting upon sectors such as health and care.

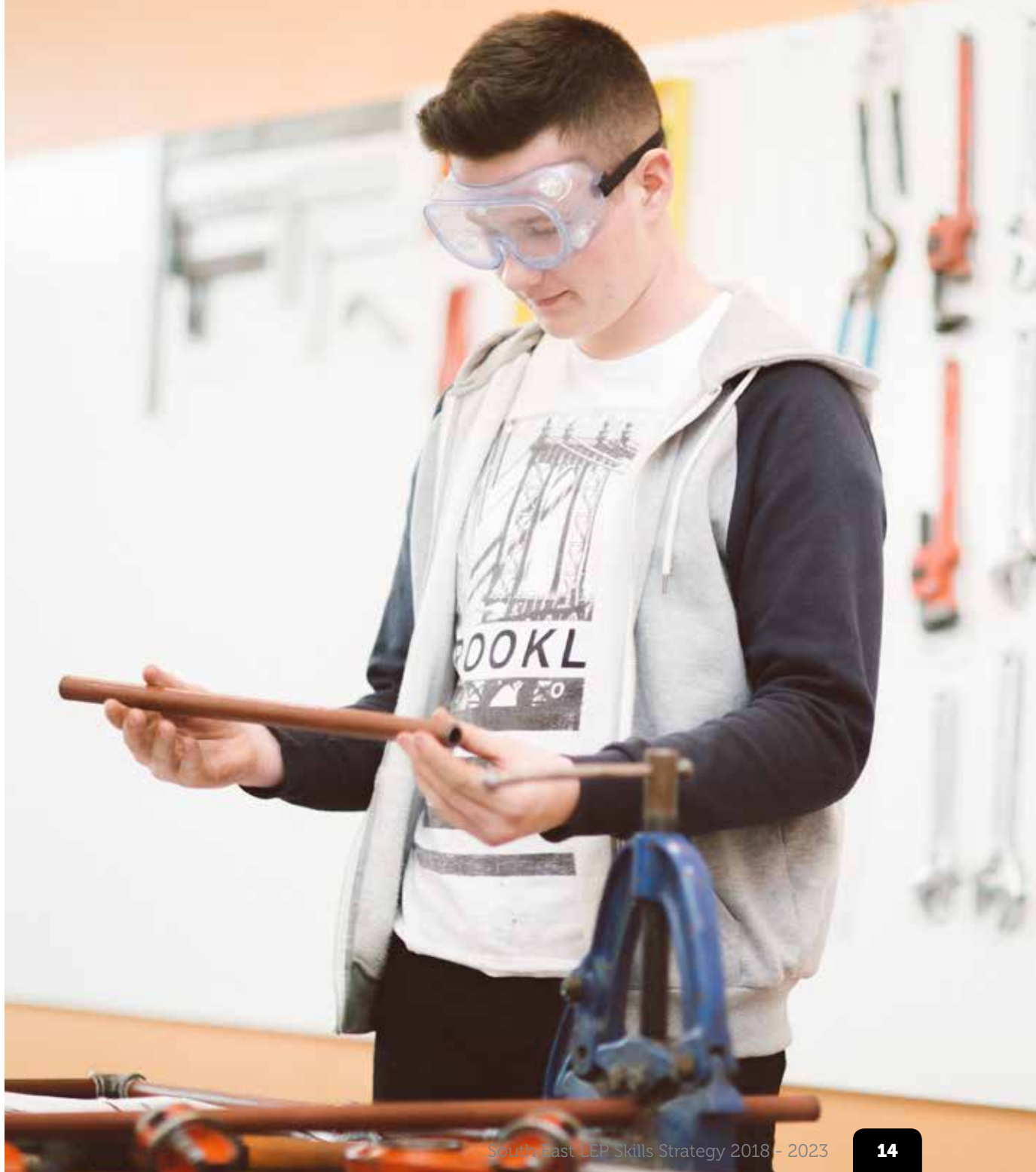
## Strong employment base

There are a large volumes of both high value and entry-level jobs in the SELEP area, nearly 400,000 vacancies advertised from August 2016 to July 2017, building on a strong IT, creative, construction, manufacturing, care, tourism, agriculture and health base. New entrants in these sectors often require support.

## Workless households

There are more workless households in the SELEP area than in any other LEP area in the UK. There are 178,000 workless households and 83,000 children living in workless households in the SELEP area. Over 46,000 people were claiming out of work benefits, as of March 2018, among the highest nationally.

Image: South Essex College construction training



## Stagnation of apprenticeships

Apprenticeship start numbers have stagnated in recent years at around 32,000 as is illustrated in the graphs below. At the time of writing, figures show a 21% fall in quarter one of 2017/18 compared to the same period the previous year.

The government has a target for 3 million apprenticeships (from 2015-2020). Applying this to the SELEP area based on population would equate to 210,000 apprenticeships. Based on recent figures (roughly 32,000 annually), the SELEP area is forecast to under deliver by at least 50,000.

However, with a population of 0.5 million 15-25 year olds and 2.5 million people of working age, there is a considerable potential to support local people to take up apprenticeships. SELEP and partners are committed to working together to achieve this.



This image: Apprenticeship, Electronics



## Proximity to London

The SELEP area enjoys a close relationship with London. This has both a positive and a negative impact. Whilst London provides an accessible job market, with higher salaries, to people living in the SELEP area it also affects the housing market in commuter towns, which in turn has implications for lower paid jobs, in sectors such as care. However, there are London companies who are seeing the opportunity to relocate into the SELEP area, in finance and creative sectors.

## Supporting disadvantaged groups

Across the SELEP area there is a growing need to support disadvantaged groups such as; benefit claimants, ex-offenders and homeless people.

Some areas in the South East are now nationally considered 'hotspots' for homelessness including; Medway, Hastings, Basildon, Dartford, Chelmsford, Eastbourne and Colchester.

Across the SELEP area the latest local authority statistics show that in 2016/17 there were nearly 2,150 homeless people, or households threatened with homelessness.

Hastings has been identified by the government as an 'opportunity area' whereby additional focus and resource is should be provided to improve social mobility.



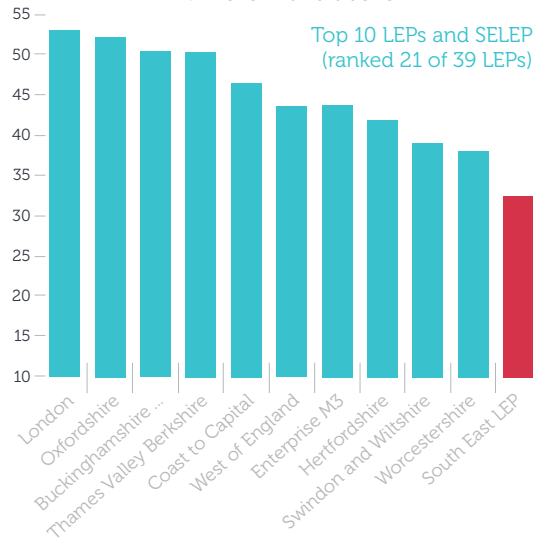
This image: CXK

# Benchmarking the SELEP area against the rest of the UK

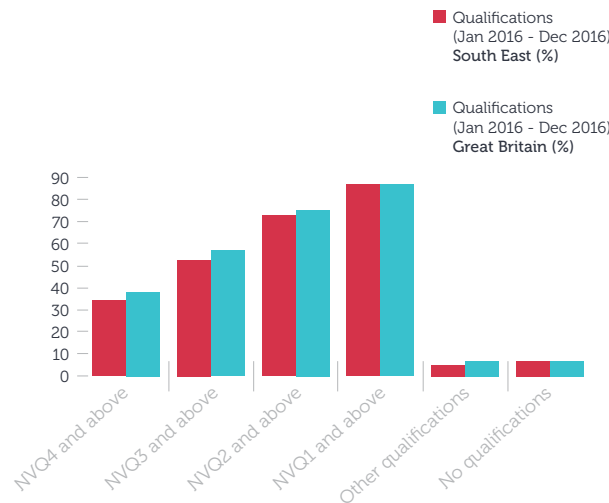
## In introducing the level 4, level 2, qualifications

