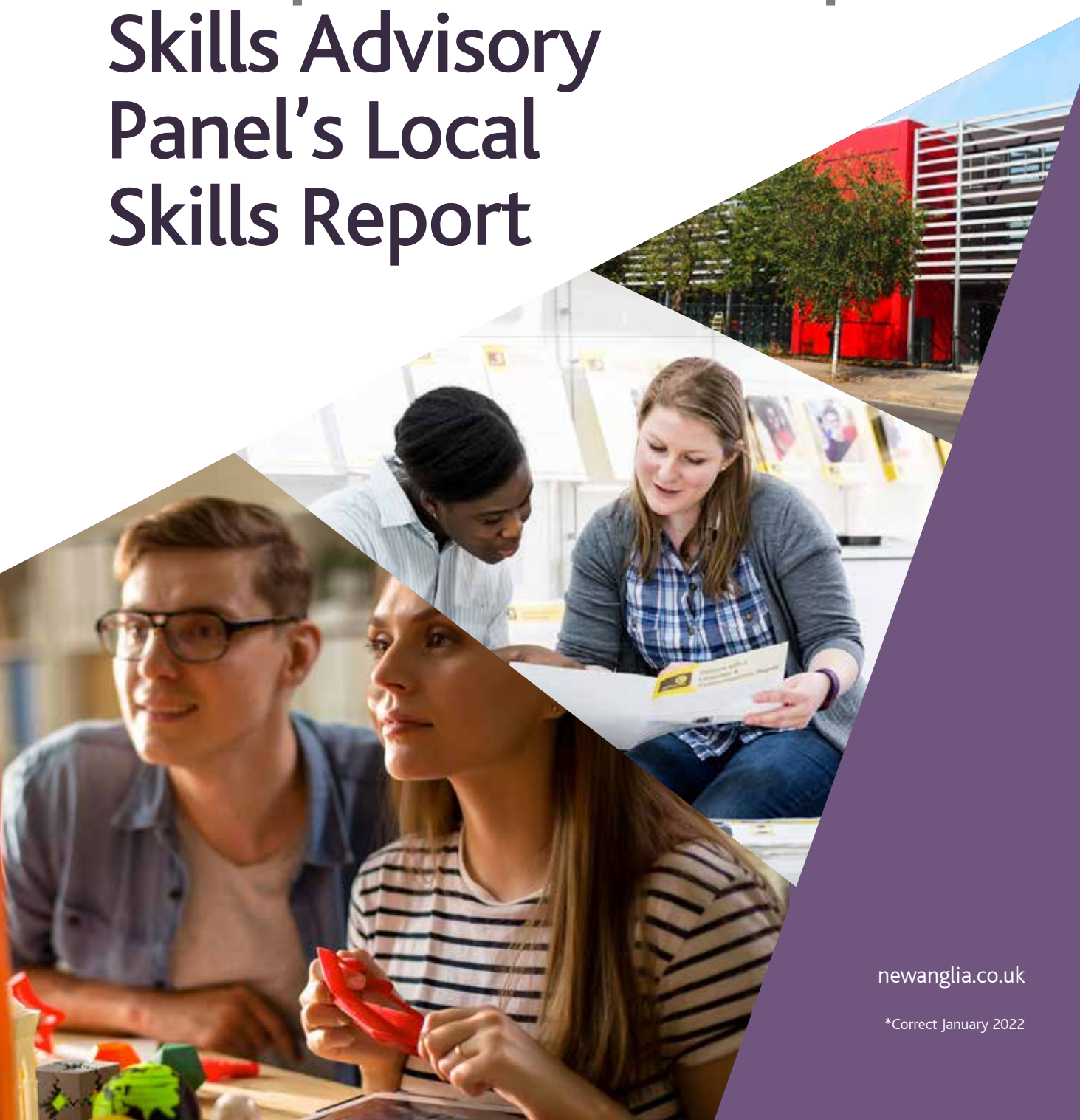


January 2022

# New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership Skills Advisory Panel's Local Skills Report



# Introduction from our chair **Claire Cullens, New Anglia Skills Advisory Panel**



I became the Chair of the New Anglia Skills Advisory Panel at the start of 2020, never expecting the rollercoaster journey that Covid-19 has thrown at us! The skills agenda is one I have been passionate about for many years, so I remain very committed to this role, excited by the opportunities that have arisen in recent months while at the same time not underestimating the challenges.

## Skills Advisory Panel's Local Skills Report

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**Our Skills Advisory Panel members care very much about their role and genuinely want the people who live and work in region to reach their potential, together with the businesses within Norfolk and Suffolk. Their message to me was very clear: the panel should be action-focused and not just a talking shop.**

As you will see from reading this report, Norfolk and Suffolk is at the national average for many aspects of the skills and educational attainment metrics. However, the LEP and our wider stakeholders are more ambitious for the area than being 'just good enough', particularly with our Local Industrial Strategic Opportunities particularly in the sectors of agri-food, clean energy and ICT digital. We want to be seen as the place to study and work within these sectors, and we will need a collective step-change to make this happen.

This report is not expected to largely address the issues around Covid-19 or Brexit, as other LEP documents do this. However, the pandemic has underlined the importance of the Health & Social Care sector in everyone's lives, and it is clear this is a growing part of our economy which must not be ignored in our forward thinking. Net zero will be an increasing focus as well.

The SAP's four objectives mean that we aim to give new entrants, the current workforce and those facing barriers in gaining employment the best opportunities through a dynamic and relevant curriculum offer. We are so fortunate that our educators at all levels and types engage with the LEP, our stakeholders, and each other. This makes addressing challenges within the skills landscape so much easier to tackle.

Our SAP cannot do this work in isolation, and we need everyone in Norfolk and Suffolk, as well as those who have a vested interest in our area, to help us address our weaknesses and further build our strengths. I am often asked, 'What are our 'key measures of success?' so I hope this report helps everyone to see where we need to focus and what we need to achieve. We have been pleased that the original version has been well utilised by our stakeholders in their own work, building an evidence base and narrative for funding bids. We hope this version will be of equal use.

Thank you to the LEP staff for putting this together. I hope you find this report of great value and you will become invested in what we need to collectively achieve.

**Claire Cullens,**  
SAP Chair

# Introduction



**Since 2018, Skills Advisory Panels (SAPs) have been bringing together employers, skills providers and key local stakeholders to better understand and resolve skills mismatches at a local level. SAPs are part of Mayoral Combined Authorities and Local Enterprise Partnerships and there are 36 in total across England.**

The Department for Education (DfE) has supported SAPs with grant funding primarily to produce high-quality analysis of local labour markets and publish Local Skills Reports, which set out the local skills strengths and needs and how the SAP proposes its area addresses its key priorities. This second iteration of SAPs' Local Skills Reports comes at a time when DfE is Trailblazing new Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs) in eight areas of the country. Developed by Employer Representative Bodies, LSIPs are part of a suite of reforms launched in DfE's 'Skills for Jobs' White Paper that aim to put employers at the heart of the skills system. An evaluation of the eight Trailblazers will inform the national rollout of the programme. In the meantime, and

before LSIPs are rolled out across the country, it is DfE's intention that Skills Advisory Panels, and this Local Skills Report, should continue to influence the behaviour of local partners and feed intelligence to central government, including to sectoral-focused skills teams and the national-level Skills and Productivity Board (SPB).

SAPs adopt a local leadership role on skills and are expected to identify skills priorities for the area based on high-quality analysis. They advise on and help implement funding and investment decisions for local skills provision. SAPs are expected to uphold and support national skills initiatives such as apprenticeships and T Levels. More detailed information on the role, remit and governance of SAPs is available online: [Skills Advisory Panels - guidance on the role and governance.](#)





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SAPs have developed and continue to develop evidence bases in line with the [Skills Advisory Panels: analytical toolkit](#). Our Local Skills Reports builds on this and aim to enhance SAPs' influence and aid collaboration by articulating the area's skills needs, plans and progress in a single accessible document for local stakeholders and government.

The New Anglia LEP Skills Advisory Panel was established in 2019, replacing the well-established New Anglia Skills Board. Given the strength of the pre-existing Skills Board, it was felt appropriate to transfer membership, vision and objectives into the SAP. The Skills Board built a strong foundation, securing engagement of stakeholders, and was responsible for some vital skills work, including the inception of sector skills plans, the endorsement of £2m of Skills Deals funding, and overseeing the recommendations of the area review.

The [SAP membership](#) is made up of a mix of education, private and public sector representatives, with Claire Cullens acting as Chair, as well as our link with the LEP Board. Universities, Further Education colleges and a representative from our local Independent Training Providers have membership. Our sixth-forms, UTC and the secondary education sector are covered through a combination of principals, governors, the Enterprise Adviser Network and public sector members from Norfolk and Suffolk County Councils, including councillor membership from both Norfolk and Suffolk. It is expected that councillor and officer members from the county councils cascade information down to the districts.

Local authorities are also represented on our [LEP Board](#) and skills updates are scheduled in regularly for these members. The private sector members cover most of our key sectors and own/manage businesses and organisations within Norfolk and Suffolk. They are active in their sector and the wider business community. We also have attendance from the Department for Work and Pensions and the Department for Education.

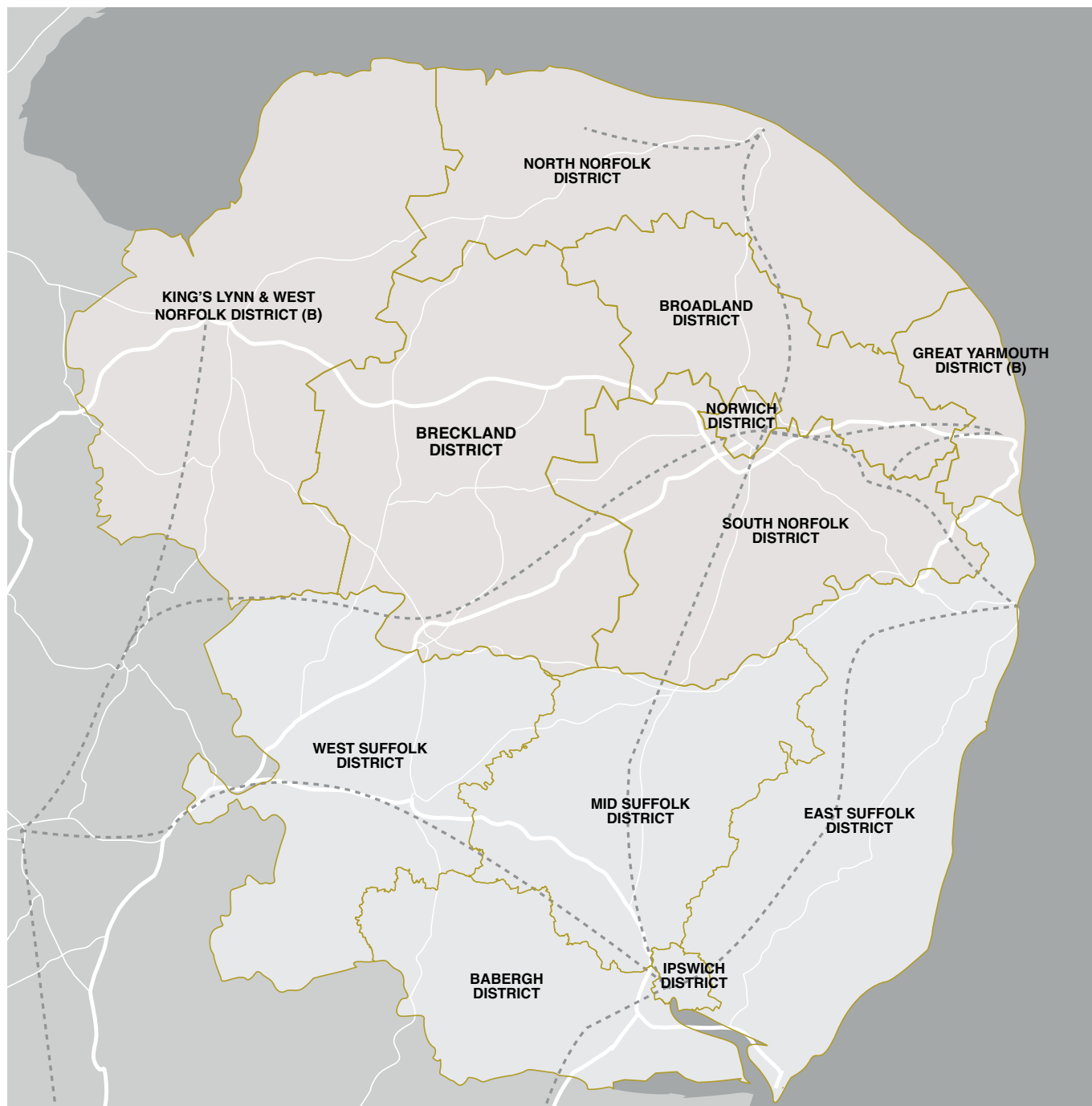
Members are interviewed for the role and have an initial tenure of three years, with the option for an additional tenure. They adhere to our [Terms of Reference and Membership agreement](#). They also complete and keep updated their [declaration of interests](#). The SAP meets six times a year with the Terms of Reference and minutes published on New Anglia LEP's website. Task and finish groups are established from time to time to focus on actions that need to be developed or delivered. [Youth Pledge](#) has been an example of this.

New Anglia LEP provides the secretariat for the SAP. There is an agreed forward plan which sets out the focus for each meeting. Agendas are agreed in collaboration with the SAP Chair, the LEP and Norfolk and Suffolk County Councils' skills teams.

We continually challenge our membership and ensure they actively play their part in the success of the skills and employment landscape.

If you have any questions or you would like to get in touch with the SAP, you can do this via the LEP team by emailing [skills@newanglia.co.uk](mailto:skills@newanglia.co.uk)

### Norfolk and Suffolk District Council Boundaries



# Skills, strengths and needs



## Intro and scene-setting

**We are facing unprecedented social and economic change. The way we live, learn, work, and do business is transforming. The impacts of the pandemic, leaving the EU, the acceleration of digitisation and the need to address our impact on climate change and biodiversity are all contributing factors.**

The Norfolk and Suffolk Economic Strategy 2022 identifies the social and economic challenges, our economic strengths and opportunities, and details the actions and commitments needed to support growth, which is clean, inclusive and productive. The Strategy sets out our collective ambition:

*"to transform our economy into a globally recognised, technology-driven and inclusive economy which is leading the transition to a zero-carbon economy through sustainable food production, clean energy generation and consumption and digital innovation; becoming one of the best places in the world to live, work, learn and succeed in business."*

The Norfolk and Suffolk economy is diverse and in the face of recent difficulties has proven comparatively resilient, with nationally recognised strengths in clean energy, agri-food and ICT digital. The area also has significant strengths in ports and logistics, tourism and culture, advanced manufacturing, financial services, life sciences, a large care sector and a diverse VCSE sector. But our economy does face some real challenges. The People chapter in the Economic Strategy identifies the challenges and opportunities and sets out how partners will work together.

