



Cumbria Skills Advisory Panel

Local Skills Report 2022

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Foreword by Joint Chairs Janet Garner and Julie Mennell



Cumbria's £12 billion economy is unique with our strengths in agriculture/land-based industries and tourism on the one hand and in food manufacturing, clean energy/nuclear and advanced manufacturing on the other.

The Skills Advisory Panel (SAP) has brought together information and intelligence about skills successes, needs and challenges. We have worked closely with leaders from across Cumbria's economy and our education and skills system. This Local Skills Report updates the 2021 publication, reflecting the significant changes that have taken place in the last 12 months.

The following strategic imperatives have been used to develop this report:

- A declining working age population - contributing to an acute labour shortage
- A thin pool of higher-level skills, linked to below par productivity performance; and
- Local concentration of worklessness and deprivation - which are concerning but provide an opportunity to address labour shortages.

As the national and local economy has recovered from the effects of COVID, this has precipitated an unprecedented and acute labour and skills supply crisis in most parts of Cumbria's economy. Recent events have laid bare the underlying structural labour supply challenges in Cumbria that were always on the horizon.



JULIE MENNELL



JANET GARNER

The SAP developed a set of five priorities in 2021 to address the challenges that underpin the strategic imperatives. The priorities established in 2021 remain as they are still the right ones, namely:

1. Making the best use of available talent (including retaining and attracting new talent)
2. Developing and retaining higher level skills in our economy
3. Creating the future (and current) workforce and skills to meet the needs of our economy
4. Developing our future leaders and managers; and,
5. Addressing worklessness and youth unemployment.

The 1st and 5th priorities are all the more important given the scale of the labour supply challenges. The SAP set up a Labour Supply Working Group, which has developed a plan of action that complements the skills action plan set out in this report and covers a wider range of issues beyond skills including housing and transport (see Annex C).

The SAP has developed a range of actions to deliver on these priorities and provide a focus for innovative partnerships between employers and education/skills providers.

We recognise that young people are increasingly concerned about their futures, employers' skills and labour supply needs are changing rapidly, severe labour shortages have emerged in the last six months and the skills system has faced unprecedented challenges in providing support to learners as well as employers during the pandemic.

We are working together to develop an approach to skills and labour supply that responds to these immediate critical needs. At the same time, we must raise our sights to longer term opportunities driving skills needs: digitisation/ technological change; and the shift to a net zero carbon economy. The training infrastructure for our important land based industries faces a radical change in provision due to the closure of Newton Rigg in 2021.

This report builds upon the excellent work of "Restart, Reboot, Rethink - A Plan for Cumbria's Economic Recovery" prepared by the Business and Economic Response and Recovery Group of the Local Resilience Forum's and Cumbria's new Digital Strategy.

The conclusions emerging from the analysis of the skills landscape in this report are critical in driving improved productivity and growth across the economy. These are:

- Effective communication of comprehensive and relevant careers and careers pathways are essential to retaining and attracting the future workforce.
- Ensuring that skills and employment provision reflects labour market needs and the acute shortages that have emerged.
- The need to be looking to the future and the skills needs of a green, net zero economy.
- Continued development of the higher-level skills offer to ensure productivity can be enhanced across the economy.

We are particularly delighted that we have been able to draw on input from the employer-led Sector Panels set up by the LEP and a wider selection of employers in updating this skills report and its action plan. We also look forward to working with and through the trailblazer Local Skills Implementation Plan as it emerges.

Julie Mennell, Vice Chancellor, University of Cumbria, LEP Board member

Janet Garner, Head of HR, BAE Systems



CHAPTER 2 - Introduction



Cumbria matters. Our economy generates £12 billion annually, we are home to 500,000 people and attract some 47 million visits per annum. We fulfil a number of unique functions that make our polycentric economy significant nationally, namely our:

- Unique geography and Heart of the UK location
- Special environment and strategic resources
- People, business and economic assets
- Major investment opportunities.