Levels in the SELEP area are considerably below those of other LEP areas and below the national average. E.g. Graph 4.1 shows London's level 4 attainment at 51.8% compared to 32.6% in the SELEP area.

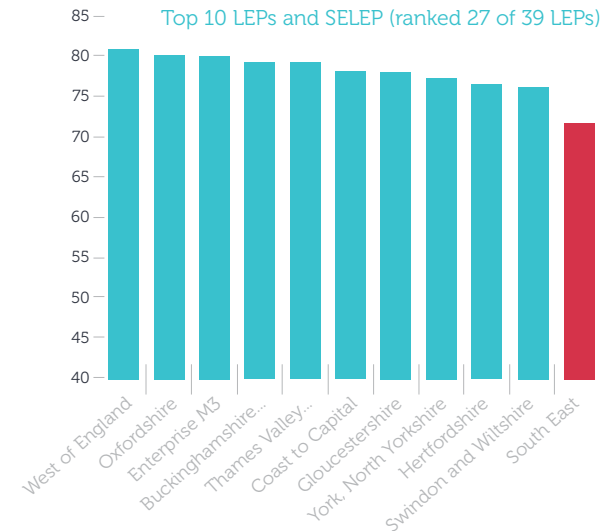
**Graph 4.1 - % of working age population with Level 4 and above**



**Graph 4.2 - qualification levels, SELEP and the UK**



**Graph 4.3 - % with Level 2 and above**



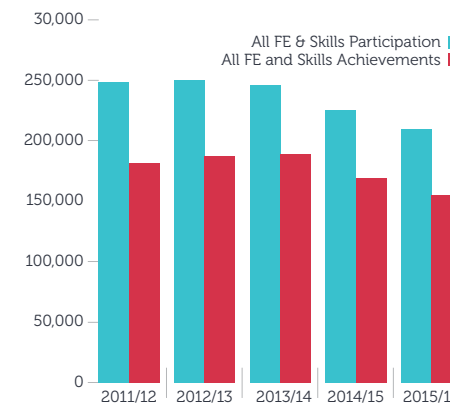
## In introducing the FE and Skills participation and apprenticeship starts

Apprenticeship and FE participation in the SELEP area need to increase. Graphs 4.4 and 4.5 illustrate that FE participation has decreased in recent years and apprenticeships have remained static.

Graph 4.4 - SELEP Apprenticeship starts and completions 2005-2016



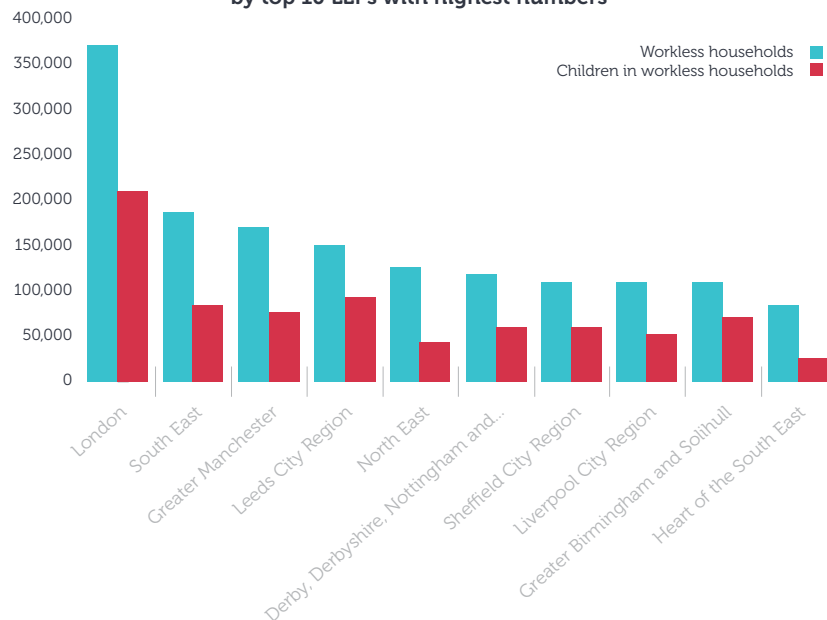
Graph 4.5 - SELEP FE & Skills Participation



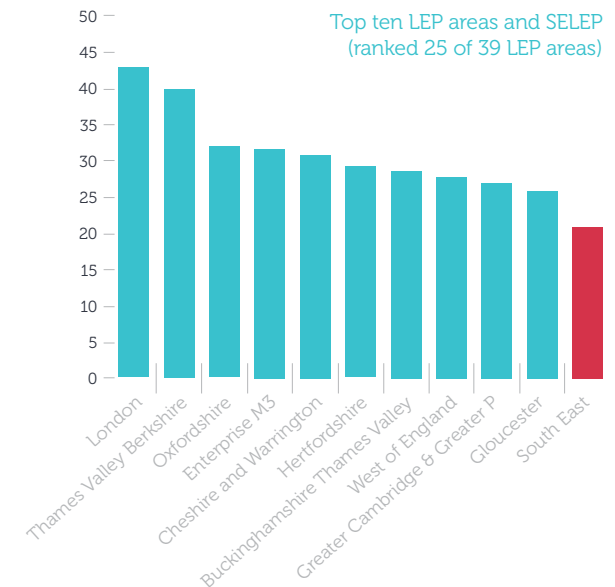
## In introducing the GVA per head, workless households and gross weekly pay

Earnings, GVA per head and workless household numbers illustrate that the SELEP area economy is not as productive as other LEP areas. E.g. Graph 4.6 shows that Thames Valley Berkshire LEP area's weekly pay is £640.90 compared to £528.70 in the SELEP area.