- *Nationally recognised strengths in clean energy, agri-food and ICT digital.*
- *Emergence of new clean growth opportunities will provide new employment opportunities, offering higher-skilled and better-paid jobs.*
- *Increased demand for technical and digital skills.*
- *Tutor shortages in engineering and construction where industry wages are more attractive is impacting on the supply of new entrants into the sectors.*
- *There is a need to empower and enable lifelong learning and progression for all, unlocking private sector investment in the workforce.*

## Chapter 3

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Labour market shortages are a key challenge for Norfolk and Suffolk. Despite having high employment rates, we don't have enough people to fill the current vacancies. Coupled with this is the mismatch of the skills required and the available workforce. Shortages are exacerbated in our foundation sectors, including logistics, agri-food, tourism and hospitality, construction and care, as well as some of our potential growth sectors, including ICT and engineering. Tutor shortages in engineering and construction where industry wages are more attractive is impacting on the supply of new entrants into the sectors. Three universities attract ambitious people to the area each year but there is a need to enhance and capitalise on the opportunities to retain the talent.

Accelerating trends in remote working, digitalisation and the requirements to be net zero are changing the nature of jobs at all levels but present significant opportunities for the creation of higher-value roles in all sectors. It is leading to increased demand for technical and digital skills.

We are also growing an environmentally positive and resilient economy by exploiting the region's strengths, driving the adoption of clean technology, enhancing natural capital, reducing waste, accelerating sustainable infrastructure, plus equipping and empowering business and people to take advantage of the opportunities in moving to a zero-carbon economy.

The expansion of the clean energy sector and the emergence of new clean growth opportunities will provide new employment opportunities, offering higher-skilled and better-paid jobs. The average salary for clean growth jobs is 25% higher in Norfolk and Suffolk compared to the economy-wide average.

Partners are committed to addressing the labour market shortage and recognise there is a need to do this through a combination of automation, reskilling and attracting talent to learn and work in Norfolk and Suffolk.

Our people, whether in traditional or more niche careers, micro businesses, arts and culture or supporting others in the community, are central to all our ambitions. We want to raise and support aspiration across all ages, unlock private sector investment in the workforce and support providers to respond quickly and in a hands-on way to address the long-term needs of people and businesses.

Norfolk and Suffolk has agreed to use data reflecting the Alternative Claim Count for the unemployed as a timelier proxy indicator for unemployment rates across both counties. According to this analysis, the most recent unemployment rate (August 2021) was hovering around 3.8%. This is down from a peak of 5.6% in May 2020, but still falls short of the unemployment rate pre-pandemic of 2.6%.



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The economic consequences of the pandemic, in both the short and longer term, are likely to be disproportionate among the local population. People with the lowest income are most vulnerable, with a significant number of jobs at risk in occupations with relatively lower wages such as retail, tourism and food services, which are forecast to be some of the hardest hit by the economic impacts of the Covid-19 response.

The unemployment impact has varied across sectors, with the accommodation and art and entertainment sectors consistently reflecting much higher rates of furloughed staff. Although overall, there have been significant increases in claimant counts across all age bands, around 30% of employees aged under-25 work in a sector most affected by shutdown, compared with 13% of those aged over-25.

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## Projected Skills Demand

**Full details of the scope of future demand across a range of sectors can be found in our [Sector Skills Plans](#). They provide a description and quantitative assessment of both the overall scale and timeline of demand, and also the corresponding projected levels of skills that will be required to support Norfolk and Suffolk's ambitions.**

As well as setting out the demands of several individual sectors key to the area's future growth, we have also produced a 'cross-cutting' skills report, which has analysed the thematic, structural, and subject-focused drivers that the Norfolk and Suffolk economy requires in the medium to longer term. However, the Norfolk and Suffolk Economic Strategy also highlighted that while benefitting from above average rates of employment, the area has also consistently tracked below the national average in terms of median wages, and GVA per hour worked. These indicators

have informed the focus of much of the SAP's work to date, in terms of attempting to ensure we maintain efforts to be both inclusive, but also increase value and wages and close the apparent productivity gap.

The workforce in Norfolk and Suffolk also holds comparatively lower levels of qualifications than the national average – certainly at NVQ Level 4 and above. There is partner-wide recognition that while addressing the attainment issue is crucial, parallel efforts to attract and support businesses that offer higher-skilled and higher-remuneration opportunities are crucial in closing the apparent wage and qualification gaps.

We have also started mapping the green jobs of the future and how our curriculum and education facilities need to develop to deliver these new courses.

### Significant geographic and socio-economic features of the area

**Norfolk and Suffolk is predominantly rural, interspersed with many smaller market towns, several larger towns, many of which function as economic hubs, and a collection of coastal towns, with two major urban population centres, the city of Norwich in Norfolk, and the county town of Ipswich in Suffolk.**

This variety of population centres, and overall population dispersal across a large area, presents partners with a divergent range of challenges made more complex by the difficulties of providing access to education and employment to segments of the population who live in comparatively deprived areas. Often these areas are situated in coastal or rural locations with relatively poor public transport links, and less than optimal digital infrastructure.

According to estimates from Metro Dynamics based on ONS Annual Population Survey (2018) and Census (2011) data, areas where a relatively high proportion of residents have NVQ Level 4 and above (over 40%) are found in parts of central Ipswich and Norwich, as well as less-densely populated areas on their outskirts (northeast of Ipswich and in western and eastern parts of Norwich).

Areas where over one third of working age residents have high skills include large swathes of Suffolk and much of Greater Norwich up to the north Norfolk coast.

There are low levels of NVQ Level 4 and above attainment in and around Great Yarmouth, Sudbury, King's Lynn and the area around Watton and Thetford (less than 15%). The two largest urban areas show a mixed picture. Parts of Norwich and Ipswich have among the highest and lowest proportions of residents with high-level skills.

The above findings must also be taken in the context of understanding that resident wages may be influenced by the fact that certain locations in Norfolk and Suffolk with good road and/or rail links to Essex, Cambridge, and London, where relative wages tend to be higher than those found for similar roles in Norfolk and Suffolk, will be reflected in Suffolk's higher earnings rates.

Productivity gains have stalled since 2014 and prior to that had only seen an incremental rate of increase, which was not keeping up with national trends. Locations in the area have recently been placed in top ten lists of most desirable locations to live in England, as well as similar rankings for 'best staycation' destinations. The areas housing affordability still compares favourably with other locations in the South-East, though more recently housing costs have increased in certain parts of the area due to the migration of higher-paid office workers to more rural locations.

*Gross Disposable Household Income (GDHI) per head of population is £1,900 below that of the East of England, and £1,300 below England.*

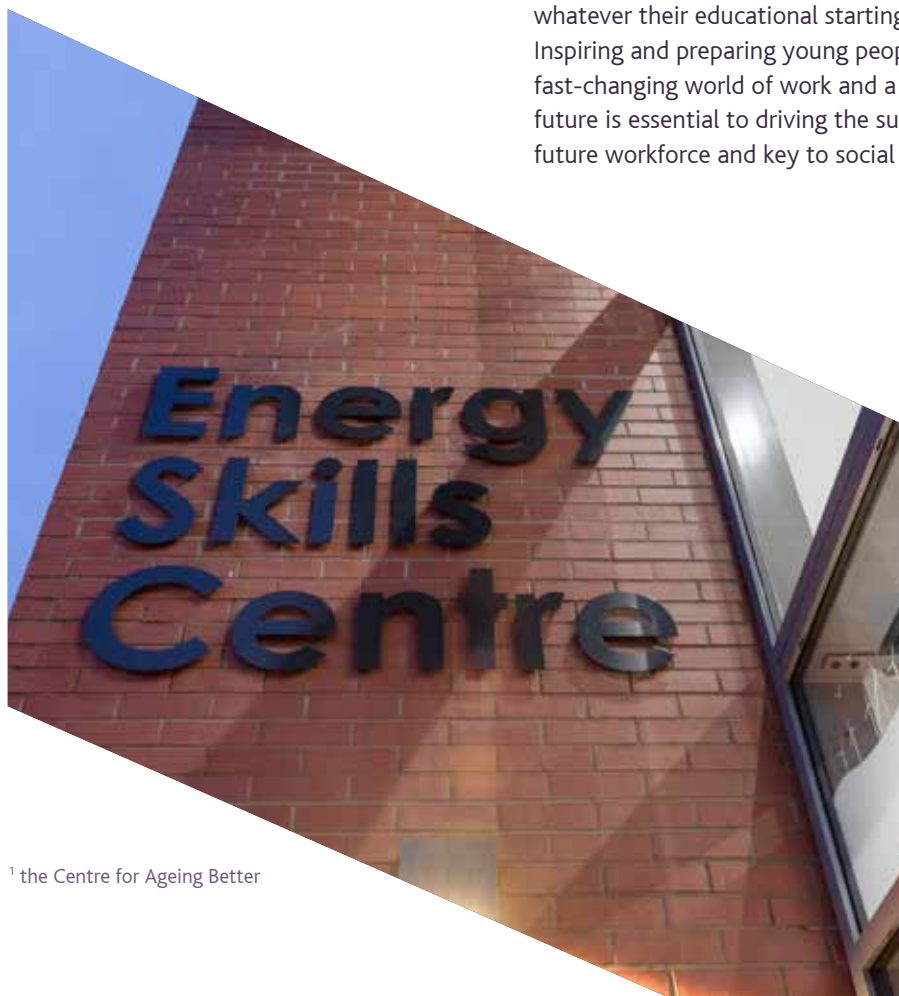
### Demographics and impact on occupation-driven skills demand

**Norfolk and Suffolk has a comparatively older population base, compared to the national average. Internal migration data for the UK reveals that Norfolk and Suffolk is a particularly popular destination to locate to for those aged 45-65.**

This presents both challenges and opportunities. This age group brings comparably higher earnings and savings, and holds higher levels of attainment and experience, but will also place increasing demand over time on the area's health and social care infrastructure. The demand for those qualified in health and social care or medical-related subjects will have to steadily increase to best support the ageing population.

There is a need to empower and enable lifelong learning and progression for all, unlocking private sector investment in the workforce. Enabling residents to capitalise on higher-level employment opportunities. The area has a higher proportion of over 50s than the national average. Recent research<sup>1</sup> indicated people aged 50 and over who are unemployed are twice as likely as younger adults to be long-term unemployed. It also highlighted they are the least likely to receive 'off the job' training, hampering their ability to keep up to date with new skills. Research shows that, for UK employers, upskilling would yield positive economic returns in 75% of cases.

Partners are committed to continuing the work to inspire and improve aspirations, connecting businesses, education and young people. Continuing to develop employability and work readiness among young people, whatever their educational starting point. Inspiring and preparing young people for the fast-changing world of work and a net zero future is essential to driving the supply of the future workforce and key to social mobility.



<sup>1</sup> the Centre for Ageing Better

# Our sectors

Norfolk and Suffolk is characterised by a diverse and varied economy, with no one sector or collection of companies/industries disproportionately dominating activity and skills demand.

## Clean Energy

- Offshore wind farms and Sizewell offer the most apparent sizeable opportunities.
- Hydrogen and anaerobic digestion offer distinct testbed potential, and the prospect of shifting the region's productivity output.
- Potential for an increased volume of employment with pay above the local median wage.

## Agri-food

- The region is the single most important focus for the export and import of food in the UK.
- It is a key place where a large proportion of the UK's food is produced.
- It plays a vital role in global-leading research, innovation and logistics to enhance productivity, drive the transition to net zero, deliver the levelling up agenda, and support a strong Global Britain.

## ICT Digital

- The need for an improvement of IT skills across the economy/workforce as a whole is a big priority for business and communities.
- A major shift in recruitment challenges is becoming increasingly evident.
- The increased uptake and acceptance of more flexible work patterns and locations means London firms in particular are now able to compete for top local talent more easily, driving wage increases.

## Advanced manufacturing and engineering

- A longstanding challenge to secure sufficient volumes of skilled staff at all levels.
- As the sector has incorporated digital practices, solutions and operations, this has placed increased demand, and therefore wage pressures, on employing staff with suitable digital training/experience.
- As supply chains have become less certain/more expensive, the industry is having to adjust in order to try and maintain margins, and/or pass on these costs to the end user/consumer.
- The pressure of energy usage and cost will be keenly felt.

## Construction and development

- Monthly job vacancies have tracked above pre-Covid levels from January through August 2021.
- Quarterly construction growth fell 1.5% in Quarter 3 (July to Sept) compared with Quarter 2 (Apr to June) of 2021. This is the first quarterly fall since Quarter 2 2020, after four successive increases in quarterly growth.
- Supply chain issues are affecting projects currently underway.
- Sector prices estimated by the construction output price indices (OPI), increased to 5.1% in the 12 months to September 2021. This was the strongest annual rate of construction output price growth since records began in 2014.

## Creative industries

- This is a strong and diverse sector, with major concentrations around Norwich and Ipswich.
- It has strong ambitions around net zero production skills and supporting and retaining young people in the sector.

## Financial services, insurance & related professional services

- We have one of the largest general insurance and financial services clusters in Europe, with growing start-up financial services businesses.
- There are opportunities to further develop the major FinTech offer and promote and further enhance our ESG and green investment credentials.
- Monthly job vacancies are now tracking back to pre-Covid levels from January through August 2021.

## Health and social care

- The relative scale of the market in Norfolk and Suffolk (driven by the comparatively high and increasing proportion of older people in the population), is high.
- The sector offers low wages and low per hour productivity output.
- There is a persistent shortfall in terms of both skills and available labour – as evidenced by the volume of vacancies advertised.
- The nature of the challenge around social distancing associated with Covid protection measures, has presented especially acute challenges for this sector, both literally and psychologically.
- Planning for possible future spikes in demand/pressure on services will be necessary.



### Life sciences and biotech

- International expertise in the fields of food, health, and microbiome.
- Advanced cluster of animal health and emerging pharmaceutical manufacture.
- High-potential opportunity in plant science and nutrition using the latest technology, such as next generation sequencing and development of bioinformatics pipelines.

### Ports and logistics

- We have the UK's largest container port at Felixstowe and nationally significant ports for the energy and agri-food sectors, with a strong logistics cluster.
- There are significant opportunities through Freeport East, the A14 corridor emerging as a major location for a smart logistics hub, port expansions and many innovation plans.
- There is major growth potential for employment and general business development.