Cumbria has a complex and unique economic geography. As the 8th largest LEP area geographically combined with a relatively low population, Cumbria overall has the lowest population density and economic output density (GVA per hectare) of any LEP area. Cumbria therefore has space to grow.

Cumbria sits at the heart of Britain – on vital cross-roads between England and Scotland, supporting critical north/south (M6/West Coast Mainline) and east/west links (A66 and A69).

Our close and historic ties to Scotland are reflected in the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal and in the daily flows of workers, shoppers and visitors between southern Scotland and north Cumbria. Carlisle acts as a sub-regional centre for a large part of the Borderlands geography (covering all of Cumbria, Northumberland and south Scotland). Cumbria is playing its full part in the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal providing strategic investment proposals related to digital infrastructure, renewable energy, place-making, better business premises, enhancing the higher education offer and knowledge exchange.

South Cumbria has strong housing and labour market links with northern parts of Lancashire – especially Lancaster – with a history of cross-border economic development activity around the Morecambe Bay area. Lancaster University is closely involved in Cumbria, working in close partnership with the University of Cumbria.

Our geography is not without its challenges, especially in relation to skills: people and businesses are dispersed across Cumbria, which means that travel to work and learn distances across different functioning economic areas are longer and more complex than in urban environments. Overall, although Cumbria is the most self-contained LEP

area in terms of travel to workflows, it does not function as one single travel to work or functional economic area. The size and typography of Cumbria means that the county has a series of overlapping labour market, economic and housing areas centred on our main towns and city. This is important in understanding skills needs and provision.



Skills Advisory Panels: the national and local context

The national context

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, including in Cumbria. Developed by Employer Representative Bodies (in Cumbria the Chamber of Commerce), LSIPs are part of a suite of reforms launched in DfE's "Skills for Jobs" White Paper that aim to put employers more firmly at the heart of the skills system. An evaluation of the eight Trailblazers will inform the national roll out 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 focussed skills teams and the national-level Skills and Productivity Board (SPB).

Local context

In Cumbria, the role of the Skills Advisory Panel (SAP) is delivered by different elements of the LEP's governance structure covering and bringing together both providers and employers (the supply and demand side of skills). The SAP consists of the People, Employment and Skills Strategy Group (PESSG) and the eight Sector Panels that provide a clear employer and business voice for our key sectors. The PESSG is the thematic arm of the Cumbria LEP Board for all employment, education, skills and careers related issues. The PESSG provides advice and recommendations to the LEP Board on future investment in skills in line with the current and future needs of the Cumbrian economy.

The SAP therefore draws together leaders from employers, schools, Colleges, Universities, independent private training providers and voluntary and community sector organisations across Cumbria.

It provides guidance and support to the skills system to tailor provision to the needs of the current and future workforce to facilitate sustainable and inclusive economic growth. It works closely with businesses to understand their employment and skills needs, also encouraging the continued upskilling of individuals to drive productivity and business growth. The SAP champions inclusive growth ensuring that nobody is left behind and effective measures to tackle worklessness are in place.

The membership of the SAP is, therefore, necessarily wide and reflects the specific geographies and distinct economies within Cumbria.

The membership of the group is as follows:



This model already places employers at the heart of the system, providing high quality intelligence and support to a skills system that has demonstrated its ability to respond. The engagement with employers has included a full consultation event in January 2022 on both the Local Skills Report and the Labour Supply Action Plan.

In addition to the involvement of employers at all stages of strategy and plan development, the Cumbria SAP model includes the voice of young people via representation from the Cumbria LEP Futures Forum. This Forum is a group of young people aged 18-35, who support the LEP in the development of its strategies and plans.

Normally the LEP's various Strategy Groups meet quarterly. However, as a result of the importance of labour and skills issues in Cumbria during 2021/22 PESSG has met monthly.

Given the importance of current labour supply issues in Cumbria, the SAP formed the Labour Supply Working Group in autumn 2021. This group has brought together employers, sector bodies and skills/ training providers to develop an action plan to address labour supply issues in a holistic way in the short, medium and longer term (included as Annex C).