**Graph 4.6 - Numbers in workless households ranked by top 10 LEPs with highest numbers**



**Graph 4.7 - per Head 2015**



**Graph 4.8 - Gross weekly work based pay**

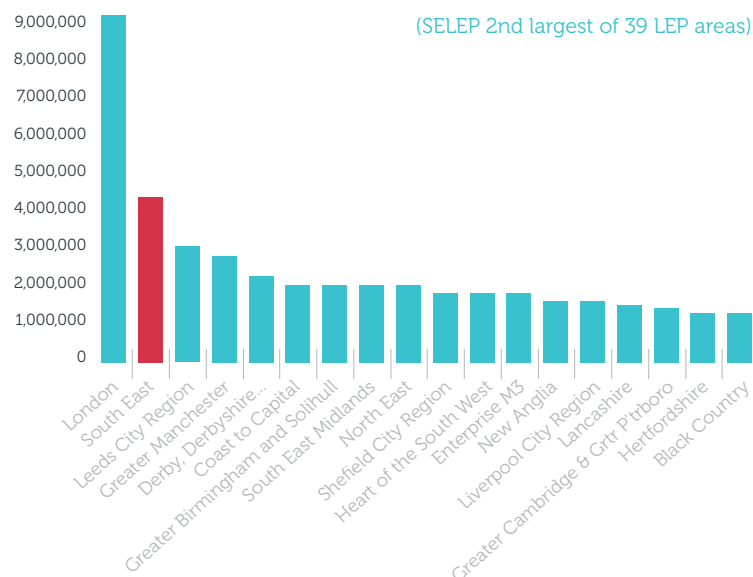




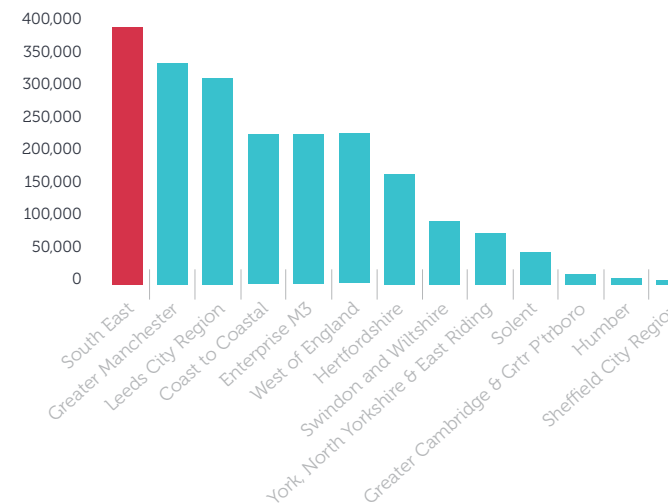
## In introducing the LEP populations, projected growth and vacancies

With total population in the SELEP area set to reach 5 million by 2039 and vacancies at nearly 370,000 annually the growth and scale of opportunity is considerable. Graph 4.9 illustrates our population is at least double that of all other LEP areas.

**Graph 4.9 - LEP populations ranked by largest 20**



**Graph 4.10 - Total vacancies Aug 2016 - July 2017  
SELEP and other LEPs**



**Graph 4.11 - Projected population increase in SELEP area 2014 to 2039**



# 5. Sector, growth and business context

The skills evidence base supporting this strategy illustrates the significant scale of the SELEP area when compared with other LEPs:

- 101,000 (6.4%\*) people are employed in construction compared with 62,000 (4.6%) in Leeds and 48,000 (3.8%\*) in Greater Manchester
- 220,000 (13.9%\*) people are employed in health and care
- 108,000 (8.5%\*) manufacturing sector employees, the fourth highest number compared to other LEPs
- 90.1% of SELEP's 169,000 enterprises are micro, the highest proportion of any LEP outside London
- significant growth amongst the micro business community rising to nearly 153,000 in 2017 from 123,000 in 2010

enable people to progress from low and entry level jobs. Sectors that have been marked as priorities have been identified as having SELEP wide significance, based on current and future job demand, high value jobs or strategic and economic importance. Supporting sector reports are also available on the SELEP website, the following are headlines only.

Across all sectors there is both a growing need for more start-up / entrepreneurial, leadership and management skills as well as skills in digital and a need to adapt and train the existing workforce due to the speed and level of change in the nature of work. More people are working flexibly and so may require different sorts of support, such as short-term office hubs and space.

Generally, there is a need to support people across all sectors by delivering higher technical and professional skills to increase productivity and competitiveness and

*\* - proportion of total employees in the SELEP area, this does not include people who are self-employed*

# A snapshot of sectors now and in the future

Illustrates requirements and developments in the area which will impact upon skills and jobs needs in the future.

## Agriculture and land based ‡

- 6,000 enterprises
- 1,000 vacancies including landscaper, veterinary nurse and farm estate worker
- Average national salaries include farmer (£44k), veterinary nurses (£24,495)
- A rich and diverse food production / manufacturing sector showcasing innovations and importance of food security – linked to tourism

Now

Future

- Important to food security and potential move to more UK production if imports become costly
- Innovations in areas such as wine production could lead to further growth
- Farmers UKCES jobs of the future
- Growing need for farm based R&D and response to climate change

## Health & Care\*

- 7,240 enterprises
- 220,000 employee jobs
- Disproportionately female workforce (particularly in care)
- Over 45,000 vacancies (including nurses, care workers, medical practitioners, social workers and care managers)
- Average national salaries include: nurse (£35k), care workers (£20k), residential home managers (£41k), social workers (£41k)

Now

Future

- Population growth to 5 million by 2039
- Increasing ageing population – both will impact on health & care needs
- Public perception of sector (particularly care) hindering recruitment – good opportunity to progress to management
- Care workers, nurses, dentists and nursing assistants identified by UKCES as jobs of the future
- Potential impact of Brexit as large migrant workforce
- Opportunities to use digital technologies in care

## Transport & Logistics\*

- 6,270 enterprises
- 93,000 employee jobs
- Disproportionate male workforce
- Of national and international significance – SELEP has nine ports, high speed rail links and regional airport capacity
- Over 8,000 vacancies including HGV driver, forklift truck driver, warehouse manager, transport manager and depot manager
- Average national salaries include: managers in transport distribution (£37k), warehouse managers (£36k), LGV drivers (£26k)

Now

Future

- Impact of digital and robotics on future skills requirements (i.e. automated warehousing)
- Aircraft pilots, LGV drivers, train drivers identified by UKCES as jobs of the future
- Airport expansion at Gatwick (outside LEP but providing large volume of jobs), Stansted, Southend airports

## Construction\*

- 27,325 enterprises, fourth highest number compared to other LEPs
- 101,000 employee jobs
- 213,973 employee jobs (construction/related sectors)
- Ageing workforce
- Disproportionately male workforce
- Nearly 6,000 vacancies (including electricians, plumbers, carpenters, quantity surveyors, bricklayers, production managers)
- Average national salaries include: production manager (£46k), supervisor (£33k), carpenter (£32k), quantity surveyor (£47k)
- Competition from London offering higher salaries to people trained here

Now

Future

- 300,000 new homes across SELEP
- Large infrastructure projects (i.e. Lower Thames Crossing)
- Growing need for 'green' & low carbon skills and opportunity to establish as area of expertise
- Public perception hindering growth
- Large requirements in 'off site' jobs
- Carpenters, joiners, architects, project managers, plumbers & heating & ventilation engineers and chartered surveyors identified by UKCES as jobs of the future
- Brexit impact (large migrant workforce)
- Trend towards pre-fabricated housing speeding up construction