### Visitor economy

- Hospitality is really struggling to recruit sufficient labour into certain roles e.g chefs.
- The sector has had to cope with shifting measures in terms of social distancing and rules.
- Our business intelligence indicates this has increased levels of uncertainty among both business owners and their staff as to the sustainability of the business and employment prospects.
- However, demand for staycation properties has been very high as the UK population faces continued international travel restrictions. This is helping to drive future sustainability and revenues.

### VCSE

- The pandemic has negatively affected resources and income of the sector organisations.
- It has been noted that while more affluent demographics have been able to access employment, services and opportunities, communities with lower incomes have struggled – due to a range of factors, including access to adequate kit and familiarity with digital platforms/solutions.
- It is extremely diverse and such diversity requires further analysis to enable the relative strengths of the sector to be optimised.

## Education Attainment Facts about Norfolk & Suffolk

- The health and social care sector has the largest projected scale of increased occupation growth in Norfolk and Suffolk.
  - Social sciences, Business Management and subjects allied to medicine had the highest HE qualifiers in 2019/20.
  - Health, Public Services and Care had the highest FE achievements in 2020/21 followed by Retail & Commercial Enterprise and Business, Admin & Law.
  - Business, Administration & Law had 31% of the apprenticeship achievements by sector in 2020/21.
  - Only 32% of people aged 16-64 years had a Level 4+ qualification compared to 40% nationally in 2019.
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## Adult Social Care

**Health Professionals and Caring Personal Services Occupations both rank above the all-sector average in terms of job posting intensity – indicating roles in this sector are among the hardest to fill.**

### **Challenges include:**

- Demand for services exceeding supply.
- Recruitment and retention are critical issues – as unemployment falls and other sectors increase wages, fewer people are attracted to the sector and there is no parity of pay with health. Turnover is high.
- Mandatory vaccinations have impacted on recruitment in care homes and the wider social care workforce.
- The level of qualifications among the workforce is low compared to other occupations and prevents the professionalisation of the workforce – capacity issues are also inhibiting take-up of accredited and non-accredited training.

- Care providers are unable to take on additional services as they cannot operate at unsafe levels.
- Pay is lower than other sectors and there appears to be a gender bias: women make up 83% of the workforce and are generally paid less than their male equivalents.

### **Opportunities include:**

- New School of Nursing at The College of West Anglia.
- Integrated Care Academy at the University of Suffolk.
- The ESF Developing Skills in Health & Social Care programme.

### **Key reports:**

<https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/adult-social-care-workforce-data/Workforce-intelligence/documents/Local-authority-area-summary-reports/Eastern/2021/Norfolk-Summary-2021.pdf>

<https://norfolkandsuffolkaresupport.co.uk/recruitment-retention/adult-social-care-workforce-strategy>

<https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/topics/integrated-care/sustainability-transformation-plans-explained>

### Construction (including buildings/retrofit)

**Challenges include:**

- The availability of key materials.
- A rise in the cost of materials.
- Labour shortages.
- The number of infrastructure projects which is adding to the pressure on materials and labour.

**Opportunities include:**

- Regional infrastructure and regeneration projects offer a major opportunity for the sector.
  - Adoption of new technologies/innovation.
  - Delivery of the Net Zero Strategy – retrofitting and adopting more sustainable methods of construction.
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### Digital & Technology

**Challenges include:**

- Increased hiring and salary costs – as additional competition of talent has been enabled by the move to 'working from home'.
- The pandemic has seen pressure on companies providing ICT solutions and infrastructure as businesses transition to home working simultaneously.
- Persistent underachievement in STEM qualifications, particularly at the higher end of the spectrum.

**Opportunities include:**

- Creative businesses in UX design, games, animation and augmented reality have seen a surge in interest as their clients look for

ways to transition to online provision and engage their customers virtually.

- Lockdowns have thrown the digital sector into the spotlight, with businesses moving to homeworking en masse, and people looking for new ways to work, learn, shop and socialise virtually.
  - There is huge potential for this sector to grow even faster in relation to a range of solutions associated with clean growth, particularly around AI and smart technologies.
  - A large amount of scope in the region for establishing testbeds for digital tech solutions within sectors such as Agri-food and Health & Social Care.
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### Haulage & Logistics

**Challenges include:**

- The sector has been hit hard by supply chain disruption and backlogs at ports.
- The price of containers and warehousing space has gone through the roof.
- Labour challenges such as the impact of the HGV driver shortage.

**Opportunities include:**

- Freeport East opportunity – Port of Felixstowe & Gateway 14.

- UK's largest container port at Felixstowe.
- Nationally significant ports for the energy and agri-food sectors.
- Strong logistics cluster and the A14 corridor emerging as a key location for smart logistics hubs.
- Port expansion and innovation plans (e.g., O&M Campus, 5G technology, PowerPark).
- Decarbonisation plans across ports.

## Manufacturing

### Challenges include:

- Inflationary burdens.
- Increased cost of raw materials.
- Supply chain disruptions.
- Funding – investments into new machinery and digital technology is expensive (likewise for products that help reduce carbon footprint) and it is not just SMEs that struggle in this space.
- Wage pressures and labour shortages.

### Opportunities include:

- Positive growth forecast for 2022.
- Sustainable HR management, lean and digitisation are three priorities/opportunities

that will deliver innovation, productivity and support the transition to net zero.

- Adoption of digital tech to boost productivity.
- Increased investments into R&D.
- Localised supply chains.
- Productivity East is a major asset for the sector.
- Consideration should also be given to the labour market transition to net zero in sectors such as Automotive (Electric vehicles), Offshore wind and electric networks, Forestry and Carbon Capture Usage & Storage/Hydrogen.

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## Agri-food analysis

**In 2017, New Anglia LEP commissioned a series of sector skills plans, providing more nuanced and in-depth analysis as to the potential scale and nature of skills demand, linked to future growth in what we termed the 'agri-food' sector. This definition encompassed a broader base of data, that reflected the sector's significance across the entire supply chain and related activities – excluding food retail.**

We felt this was an important element to highlight as the findings of this research contrast with the growth profiles for the narrower definition of 'agriculture, food & tobacco' contained in this report's core indicator analysis.

Norfolk and Suffolk's Agri-food Tech sector (excluding food retail and catering) generated 7% of the area's GVA and employs 50,000 staff or 7.4% of the workforce – double the national average. It also accounts for 10.8% of all businesses in the LEP area.

Meeting growth projections in relation to associated skills supply is likely to be more challenging as a result of Brexit, which looks set to increase restrictions on labour supply in the near term, and lead to a subsequent increase in labour costs. Locally we have already seen bonus structures put into place in the food processing sector to meet the increased Christmas demands.

New technology and specifically data, sensors and automation (Industry 4.0), is likely to have a major impact on the industry and will require new skills among the existing workforce and new recruits as ways of working change.

Work has begun on a £25m project to build the world's largest vertical farm in Norfolk, aiming to blaze a trail for sustainable food production. The site, currently under construction at the Food Enterprise Park at Easton, will create 25,000sqm of stacked growing space for salad leaves, herbs and other fresh produce for supermarkets.

## Chapter 3

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Fischer Farms, the company behind the project, claims it will be able to produce the same amount of food in its four-acre building as would be possible on 1,000 acres of conventional British farmland.

Locally the skills system is good at meeting FE and postgraduate training needs but has a significant deficit in undergraduate skills provision. This is very relevant to future sector growth as forecasts show the proportion of sector staff employed in elementary occupations has already fallen from 26% in 2004 to 15% in 2014, with a further fall to 13% predicted by 2024. In contrast the proportion in skilled trades has risen from 40% in 2004 to 58% in 2014, and is expected to reach 59% by 2024. The projections also suggest the largest demand for new staff, 6,700 over the period 2014-24 will be for those qualified to QCF4-6, the level at which the New Anglia area currently has very little training provision.

Agri-food Tech sector skills plan link: [New-Anglia-LEP-Agri-Food-Tech-Sector-Skills-Plan-FINAL-26th-Sept-2017-002-1.pdf](#)

City College Norwich has been consulting representatives from the sector in order to develop the curriculum delivered locally. This initial project funding has been provided by Norfolk County Council. Subsequent work will be carried out as part of the ESF Curriculum Development programme, which looks at the curriculum for five of our key sectors to ensure local provision is fit for purpose for employers in the region.

In addition, Forestry England manages 19,000ha of forest in and around Thetford. A key revenue-generating part of its business is felling trees for wholesale use, while maintaining an active re-planting schedule so that it's entirely cyclical. It has an intrinsic role in protecting the local environment, biodiversity and thus sustainability, putting climate change at very much at the forefront of its work.

The organisation has just launched a 'Thetford Forest Resilience Programme' which is a wide-ranging programme of activity aimed at future-proofing the forest against potential threats like invasive species, the visitor economy and of course, climate change. It also operates skills programmes that revolve around forestry careers.

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## Employment Growth Forecast

**The analysis in both our sector skills plans and more recently in our Economic Strategy indicates there is likely to be an increase in occupations in scientific, engineering and technical disciplines (including ICT digital), especially in relation to the region's ambition to become a lead location for clean growth.**

In addition, there are several large-scale infrastructure projects, (most notably Sizewell C), that are set to significantly increase demand for construction-related skills. This demand which could be further increased as retrofit and thermal efficiency improvements roll out across both business and domestic markets.



## Skills Advisory Panel's Local Skills Report

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CITB (Construction Industry Training Board) actively encourages new entrants into the construction sector and ongoing professional development. Its December 2020 report, Learning To Earning aimed to better understand the barriers to FE learners joining the construction industry and outline potential solutions.

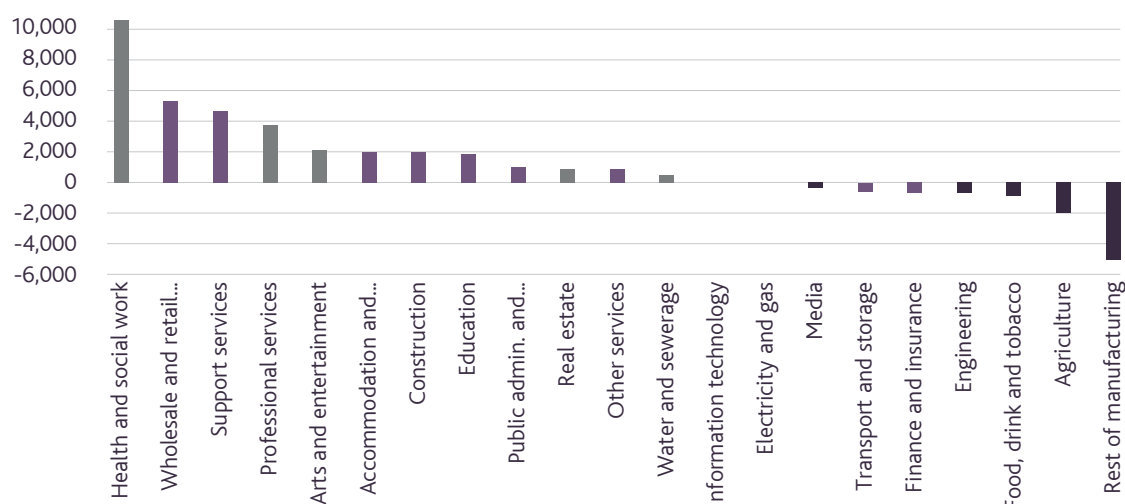
The following charts provide a useful indication of the profile of the projected scale

of increased occupation growth in certain sectors based on purely historical data – most notably, potential growth in the health and social care sector. These figures should be viewed in conjunction with the demographics data set out earlier in this report, suggesting that due to the ageing population in Norfolk and Suffolk, growth in employment within these occupations should help the region manage the increase in demand for their skills and expertise.



CREDIT  
Dave Guttridge

### Sectors by absolute forecast employment growth (2017-2027) - Norfolk and Suffolk



Sectors by absolute forecast employment growth in Norfolk and Suffolk (colour coded by the top 5 highest (grey) and lowest (dark purple) sectors by percentage forecast employment growth), *Working Futures: 2017-2027, 2017 SAP boundaries*.

## Future Skills Supply

### Higher Education

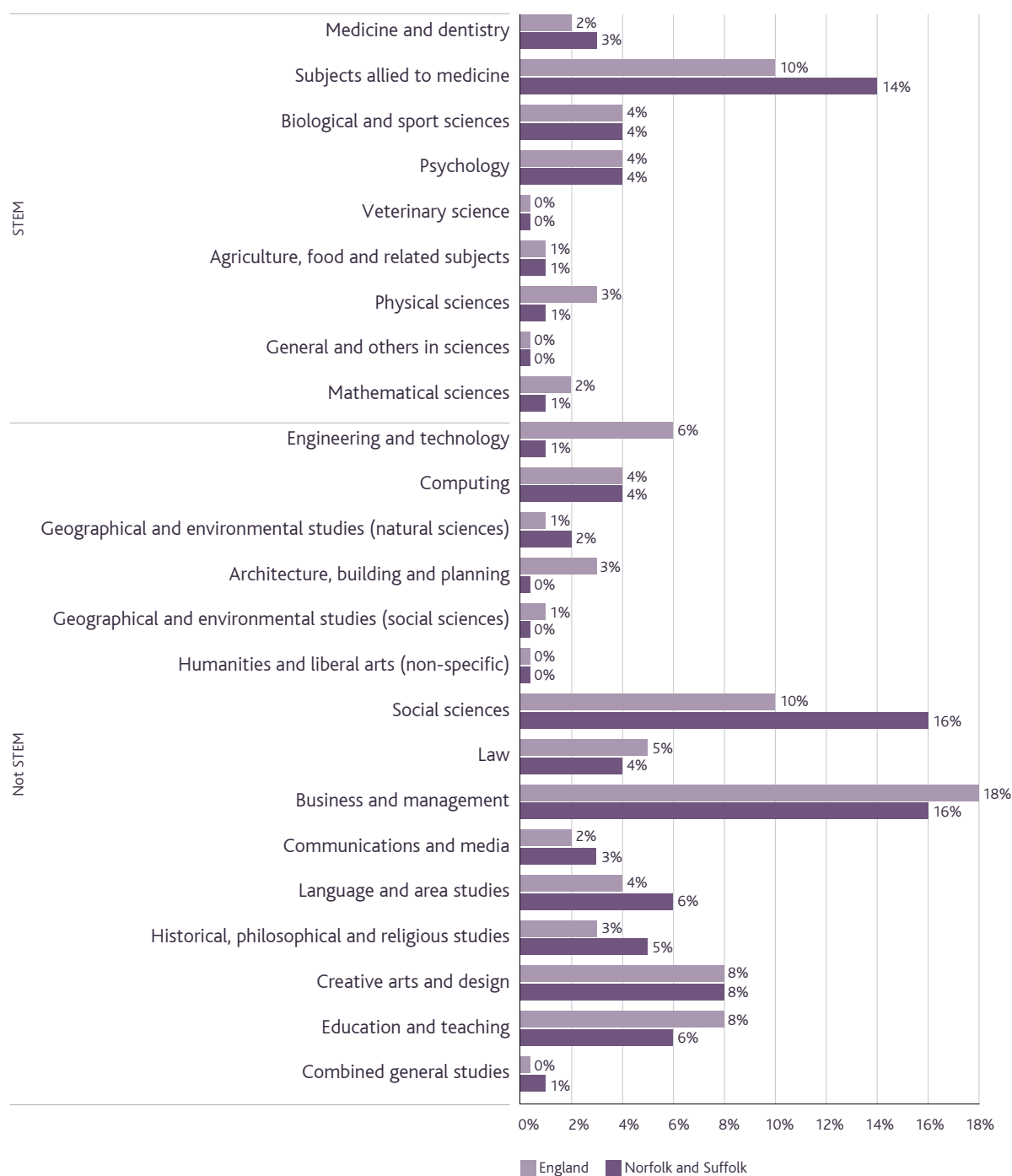
**In terms of higher education (HE) qualifications, we can see in the chart below that Norfolk and Suffolk tracks ahead of the England average in subjects allied to medicine, as well as social studies and creative arts and design.**

However, the area tracks below the national average in Education, Business and Administration, Computer Studies, and most clearly in Architecture Building and Planning, and Engineering and Technology.