Details of the progress made with this report and skills strategies can be found here:

<https://www.thecumbrialep.co.uk/skills/>

If you are interested in getting involved in developing Cumbria's skills offer please contact:

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CHAPTER 3 - Skills Strengths and Needs



The SAP has identified the skills strengths and weaknesses of the county, with the long term challenges identified previously including:

- A declining working age population and associated fall in labour supply;
- Low rates of productivity and a small pool of higher-level skills, and;
- Local concentration of worklessness and deprivation.

Prior to the pandemic, the challenge of potential future declines in the workforce in all parts of Cumbria was clear, but still some way off. As a result of changes driven by the pandemic, withdrawal of existing workers from the labour market and the

impacts of EU-Exit on migrant labour supply, these forecasted labour supply shortages became manifest in a very acute way in the second half of 2021. In essence, a long term challenge has become a here and now major issue.

Employers are currently reporting acute labour supply shortages and unfilled vacancies across most geographies and sectors¹. This is leading to increased operating costs and, in some cases, reductions in output and activity. These shortages are of course national challenges, but have been amplified in Cumbria due to the underlying extremely tight and declining labour supply locally as well as the limited size and overlap between local labour markets.

SUMMARY

STRENGTHS

The SAP has identified the following key skills strengths in Cumbria. They are as previously identified:

1. Strength of the **apprenticeship system** in the county and strong engagement by employers and take-up by young people, especially in the manufacturing and engineering sectors.
2. Particularly strong engagement with employers in vocational learning from FE/HE providers and take-up of **higher level** apprenticeships (higher and degree)
3. Good overall alignment of learning provision with the needs of the economy and the engagement of employers with schools
4. Niche skills expertise in advanced **manufacturing, nuclear and engineering** skill (Levels 4-6)

CHALLENGES AND ISSUES

The SAP has identified the following headline issues for Cumbria, which are driving action. They are a mixture of immediate skills issues and longer term challenges.

1. Urgent need to increase overall labour supply across the economy. The labour supply gap had been identified as a key future issue pre-COVID and prior to EU-Exit, but is now an acute issue facing the economy and employers. There is limited robust data on which to assess the scale of the gap (demand vs supply). However, overall labour demand is now at least as high as it was pre-pandemic, as is true across the UK. Yet, the available labour force has shrunk. The scale of the gap could be at least as high as 5,000 workers across the economy, which to put this in context equates to 1 in twenty of the economically active. Furthermore, the current population trends across Cumbria are unfavourable so without action the problem will, if anything, worsen.
2. Provide routes to meet **immediate acute skills gaps**. The overall labour supply shortage has been concentrated in particular sectors and occupations where there are the most acute current skills and labour gaps (hospitality, adult social care, health sector, logistics, manufacturing, with no one single sector standing out). Across some sectors and geographies vacancy rates are running at 20%.
3. Increase the **pool of higher level skills** developed in, attracted to and retained in Cumbria. This is both a current and a clear future need. The need relates both to the current needs of the economy but also the transformation that we wish to see in the future. It links to the need to improve productivity levels across the economy. Currently, Cumbria has a small pool and relatively low rate of the workforce qualified to NVQ Level 4 or better. (approx. 35%)

¹. The rate of unfilled vacancies is as high as 20% in some sectors and geographies - with the east /M6 corridor (Carlisle to Kendal) and the Lake District the hardest hit areas

4. Build a better **digital skills base** across the workforce. The experience of COVID has accelerated the need for digital skills across all ages and areas of the economy and life including the ability to work effectively remotely. The Digital Strategy for Cumbria highlights the need to ensure “all of Cumbria’s population have the necessary skills to allow them to actively engage with the digital agenda”.
5. Develop and enhance skills aligned to changes in the economy linked to development of **clean energy, shifts in environmental land management and application of technology**.
6. Finally, a major concern from all those involved with young people is the danger of a “lost generation” as a result of the impacts of COVID-19. As well as the direct impact on educational performance and qualifications, where Cumbria already faced a concerning performance gap between disadvantaged pupils and others, there has been a period of hybrid/remote school, a lack of work experience opportunities and of opportunities for paid employment during much of 2020 and 2021. This has impacted on the **development of softer skills**, which are important for employability.

