

LINCOLNSHIRE EMPLOYMENT & SKILLS STRATEGY

SEPTEMBER 2021 – 2023

SUMMARY VERSION, JULY 2021

FINAL DRAFT – FOR FEEDBACK



INTRODUCTION

The Lincolnshire Joint Employment and Skills Commissioning Board comprises the following stakeholders collaborating to improve employment and skills outcomes for Lincolnshire's residents, communities, business and wider economy:

- Lincolnshire County Council (LCC)
- Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership (GLLEP)
- The Federation of Lincolnshire Colleges
- Department for Work and Pensions

Despite the long-standing excellence of our local schools, FE colleges and independent learning providers, there is a collective recognition that Lincolnshire faces some substantial, enduring employment and skills challenges balanced with exciting, fast-emerging new opportunities. Our Board remit includes the collaborative identification of strategic priorities and specific actions to:

- *support engagement with, and continuous improvement of, local learning and career opportunities*
- *ensure the alignment of LCC and GLLEP priorities, particularly around the 'skills agenda'*
- *realise the positive influence and wider social value that can be achieved through collaborating as employers, service providers and commissioners*

This strategy (which is summarized in this document) sets out a two-year Work Programme providing a local, cohesive, evidence-led response to Lincolnshire's enduring challenges and exciting opportunities.

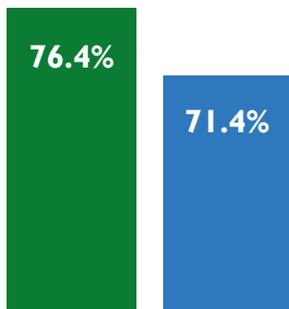
The Strategy and Work Programme have been developed following:

- A comprehensive review of our robust local evidence base which incorporates recent local research and several ongoing employment and skills action plans
- Ongoing partnership dialogue with the board, senior officers and other strategic partners
- Articulation of the current 'status quo' of employment and skills in Lincolnshire
- Identification of our enduring, distinctive Lincolnshire 'problems'; our consequent employment & skills priorities; and cross-cutting interventions that will add greatest cohesion and value
- Recognising the wider national economy and skills policy context, yet focusing upon where we can make the most difference in Lincolnshire
- Production of an outcome-led Work Programme as a framework to steer a cohesive local response, complementing national provision with local initiatives that can make a difference
- Production of a High-Level Work Plan setting out the priority activities for 2021-23

SCALING THE CHALLENGE

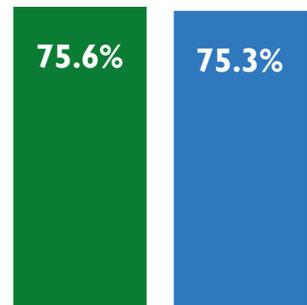
LINCOLNSHIRE

NATIONAL

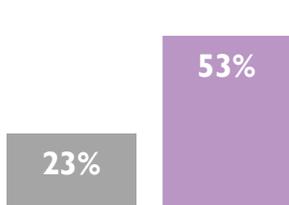


EMPLOYMENT RATE

DEC19 DEC20

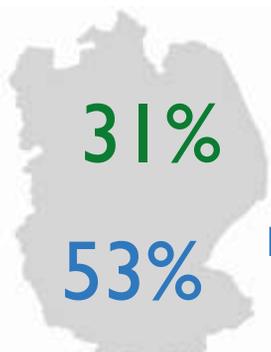
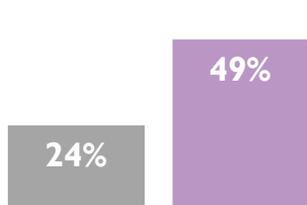


UNEMPLOYMENT RATE



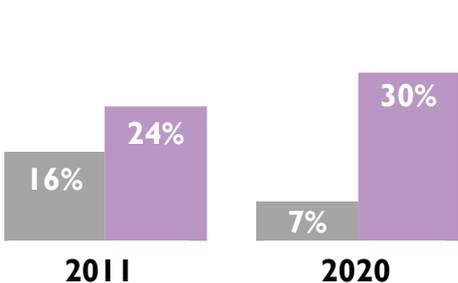
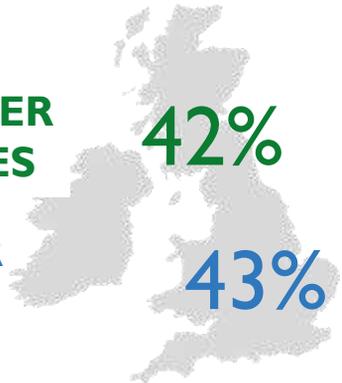
LONG TERM UNEMPLOYMENT
(as a % of unemployed)