## Professional, scientific & technical\*

- 27,950 enterprises
- 110,000 employee jobs
- Reflecting the high level of technical and higher level jobs across SELEP
- Reflects jobs in some other sectors; IT, construction and legal
- Over 9,000 vacancies including solicitors, legal professionals and legal secretaries
- Average national salaries include solicitors (£45k), vets (£40k) and legal professionals (£45k)

Now

Future

- Technical roles are increasing as reflected in the sectors described above and are reflected in UKCES jobs of the future as well as legal and medical roles
- Factors such as climate change and exploring new approaches to areas such as crop growth could be an area for expertise and expansion

## Education\*

- 2,935 enterprises
- 156,000 employee jobs
- 33,000 vacancies including secondary education teaching professionals, teaching assistants, primary and nursery education teaching professions
- Reported difficulties recruiting and people leaving sector
- Average national salaries include secondary education teachers (£31k), FE teaching professionals (£35k) & teaching assistants (£17k)

Now

Future

- Largely public sector so reliant on public funding
- UKCES identifies secondary school teachers and educational support assistants as jobs of the future
- General challenge in schools, colleges and universities to recruit to sector specialism especially where there are shortages in the sector itself. Essential to explore industry placements and support to address this

## IT, Digital & creative\*

- 19,170 enterprises
- 85,000 employee jobs
- IT has a disproportionately male workforce
- Over 30,000 vacancies (including web developers, software developers, IT support, graphic designers)
- Average salaries include: IT project manager (£57k), IT technician (£34k), programmer (£43k)

Now

Future

- Current 'digital revolution' means skills for this sector applies across all other sectors with digital skills needs growing
- Many hard to fill vacancies in IT and creative likely to be increased by Brexit
- Programmers & software developers, IT specialist managers, IT analysts, IT project managers, web designers and developers identified by UKCES as jobs of the future
- High numbers of micro businesses and freelancers which may require a different approach / support to enter sector
- Sizeable Games, Entertainment and cultural part of sector likely to see growth
- Aligning to government plans for Local Digital Partnerships
- Ensuring local communities are aware of the new digital entitlement

## Retail

- 11,495 enterprises
- 276,000 employee jobs (NB includes wholesale and repair also)
- 11,000 vacancies including store manager, sales executive and retail sales person
- Average national salaries include sales assistants (£21k), cashiers (£18k), retail managers (£28k)

Now

Future

- Impact of online retail
- Heavy reliance and inter-relation with transport and logistics sector
- UKCES identifies IT skills associated with sector, such as business analysts as jobs of the future

### Key:

\* = Priority sector for East Sussex, Kent & Medway

‡ = Priority sector across the South East LEP area



## Finance\*

- 3,020 enterprises
- 43,000 employee jobs
- Strong relationship to London – many SELEP residents commuting to finance jobs
- Over 8,000 vacancies (including Insurance underwriters, finance analysts, sales related roles and financial managers)
- Average salaries include: Finance and investment analysts (£45k), pensions and insurance clerks insurance underwriters (£42k), insurance underwriters (£41k)

Now

Future

- Current 'digital revolution' means skills for this sector applies across all other sectors with digital skills needs growing
- Many hard to fill vacancies in IT and creative likely to be increased by Brexit
- Programmers & software developers, IT specialist managers, IT analysts, IT project managers, web designers and developers identified by UKCES as jobs of the future
- High numbers of micro businesses and freelancers which may require a different approach / support to enter sector
- Sizeable Games, Entertainment and cultural part of sector likely to see growth
- Aligning to government plans for Local Digital Partnerships
- Ensuring local communities are aware of the new digital entitlement

## Manufacturing and engineering\*

- 108,000 employee jobs
- Nearly 12,000 vacancies including mechanical engineer, production manager, engineering manager, test engineer
- Disproportionate male workforce
- Ageing workforce
- Internationally famous companies located here (i.e. Ford, Raytheon, e2v)
- Average national salaries include: design and development engineers (£43k) engineering professionals (£33k), mechanical engineers (£38K)

Now

Future

- Public perception of sector hindering recruitment
- Ageing workforce likely to impact on skills needed – high need for technical skills
- Mechanical engineers, metal fitters, production and maintenance fitters identified by UKCES as jobs of the future
- Impact of digital and robotics on future skills requirements
- Decline in employment forecasts but current shortages and factors such as competition from other sectors / ageing workforce means there is continued need for skilled staff
- 2018 is the year of engineering

## Energy & Utilities\*

- 18,000 employee jobs
- 1,600 vacancies including water and sewerage operatives, engineering technicians and business sales executives
- Average national salaries include £29k for water and sewerage operatives and £30k for engineering technicians

Now

Future

- The sector reports requirements in engineering and experiences similar shortages to the engineering sector
- UKCES identifies needs for technical skills and notes that in future there will be increasing skills requirements for the expansion of intelligent energy systems that track usage as well as installation of energy technologies such as solar & wind

## Accommodation, Food & Hospitality & tourism ‡

- 112,000 employee jobs
- 8,615 enterprises
- Nearly 6,000 vacancies including restaurant manager, bar staff, hotel manager
- Average salaries include £28k for a restaurant manager, £20k for a chef & £30k for a hotel manager

Now

Future

- Current and future trends include the development of companies such as Airbnb changing the nature of the sector
- Growth across the SELEP area has seen an increase in new restaurants, hotels and bars in many areas
- Likely to be impacted by Brexit and potential reduced workforce. Sector has campaign to recruit more UK workers
- Potential impact of climate change
- Language skills important and require nurturing
- A high employment turnover rate
- Links to agriculture and land-based

## Growth illustrated through developments and infrastructure

Clearly there is a lot about the future which will impact SELEP's sectors which cannot be predicted. However, there are a range of certainties in terms of forthcoming investments which will have skills and jobs implications across the area.

According to the Construction and Industry Training Board, there are over 890 projects already in the planning process for the next five years, which illustrates the scale of growth.

Examples of schemes are illustrated here (pages 25 and 26). Please see accompanying Construction and Industry Board (CITB) demand led report on the SELEP website.

### Public Health England relocation to Harlow from 2019

Jobs to include Scientists, engineers, researchers, Scientific support workers, finance, HR, IT analyst and marketing roles. These will include graduate and post graduate roles, PHD studentships, entry level roles and apprenticeships. Recruitment is expected to take place from academia, industry and the NHS.

### Bradwell Power Station (Essex) new build (pre-planning stage only)

Jobs would be in engineering, construction, planning.

### Amazon Fulfilment Centre (Thurrock)

1500 jobs including Control Systems Engineer, Senior Control System Engineer, maintenance technician and health and safety manager.

### Lower Thames Crossing (Essex, Southend, Thurrock and Kent) (timings to be confirmed)

Expected to generate up to 25,000 new jobs in construction and engineering.

### Cross Rail Essex routes – to 2020

Generating a share of 50,000 jobs which were projected for London and the South East.

### Harlow Enterprise Zone (Essex)

2,500 jobs, growing to 5,000 over 25 years.

### Southend Airport Growth

Up to 7,000 new jobs to 2020.

### Stansted Airport (Essex) growth

Up to 10,000 new jobs to 2030

### Port of Tilbury (Thurrock) growth

Up to 5,500 jobs at London distribution Park and Tilbury sites.

