

This report provides TES with a summary of current and planned activities by the Skills East Sussex (SES) Board and its partners. It also provides some headline information about the known impact of the Levelling Up White Paper on the local skills and employment arena.



## 1. Skills East Sussex (SES) Priorities

SES agreed its new priorities for the period 2021-2030, with a progress review in 2025:

1. Ensuring that national policy and funding supports the delivery of learning and skills in East Sussex.
2. Enabling our FE/HE establishments to recruit excellent educators with specialist technical knowledge.
3. Improving our digital skills and digital inclusion.
4. Upskilling our workforce to increase regional productivity.
5. Supporting the unemployed and unqualified.
6. Developing skills and provision for a Net Zero future.

## 2. Sector Task Group Action Plans

Subsequently, the SES task groups have been working to agree actions to help progress vis a vis the SES priorities. Thus far the task groups have agreed:

Engineering:

- Increase the range of training opportunities to upskill those working at operative level, to enable better productivity and career progression.
- Increase the recruitment of HE graduates into the sector locally.
- Support educator recruitment via a campaign and employer designed CPD.

Visitor Economy:

- Set up careers' pages including progression routes, linked to Careers East Sussex webpages and Careers Hub.
- Develop and establish a programme for attracting new entrants to the sector via "taster" training sessions.
- Devise and deliver social media campaign to increase participation in training and careers activity.

Construction:

- Establish a risk register of green skills availability.
- Support educator recruitment via a campaign and employer designed CPD.

Creative and Digital:

- Support educator recruitment via a campaign and employer designed CPD.
- Launch "Talent Accelerator" programme.
- Improve the relevance of higher level (degree) courses to the world of digital skills based work.

Landbased (led by Plumpton College):

- Promote the diversity of careers within the sector and the requirement for higher level technological and digital skills.
- Develop a L4-6 credit based/modular offer aligned to employer led demand.
- Develop and establish a programme for attracting new entrants to the sector via "taster" training sessions.

#### Health and Social Care:

- Social Care recruitment campaign co-designed with DWP (SWAPS etc).
- Set up careers' pages including progression routes for NHS, and ASC careers via Careers East Sussex website.
- Map learning pathways into careers in East Sussex (linked to Level 2 and Level 3 offers), identify gaps in provision and develop further modular learning from Level 2 to Level 7.
- Maximise opportunities from the "Workforce Recruitment and Retention Fund".

#### Apprenticeships East Sussex:

- Provide impartial Apprenticeship IAG sessions to RESTART and DWP to improve understanding of the offer.
- Deliver Apprenticeship Roadshows.
- Hold Apprenticeship Graduation ceremony 2022.

#### All Age Careers Campaign:

- Develop accessible CEIAG materials/resources on Careers East Sussex website.
- Encourage employers to train their staff beyond level 2.
- Support campaign(s) to promote the recruitment of educators.

#### Net Zero:

- Phase one: Undertake research to identify future skills needs and shifts in employment in the local economy.
- Phase two: Use research findings to help inform local provider development of training and plan volumes of delivery.

### 3. SES Projects and Developments

#### 3.1 DWP Agreement with ESCC

ESCC and DWP have signed an agreement to work collaboratively via Skills East Sussex on the following:

- Providing localised employment data to SES.
- Keeping DWP up to date re local provision, courses, recruitment campaigns, and other support and resources available to their clients.
- Working together to develop and promote the Careers East Sussex web platform, with its e-prospectus of local courses and training (for young people and adults), pre-employment support programme database, an online application system and careers information and resources.
- Focusing support on priority groups and/or wards most in need of additional intervention to improve employment outcomes, social mobility and raise aspirations.
- Supporting Youth Hubs for young people (16-24yrs).
- Explore/establish a mechanism for ESCC to help support local DWP, MHCLG, DfE and ESFA contractors (i.e. REED, TWIN UK, SCDA) to establish link/partnerships/referral routes between each other and local colleges, training/employment support/careers providers.
- NEET prevention.
- Working with ESTAR to support those in social housing, at risk of homelessness, ex rough sleepers.

#### 3.2 Careers East Sussex website development [www.careerseastsussex.co.uk](http://www.careerseastsussex.co.uk)

The Careers East Sussex website has been redesigned and streamlined and the new look site is being soft launched at the end of Mar 2022. It now contains:

- A searchable online brochure of post-16 courses and application forms for all those making their post-16 choices.
- Information about Apprenticeships in East Sussex.

- An online searchable database of pre-employment support in East Sussex for those who are unemployed and seeking work.
- An online searchable databases of adult learning provision to support careers development.
- Information about all of the East Sussex Economic Sectors.
- Interactive careers pathway infographics focusing on the most in-demand roles in East Sussex.
- Short films about the economic sectors.
- A calendar of skills and careers events – for all partners to use.
- Careers Hub resources for schools.
- Resources for adults who are unemployed and want to find out more about the world of work including links.
- A careers search tool that enables individuals to identify the sectors where their strengths could lie, with information about local courses to support career pathways in these areas and a link to locally available jobs.

Next developments:

- Working with the NHS and Integrated Care Service, we will be developing the site to integrate a variety of sector pathway infographics, links to the NHS Trusts' jobs boards, information about training and apprenticeships into the sector.

### 3.3 East Sussex Careers Hub

The Hub continues to work with all secondary schools, special schools and colleges, and their Enterprise Advisers to drive up understanding of careers, the labour market and enterprise. It is one of the top performing Hubs in the country as measured against the national Gatsby Benchmarks.

Open Doors launched in Nov 2021, with employers providing face-to-face visits for groups of students for the first time since 2019. This is the fifth year of the project and to date over 3,000 students have visited nearly 100 businesses. This year we have over 300 students visiting 11 businesses, and it will be run again in the Spring term.