APR20 APR21



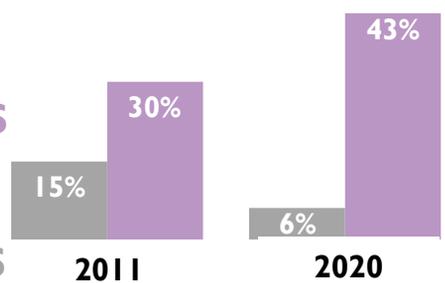
EMPLOYMENT IN HIGHER QUALIFIED INDUSTRIES

EMPLOYMENT IN LOWER QUALIFIED INDUSTRIES



LEVEL 4+ QUALIFICATIONS

NO QUALIFICATIONS



EMPLOYMENT & SKILLS - OUR ENDURING CHALLENGES

1. LOCAL BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT

- Levels of economic inactivity amongst those of working age have increased during the last year with data for 2020 showing that **nearly a quarter (24%) of residents aged 16-64 are economically inactive**. This equates to around **107,000 people, of which 25,000 do want to work**. *Source: Annual Population Survey 2020, Office for National Statistics*
- The sheer size of Lincolnshire and its rural nature means that jobs can be difficult to reach with on average **only 45 employment opportunities per sq km** compared to 208 nationally. *Source: Business Register and Employer Survey 2019, Office for National Statistics*
- With **7% of the local working age population (32,200 people) holding no qualification** (*Source: Adult Literacy in Greater Lincolnshire, March 2021, LORIC*), 'basic skills' e.g. adult literacy, ESOL and digital skills remain major barriers to employment – this aligned to broader skills deprivation – especially localities such as the Lincolnshire coast.

2. LOCAL QUALIFICATION AND SKILLS LEVELS

- In 2011, **24% of Lincolnshire working age residents had a Level 4 qualification or above compared to 30% across England. In 2020 these figures are now 30% and 43% respectively** meaning the gap has increased from 6 to 13 percentage points. **To close this gap would entail nearly 58,000 additional local people gaining at least a Level 4 qualification today.** *Sources: 2011 Census, Annual Population Survey 2020, Office for National Statistics; Annual Population Survey 2020, Office for National Statistics*
- 15% of Lincolnshire employers (nearly **3,300 businesses**) report having a skills gap in their current workforce compared to 13% nationally. *Source: Employer Skills Survey 2019, Department for Education*

3. LOCAL SKILLS SUPPLY AND DEMAND MISMATCHES

- Lincolnshire employers with vacancies are **more likely to report having at least one vacancy that is hard-to-fill** (51%, or **over 1,700 businesses**) compared to the national average (44%). *Source: Employer Skills Survey 2019, Department for Education*
- Lincolnshire employers with hard-to-fill vacancies are more likely to report it being **hard-to-fill due to a skills shortage** (35% or **over 1,200 businesses**) compared to the national average (32%). *Source: Employer Skills Survey 2019, Department for Education*
- Lincolnshire employers are **more likely to report having over-qualified staff** (44% compared to 42% nationally) **and under-utilised staff** i.e. those that have qualifications and skills that are more advanced than required for their current job role (36% compared to 34% nationally). *Source: Employer Skills Survey 2019, Department for Education*

FROM PROBLEM TO PRIORITY

The strategy is summarised around the three key employment and skills challenges where a cohesive local response can drive solutions

1. Local Barriers to Employment

Issues around rurality, sparsity, transport, provision of unpaid care, and lack of work flexibility combine to create significant barriers for a significant number of Lincolnshire residents - with increasing long-term unemployment a concern

The solutions for tackling these challenges are identified, and these then form the basis for our three identified priorities