As mentioned in the two preceding analytical narratives, the ambition of the Norfolk and Suffolk SAP is to support and encourage achievement closer to or exceeding the national average in subjects most closely aligned with the objectives of the Norfolk and Suffolk Economic Strategy.

# Skills Advisory Panel's Local Skills Report

## HE Qualifiers by subject 2019/20 - Norfolk & Suffolk with England



HE qualifiers by sector subject area in Norfolk and Suffolk, Source: HESA, 2018/19 *qualifiers* (published 2020), 2020 SAP boundaries

Note: A *qualifier* is a student who gained a qualification during the academic year in question. The data also reflects students studying at providers in the local area, rather than those who are domiciled there. "Social studies" consists of: Economics, Politics, Sociology, Social Policy, Social Work, Anthropology, Human and Social Geography, Development Studies, Broadly-based Programmes within Social Studies, Others in Social Studies.

## Chapter 3



There are three universities across Norfolk and Suffolk, and below is a description of each university's areas of specialism, and how they align with the broader economic priorities of the area.

### The University of East Anglia (UEA)

**UEA ranked in the top 25 UK's universities<sup>2</sup> and world top 200<sup>3</sup>. It has as global pull with students drawn to specialisms that include computing science, computer systems engineering, business information systems, computer graphics, imaging and multimedia, data mining, engineering and environmental science.**

UEA is a research-intensive institution recognised for the quality of its work. It is proud of its strong research into 'real world issues' such as cancer, dementia, water security and politics, and is ideally located on the Norwich Research Park, a world-leading centre for environment, health and plant science research, and home to the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital.

UEA has pioneered climate research for nearly 50 years. Its Climatic Research Unit and the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research have both broken new ground in understanding the global climate system and its implications for society, and continue to do so.

### University of Suffolk (UoS)

**UoS was originally established as University Campus Suffolk in 2007 and went on to be awarded university status in 2016, making it one of the newest universities in the UK. It is spread over four campuses with a central hub in Ipswich and further franchised partner campuses in Lowestoft and Great Yarmouth.**

Health, care and wellbeing is central to UoS's 10-year strategy, and it is working with a wide range of partners to create the UK's first Integrated Care Academy. It has recently opened the DigiTech Centre located at Adastral Park, BT's global Research and Development centre in Martlesham, near Ipswich. This facility will provide cutting-edge digital skills for people looking to pursue careers in information and communications technology (ICT), as well as exploring innovations and research in digital health and smart living.

### Norwich University of the Arts (NUA)

**NUA located in Norwich, has established itself in arts, design and media education for over 170 years. It is developing a national reputation as an innovative and creative academic community, with a firm commitment to offering vocational, practice-based courses that afford students space to develop their skills and pursue their passions.**

The college's Games courses are part of the Sony PlayStation First Academic Partnership Programme and accredited by ScreenSkills and the games industry body TIGA, which crowned NUA the best educational institution in 2017.

NUA has gained an international reputation for producing graduates who excel in a constantly evolving industry and the emerging cluster. It has also earned national recognition for its user experience and digital design courses, and is home to the Ideas Factory incubation centre for digital creative businesses and user experience lab.

These three universities provide 5% more HE qualifiers in Social Studies and 3% more Creative Arts & Design than the national average.

## Further Education and Apprenticeships

**Norfolk and Suffolk is also home to five Further Education colleges that are passionate about driving the skills agenda and meeting the needs of our population, society and industries. They play an integral part in creating a skills pipeline to meet the current and future skills needs of industry.**

There is a strong collaboration between the colleges that collectively established the New Anglia colleges group in 2014. Together the colleges educate more than 32,000 students and nearly 8,000 apprentices each year.

The colleges work closely with local partners to support their ambition of 'education without borders'. Their vision sets out the needs and priorities of the education sector and they are committed to raising educational standards and aspirations to produce a stronger regional economy.

All of the FE colleges have good relationships with the three universities, whether through their own HE franchise agreements, developed progression routes or general collaboration on a range of education and business projects.

[City College Norwich](#)

[East Coast College](#)

[Suffolk New College](#)

[The College of West Anglia](#)

[West Suffolk College](#)





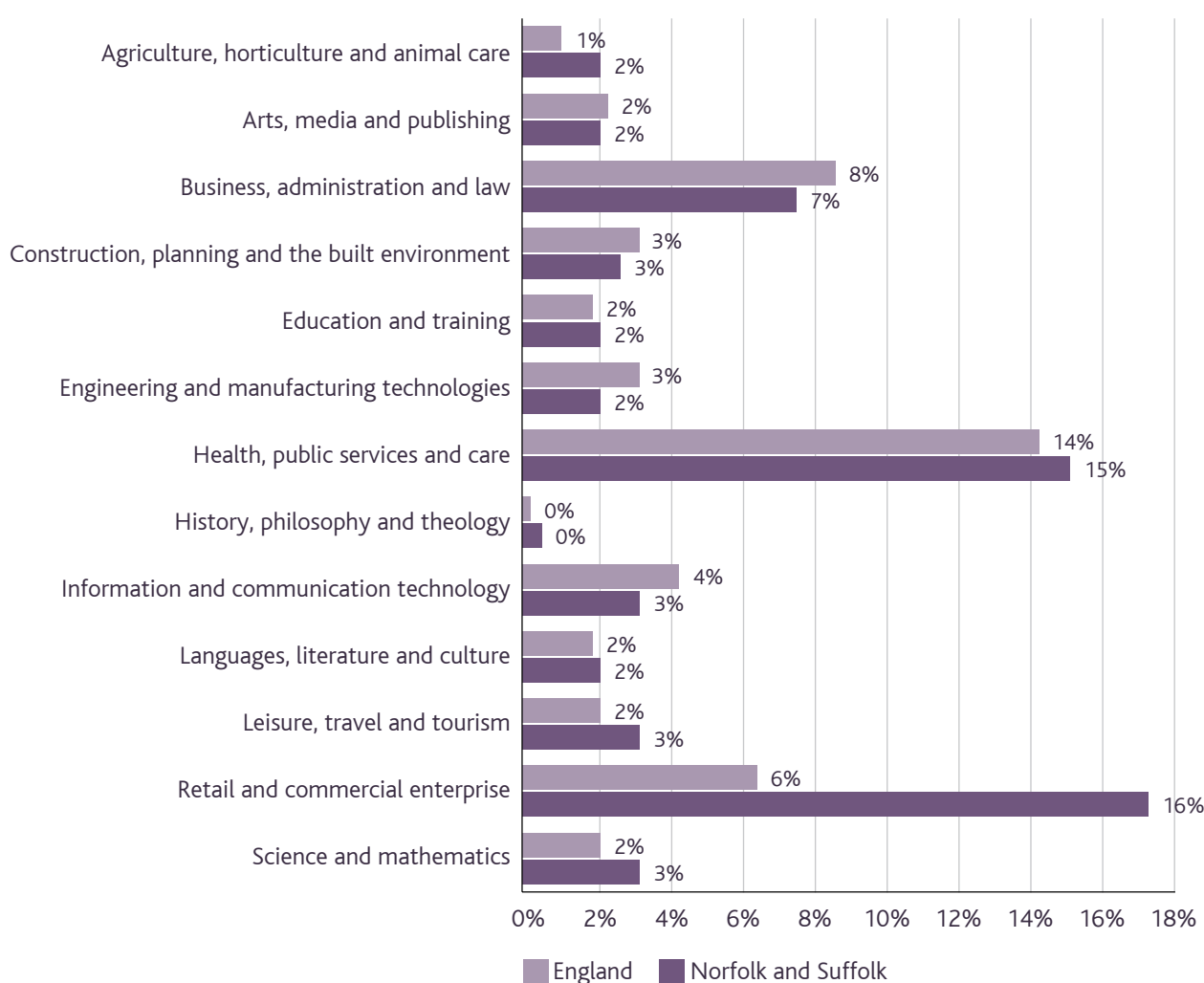
## Chapter 3

The chart below compares the proportion of achievements attained through further education (FE) (excluding apprenticeships) between Norfolk and Suffolk and England. Norfolk and Suffolk broadly tracks in line with national achievement averages across many FE subject areas. Notable exceptions are that Norfolk and Suffolk sees a significantly higher proportion of achievements in retail and commercial enterprise, and to a lesser extent science and maths, agriculture, leisure and tourism, and health and social care.

To an extent, this is perhaps reflective of the demand drivers within the local economy in the immediacy.

However, an area for focus for the SAP in the longer term will be to increase the proportion of achievements in areas such as information and communications, and engineering and technology, as the area is projected to see an increase in demand for these skills in the medium to longer term, as set out in the sector skills plans mentioned earlier in this report.

### FE achievements by subject, 2018/19 - Norfolk and Suffolk with England



FE Education & Training achievements (not including apprenticeships) by sector subject area in Norfolk and Suffolk (compared with England),  
Source: DfE Localism Dashboard, 2018/19 FE achievements, 2020 SAP boundaries.

Note: Achievements are a count of the number of framework or standard achievements at any point during the year. Learners achieving more than one framework or standard will appear more than once. The geographies are based on the home postcode of the learner. The labels on the above chart are the percentage of total FE achievements (across all subject areas) made in that specific subject area

## Skills Advisory Panel's Local Skills Report

In terms of apprenticeship achievements, Norfolk and Suffolk is seeing a comparatively healthy number of people gain achievements in Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies, as well as in apprenticeships related to Health, Public Services and Care. This data indicates that, at least in terms of apprenticeship achievements, skills demands are meeting some of the short- and longer-term needs, which have been spelt out earlier in the report.

Analysis of the apprenticeship achievement by subject data shows there is very little discrepancy between Norfolk and Suffolk and the national average, in terms of the proportion of achievements being secured in each subject category.

However, apprenticeship starts within Norfolk and Suffolk have declined in recent months, despite initiatives aimed at increasing interest. Investigation work has started to determine why our region is more adversely impacted than the national situation.



Apprenticeship Subject	England		Norfolk and Suffolk	
	Volume	%	Volume	%
Agriculture, horticulture and animal care	3,489	2%	162	4%
Arts, media and publishing	613	0%	8	0%
Business, administration and law	47,693	30%	1,383	31%
Construction, planning and the built environment	8,989	6%	244	5%
Education and training	3,815	2%	92	2%
Engineering and manufacturing technologies	23,670	15%	575	13%
Health, public services and care	37,911	24%	1,223	27%
Information and communication technology	10,985	7%	265	6%
Leisure, travel and tourism	2,853	2%	100	2%
Retail and commercial enterprise	16,485	11%	460	10%
Science and mathematics	22	0%	0	0%

Apprenticeship achievements by sector subject area in Norfolk and Suffolk (compared with England), Source: DfE Localism Dashboard, 2020/21 FE achievements, 2020 SAP boundaries.

Note: Achievements are a count of the number of framework or standard achievements at any point during the year. Learners achieving more than one framework or standard will appear more than once. The geographies are based on the home postcode of the learner.

# Funding to Support Skills Development

In addition to the LEP funding identified earlier, other skills funding includes:

### Skills Deal Programme

**The Skills Deals Programme is a long-running project aiming to stimulate the development of innovative employer-led training in the region. Funded through a combination of national (£1m Skills Funding Agency £1m) and local funds (£1m Suffolk Local Authorities and Norfolk County Council) and allocated by the Skills Board, the programme has to date has created or enhanced over 38 courses, providing delivery to over 1,300 learners and benefited over 270 employers across eight different sectors.**

2021 also saw continued progress on the New Anglia Skills Deals Programme, following a pause in 2020, while the two remaining projects reviewed and developed new delivery models as a result of Covid restrictions within the colleges.

Firstly, the Millburn Innovation Project delivered by West Suffolk College has seen engagement from employers and students and a renewed focus on the development of 'building site' pods for students to work on and experience real life scenarios in which they can try out the skills they learn over the lifetime of the project. The scheme has far exceeded its original targets and is now on track to deliver the Milburn Innovation Pods/worksites in early 2022. Secondly, the East Coast College-based Offshore Wind Skills Centre: Phase 2 project has had an impressive year, with 84 of the 168 total training starts being delivered in 2021, and an impressive 105% delivery on the stage 4 (GWO) training, which the Skills Deal was specifically funding.

# Skills Advisory Panel's Local Skills Report

## Towns Fund

The Government's Towns Fund announced in November 2019 recognised that struggling towns do not always have the fundamental building blocks of a strong local economy in place. Evidence shows they can face some significant challenges: an ageing population without the skills necessary to attract new firms; fewer people going on to and returning from higher education; fewer economic opportunities in the surrounding region; and less direct foreign investment than in cities. Growth is held back where this is compounded by poor transport and digital connectivity.

Great Yarmouth, Ipswich, King's Lynn, Lowestoft and Norwich have been successful in securing a Town Deal and supporting Towns Fund.

- **Norwich** – £25m of funding to help the council to realise its '2040 vision'.
- **Ipswich** – £25m funding to help develop 11 projects across the town.
- **Lowestoft** – £24.9m funding to help develop projects as part of the town's Investment Plan.
- **Great Yarmouth** – £20.1m to help deliver plans for jobs, economic growth and regeneration across the borough.
- **King's Lynn** – £25m to help deliver projects to support economic productivity through urban regeneration, planning and land use, skills and enterprise, and infrastructure and connectivity.