### London Gateway (Thurrock)

One of Europe's biggest logistics parks and growing.

### **Wind farms (Greater Gabbard, Gunfleet Sands, London Array, East Sussex coast)**

Maintenance (Engineering) skills likely to continue to be needed.

### **Better Queensway Development (Southend)**

£320 million regeneration in Southend over next 15-20 years.

### **Up to 300,000 new homes to 2030 across SELEP area**

Large numbers of jobs in construction and engineering. Sites including:

- Ebbsfleet Garden City (Kent)
- Otterpool Park Garden Town (Kent) houses & commercial land
- New garden town on Essex-Hertfordshire border
- Dunton Hills in Essex (to include new schools and shopping facilities)
- Wealden Housing developments to 2028

### **Discovery Park (Kent)**

Up to 3,000 new jobs

### **Elwick Place Development Ashford (Kent)**

Development requiring construction and engineering jobs. Leisure and hospitality jobs to be created.

### **Sittingbourne Town Centre regeneration (Kent)**

Development requiring construction and engineering jobs. Hotels, cinemas and shops to create retail and hospitality jobs.

### **London Entertainment resort (plans only)**

Large scale entertainment resort would require construction and engineering skills and once up and running, large numbers of hospitality jobs.

### **Growth of Gatwick Airport**

Continuing jobs for people living in East Sussex and Kent.

### **South Essex Vision 2050**

Ambitions for growth including housing, business and leisure development to ensure the right conditions for growth.

### **Swallows Business Park (Hailsham, East Sussex)**

Over 500 new jobs.

### **North Bexhill Access Road**

Development opening up land for the development of 38,000 sqm of new employment space and the creation of over 2200 jobs.

### **Lewes North Street Quarter**

£180m development on brownfield site to include public spaces, off street parking, employment space and a healthcare hub.

### **Devonshire Park (Eastbourne)**

£44m project to deliver new welcome building, theatre and gardens.

### **Queensway Gateway Road**

New road to reduce congestions on the Ridge and open up land along a corridor between Hastings and Bexhill for business investment and housing development.

### **Hastings Harbour Quarter project plan**

£500m project to regenerate Hastings seafront creating jobs, homes and a working marina for up to 600 vessels. Construction and jobs based at the marina as well as 1,300 homes.

### **Newhaven Enterprise Zone**

Made up of eight sites covering 79 hectares and focusing on advanced manufacturing, engineering and 'clean, green and marine' sectors linked to Rampion Offshore Wind Farm (Operations and Maintenance Base currently under construction).

### **Eastbourne Arndale Centre Retail / Leisure development**

£80m re-development in Eastbourne creating 22 new retail units, approximately 300 extra car-parking spaces, 7 restaurants and a cinema.

### **Potential High Speed One from Ashford to Hastings**

High speed rail link between London St Pancras, Hastings, Bexhill and Rye via Ashford International – proposed by government.

# 6. National context and impact upon the SELEP area

## 6a The Industrial Strategy and skills

The government's industrial strategy white paper was published in November 2017 and sets out the government's plans for growth. This includes five foundations of productivity:

- **Ideas** – the world's most innovative economy
- **People** – good jobs and greater earning power for all (including the establishment of a world class technical education system, additional £406m in maths, digital and technical education, new National Retraining Scheme supporting people to re-skill)
- **Infrastructure** – a major upgrade to the UK's infrastructure
- **Business environment** – the best place to start and grow a business (including a construction 'Sector Deal') which SELEP will engage with
- **Places** – prosperous communities across the UK

Many of the ambitions set out in the government's industrial Strategy align to those in the National Careers Strategy (see section 9f) and acknowledge the vital role skills plays in employment growth stating that 'we recognise that people and the skills they have are a key driver of productivity.'

The Industrial Strategy acknowledges the importance of investment in technical education which it notes 'for too long has not had the prestige it has enjoyed in other countries. The system can be complex and confusing, not always meeting the needs of individuals or those of employers.'

This has led to a shortage of technical-level skills and STEM take up (which is also evident across the SELEP area) and greater proportions of young people are still choosing academic rather than vocational study. This complexity is also reflected by responses to SELEP's skills strategy consultation.

Examples of feedback include 'the approach to skills is fragmented which causes confusion' and 'the educational landscape is extremely confusing. The disconnect between consumer led educational provision and the labour market is a systemic weakness.'

SELEP and partners are committed to delivering against the Industrial Strategy, recognising the key role skills plays in driving productivity. The Industrial Strategy's commitment to supporting all in society throughout their working lives is welcomed and aligns to the SELEP ambition for an inclusive economy. SELEP is keen to deliver against the digital ambition set out ranging from ensuring all in society can access digital skills to understanding employment and skills needs of areas like

**"We must help people and businesses to thrive through skills. Our poor performance in basic and technical skills is key to the UK's persistently lower levels of productivity compared with other advanced economies."**  
UK government



artificial intelligence and robotics. The industrial strategy also outlines plans for sector deals, which it states 'will be partnerships between the government and industry on specific issues that can create significant opportunities to boost productivity, employment, innovation and skills.' It will therefore be important for SELEP and partners to engage with these particularly where they align with the sector focus set out in the snapshot of sectors above.

## 6b The Apprenticeship levy and reforms are one of the most significant changes in recent years

The levy is essentially a tax on UK employers who have annual pay bills in excess of £3 million (in reality this represents less than 2% of UK businesses). Therefore funding will be with the employer, rather than the provider. Most non-levy payers will make a 10% contribution to apprenticeships, with 90% provided by the government, though there are exceptions to this based on business size and apprentice age.

At the time of publication, there has been speculation that smaller non-levy paying employers may be deterred by this new requirement which has likely contributed to a short-term decrease in the numbers offered. Additionally, there is a risk that employers seeking to get value for money will focus on existing training as apprenticeships, potentially resulting in lower numbers of apprenticeships offered to new entrants. This will therefore be an area for continued review.

SELEP's population is 4.1 million, roughly 7% of England. Applying this proportion to the government target of 3 million apprenticeships (2015-2020) means a contribution of 210,000 apprenticeships towards this target from the SELEP area. For the last few years, apprenticeship starts have been approximately 32,000 annually which means we have more work to do to increase the uptake of apprenticeships across our area.

The reform of apprenticeships means that apprenticeship frameworks are being replaced with standards, also known as 'Trailblazers', with employer input informing their design. In the short-term new standards applicable to growth sectors will not be universally available though in the longer-term these should be more relevant and employer driven. Degree apprenticeships have also been introduced, which is welcome in addressing the arbitrary divide between academic and vocational routes. Some sectors, such as creative, digital and construction, with high levels of short-term contracts and freelancing, may require additional support to take on apprentices, such as a consortium approach whereby the apprentice would rotate around a partnership of employers.



## 6c Introduction of T-levels by 2020

As with apprenticeships, SELEP is committed to achieving greater levels of technical skills, supporting educators to deliver these and responding to sector need.

T-levels are new technical qualifications aimed at putting vocational qualifications on an equal footing with academic ones. They will enable 16 to 19 year olds to study in 15 sectors such as construction and hair and beauty, replacing thousands of qualifications currently on offer and with the ambition of making access to the job market easier. The first T-levels will commence from September 2020 with the remaining routes in place by 2022.