Develop the employment 'offer', employment pathways, and support people to overcome barriers to work

1. Local Employment Opportunities for All

2. Local Qualification & Skills Levels

Whilst Lincolnshire has made considerable gains over the last decade in raising qualification levels amongst residents in still lags behind the national average for higher level qualifications

Support and encourage residents in improving qualification and skills levels, with employers playing a role through investment in workforce development, and creating more higher qualified job opportunities

2.A Higher Skilled & Qualified Lincolnshire

3. Local Skills Supply & Demand Mismatches

Lincolnshire employers are more likely to report hard-to-fill and, skills shortage vacancies, and having under-utilised and over-qualified staff

Improving the connections between our important and growing sectors, their skills needs, and the job and career prospects of residents

3. Skills for Local Business Growth

OPPORTUNITIES FOR LOCAL ACTION & POSITIVE OUTCOMES

CROSS CUTTING THEMES

The strategy identifies four cross cutting themes as opportunities for local collaborative interventions that seek to make a real difference to employment and skills in Lincolnshire.

A. COLLABORATION / LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS ADDING VALUE

Recognising that a very high proportion of public investment in education, skills and employment is led and managed according to national policy and budgets, large, rural area such as Lincolnshire can report that national programmes have less reach; and present a less viable proposition for learning providers. There is an opportunity for local employment and skills stakeholders to work together to maximise local take up and also to develop smart, local initiatives tailored to the needs of Lincolnshire residents and businesses.

B. EMBRACING DIGITISATION

Realise the transformational opportunities that digitisation offers to our residents, communities, businesses and economy whilst also ensuring that digital exclusion does not provide another barrier to personal or business development and achievement. From a skills perspective, digitisation includes ensuring physical digital access to technologies and the digital skillsets to support people to develop within, and into, employment; whilst enabling local businesses to compete, innovate and thrive.

C. FUTURE PROOFING LOCALITIES & COMMUNITIES

Recognising the diversity of our large, sparse county and the variations in employment and skills challenges faced by different localities such as the Lincolnshire Coast / South Lincolnshire; this also considers the diversity of communities across Lincolnshire and the implications of employment and skills needs for groups such as BAME groups, disabled, unpaid carers, residents for whom English is a second language, or our older workers.

D. BUILDING LOCAL ASPIRATION, ENGAGEMENT & CAREERS

In this large, sparsely-populated county, this theme supports a cohesive approach to careers education, information, advice and guidance, improving education-business partnerships, raising local aspirations, and building mutually beneficial connections between our key sectors, employers and our local communities.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR LOCAL ACTION & POSITIVE OUTCOMES

STRATEGY FRAMEWORK

PRIORITIES, THEMES & OUTCOMES

I. EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL

2.A HIGHER QUALIFIED, HIGHER SKILLED LINCOLNSHIRE

3. SKILLS FOR LOCAL BUSINESS GROWTH

A. COLLABORATION / LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS ADDING VALUE

OUTCOME

Lincolnshire employment and skills progress and ambitions are underpinned by an infrastructure of collaboration and impactful social value investment

B. EMBRACING DIGITISATION

OUTCOME

- High quality connectivity achieved across Lincolnshire with high-speed broadband the norm and resident access to the tools for a 'digital world'
- Digital literacy levels in line or above the national average
- A local environment of digital confidence, investment and innovation for business and residents

C. FUTURE PROOFING LOCALITIES AND COMMUNITIES

OUTCOME

A 'levelling up' for Lincolnshire across key employment and skills performance indicators such as employment, skills levels and progression

D. BUILDING LOCAL ASPIRATION, ENGAGEMENT & CAREERS

OUTCOME

The breadth of career pathways, including locally available technical opportunities, are consistently articulated in schools and supported by local employers, FE/ learning providers and residents to raise aspiration, increase opportunity and support business and economic growth

OUTCOME

Levels of unemployment and economic inactivity are below the national average, with a fast post-covid 'recovery' in employment levels

OUTCOME

The enduring gap between local and national performance in terms of higher-level qualifications is reduced

OUTCOME

Skills gaps and hard-to-fill vacancies in locally important sectors are reduced, resulting in increased employment, productivity and economic output

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