Longer term skills needs

The longer term skills needs and challenges of the economy have, as would have/ would be expected, not changed significantly over the last 12 months. The impact of our declining working age population can be seen in several sectors and occupations where in addition employers are looking to replace over 86,000 job roles over the 10 year period 2017 to 2027 as a result of people leaving the workforce (i.e. replacement demand for retirement and other causes). Whilst every sector and occupation will require skills to be replaced, the following occupations have replacement demand rates above the average for Cumbria:

- Corporate managers and directors
- Health professionals
- Health and social care associate professionals
- Caring personal service occupations
- Teaching and educational professionals
- Business, media, and public service professionals
- Skilled agricultural and related trades
- Leisure, travel, and related personal service occupations
- Transport and mobile machine drivers and operatives.

There will also be significant replacement demand for administrative, sales and public service occupations. The previous analysis of longer term growth sectors and occupations suggests growth in the following areas (within an overall largely static employment level):

Growth Sectors	Growth Occupations
Arts and entertainment	Caring personal service occupations
Information technology	Customer service occupations
Professional services	Health & social care associate professionals
Health and social work	Corporate managers & directors
Real estate	Business, media & public service professionals

An emerging issue for the SAP is the long term sustainability and suitability of the land-based skills offer as evidenced by challenges created by the closure of the Newton Rigg campus in Penrith in 2021. Alternative provision is being developed and offered by a new set of providers including Myerscough College based in Lancashire, Ullswater Community College in Penrith and Kendal College.

These longer term skills needs reflect in essence a ‘business as usual’ scenario based on existing, established trends. As part of the COVID recovery plan for Cumbria, CLEP and partners have been considering how the shape of the economy could change in the future (see Box 1).

CUMBRIA'S RETHINK PRIORITIES

- **Clean Energy Production** – world recognised expertise, which provides the platform for significant future investment in clean energy generation, including offshore wind, new nuclear, hydrogen
- **Diversify to Thrive** – building on the pivoting that has taken place and moving it to the next level in terms of localisation of supply chains and movement into new markets
- The New **Visitor Experience** – capturing the changes in sustainable visitor behaviour by offering a world class experience to a wide range of markets
- The Future of **Food** – using technology to drive innovation and productivity in our farming sector
- Cumbria - The UK’s **Natural Capital** – promoting and exploiting the benefits created by having the most protected landscape in England. Includes investment in natural capital improvements and land management schemes
- The Way We Live, The **Way We Work** Now – benefitting from the rethink that people are making about their lives and the way that they will live and work in the future.

Source: “Restart, Reboot, Rethink – A Plan for Cumbria’s Economic Recovery”. Note: **shaded opportunities** are ones requiring most significant shift in skills supply locally

In addition to specific occupational and sector challenges, the SAP has also identified the need for enhancements to the skills offer to support the development of skills that would support every sector of the economy:

- Leadership and management, and
- Digital skills

The digital strategy for Cumbria² identifies a wide range of digital skills that are needed for the successful functioning of the economy and in order to ensure that there is an inclusive and connected society and economy (see Annex B). The SAP is also concerned about the long term implications for skills supply and progression of young people in the workplace as a result of the hiatus caused by the pandemic over the last two years, on formal education and on ability to acquire softer skills via wider experiences outside skills in the world of work etc.

Overall Workforce Change

Cumbria has seen limited growth in total population over the last 25 years (13,000 or 2.6%) and indeed the total population peaked in 2008 and has since fallen slightly. In the rest of the North West and nationally there has been much stronger population growth.

Furthermore, the population of working age (16-64) has been contracting and fell by 20,200 or 6% over the 10 years to 2020. This is the fastest rate of decline in any LEP area.