Communities, businesses and local leaders in each of the five areas have drawn up plans to transform their area's prospects with a focus on improved transport, broadband connectivity, skills and culture.

## Opportunity Areas

**Opportunity Areas were developed by the Department for Education to see local partnerships formed with early years providers, schools, colleges, universities, businesses, charities and local authorities, to ensure all children and young people have the opportunity to reach their full potential.**

A key aim of Opportunity Areas is to build young people's knowledge and skills and provide them with the best advice and opportunities, including working with organisations such as the Careers and Enterprise Company, the Network for East Anglian Collaborative Outreach (neaco), and the National Citizen Service. The Department for Education targets its programmes to

ensure children get the best start in life, build teaching and leadership capacity in schools, increase access to university, strengthen technical pathways for young people, and work with employers to improve young people's access to the right advice and experiences.

Twelve Opportunity Areas were chosen nationally based on the **Social Mobility Index** (2016) given their poor long-term outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. At this time, Norwich was ranked 323rd out of 324 districts and Ipswich 292nd. They were initially funded for three years but were extended to a fourth and now fifth year, taking them through to August 31st, 2022.

### Norwich Opportunity Area

The Norwich Opportunity Area is a network of local partners collaborating on coordinated activities to increase social mobility in Norwich. A Partnership Board, focused Legacy teams, and practitioner networks, work together to improve outcomes at each stage of a pupil's journey through education.

1 – Improving **speech, language and communication in the early years** so children have the best chance to progress as they start school.

2 – Improving **teaching and attainment**, from primary school through to age 18, so young people gain the skills, knowledge and qualifications they need for the next stage of their life.

3 – Giving young people the information, advice and support they need **to move successfully between school, college, university and into work**, with a focus on supporting pupils with decisions at key transition points and informing aspirations from the earliest age.

4 – Reducing the number of **children at risk of exclusion and disengagement from education**, by supporting them to overcome barriers to participating successfully in learning.

Our Chief Executive, Chris Starkie, sits on the Partnership Board. Careers facilitators in each of the Norwich schools meet regularly as a network, with representatives from local HE and FE providers, New Anglia LEP, employers and support organisations. Collectively, partners aim to support and enable all young people in Norwich to achieve their potential, regardless of background, to help transform Norfolk into a global centre for talent and innovation. [More information about Norwich Opportunity Area can be found here.](#)

### Ipswich Opportunity Area

The vision of the Ipswich Opportunity Area is for all young people in Ipswich to be **happy, confident, ambitious and flexible lifelong learners**. It wants to ensure that every young person can fulfil their potential and access the opportunities available to them, regardless of their background. Its four priorities for achieving this vision are:

1 – Ensure all children in Ipswich are prepared to learn for life by developing key behaviours such as resilience and self-regulation.

2 – Strengthen the teaching profession in Ipswich by providing world-class support and development.

3 – Improve attainment for disadvantaged pupils by embedding evidence-based practice in the teaching of English and Maths.

4 – Inspire and equip young people with the skills and guidance they need to pursue an ambitious career pathway.

The Ipswich Opportunity Area Partnership Board is focusing on a legacy strategy to ensure the impact of the Opportunity Area is sustained, and that work continues to ensure opportunities for children to meet their potential across voluntary, public and private sectors are well coordinated. Again, Chris Starkie is helping to shape this vision. [Details on the impact of the Ipswich Opportunity Area can be found here](#)



### Freeport East

**This is one of eight new Freeports in England announced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in March 2021. It will be a hub for global trade and national regeneration as well as creating a hotbed for innovation that will have impact across the UK.**

With its unique global links and existing innovative sectoral clusters, Freeport East will attract international inward investment and drive domestic growth, propelling the country's economy forward.

It covers Britain's busiest container port in Felixstowe and Harwich International port and is located close to the East Coast green energy cluster. It offers a unique

combination of advantages to benefit traders, manufacturers and clean energy suppliers. It will create 13,500 new jobs and generate a Gross Value Added (GVA) of £5.5 billion over 10 years.

Freeport East is a partnership between Hutchison Ports, Harwich Haven Authority, New Anglia LEP, South East LEP, Essex County Council, Suffolk County Council, East Suffolk Council, Tendring District Council, Babergh and Mid Suffolk Councils and the Haven Gateway Partnership.

It will help drive post-Brexit growth, benefit from tax reliefs, simplified customs procedures, streamlined planning and wider government support.



## Chapter 3

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### ESF

**New Anglia LEP coordinates the £40m [European Social Fund programme in Suffolk and Norfolk](#) in collaboration with DWP. The ESF programme offers a range of employment skills and training opportunities delivered through local projects and it is anticipated that they are in a strong position to achieve the New Anglia target of 34,000 participants. Our [European Investment Strategy](#) sets out the programme priorities, and shows how they link to the Norfolk and Suffolk Economic Strategy.**

A significant focus of the ESF programme in Norfolk and Suffolk has been on giving people who are out of work the skills and confidence to re-enter the workplace.

The £10.5m Building Better Opportunities programme, co-financed by the National Lottery Community Fund, is now well established with four projects in Norfolk and Suffolk since 2017. These strong partnerships bring together high-quality delivery from across from the VCSE sector, as well as input from colleges, and have good results for their participants. These projects have now been joined by Work Well Suffolk and CHANCES, focusing on good work outcomes for those with long-term health conditions, and by Routes to Work, which promotes sector opportunities. Alongside these, the LIFT Programme has provided smaller grants to VCSE organisations delivering targeted activity on a smaller scale.

All of the above projects have found that barriers to employment from mental illness and anxiety conditions have been more prevalent than expected among their participants. They have all been adapting their services to the emerging needs of a new cohort of unemployed people and adjusting referral routes which have been disrupted in the pandemic.

The training initiatives supported through European Social Fund have included the Skills Support for the Workforce, initially delivered by SEETEC and now Steadfast Training. This provides valuable training across all our key sectors and has been particularly successful during lockdown, when delivery moved to high-quality online provision, and successfully developed a redundancy training package. Steadfast is also involved in the Work Well Suffolk initiative, offering similar support.

More targeted training provision in ESF has included the Developing Skills in Health and Social Care initiative, an ambitious training and skills sector programme across Norfolk and Suffolk. The ESF programme in Norfolk and Suffolk has been particularly successful in delivering projects which connect the education sector more effectively with SMEs to provide in-college employer engagement and work experience opportunities. Place 21, delivered by West Suffolk College, has been an exemplar in this area and expanded and developed its vision with two new projects: NASCENT, and Higher Place, which moves into employer engagement in higher education delivery.

Insight Apprenticeships, delivered by Norfolk County Council joins our existing apprenticeships projects – Apprenticeships Suffolk and Apprenticeships New Anglia. All are engaged with supporting SME employers and/or potential apprentices through the application process and early stages of the apprenticeship.

The Youth Pledge for Employers led by Norfolk County Council, adds more capacity to the vital work of engaging busy SMEs with providing opportunities for young people. By offering work-inspiration, experience or employment opportunities, they are offering crucial support to shape the future workforce. Built flexibly so that businesses can engage in a way that fits with their needs, the scheme is collaborating with young person-facing organisations to realise these opportunities for 16-24-year-olds across the region.

## Skills Advisory Panel's Local Skills Report

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In 2021, the £1m Supply Chain Skills Development Fund' launched across Norfolk and Suffolk. This looks to ensure that local employers are aware of the competencies and capabilities they will be required to have in their workforces to fully capitalise on any inward investment and large-scale projects happening in the area over the next couple of years. The fund helps an employer to understand these opportunities, identifies the training to give them the greatest chance of capitalising on growth, and looks to offset the cost of doing so. The delegated grant scheme enhances both the development and delivery of training available to employers in the New Anglia area, and focuses on what is required to build the capacity of key local supply chains, ultimately resulting in the creation of inclusive economic growth. The project is being delivered by Suffolk County Council.

Norfolk County Council is also leading on Aspire, a project tackling the impact of County Lines drug exploitation of young people. Again, this covers Norfolk and Suffolk.

The last year has also seen the development of the new Skills Progression Adaptability Resilience Coordination (SPARC) Project, which includes nearly £1.25m of investment from the ESF and from 2022 will deliver across two key project strands and a skills coordination piece. The first strand, Pathways 50+ (P50+), is delivered by Futures for Business and will create and support over 120 13-week work placements in Norfolk and Suffolk SMEs. These placements are similar to the DWP 'Kickstart' Scheme and will give returners to work valuable experience and learning to help them progress and build new careers.

The second strand is the Pathways Training Fund (PTF), delivered by Suffolk County Council and Norfolk County Council in partnership with our key providers, to administer a delegated grant scheme which will support employers to purchase training which improves their business adaptability and resilience and progression for their staff. Developed in response to the challenges wrought by Covid-19 the fund will focus on training across four key themes: Digital and Industry 4.0, Leadership and Management, Health and Wellbeing, Customer Services. Max grant values around £500 per employee (up to 75% of cost) for training, which clearly demonstrates employer need, agility, and resilience in the workplace.

In evaluation, however, it is worth noting that New Anglia LEP has recently invested heavily into the universities and FE college estates, and therefore, despite the clear underrepresentation of current Engineering and Technology qualifiers in HE, it is likely that the area will experience significant growth when they become established.

## Chapter 3

These include:

New Anglia LEP - Skills Capital Projects				
Education/ Training Institution	Name of Project	Aim of Project	Skills capital Investment (£)	Training Targets (Number of additional Learners, academic year & levels)
West Suffolk College	STEM Innovation Campus	Acquired and refurbished new premises to enable growth and diversification of apprenticeships, further and higher education and training for employees in energy, engineering and advanced manufacturing.	7,000,000	266 by 2022-23 L3 - 6
East Coast College	Energy Skills & Engineering Centre	Created a purpose-built new centre for energy and engineering skills to address local gaps in the economy.	10,000,000	1,275 by 2023-24 L1 - 5
University of Suffolk	Digi Tech Centre	ICT education, training & collaboration facility to build skills, drive growth in the ICT sector, and support increased productivity.	6,497,000	915 by 2023-24 L4 - 8
City College Norwich	Digi-Tech Factory	To build facilities to support the full range of digital industries; creative media work, software & programming, network skills, infrastructure, electronics and automated manufacturing.	6,098,000	477 by 2023-24 L1 - 4
Suffolk New College	Digital & Technology Skills Hub	To create tailored workshops and spaces to enhance technology and digital sector training provision, and qualifications to meet the needs of employers.	1,600,000	264 by 2023-24 L1 - 3
University of East Anglia	Productivity East	Development of a new regional hub for engineering, technology and management to provide innovative engineering and business solutions to enable growth and productivity.	4,461,000	842 by 2022-23 L3 - 8

## Skills Advisory Panel's Local Skills Report

Skills Projects funded from the Innovative Projects Fund			
Lead	Project	Amount	Notes
NUA	Creative Internships	£66,450	Work experience and intern placements in creative businesses for graduates.
Royal Norfolk Agricultural Association	East Anglia Skills Initiative	£45,000	Funding awarded over 3 years (£15k PA) - Careers Shows.
Norfolk County Council	NCC Gearing up to Grow	£22,000	This project equips businesses with the right skills to enter the renewables supply chain, specifically Offshore.
NUA	Connecting Creative Capital	£100,000	This is about connecting graduates with businesses not traditionally noted for using creative graduates.
West Suffolk College	Fit For Nuclear	£118,800	This project equips businesses with the right skills to enter the nuclear supply chain.
Netmatters	SCION plus	£100,000	Skilling unemployed people as computer programmers.
The ORE Catapult	Fit 4 OR	£75,000	This project equips businesses with the right skills to enter the Renewable Energy supply chain.
National Writing Centre	Collaboration, Place Change	£60,952	It is designed to develop 40 current and next generation leaders' skills and capacity in the cultural sector to affect social and economic change in the New Anglia region through collaborative working, place sensitivity and innovative thinking.
VG Incubator	TCHC	£120,000	This project equips people with gaming skills to start their own businesses or become employment ready (within the gaming sector). The Creative Computing Club is a partner.

Skills funding can drive sector focus, careers inspiration and curriculum priorities, so knowledge and cascading of new funding opportunities are useful for the Skills Advisory

Panel and our wider stakeholders. They will also add to our Covid recovery work and potentially support changes in the post-Brexit employment landscape.

### Trade and Cooperation Deal: UK & EU

**We are aware from information gleaned through weekly business intelligence reports that several sectors have struggled to secure sufficient skilled workers as a result of the end of the principle of 'freedom of movement' between EU states and the UK. We have detected particular challenges for businesses in the Health & Social Care, Agricultural and Food processing, and Tourism and Hospitality sectors. The negative impact on the availability of staff has of course been compounded by the restrictions associated with Covid lockdown measures.**

While we have not undertaken a robust analysis of the longer-term impacts of the agreement reached between the UK and the EU, we are aware of the Office for Budgetary Regulation's analysis, which has indicated

that the UK could see a reduction of 4% in productivity – compared with if the UK had remained a member of the EU.

New Anglia LEP continues to actively monitor and assess the potential impact of additional restrictions and likely subsequent reduction in access to the labour force coming from EU countries. With a range of partners – including local networks and business intermediaries. Intelligence gleaned through these discussions will be shared on a consistent basis in regular updates and reports presented to the Norfolk and Suffolk SAP.

More detailed analysis of some of the potential impacts on a sector and geographic basis are laid out in Annex B.





# Skills strategy



Our Skills Strategy is directed by the Norfolk and Suffolk Economic Strategy 2022. This was developed in collaboration with a wide number of stakeholders and sets out our collective ambition and direction of travel.

The Skills Advisory Panel has four objectives:

- **Driving skills progression for the workforce** – encouraging lifelong professional development, upskilling and reskilling which will future-proof New Anglia business, boost productivity and improve the quality of our products, services and supply chains.
- **Providing agile and responsive training provision for key sectors** – working in partnership with businesses, developing innovative training courses, able to meet the emerging needs of the New Anglia economy.
- **Equipping young people for success** – unlocking the abilities, confidence and potential of young people, equipping this future generation with the technical skills, digital, entrepreneurship and problem-solving capabilities for further and higher education, and ultimately employment in our evolving technical sectors.
- **Tackling barriers to employment** – Developing steppingstone opportunities for vulnerable and disadvantaged groups to develop the skills required to enter, re-enter or transfer employment to benefit from productive careers in our technical sectors.

These objectives can be mapped into each point of the Driving Inclusion and Skills section of the Economic Strategy.