Over 3,000 pupils are expected to take part in Work Experience service in 2021/22.

The **Effective Transitions pilot 'Steps to Success'** launched in Jan 2022, one of only 10 pilots in a national research project to understand what works to support transitions of the most vulnerable young people in the current year 10 cohort into post-16 education. Learning from the research pilot will be shared nationally and locally.

### 3.4 Research

The Employment and Skills Team is commissioning Institute of Employment Studies to undertake research to support the SES strategy, to help us consider what the local labour market will look like in 5-10 years as we move towards net zero. The research will benchmark:

- The current digital skills of East Sussex workforce.
- The current curriculum offer by our FE providers to support future skills needs and volumes of learners on this provision.
- Volume of jobs currently available in Net Zero occupations.
- The impact of Brexit on employment and skills gaps within our key sectors.

It will then look forwards to help us to ensure that we:

- Are developing the right new learning provision at FE, HE, school levels to equip a future workforce, and to support the skills development of our current workforce.
- Are offering the right volume of learning provision to address the future work and skills needs of our local economy (to counter skills gaps).

- Have an understanding of the roles that may become redundant as we see increased automation, so that we can project potential waves on unemployment, and mitigate these risks through training and careers advice.
- can determine the core skills that our residents need to have in order to adapt as we move towards NET Zero.

### 3.5 ESTAR

The ESTAR project continues well, addressing the employment and skills needs of the ex-homeless. People Matter is running a careers event on 29 Mar 2022 in Eastbourne for those furthest from the workforce as part of the ESTAR partnership.

Moving on Up is a project run in partnership with SCDA, SCTP, People Matter, Wealden Works, ESCG and Plumpton College, local housing teams and businesses to support people who live in supported and temporary accommodation, or who risk homelessness as a result of the impact of COVID, into training and careers and independent living. The project has moved seven people into work thus far and supported over 200 in taking their first steps towards learning and employment.

The ESTAR team is starting to put together a set of training videos to support the cohort to get a better understanding of the world of work, and alongside this they are also working on videos for professionals in housing to use to support the cohort. Videos will be made in partnership with DWP around the use of the Universal Credit calculator and the range of DWP pre-employment support programmes available, and with a range of other partners about areas such as trauma informed employment support, mental health and employment support and neurodiversity and employment support, as well as about the jobs available in the locally economy. Many videos will be a useful resource for our local businesses.

### 3.6 Transform

ESCC and SCTP continue to offer the Transform initiative, passing on ESCC Apprenticeship Levy funding to support our SMEs with training and appointing Apprentices. The businesses are supported through the process by SCTP. [TRANSFORM Project - SCTP](#)

## 4. Levelling Up White Paper and Skills

Although a lot of the paper built on prior developments, there were some interesting new elements relating to skills. We need to consider at SES how we maximise the impact of these elements to work towards delivering our strategic priorities.

#### For our schools:

- East Sussex becomes an **Education Improvement Area** – because Hastings Opportunity Area is within our geography. This will mean additional funding for SEND provision but the detail of what an EIA means in terms of remit and resource is still unclear.
- We do know of the **expansion of Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs)** in EIAs who will be able to offer retention incentives to retain teachers. Local Authorities in EIAs may be able to set up MATs.
- **New 16-19 free schools** are proposed to be opened in EIAs to provide academic education and enable progress on to leading universities.

#### For our adults:

- The overhaul of funding of courses and the governance of, and accountability for, further education colleges in line with employers' needs and greater inspection rights for OFSTED.
- £1.5bn Further Education Capital Transformation Programme to upgrade and transform college estates.
- Using £560m of Shared Prosperity Fund, the **Multiply scheme** will target disparities in numeracy levels.
- Quadrupling places on **Skills Bootcamps** – short intensive training (e.g. digital, construction retrofit, and HGV driving).

- Nine new **Institutes of Technology** will be established.
- **Lifetime Skills Guarantee** offered from 2021 to all adults without a L3 qualification to access a free approved L3 qualification. **From Apr 2022 will offer a second L3 qualification to those who earn below the National Living Wage or are unemployed.**
- From 2025, flexible **Lifelong Loan Entitlement** for FE or HE modules and/or four full years of study at higher technical and degree levels.
- **HE providers** are asked to refocus their **Access and Participation Plans** by focusing on delivering social mobility activities in their localities.
- From Apr 2021, DWP to scale up support to Universal Credit (UC) claimants already in work. £99m invested until 2024 in an **In-Work Progression offer** (work coach support to people on low incomes to help them progress).

### **What skills infrastructure is proposed?**

There are some significant areas that SES (and TES) need to consider:

- The UK Shared Prosperity Fund £2.6bn via District and Borough allocations. Pre-launch guidance said that the tranche for skills will be offered from 2024-25. **This will be an issue for our local provision as it means a potential gap in funding of 18 months.**
- The paper suggests that more areas should be offered devolved adult education budget (AEB) as part of a new 'devolution framework'.
- Local Skills Improvement Plans will be rolled out across England and the Government is legislating to put LSIPs on a statutory footing through the Skills and Post-16 Education Bill.
- The DfE is setting up a new Future Skills Unit (BEIS and DWP).
- The push towards devolution deals will have an impact on the nature of how skills is supported at a regional or local level via LEP/LSIP/Skills funding.
- Research & Development: The paper states that BEIS will aim to invest at least 55% of its total domestic R&D funding outside the Greater South East by 2024-25. Currently 54% is spent in London and the South East and the East of England. **There are no R&D investment clusters in Sussex so no proposed investment here and this may have an impact on skills, the ability to attract businesses into a geography and productivity.**

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