The latest official projections are for continued population stagnation with total population barely changing from the current 500,000 in 2020 to 499,000 by 2030. The projected overall population of working age (16-64) could however, fall by 5% (15,000) over the 10 years to 2030 and by 8% (23,000) over the 15 years to 2035. This is likely to be offset to some degree by increases in economic activity rates for those over 60, particularly women.

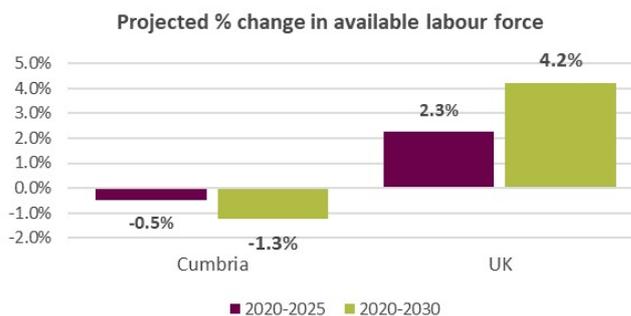
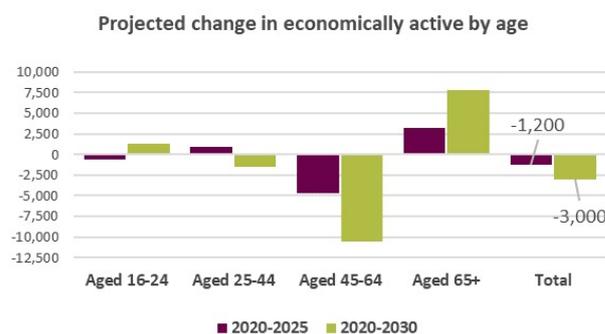
If shifts in projected national economic participation rates by age and gender are applied to Cumbria, the overall available labour force is projected to fall by over 3,000 over the next 15 years³ or a 1.3% fall compared to 4% rise nationally. Within the overall total, older workers will become a much more important share of the total workforce.

The assumed growth in economic activity rates for those over 60 in large part offsets the decline in core working age population. However, it is important to stress that these rises are not guaranteed. Indeed, recent evidence during 2021 indicates that as a result of COVID-19 there has been withdrawal of older workers from the labour market. Furthermore, the ONS projections are sensitive to assumptions

about international migration, which will have been impacted by EU-Exit.

The data on the size of the workforce for Cumbria is difficult to discern reliably from the data and has been complicated by COVID-19 and the impact of the furlough scheme. The working age population of Cumbria fell by around 3,000 between June 2019 and 2021. It is likely that the economically active population fell by considerably more than this⁴.

It is, however, clear that the economy and business performance in Cumbria has become very significantly constrained by the availability of labour. Since, May 2021 the number of payrolled employees in Cumbria has risen by around 8,000 and is now above its pre COVID peak. Yet, as noted, the economically active labour force has shrunk.



Current labour supply and skills issues

As noted earlier, there has been a marked shift in the labour market in Cumbria creating the current labour shortages. There are multiple factors explaining this:

- The speed of the bounce back in demand for labour as sectors of the economy emerged from COVID restrictions in mid-2021, especially but not exclusively the hospitality sector
- The loss in EU workers as a result of EU-Exit, who had been especially important in the east parts of Cumbria (Carlisle, Penrith and South Lakeland and in the hospitality and food sectors)
- As noted earlier, people withdrawing from the labour market as result of COVID and other issues

² "Digital Cumbria – Connected, Capable and Creative: 2021 – 2026 A Strategy for Digital Transformation". April 2021

³ Note: this is a much smaller fall than had been estimated previously (20,000 over 15 years) largely due to changes in expected longer term economic activity rates nationally and changed (reduced) projections of falls in working age population in Cumbria from ONS

⁴ A comparison of the APS data on economically active suggests this might have fallen from 236,000 (average July 2018 to June 2019) to 224,000 (average July 2020 to June 2021) or by 12,000 (5%). However, the APS data is subject to significant margins of error for Cumbria

- A general increase in mobility across sectors and occupations.