Funding and skills prioritisation with skills initiatives is shaped with this in mind. The vision of the New Anglia Skills Advisory Panel is *"to support the growth of an inclusive economy with a highly-skilled workforce where skills and employment provision meets business need and the aspirations of individuals."*

## Chapter 4

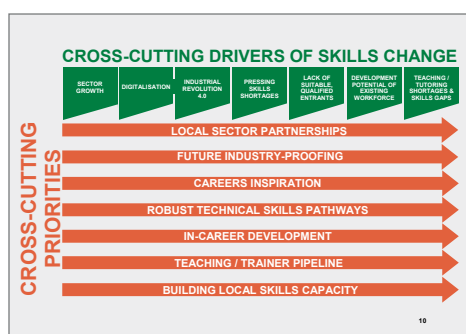
### Sector/occupational priorities

Using funding from the European Social Fund, 15 sector skills plans have been produced – [Sector Skills Plans](#) and a cross-cutting report. These lay out the strengths and weaknesses of our key

sectors from a skills and employment focus and link it with the curriculum offer. Key recommendations are made for each sector in order to address issues and take the sector ambitions forward.

### Cross-cutting skills priorities

The [cross-cutting report](#) identifies the key skills priorities and overarching drivers for change that are pertinent to all our key sectors.



There is a collective of sector groups which take forward the recommendations in the sector skills plans. These groups report into the SAP and there are clear lines of communication in and out, as well as to wider LEP or sector groups. The success of these groups is dependent on a mix of employer, education provider and wider stakeholder ownership. The more successful groups have true buy-in from these members.

Additional programmes have been developed to build on this work funded through the European Social Fund and we anticipate them progressing in the coming months.

### Enterprise Adviser Network / Careers Hub Strategy

**Our vision for the New Anglia Careers Hub is to:**

- Support secondary schools and colleges to fully achieve the eight Gatsby Benchmarks.
- Create a community of best practice across the Careers Hub through cluster and regional meetings.
- Creation of resources and CPD workshops to support careers leads and teachers to embed careers learning.
- Ensure engaged and knowledgeable Enterprise Advisers support the Careers Hub and are representative of the sectors across New Anglia.
- Ensure accurate LMI (Labour Market Information) is created and disseminated to careers leads, teachers, parents/carers and students to help students make informed choices and increase the understanding of the world of work.
- Create an evaluation framework to assess the impact of the Careers Hub.

# Skills Advisory Panel's Local Skills Report

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## Skills Festivals

In 2019, New Anglia LEP made a commitment to invest £45,000 over three years for the organisation and hosting of the Norfolk Skills & Careers Festival and the Suffolk Skills & Careers Festival. They have been the major 'go to' careers events for our schools and many other educational settings. There are approximately 200 stands over the two events capturing all of our key sectors.

Covid has disrupted the ability to hold three of these festivals, but we are working with the Royal Norfolk Agricultural Association and its delivery partner, Suffolk Agricultural Association, to ensure we can get these events back up and running.

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## Disability Confident

The [Disability Confident](#) scheme aims to help employers make the most of the opportunities provided by employing disabled people. It is voluntary and has been developed by employers and disabled people's representatives.

Norfolk County Council works with employers to embrace this scheme including

within the LEP. As part of this, its Youth Pledge for Employers ESF programme is also promoting disability confidence as part of its work with employers across Norfolk and Suffolk. Over the duration of the project, they will help organisations to engage with the scheme to support people with disabling barriers into their workplaces.

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## Covid-19 recovery and renewal skills priorities

The [Norfolk and Suffolk Covid-19 Economic Recovery Restart Plan](#) published in June 2020 brought together commitments and actions from local authority, private sector, third sector and education organisations to outline the key activities in place to help our region's economy restart after the COVID-19 pandemic. The People section was agreed by the SAP, and it had responsibility for monitoring progress.

The fall in business output has significant implications for employment levels. The overall impact will remain very hard to assess until the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme begins to taper off. The impacts, in both the short- and longer-term, are likely to be disproportionate among the local population. People with the lowest income are most vulnerable, with a significant number of jobs at risk in occupations with relatively lower wages, such as retail, tourism and food services, which are forecast to be some of the hardest hit by the economic impacts of the COVID-19 response.

## Chapter 4

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Young people may be particularly affected. Around 30% of employees aged under-25 work in a sector most affected by shutdown, compared with 13% of those over-25. The Resolution Foundation estimates that those leaving education this year will be less likely than previous cohorts to have a job in three years' time, with graduates being 13% less likely and those with the fewest qualifications 37% less likely to have a job.

The pandemic has affected individuals in various ways, from being furloughed to being made redundant or seeing a reduction in hours and pay or their apprenticeships and education paused. Those that have continued to work from home have had to rapidly adapt to new ways of working, many while home schooling, and many of our large and most affected employment sectors are also those in which working at home is less possible.

The rapid changes in ways of working, including an overnight shift to online working and lower-contact methods of doing business, have highlighted the importance of an adaptable workforce. The workforce requires the opportunities and capabilities to rapidly acquire these new skills, and especially those associated with online and digital working. We must ensure we do not exacerbate the education divide due to the ability to work from home or in the physical workplace.

As we look to develop the next phase of the Norfolk and Suffolk Economic Strategy, this skills report will add to the robust evidence base needed to identify the actions and interventions needed to renew the local economy and build a resilient skilled workforce of the future. The SAP will play a central role in identifying and shaping the interventions.

The Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise sector is playing a significant role in supporting workplace wellbeing, with much of the support employers and employees turn to being provided by local charities or community groups. We are looking to develop a sector skills plan for the sector to highlight the importance of the sector from an employment and skills acquisition perspective, together with a role in driving the local economy.

The rapid changes in ways of working, including an overnight shift to online working and lower-contact methods of doing business, have highlighted the importance of an adaptable workforce. The workforce requires the opportunities and capabilities to rapidly acquire these new skills, and especially those associated with online and digital working. Several firms, including construction company Morgan Sindall, have been supporting young people with virtual work experience.

As the economy restarts and looks to rebuild, it is important that individuals are supported to identify their transferable skills and consider moving into a different sector, and that all partners promote the range of opportunities available. Like businesses, colleges, universities and independent training providers have faced the same challenges to reopen and adapt to new ways of working, and support will be needed to assist them to continue providing the agile and responsive training that our economy requires.

# Skills Action Plan



Following a consultation exercise at the beginning of 2020, Panel members agreed a framework for action with a private sector member of the SAP acting as Champion for each objective group, an education link and a LEP/county council officer acting as a facilitator. Panel members were aligned to each group to develop two projects based around a framework agreed by all members. These projects needed to deliver initial outputs by the end of 2020.

We are encouraging engagement with existing local interventions and national skills priorities but with clear understanding of where the SAP is adding value. Having a targeted approach means we can have some tangible outcomes from our work on top of skills 'business as usual'. Scattering ourselves thinly over a wide number of projects was not the approach that members were wanting to adopt at this stage.

Our objectives cannot be looked at as discrete entities, so we are asking some members to spend time with another group from time to time and invite non-SAP members to objective meetings where appropriate. **The priorities are as follows:**

### Driving Skills Progression for the Workforce

*Champion - Christine Futter*

#### Priority - Sector approaches to encourage 'in work' progression

Develop a higher-level version of the Skills Support for the Workforce programme with an accompanying campaign to raise the profile around targeted training leading to greater productivity and business resilience.

#### Priority - Clear pathways to enter/ progress in/between key sectors

Series of campaigns raising awareness of training and mentorship, including Adult Learning and apprenticeships for all ages.

Highlighting transferable skills will be important here and at this time.

## Chapter 5

### Progress

Funding has been secured and a fund developed to develop the local workforce in order to enhance the potential of local SME involvement in major key strategic opportunities (e.g. infrastructure development). The £1m Supply Chain Skills Development Fund will run until 2023. The Apprenticeship Transfer Levy Mechanism has created additional apprenticeships at various levels and additional support has been provided and is available to employers via Apprenticeships Norfolk and Apprenticeships Suffolk to facilitate the creation of such apprenticeships. The 'ETIP' scheme in Norfolk has funded over 1,000 training interventions, while the ICET scheme delivered by UoS is provided the opportunity for higher-level training in digital and management – especially focused on women. The Developing Skills in Health and Social Care project has also provided upskilling opportunities for the sector.

A further £1.2m secured from the ESF 'Sector Skills' call to establish a 'Skills, Progression, Adaptability and Resilience' programme to launch in early 2022. The group has become the representative group of the SAP for the purposes of the Supply Chain Skills Development Fund.

### Challenges

Concern that businesses may not choose or be able to invest in training when economy is so uncertain.

Available funding is often restrictive in terms of what can be funded and to whom.

Employer and individual engagement – we need better, clearer means of accessing comprehensive support and information – some enhancing of collaboration required.

Lack of HR capacity in some SMEs to develop a culture of continued professional development.

Difficulties in knowing what support is going to come through from Government and how best to align ourselves with it to maximise benefits.

### Next steps

The group is now focused on what is required in the region in relation to the two following priorities and how existing programmes and activity may be shaped/steered in order to achieve:

- **EMPLOYERS** – High levels of employer-led upskilling and development of the workforce.
- **INDIVIDUALS** – Clear and coordinated pathways to progress and move between key sectors.

These priorities are reflective of the national ambitions outlined in the Skills for Jobs White Paper and a focus of engendering a culture of continuous professional development and life-long learning.

The group will form a direct link between the SAP and continuing relevant activity.

The group has also identified the following further actions to explore further and progress.

- **Communications** – review of an initial communications plan created by the group last year. With many employers having a focus on short-term survival, the plan was not progressed further. However, as vacancies rise and with the Government's focus on professional development, there may be a case to look again at whether the SAP could play a key role, across partner organisations, to develop and disseminate through various existing channels key messages about the benefits of investment in training (for both individuals and employers) and the opportunities of doing so.



# Skills Advisory Panel's Local Skills Report

## Next steps

- **Coordination and Navigation** – there is lot happening in this space but there is concern that the offers are not well understood or the potential impact of them maximised. The group would like to look closer at how the SAP could enhance means of accessing information and support related to progression within the workforce.

## Providing agile and responsive training provision for key sectors *Champion – Nova Fairbank*

### Priority – Training providers response to the sector skills plans

Develop a regional strategic prioritisation statement for Norfolk and Suffolk highlighting our economic priorities for the development of training provision.

### Priority – Tutor shortages in key sectors

Develop a campaign centred around highlighting the opportunities to get into FE teaching.  
Establish an industry visiting lecturer programme that provides the infrastructure to support those working in priority sectors to undertake college teaching placements/associate lectureships.

### Progress over 2021

- A Norfolk and Suffolk Institute of Technology Wave 2 Local Framework was developed to outline our vision for IoT bidders – utilised in bids.
- Wider skills and employment evidence base developed to support subsequent SAP direction and for use by our partners. Initial evidence of employment data within teaching has been gained.
- LEP website Jobs Support Programme promoting FE careers/vacancies and the wider education sector roles.
- Trialling of information sessions for potential FE staff recruitment.
- HR managers from FE colleges have played an active part in discussions.

### Challenges

It is still challenging to attract employees from industry to FE. Colleges have recently lost staff to industry due to the pay differentials. The business/education links identified in the Skills White Paper may go some way to address this but we will continue to look for solutions.

### Next steps

- LEP Data Analysts to work with FE HR managers to design a framework for seeking more evidence around recruitment and retention challenges of lecturers and support staff.
- Continue to promote education positions through the LEP Job Support Programme.
- Engage further with Teacher Trainers and develop a local network to support new FE lecturers.
- Seek further funding to support new FE lecturers.

## Chapter 5

### Equipping Young People for Success

*Champion – Glen Todd & Karin Porter*

#### Priority – Equipping young people with the confidence and work-ready skills

Highlighting a suite of activity programmes across Norfolk and Suffolk that aim to give young people confidence and resilience, targeting disadvantaged young people in particular.

#### Priority – Careers Inspiration & Improving CEIAG, Employer involvement & economy info

A series of communications/activities to ensure CEOs and Governing Boards of those schools and colleges engaged with the Enterprise Adviser Network are aware of the role and workings of the programme. Increasing work experience opportunities for young people across the region. Supporting and promoting activities that increase resilience and confidence of young people.

#### Progress

Mapping of Youth Pledge activity and support across Norfolk and Suffolk.

Focus group with young people to understand where they feel the gaps are.

Outcomes of positive activity discussions fed into the model adopted for the ESF NEET Support bid led by ECC.

Virtual work experiences being embedded into school offer.

Monthly Governor careers workshops are taking place and well attended.

#### Challenges

Covid has halted most face-to-face activity and delivery. We have explored virtual positive activities with some success and have excellent examples of virtual work experiences. Going forward, we will continue with a blended approach, using the good practice from virtual delivery to engage with young people and employers.

Lack of funds to expand the range of positive activities offered to disadvantaged young people.

#### Next steps

Sharing of virtual work inspiration resources created in collaboration between the EAN, SCC and NEACO with schools and colleges to support increased meaningful work inspiration activities.

Workshop to be delivered to local businesses by organisations that have developed and facilitated their own work experience programme to share best practice and increase the number of businesses offering work experience opportunities.

Continue to support and promote programmes that are increasing confidence and resilience in young people.

## Tackling Barriers to Employment

*Champion – Guy Hazlehurst*

### Priority – Pathways into employment for the economically inactive

Original aim was to support the Fuller Working lives agenda – actively reviewing recruitment policies, mid-life MOTs and supporting those with family caring responsibilities.

**Additional aim to support young people into employment through schemes in the Chancellor's A plan for jobs, e.g. Kickstart, apprenticeships and traineeships.**

### Priority – Basic Skills

Carry out research into why there is still a basic skills issue in the region and develop a promotion campaign to break down the barriers with English, Maths and Digital skills development.

**This work is likely to be heavily supported by other champions due to the change in focus on young people.**

### Progress

2020 was a success for the group in bringing people together, sharing intelligence and knowledge with some clear outcomes, and this continued in 2021.

Supported Young People – Utilised Young SZC Development Platform.

Supported the DWP/NALEP 50+ Choices project, reviewed successes and supported/lobbied for upscaling.

Developed format for Self-Employment Support for 50+ group, formed part of NALEP CRF bid.

### Challenges

Exploring what else we could do to support 50+ group, what the barriers are for this age group, and what else can we do to help tackle them.

The landscape is crowded, we need to focus on joining up existing initiatives rather than creating new ones.

### Next steps

Determine if there is a role for the group in supporting better connectivity between organisations involved inspiration work for young people and adults. If so, aim to co-ordinate some aspects of this work to avoid duplication and steer work to support adult inspiration which is less well developed/co-ordinated.