The government has described these reforms as 'the biggest overhaul of post-school education in 70 years' and has pledged £500 million per year to deliver them by 2022. There will be a requirement for three months high quality work experience to be delivered, which is positive although additional support may be required given the high number of SMEs across the SELEP area. Employers will therefore need to be assisted and incentivised to prepare for this change.

The 15 sectors available to study within are as follows. Some of these cover a range of occupational areas. These correlate with many of SELEP's areas of growth and sectors potentially experiencing shortages:

- Agriculture, Environmental & Animal Care
- Business and Administrative
- Catering and Hospitality
- Childcare and Education
- Construction
- Creative and Design
- Digital
- Engineering and Manufacturing
- Hair and Beauty
- Health and Science
- Legal, finance and Accounting
- Protective Services \*
- Sales, Marketing and Procurement \*
- Social Care \*
- Transport and Logistics \*

To this end, alongside and in parity with A-levels, this simplification may assist in responding to forecast growth in our sectors and the confusion within the landscape often cited.

There are 233,000 15-19 year olds in the SELEP area, set to increase to 243,000 by 2022. With approximately a third of young people nationally choosing vocational pathways 81,000 young people may choose to undertake T-levels across the SELEP area. A significant obstacle to achieving this is a general shortage of qualified trainers aligned to growth sectors, exacerbated by, and impacting upon, skills shortages in industries.

(\* = will primarily be delivered through apprenticeships).



This image: University of Brighton



## 6d £170m for Institutes of Technology (IoTs) and similar initiatives

The government announced £170m capital for Institutes of Technology early in 2017, to improve attainment of technical and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Maths) based skills required by employers.

IoTs will be based around boosting provision at Levels 4 and 5 in the Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths subjects, developing a strong pipeline of provision at Level 3 with clear pathways to the IoT's level 4/5 provision and up-skilling or re-skilling the existing workforce to keep pace with rapid technological change. Again, the SELEP Skills Evidence Base illustrates the necessity of this across the SELEP area which is seeing lower than average skills levels, particularly at level 4 and above, coupled with high levels of need. Employers are expected to be central and to this end SELEP's local Employment and Skills Boards will have a key role to play. SELEP and partners would be keen to see strong Higher/Further Education and employer partnerships, responding to the growth set out in the Skills Evidence Base. SELEP would therefore be supportive of an IoT locally and will continue to support similar government initiatives and funds.

## 6e SELEP's Local Economic Plan / Industrial Strategy

Alongside the skills strategy, SELEP has its Strategic Economic Plan aligning future plans for growth with the government's Industrial Strategy. The plan has set out five ambitions which includes a focus on skills:

- Strong digital infrastructure connecting and energising communities
- Generate a business infrastructure fit to drive UK PLC
- Help build resilient places embracing inclusive growth
- Increase productivity driven by innovative businesses and people skilled for the future
- Demonstrate an influential collective voice leading change

The economic plan explores areas such as coastal and rural economies, digital infrastructure, entrepreneurship and supporting creatives and freelancers. Much of SELEP's interaction with small to medium sized businesses is through our Growth Hub, co-ordinated business support providing start up and scale up support across the SELEP area, and SELEP's skills partners. We will continue working with the SELEP Growth Hub to provide information about the skills landscape and to join up areas of work.

This image: Harlow Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering Centre



## 6f The National Careers Strategy

In December 2017, the Department for Education published a new National Careers Strategy setting out roles for employers and education providers. This was followed in January 2018 with Careers Statutory Guidance for schools which includes a broader and key role for the national Careers Enterprise Company (CEC), see below, work which is being delivered across SELEP.

The focus on strengthening engagement with employers and ensuring access to apprenticeships and other opportunities is positive and aligns with the ambitions set out through this SELEP Skills strategy and feedback at the consultation stage regarding the importance of careers.

There is a clear role for LEPs and partners in delivering the National Careers Strategy as is reflected in our ambitions, see sections 3 and 7 of this strategy. Through the local Careers Enterprise Adviser network and beyond, SELEP is committed to delivering against the National Careers Strategy.



Key elements of the National Careers Strategy include:

- Secondary schools to offer every young person at least seven encounters with employers during their education, supported by the CEC network
- All schools to give providers of technical education (including apprenticeships) opportunity to talk to pupils about their offer and continued work with higher education
- A strategy to communicate key aspects of the new T-levels to parents, teachers, students and careers professionals as they become available
- £2million to test careers activities including those with primary schools
- Improving the take up of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) qualifications
- A requirement for schools to meet the eight Gatsby Benchmarks which form a framework for good career guidance including encounters with employers and linking curriculum learning to careers
- A role for Ofsted to comment on careers guidance provided in inspections
- Careers Hubs' in 20 areas nationally, linking together schools, colleges, universities and other local partners
- Support higher education students from disadvantaged backgrounds to make best use of their university careers services and offering support such as mentoring and outreach
- Contributions to careers information from LEPs, including Local Industrial Strategies and Skills Advisory Panels and up to date information on skills and jobs in local areas

Image: East Sussex Open Doors project  
Facing image: Kent Enterprise Advisor Network





## 6g The Careers Enterprise Company (CEC), connecting schools and employers

The Careers Enterprise Company (CEC) is a national network set up by government to 'connect schools and colleges, employers and career programme providers to provide high-impact career opportunities for young people.'

Local Enterprise Co-ordinators work with up to 20 schools in their area matching each school with an Enterprise Adviser (senior business volunteer) who work in partnership with schools and colleges to develop a careers plan for the school. The National Careers Strategy includes the commitment for an Enterprise Adviser to be available to every school and college by 2020 and to launch a £5 million new investment fund to support disadvantaged pupils with support to prepare for work, including mentoring and guidance.

This means that nearly 200 secondary schools across the SELEP area will benefit from Enterprise Advisers. This significant reach of the Local Enterprise Co-ordinators gives SELEP a strong platform to communicate its vision, careers opportunities of the future and updates on delivery to a range of audiences including schools and students. Thereby reaching the future workforce well in advance of career choice.

In 2017 government established Opportunity Areas to focus local and national resources on a



common goal of increasing social mobility and creating local partnerships with early years providers, schools, colleges, universities, businesses, charities and local authorities. Amongst areas chosen across the UK was Hastings which now has a dedicated Enterprise Co-ordinator and Partnership Board focused on four priority areas; improving literacy, raising attainment in maths, improving

mental health and resilience and broadening horizons and preparing young people for work.

In addition to the work we are doing with Enterprise Co-ordinators SELEP has also played a role in linking up partners such as the National Careers Service, Job Centre Plus and others all of which have a remit to work with schools.



## 6h Brexit and impact on sectors, funding and workforce

A separate report to support this strategy will consider the potential impact of Brexit. Additionally the evidence base supporting this SELEP Skills Strategy considers the impact of Brexit on some sectors which, for example, employ higher proportions of migrant labour. Reports from industry and sector bodies have outlined some of the likely challenges arising from a reduced migrant workforce. Sectors that have cited concerns include construction, health and care. With skills shortages already within these sectors and potentially set to increase, investing in areas such as skills support and apprenticeships are therefore likely to be even more important.