Continue to support Choices for 50+ or similar initiatives.

Work with the existing Skills Bootcamp providers to ensure high uptake in our region, and support the development and roll-out of new provision.

## Chapter 5

Examples of where we are supporting Government policies and funded initiatives include:

- [Apprenticeships and Levy Transfer Scheme](#)
- [Kickstart](#)
- [Fuller Working Lives/50+ Choices](#)
- [Enterprise Adviser Network](#)
- [DWP Restart programme](#)

Our Restart Festival in 2020 highlighted much of our skills support. Videos can be seen on the following links:

[Supporting young people](#)  
[Skills for your workforce](#)  
[Skills in New Anglia with Vattenfall](#)

[Clean Growth for Business](#) – Ahead of the COP 26 summit in the UK in November 2021, we delivered a programme of support to help businesses learn more about the actions you can take on the Journey to net zero. We ran webinars and events full of practical tips, bringing inspiring stories through our news and blogs and shared helpful online resources. We also developed podcasts to bring motivating stories from local businesses.



## Current and Ongoing Activity

Equipping Young People for Success	Providing Agile and Responsive Training Provision for Key Sectors	Driving Skills Progression for the Workforce	Tackling Barriers to Employment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Anglia Youth Pledge</li> <li>• Enterprise Advisor Network</li> <li>• Apprenticeship focussed projects and support</li> <li>• Kickstart and Traineeships</li> <li>• Virtual work experience</li> <li>• Help You Choose / Icanbea</li> <li>• Skills Shows</li> <li>• Opportunity Areas</li> <li>• Norwich for Jobs and parallel district initiatives</li> <li>• NEACO services</li> <li>• Young Apprenticeship Ambassador Network</li> <li>• Suffolk Place-Based Youth Employment initiatives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Digital/ICT provision/new builds.</li> <li>• Skills Support for the Workforce</li> <li>• Response to Sector Skills Plans</li> <li>• New Anglia Skills Deals</li> <li>• ESF Programme e.g. Health &amp; Social Care</li> <li>• Apprenticeship standards &amp; T Level consultation</li> <li>• New Anglia Learning Providers group consultation</li> <li>• LSIP/SDF</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skills Support for the Workforce</li> <li>• Apprenticeship Levy Transfer Scheme and national/local incentives</li> <li>• NAAME Talent Sharing</li> <li>• ESF Sector Skills and Supply Chain</li> <li>• Local training fund incentives/net zero consultancy</li> <li>• Sector Skills Plans and groups</li> <li>• ESF In-Career Education and Training</li> <li>• Basic Skills provision through adult and community funding</li> <li>• 50+ Choices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Job Support Programme including triage referrals</li> <li>• DWP Restart, Flexible Support fund, Youth Hubs and sector-based work academies</li> <li>• LIFT Community Grants</li> <li>• ESF/BLF Building Better Opportunities</li> <li>• Supporting graduates into the workplace</li> <li>• Integrated Work and Health (IHES)</li> <li>• Norfolk Police &amp; Crime Commissioner – Gateway to Employment/County Lines</li> </ul>

## Forecast Employment Growth – Norfolk and Suffolk's Strategic Opportunities

**As has been outlined above, the Norfolk and Suffolk Economic Strategy sets out three strategic opportunities: Clean Energy, Agri-food and ICT and Digital Creative. In order to be able to estimate how the Working Futures projections impact on the LEP's strategic opportunities, "Clean Energy" will be treated as engineering, "Agri-food" as agriculture and "ICT and Digital Creative" as information technology.**

The Working Futures projections (see "Skills Demand - Working Futures Employment Projections" in Annex B) are not favourable for these industries, with Information Technology experiencing nominal growth, and engineering and agriculture both being forecasted to shrink in total numbers employed. Agriculture is the lowest ranked sector in percentage terms, with an estimated forecasted decrease of -1.6% per annum. However, a significant factor behind why Clean Energy, Agri-Food and ICT and Digital Creative have been identified as

having strategic opportunities is that they are forecast to be at the centre of future innovation and therefore have potential for significant growth. There are few places which are so uniquely equipped to make telling contributions to the major challenges facing the world in the 21st century – food and energy security, healthy ageing and living with environmental change in a world where technology is advancing rapidly. The Working Futures projections will not have incorporated the potential for innovation within their calculations, and so this will not be reflected in the forecast.

Furthermore, the Working Futures projections were prepared in late 2019 and early 2020, and therefore will not incorporate the potential impact of the proposed Sizewell C nuclear power station in Suffolk, or the economic impact of Covid-19.

*A detailed explanation of how Working Futures forecasts were prepared can be found in the Appendix B.*

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## Employer Representative Bodies

**Norfolk Chambers of Commerce and Suffolk Chamber of Commerce are both members of our Skills Advisory Panel. They also sit on a number of LEP groups and Chris Sargisson, Chief Executive Officer of NCoC, chairs our Digital Taskforce. The New Anglia Growth Hub is hosted by SCoC.**

At the beginning of 2021, the two chambers – supported by Norfolk County Council, Suffolk County Council and New Anglia LEP – came together to develop a bid to become a Local Skills Improvement Plan trailblazer. The Chambers were unsuccessful, but they are engaged with the British Chambers of Commerce meetings so they can learn from existing trailblazers and prepare for the future.

New Anglia LEP has a strong relationship with employer representative bodies in the region, meeting regularly with other key business intermediary stakeholders such as the FSB, CBI, and IoD, and they are represented on both the New Anglia Growth Programme Partnership Board and the Economic Recovery Group. Trade associations such as NFU, CLA, ICAEW and Make UK are consulted frequently around key issues such as skills, innovation and regulation, supporting the sectoral work of the LEP.

Locally, representative bodies such as Tech East, New Anglia Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering (NAAME), Visit East of England and the East of England Energy Group (EEEGR) all play a crucial role in supporting the conversation around skills.

# Assessment of progress



The SAP oversaw the People chapter of the Covid-19 Economic Recovery Restart Plan.

An assessment of progress was compiled in November 2020:

The implications for the workforce go beyond those that have been made redundant or furloughed over the pandemic. People have adapted to new COVID-safe working practices, hybrid working and online meetings. According to the Office of National Statistics (ONS), around eight million people worked from home, but almost 20% of them found it difficult.

Locally, it is recognised that focus on people is vital to building a resilient economy.

Skills at all levels will become even more important, with re-skilling, mental health, and wellbeing of significant importance.

The investment from local partners to progress the actions in the Restart plan reflects the drive to support people in Norfolk and Suffolk.

Together we have:

- Launched a **Job Support Programme** which builds on and brings together existing initiatives to support businesses that are either contracting or expanding, as well as individuals facing redundancy or looking for new opportunities.

The programme will evolve over time as more support and services come on board or are identified. Currently it includes:

- An online portal of resources and support information for people facing redundancy which is helping to connect people to new training and employment opportunities. Since its launch in September 2020, the Job Support Programme section of the website has attracted **more than 22,000 page views**. This includes information to help people get back to work, including specific support for those aged over 50, and a Money Advice Service budget planner which can support individuals to take control of their finances. An **Employment Opportunities** platform which is helping to plug short-term gaps in essential workforce by promoting hundreds of vacancies, with support from social media channels, has had **more than 17,500 page views** since it went live in May 2020.
- Business health check-ups – approximately 200 have been carried out by the New Anglia Growth Hub in 2021 identifying opportunities to upskill the existing workforce and grow businesses through apprenticeship pathways.



## Skills Advisory Panel's Local Skills Report

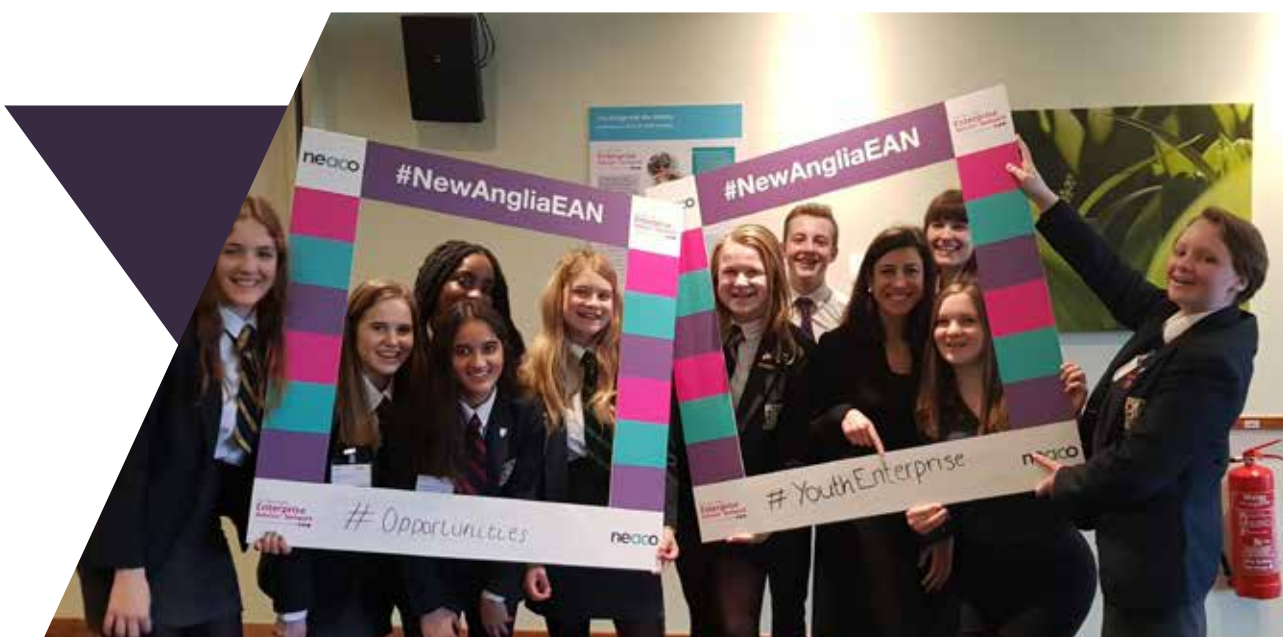
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- Strong partnership between DWP, Jobcentre Plus, Local Authorities, training and education providers, mental health services and VCSE organisations who are working to engage with professional services to ensure employers and employees are aware of and have access to available support programmes at the earliest point.
- Continuation of our support for the Norfolk and Suffolk Skills & Careers Festivals. Worked with all existing ESF programmes running in Norfolk and Suffolk and many other projects that invest in people, have a focus on improving employment and education opportunities, and have identified how they can adapt, collaborate and become agile to the changing nature and demands of the workforce. We were successful in a bid for £200,000 of funds to provide IT equipment for participants for these projects, which has further broken down barriers to accessing support where face-to-face interventions are challenging.
- Launched Routes to Work, a £2.4m European Social Funded project at East Coast College which supports newly unemployed people in Norwich, Great Yarmouth, Lowestoft and Waveney. The project has a range of specialist delivery partners including with Access Community Trust, ACE Training, DIAL and Voluntary Norfolk. It offers 1:1 mentoring and advice and support to help people progress into work or training. Support is often short and intensive focusing on a specific area of need, such as interview skills or writing application forms.
- Worked with DWP to promote and coordinate the Kickstart Scheme initiative – supporting 16-24-year-olds on Universal Credit into high-quality, six-month work placements to avoid long-term unemployment. The wages for up to 25 hours a week are funded by the Government, with additional wraparound support. Organisations such as the Chambers of Commerce and county councils have applied to become gateway organisations, enabling businesses to apply.
- As of 9th November 2021, 17,210 Kickstart jobs had been made available in the East of England, with 7,090 started. Local partners will work with the DWP to promote and support young people to apply and take up suitable roles. We are also collectively working with employers, young people and support services to ensure there are positive outcomes for those already in placements.
- Showcased the practical interventions that employers can carry out around mental health through sessions at the Restart Festival and case studies/referral options on the Job Support Programme platform.
- Accelerated the delivery of the Youth Pledge projects, providing an integrated offer that links young people to opportunities and support to help them into education, training and employment. West Suffolk College has launched its RYPE Youth Pledge project which aims to recruit 860 unemployed or economically inactive young people (16–24-year-olds) in rural areas onto a programme providing support, integration and progression. It provides on-demand pastoral support, positive mindset development, and a matchmaking job service, including CV writing and career development support and progression into training and/or employment.
- Drove forward the levy transfer scheme. A total of 213 apprenticeships were funded, with £1,782,606 transferred in 2020-21.
- Initiated the Recruit, Retain and Reward apprenticeship incentive grant scheme via Norfolk and Suffolk County Council Apprenticeship teams. To date there have been more than 275 successful applications for the £1,000 award for recruiting a new or recently made redundant apprentice due to COVID-19 challenges. The vast majority of successful applicants have been supporting the 16-18-year-old cohort, which shows the commitment our businesses still have for assisting young people at the start of their careers.

## Chapter 6

- Expanded the Enterprise Adviser Network and Careers Hub, increasing the capacity to support schools and colleges with their careers strategy. Since September 2020, each Enterprise Coordinator has held a cluster meeting with their schools to share best practice and discuss solutions for challenges being faced this academic year. Weekly careers resource is distributed to Careers Leads and Enterprise Advisers, highlighting available careers activities to support with achieving the Gatsby Benchmarks. CPD sessions for Careers Leads and Governors have been facilitated.
- Broadcasted 80 episodes of the [EAN Careers and Coffee](#) sessions via YouTube featuring interviews with people from a wide range of sectors, including, IT, engineering, finance, education, law, creative and the manufacturing sector. They have highlighted future employment opportunities across key sectors to help raise awareness and aspirations for young people. Careers Leads are using the episodes in classes and as designated homework for students.
- Supported graduates from local universities by making them aware of our Job Support Programme, promoted the graduate internship programme, and developed a showcasing event for university departments and businesses to highlight themselves to each other.

In addition, Developing Experts – which offers a science curriculum for schools and a careers and recruitment platform for the whole family – was awarded an Innovate UK grant during the pandemic. Its resources are used by over 5,800 UK schools, including more than 1,300 in the Eastern Region.



## Skills action plan

- Since September 2020, New Anglia LEP has expanded its Careers Hub to include all secondary mainstream, PRUs, SEND and FE colleges across Norfolk and Suffolk. Collaborating with business partners, the public, education and voluntary sectors, the Careers Hub helps deliver the Gatsby Benchmarks and improve careers outcomes for young people. The Hub's delivery is informed by local skills needs through the SAP and tailored to respond to developments in local job markets informed by labour market information. Evidence published by the Careers and Enterprise Company in October 2019 showed Careers Hubs accelerating overall careers education progress and performance by 56 per cent in 12 months.