Please see the [southeastlep.com](https://southeastlep.com) website for further information or request this at [hello@southeastlep.com](mailto:hello@southeastlep.com).

With much still to be negotiated at the time of writing, it is difficult to make any predictions with certainty however at this stage the government has confirmed there will be 'UK shared Prosperity' fund to replace EU funding.

SELEP and partners have influenced European Social Funding, held by the DWP and matched by the DWP, ESFA and Big Lottery, to deliver skills focused projects such as apprenticeships, in work training for growth sectors and supporting unemployed and disadvantaged cohorts towards employment.

For cohorts including homeless, carers, care leavers, offenders, those with mental health barriers and special educational needs and disabilities, EU funding support has been important. Partners would welcome greater

control, influence, and flexibility over funding so any national pot to enable funding to respond to local need and give local partners a leading role in steering delivery and sector focus. Some ring fencing would arguably be a positive thing.

This image: East Kent College Group,  
health and social care  
Facing image: East Sussex Open  
Doors project



## 6i Digital revolution changing the way we work

Digital now cuts across all sectors, from robotics in logistics, to the application of digital care all sectors are increasingly being impacted. In some sectors, such as manufacturing and engineering the introduction of robotics has lead to a reduction in the workforce. Digital communications infrastructure and technology are transforming the workplace with many sectors and organisations offering flexible and remote working arrangements.

A separate report to support this strategy will consider the potential impact of the digital revolution more fully. Please see the [southeastlep.com](https://southeastlep.com) website for further information or request this at [hello@southeastlep.com](mailto:hello@southeastlep.com).

Technological advances represent huge potential for skills development. Many schools and further and higher educational establishments now use virtual reality, drones and robotics. Virtual reality and simulators mean that people can be now be trained remotely resulting in greater volumes or training opportunities decoupled from the need for onsite training providers and placements.

A potential area for SELEP and partners to explore would be reaching young people, adults, those in rural areas, home educated and cohorts such as prisoners through such flexible and interactive learning, promoting sectors in new and exciting ways such as virtual reality. The digital creative and gaming sector across SELEP is highly successful and growing and will have an important part to play in maximising these opportunities.

It is predicted that the digital revolution will continue to transform workplaces with some forecasts suggesting that more than 10 million jobs could be at risk of being replaced by automation over the next ten years. This is already happening in areas such as self-service check-outs and robotics in use in health and care. Many of these lost jobs, but not all, will be lower skilled jobs, which will see 10 million low skilled workers released into the labour market.

The Learning and Work Institute predicts an oversupply of more than six million low skilled and two million intermediate skilled workers by 2024. This highlights the need to improve skills levels across the SELEP area. It is therefore vital to help people in work to upskill, as well as new entrants. The Industrial Strategy included the ambition to create local digital skills partnerships and SELEP is already exploring this.

Facing image: Brighton University  
Virtuality Reality meet-up







## 6j UK skills levels in an international context and on productivity

According to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)'s international table published in 2015, two in ten 15-year olds in the UK lack basic maths, science and reading skills compared to one in 10 in Vietnam. The UK is ranked 20th of 76 countries and falls behind Japan, Poland, Finland and Canada. The OECD notes that if education failings are not tackled 'economic output is lost and is a powerful predictor of the wealth that countries will produce in the long run.'

A BEIS report notes that 'a nation's prosperity depends largely on its ability to raise the level of its productivity. The education level of its workforce, and how effectively the skills are used in the production processes, are considered important factors in this process.' Comparisons with other countries illustrate relatively poor productivity in the UK compared with countries such as Italy, Canada, France and Germany.

The same report finds evidence of a positive link between high skills and productivity. This is evident in SELEP's lower than average GVA, earnings and skills levels and further illustrates the benefits of upskilling. It should be noted however, that employment levels are generally good currently.

It is clear that the UK's performance in productivity and skills is not keeping pace internationally and the skills evidence base illustrates that SELEP is failing to keep up with national skills levels and those of other LEPs. This is due to a combination of factors, including availability of employment, access to training in rural areas and deprivation in coastal areas and there are disparities, with some parts of SELEP well above and others well below the national average.



This image: CXK

## 6k Further education area reviews

In September 2015, the government commenced reviews of further education across England (33 in total), which concluded in 2017. The focus was on FE and sixth-form colleges, with participation by other institutions such as school sixth forms and training providers being voluntary.

Not all post 16 provision was therefore included. Reviews were led by steering groups, chaired by the FE commissioner and including LEP and local authority representation as well as college Principals and Chairs of Governors. They explored areas such as mergers, financial resilience and responding to labour market needs.

The full reports are available at:  
[www.gov.uk/government/collections/post-16-education-and-training-area-reviews](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/post-16-education-and-training-area-reviews)

Key recommendations include:

- Continued collaborative working to provide routes to higher technical and professional learning
- Developing progression routes beyond level 3 to increase skills levels of local residents
- Increasing delivery of apprenticeships in key sectors, particularly at higher levels
- Supporting better careers education, information, advice and guidance through collaborative working with colleges, the LEP and local authorities
- Colleges developing their estates to ensure facilities are suitable to support the delivery of provision in priority skills areas
- The development of greater specialisation in key areas where colleges have expertise in order to provide level 4+ provision in priority areas
- Effective transition arrangements between schools and colleges
- Continued support to ensure direct links with industry, FE and HE and to inform provision

## 6l Work and health programme and similar initiatives

The Work and health programme is a Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) government welfare-to-work programme, launched in January 2018. This replaced the previous 'Work Programme' and 'Work Choice'.

This provides specialised employment support for people with disabilities and longterm unemployed people. In the SELEP area this is delivered by Shaw Trust and local partners. Shaw Trust are working with SELEP and federated areas to ensure join up with local programmes and activity. Geographically, the programme is based on Job Centre Plus operational boundaries and the SELEP falls within the 'Home counties' area, which also includes parts of East Anglia.

New programme areas for DWP include 'Access to Work Mental Health Support Service' which it will be important to link in with. SELEP and partners are keen to work with the DWP on initiatives to support disadvantaged people and to ensure that any gaps can be addressed.

## 9m Adult and community education

The government plans to devolve the adult education budget in Mayoral Combined Authorities from 2019. This therefore does not currently include the SELEP area.

These changes were outlined in the Industrial Strategy and at [www.gov.uk/government/publications/sfa-changes-to-the-adult-education-budget-for-2016-to-2017](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sfa-changes-to-the-adult-education-budget-for-2016-to-2017).

The SELEP area has a significant and important adult and community learning offer. This is a vital part of the landscape in ensuring adults can enter and progress in the labour market by improving their employability skills in areas such as reading, writing, communication, maths, ESOL, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and their vocational skills in accessible, part-time learning environments.

As this strategy outlines, it is also very important to ensure that adults can upskill and re-skill in areas relevant to economic growth. Many adult education providers are already responding to sector needs such as those in health, care and construction.

SELEP and partners are committed to continuing to work closely with adult education providers to support further alignment. Adult Education also contributes to the SELEP agenda for inclusion by developing stronger families and communities through its work with vulnerable adults with mental and physical health challenges, learning difficulties or social inequalities.

Facing image: 'A better start' Southend work skills programme





# 7. Our skills action plan, a commitment to deliver

This strategy has set the scene and challenges across the SELEP area and how they relate to national policy, local communities and growth.

Through consultation and evidence we have also ensured that this is both accurate and genuinely reflective of partner priorities. This has enabled us to agree ambitions for the SELEP geography in terms of economic growth, talent opportunities for employers and career and job opportunities for individuals.

We have a strong shared commitment to deliver against all the findings, national and local scene setting and conclusions in this strategy. With much excellent work happening at local level, partners and consultees to this strategy have agreed to our pan SELEP area strategic approach to the prioritization of activity. In order for delivery to be successful all partners, in their crucial role as local experts and deliverers, need to articulate the SELEP skills strategy, vision, priorities and actions to their networks which will help to ensure a consistent message.

## Turning vision and ambition into action

Our consultation with partners and the tangible inputs and experience enshrined in the development and conclusions of this SELEP Skills Strategy illustrate a genuine commitment from the biggest alliance of educators, local authorities, employers, the voluntary sector, employers and providers in the UK to forge an economic development future for the SELEP area that means opportunities for all and growth for our economy.

## The challenge

Although our skills levels are improving this is in the context of some challenging statistics:

- Nearly 180,000 people with no qualifications
- 33% of people have a degree level qualification compared to 38% nationally
- Nearly 42,000 people are claiming out of work benefits
- 178,400 workless households

## Our priorities and vision, a recap:

Vision: To help deliver a flourishing and inclusive economy across the biggest LEP in the country by equipping employers, adults and young people with the skills, conditions and aptitudes required for significant growth today and tomorrow.

## SELEP's priorities

Working together as educators, local authorities, employers, the voluntary sector, employers and providers we agree our priorities are to:

- Increase apprenticeships and industry relevant qualifications for all ages, particularly in priority sectors and at higher and degree level
- Simplify the skills landscape for employers, stakeholders and individuals
- Build an inclusive economy creating opportunities for all
- Raise awareness of jobs and growth across the SELEP area and its characteristics; size, scale, national and international significance
- Foster and support the spirit of pride, entrepreneurship innovation and enthusiasm across the SELEP area to bring about change



This image: South Essex College construction training



Reflecting on our vision, priorities and ambitions here are our headline and individual actions. These will be overseen by the SELEP Skills Advisory Group and SELEPs Skills Employer Panel. This action plan, and its subsequent delivery, will be regularly reviewed to demonstrate progress and to identify any additional areas for action.

Headline theme	Example actions
<b>Continue to secure funding and opportunities to support our most disadvantaged people and communities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Launch remaining ESF tenders to support areas of identified need</li> <li>• Achieve greater local control of Skills Funding to deliver growth</li> <li>• Be an established partner to test / input to areas of national policy</li> <li>• Ensure a proportionate share of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund</li> </ul>
<b>Promoting careers where there are current and future vacancies to adults and young people</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the growth of the Careers Enterprise Adviser network across SELEP</li> <li>• Explore and showcase innovative new solutions for careers and training (i.e. virtual reality, online careers shows, materials for adults)</li> <li>• Work with relevant partner organisation to articulate growth areas outlined in this strategy / evidence base (i.e. National Careers Service, Job Centre Plus)</li> <li>• Ensure support for and awareness of entrepreneurship and self employment</li> </ul>
<b>Removing any barriers to provision, such as the availability of tutors and facilities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pilot an online skills portal for potential roll out</li> <li>• Support Government Initiatives for Adults (e.g. Fuller Working Lives, Disability Confident)</li> <li>• Utilise ESF for areas of need (I.e. tutor recruitment, digital skills)</li> </ul>



Headline theme	Example actions
<b>Ensuring that local provision and curriculum matches employer need and is led by employers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Launch tenders for remaining European Social Funding (to 2023)</li> <li>• Work with industry bodies to respond to growth</li> <li>• Oversee the outputs from the existing £37m capital investments</li> <li>• Share this skills strategy and evidence base and updates with providers to ensure an understanding of employer need support SMEs and self-employed people with the skills required to start and grow their business</li> <li>• Ensuring that schools, colleges and HEI have the right tutors in place</li> <li>• Working with adult education providers to align delivery to growth</li> </ul>
<b>Be ambitious and work in partnership with government and employers, directing spend to meet these objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Play a leading role in government sector deals</li> <li>• Ensure success of current and future capital and ESF expenditure</li> <li>• Inform Delivery &amp; Commissioning of National Programmes (e.g. National Careers Service)</li> <li>• Pilot Government Initiatives (e.g. Digital Partnerships, Inclusive Employment)</li> <li>• Establish a LEP wide employer led Skills Employer Panel</li> <li>• Respond to Industrial Strategy Opportunities (e.g. National Retraining Scheme Funding)</li> <li>• Upscale what is working well locally through Employment and Skills Boards</li> <li>• Work with neighbouring LEPS to tackle Common Areas of Ambition</li> </ul>
<b>Ensuring that employers understand and are engaged in the skills and employability landscape</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raise the profile and understanding of apprenticeships</li> <li>• Secure public 'skills commitments' from employers across SELEP</li> <li>• Communicate and share the skills strategy locally and nationally</li> <li>• Inform and support the introduction of T-levels</li> <li>• Communicate across the LEP networks (particularly Growth Hubs)</li> <li>• Support SMEs to skill and upskill (e.g. apprenticeships, T-levels, leadership, digital)</li> </ul>

# 8. Conclusion

Fundamentally the evidence and feedback throughout this Skills strategy and the supporting documents , published on our website, illustrate that the key requirement across all activity is for greater alignment between education and employers to drive up skills levels.

With growth forecast on an unprecedented scale accompanied by factors such as the digital revolution and population increases, employers will require support and clarity to respond. This will mean addressing the spectrum of skills needs from entry level through to higher. For the economy in the SELEP area to become more productive and for skills levels to improve, businesses and people here will require additional, in-depth support and facilities. Positively there is already large scale commitment to respond to challenges from employers, local authorities, education providers and the voluntary sector.

As the largest LEP in the country this represents a public/private partnership on a significant scale. This is coupled with a strong, and current, focus on skills through government policy and initiatives which SELEP and its partners are keen to engage in. The time is therefore ripe to deliver against this strategy.

Moreover there is a clear desire from SELEP and its partners to go further and to deliver more by establishing themes of expertise and innovation in areas such as freelancing and virtual reality and to create the very best conditions for local employers and individuals.

Going forward the action plan supporting this strategy will become a working document, to be overseen by the SELEP Skills Advisory Group and SELEPs Skills Employer Panel. Regular reviews will be provided to demonstrate progress. This Action Plan and the full evidence base will be made available on the SELEP website and added to on an ongoing basis to ensure relevance to need and government policy.

**"This strategy quite clearly articulates the scale of growth and opportunity across the SELEP area. We know that skills is absolutely fundamental to this, which is why it's a top priority for SELEP and its partners. What is also evident is the shared commitment and ambition to really make a difference and to deliver our vision of a flourishing, inclusive economy. We look forward to delivering against this strategy and would like to thank all partners involved in current and future work."**

**Adam Bryan, South East LEP  
Managing Director**







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