Key findings were:

- 95% higher standard of performance in schools linked to Hubs over those outside the careers network established by CEC.
- Two thirds of schools and colleges in Hubs run regular encounters with employers, compared with just over a third in schools and colleges outside the network.
- Nearly three in five schools and colleges in Hubs run work experience, compared to around a third (35%) outside the network.
- Nearly two thirds of schools and colleges in Hubs are learning about careers direct from the jobs market, compared with only 3 in 10 schools outside the network.

Throughout 2022, we will focus on taking forward the People section of the Norfolk and Suffolk Economic Strategy 2022, alongside the objectives and projects outlined above. We must ensure we remain focused and ambitious but equally nimble, driven by the changing local and national economic situation, plus Government skills and employment policy.

# Case Studies / positive impact stories



## Apprenticeship Levy Transfer Scheme

**When 20-year-old Ami Richardson describes the impact of the apprenticeship funded by energy company Vattenfall, she is unequivocal. "It has changed my life," she says.**

Ami, from Ipswich, is just one of the young people who have been given that invaluable first foothold in the world of work thanks to a LEP scheme which transfers unspent apprenticeship funding to local SMEs.

Ipswich software and app development company Coderus took on Ami as a business operations apprentice after receiving the unused funding from the Swedish firm, which is developing two offshore wind farms off the Norfolk coast.

Businesses which have used their levy and want to employ an apprentice or upskill existing staff can have their training costs covered through LEP's Apprenticeship Levy Transfer Scheme, which was launched in 2019.

So far, 277 apprentices have taken up the offer with 80 employers thanks to the transfer of £2,267,716 in levy payments.

Large organisations that pay into the government's apprenticeship levy can transfer up to 25% of unspent funds to a small employer which will fund the training costs. In 2020, £330m went back to the Treasury and was lost from the skills pool. The innovative scheme is designed to use this money to support local businesses and increase opportunities for young people.



## Skills Advisory Panel's Local Skills Report

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Ami said an apprenticeship was the right option for her because it provided on-the-job training rather than classroom lessons.

"My apprenticeship has changed my life because I have been able to learn more and have a job at the same time. The opportunity itself has been invaluable.

"I have become more confident since starting my apprenticeship and have also taken on many new responsibilities with my role at Coderus, including creating an effective Covid-19 safety plan.

"Having an apprenticeship has let me gain hands-on experience of being in a workplace while also learning a lot on the job. There is always something new to learn while working."

For employers who take on apprenticeships, the scheme is a win-win. As well as having their training costs fully funded through the scheme, they have the opportunity to recruit young people who can add value to their business and help it to grow.

Susan Falch-Lovesey is Vattenfall's Local Liaison Officer and Skills Champion for the Norfolk Vanguard and Norfolk Boreas wind farms. She said the Apprenticeship Levy had helped the energy company with its internal training and upskilling and having the flexibility to transfer it was a neat opportunity to collaborate with stakeholders to build skills capacity in the local supply chain and support development in Norfolk and Suffolk.

Susan commented: "An Apprenticeship Levy Transfer is straightforward to do. Vattenfall encourages other larger companies who pay a levy to consider this opportunity, facilitated by the LEP, as an opportunity to prioritise skills and talent for the future of this region we're so invested in."

Alison Thomas, co-director of Coderus, said all its apprentices play a significant role in the success of our business. "It has been wonderful to see Ami flourish in both skills, experience and confidence during her apprenticeship."

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## Kickstart Scheme

**From caring for residents through to her progression to the company's business support team, Rosie O'Neil has shown how the Kickstart Scheme can lead to a promising career.**

The 25-year-old graduate began training with Norfolk care home group Armscare earlier this year and says she has found her vocation thanks to what she describes as "one of the best and most useful programmes introduced by the Government".

The Kickstart Scheme is open to people aged 16-24 who are claiming Universal Credit and at risk of long-term unemployment. Rosie was in her final year at university studying for a BA in Business when the country went into lockdown. Like many

students she continued and completed her studies at home and then, after hearing about Kickstart, she was introduced to Armscare and embarked on her training.

She expressed an interest in doing some care shifts, in addition to her Kickstart hours, and did a stint as a trainee activities coordinator. However, within four months of her supervision under the scheme, she was working with directors Aman and Raj Sehgal at the head office in King's Lynn.

When her training ends in January 2022, she starts in a full-time Business Support role which will focus on all areas of our business, including accounting, recruitment and marketing.

## Chapter 7

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Speaking about her Kickstart experience, Rosie said: "I have been working for Armscare for four months and I have already progressed more than I could have imagined with the company. I am extremely proud that from growing and advancing my skills in becoming a care assistant, I have been offered an administrative support role in the Armscare business team.

"Although I have worked very hard, if it was not for the amazing support of the Kickstart team and the advertisement of the scheme in the first place, I most likely would not be in the position that I am today or know about Armscare. I think it's truly amazing that Armscare offers the Kickstart scheme, and it is a wonderful company to work for.

"My Kickstart coach, Kickstart manager and care floor manager have been extremely helpful and supportive. I have been made part of the team from day one regardless of being on the Kickstart Scheme. The staff have made me feel very welcomed and all my questions are answered. I have regular feedback and I am most importantly an equal member of the team.

"The training has also been delivered in a professional, appropriate way, and at a great pace. Overall, I am very happy and proud, and I look forward to my future prospects within Armscare."

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### The 5% Club

**A Norfolk business which has always led by example through its recruitment of apprentices has been awarded gold status by the national 5% Club.**

Warren Services, founded by Richard Bridgman more than 30 years ago in Thetford, has trained scores of young people through its scheme and the firm's commitment to providing apprenticeships was recognised at an awards ceremony held at the House of Lords in November 2021. The company currently has nine apprentices in training at all levels up to degree level and a third of its workforce are either former or current Warren apprentices, including some who are now managers.

Mr Bridgman collected the gold award at the event where he was accompanied by apprentices [pictured above left to right] Robert Jones, Jed McConochie and Cailum Wilson.

The 5% Club was started in 2013 by Balfour Beatty CEO Leo Quinn and is a movement of employers committed to increasing the number, quality and range of 'Earn & Learn' opportunities across the UK.

Companies who join pledge to raising the number of apprentices, sponsored students and graduates on formal programmes to 5% of their total workforce within five years.



## Skills Advisory Panel's Local Skills Report

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Commenting on his company's approach to employment, Mr Bridgman said: "Warren Services has always had a very open recruitment policy and always picks the best candidate, whatever their qualifications. We have worked very closely with the DWP for many years to help those struggling to find employment, especially those aged 16 to 24.

"Apprenticeships are more important than ever now and, along with KickStart and other schemes, represent a really golden opportunity to young people on their route to employment and a career."

Project engineer Cailum Wilson said of the Westminster reception where the award was presented: "I really enjoyed it as a large variety of companies attended, and the speeches that were made during the event were pushing for more apprenticeship schemes and opportunities in the UK."



Mr Bridgman's commitment to apprentices was further recognised in the Government's Levelling Up Awards 2021, Foreign Secretary and Southwest Norfolk MP Liz Truss presenting him with the honour at an event in November. His award was for the company's open, transparent and accessible recruitment practices.

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## Investment in digital skills as part of Levelling Up agenda

### **Training centres which will ensure a future pipeline of digital skills were opened at colleges in Norfolk and Suffolk in 2021.**

The £9.6m DigiTech Centre – a joint project between the University of Suffolk and BT – provides cutting-edge digital skills for people looking to pursue careers in information and communications technology and is for use by university staff, students and businesses at the Adastral Park site, near Ipswich.

Specialist high-tech laboratories form the heart of the research and engineering facility, which was officially opened in October 2021, and will be used by staff, students and businesses from Adastral Park and across the region.

By 2024, the University expects up to 700 undergraduate degree and BT apprentices to have been trained in the new facility. AI and

data sciences will also be offered to 300 post-graduate students to further boost skills.

Suffolk New College unveiled its £2.4m Tech Campus which will be able to teach around 80 students at a time in subjects that include Creative Media, ESPORTS, Games Design, Information Technology. A brand new T Level course in Digital Production, Design and Development will also be taught in the building.

Meanwhile City College Norwich has opened its £11.4m Digi-Tech Factory to enable the delivery of interconnected Digital Technology, Engineering and Design courses. This will benefit prospective students and employers as it supports the full range of digital industries from creative media work, software & programming to network skills, infrastructure, electronics & automated manufacturing.





invested £11.4m in the Digi-Tech Factory as a direct response to this key skills priority for Norfolk and Suffolk.

The opening of the facility saw Norwich become the first place in the country to complete a project as part of the Towns Fund. Corrienne Peasgood OBE, Principal, City College Norwich and a member of the New Anglia LEP board, said: "The Digi-Tech Factory will play a key role in enabling us to deliver innovative, industry-standard learning, and a digital skills curriculum developed with substantial input from employers.

"It's been brilliant seeing how the new building has been received by our lecturing staff, students, and apprentices, during the first weeks of term, and the difference this is already making to the teaching and learning of a wide range of digital skills."

"The benefits of skills generation, job creation, ICT sector company growth and productivity increase from these two initiatives will support the growth of ICT expertise in the New Anglia region."

Norwich City Council was awarded a Town Deal of £25m at the end of 2020 from the Government's Towns' Fund to deliver eight key projects – all of which will drive regeneration alongside skills, infrastructure and jobs for the city and region.

City College Norwich, New Anglia LEP, and Norwich City Council (through the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities' Towns' Fund), have collectively

## Students find inspiration through virtual work experience

**A pilot careers programme which provided a virtual work experience including mock interviews has been praised by some of the students who took part.**

The Virtual Work Inspiration Suffolk's initiative Discover Your Future aimed to raise aspirations among pupils from Sybil Andrews Academy in Bury St Edmunds, Stone Lodge Academy in Ipswich, and Stowmarket High School, and broaden their understanding of the local jobs market.

It was delivered by a team comprising the New Anglia Careers Hub, Suffolk County Council, and the Network for East Anglian Collaborative Outreach, a Uni Connect partnership, bringing together expertise in

careers, aspirations, employer engagement and progression.

Jessie Davis and Kali Sharman, Head Students at Sybil Andrews Academy, were so impressed they wrote to the Discover Your Future team afterwards, thanking them for the opportunity.

They commented: "It has been a truly incredible experience which we, as year 10 at Sybil Andrews Academy, really value. It has given us so many opportunities to learn and develop our skills that we will be able to take with us into our future careers. It has also helped for people to discover more about what they want to do in their futures and how to get there."



Discover Your Future offered employers, employees and the self-employed a flexible approach to engaging in careers education, with a limited time commitment.

Many virtual work experience or inspiration opportunities are not embedded in the curriculum, so do not necessarily reach those who need the opportunities most. The pilot sought to ensure access for all students in the classroom with activities around five key themes: Industry Sectors, Skills, Entrepreneurship, Pathways and Resilience, and Interviews.

More than two thirds of students (71%) who took part agreed they had learned something new about work, while 64% agreed they had discovered new paths they could take in future.

Over half (60%) of students said they had learned something new about careers in their local area and they were particularly positive about mock interviews and the value of the feedback they received.

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## Other case studies

[Energy Skills Centre, East Coast College](#)  
[STEM Innovation Centre, West Suffolk College](#)  
[icanbea](#)  
[Apprenticeship Levy Transfer Scheme](#)  
[Kickstart Scheme](#)

# Looking Forward



Over recent times we have seen a move to providers and employers working in a more collaborative way. This is essential at a time when our local economy is changing so quickly, and technologies are advancing. Our providers need to continue to keep their curriculum offer current as well as ensure delivery times, format and locations are flexible.

**Employers need to continue to support and increasingly invest in their future employees, whether this is offering work experience, apprenticeships or delivery to name just a few. They can also play their part in lending resources or showcasing them in situ.**

If you are an employer, then you can get involved in the following ways:

**Enterprise Adviser Network** – by becoming an Enterprise Adviser and supporting schools with their careers strategies or signing up to our Give an Hour campaign to share your experience and industry knowledge and make a difference in a young person's life.

**Apprenticeship Levy Transfer Scheme** – if you pay the apprenticeship levy and you don't use it all then we run a levy sharing initiative. Equally, if you need to receive levy for an apprentice then we can link you to a levy payer.

**Apprenticeships/Kickstart/Traineeships/T Levels** – we need employers to offer paid positions, placements and/or work experience. There are a range of options so please get in touch with the LEP or any of our partners cited in this report for more information.

**ESF (European Social Fund)** – many of these projects need support with placements or employment opportunities for their participants. Again, get in touch if this is something of interest at [skills@newanglia.co.uk](mailto:skills@newanglia.co.uk)

**Opportunity Areas** – to find out how your organisation could be involved, contact our Programme Manager at [jacqueline.bircham@newanglia.co.uk](mailto:jacqueline.bircham@newanglia.co.uk).



So, from the evidence provided in this report and the knowledge of the Skills Advisory Panel, it is clear there is a need for:

- A clear plan to inspire and upskill the workforce to counter historic poorer attainment in comparison to the national average, thus building further the lifelong learning culture.
- An increase in higher-value jobs – going hand in hand with upskilling/reskilling of the local workforce and inward investment where appropriate.
- Raising the engagement in STEM subjects in all education settings, including work-based learning. A clear focus will include ICT digital and our clean growth ambitions.
- Increased support to make the workplace more adaptable to new ways of working such as digital skills and developing HR functions, to successfully carry out online interviews and the onboarding of new staff.
- Work with partners to increase performance at Key Stage 2 and 4, particularly in our areas of deprivation through taking learnings from the Opportunity Areas and applying them in a wider and targeted place-based geography.
- An increased Health & Social Care focus as a LEP, supporting the entry points into the sector and the progression within it, plus the need for business support and the advancement of technology.
- Increased training in leadership and management, including the support for individuals to put theory into practice through mentorships and peer-to-peer support.
- Continued work to increase the aspirations of young people so we see an increase in Level 4+ HE qualifiers, especially in Engineering & Technology.
- Increasing further the numbers going into our local Land-Based education provision, particularly higher-level agriculture-related options.
- Continue to work in partnership with our Employer Representative Bodies, businesses and other stakeholders to collectively identify and address skills challenges and opportunities within Norfolk and Suffolk.
- A more in-depth labour shortage investigation and identification of possible support through aspects such as automation, upskilling, reskilling and developing a flexible workforce.
- Establishment of a campaign to attract talent to learn in Norfolk and Suffolk, stay retained in the area and enter our workforce.
- Mapping out opportunities for clean growth and green jobs, supporting local/national curriculum development, plus uptake and ensuring there is suitable institutional and physical resources in place for training for a net zero economy.





For more information,  
please visit [newanglia.co.uk](http://newanglia.co.uk)

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