The effect of these factors and the unprecedented speed of change has led to the following responses:

- Employers seeking to raise wages and look at terms and conditions to try and recruit and retain staff, with wage rises of 10% to 20% have not been uncommon.
- Employers in some instances operating well below full capacity and struggling to meet demand as a result of staff shortages, especially in the hospitality and care sectors.

Higher Level Skills

Cumbria has by far the smallest pool of residents qualified to Level 4 or better (degree level) of any LEP area with around 100,000⁵. This is around 34% to 35% of all those aged 16-64, which is one of the lower rates in England. However, the relatively low rate coupled with Cumbria's geography and relative isolation from other areas means that the effective pool of higher-level skills is very modest overall and within each travel to work geography. This means that the labour market for higher level skills is particularly 'thin', creating an issue for employers and in attracting people to live and pursue a career in Cumbria.

The factors that explain the use and prevalence of higher-level skills, as proxied by qualifications, are largely the sector and occupational mix in Cumbria with the pattern of NVQ4 qualifications by sector closely matching that at a national level in most sectors. Exceptions are manufacturing with a higher rate locally reflecting the high level of skills in sectors such as nuclear and shipbuilding; conversely ICT, finance and professional/technical services have notably a lower proportion of

Key National Sectors

The box below summarises the current situation for each sector, together with hospitality given its importance in Cumbria.

Sector	Key skills issues
Adult social care (7,000 employees working in residential care)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Severe crisis in recruitment and retention of staff in adult social care. Strongest challenges in regulated, independent social care in particular, although also felt in health and related sectors. An issue across the county. The main shortages are at entry level for care workers, but there is also burn-out in managerial staff. • In the autumn, c. 3,000 hours of personal care a week were not being staffed across Cumbria, equates to 300 individuals with full complement of staff required c 5 times this amount to meet needs. • Workforce challenges predate both the pandemic and EU Exit, but have been exacerbated by both. • Pay levels often set externally and in line with contracts, limit flexibility meaning the sector is being out-competed by other sectors at present.

⁵. In Annex A the figure quoted is 110,000 and 38% based on the APS data for Cumbria for January to December 2020. However, there are very large margins of error around this figure so the average for the last 2 or 3 years of APS data for Cumbria would give a figure in the range 99,000 to 102,000 (34% to 35%)

graduate level qualifications locally. These are also the private knowledge-based sectors where relative productivity is lower than nationally. The proportion of higher level skills in the Cumbrian economy is partly a composition effect, given the importance of sectors with relatively low rates of people with NVQ4, such as tourism and agriculture, and also a below average rate within the private sector knowledge based service sector.

Other Strengths and Weaknesses

As noted above, Cumbria has a lower proportion of its workforce qualified to NVQ4 or higher. However, the proportion of the workforce with NVQ level 3 qualifications is higher than average, which reflects the importance of manufacturing and skilled trades in the county. Over the past decade there has been a shift towards higher skill levels among the working age population in Cumbria.

An analysis of the skills offer also indicates that the offer is broadly aligned to the needs of employers:

- A degree level offer that supports growth sectors and skills shortages within the economy
- A greater proportion of young people entering higher and degree level Apprenticeships at the end of Key Stage 5 than the national average
- Level 4+ starts in Community Learning, Apprenticeships and Education and Training for learners whose home geography is Cumbria have risen by a third
- Over 60% of Apprenticeship starts are at level 3 and 4
- The learning aims analysed align closely with the key sectors of the economy with the largest 3 sector subject areas being Engineering and Manufacturing, Health, Public Service & Care and Business Administration and Law

Sector	Key skills issues
Construction (including buildings/ retrofit), (c. 18,000 working in the sector)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong demand for skills across the sector, in part driven by current high levels of house building. The significant issue of ageing workforce and looming retirement. CITB forecasts annual recruitment requirement for the sector at 1.7% across the North West, which applied to Cumbria would be at least 300 new entrants a year – however this is likely to be higher now due to the age profile of the workforce. • Some loss of EU workers, but less significant than many other parts of UK. • Current labour shortages across all trades and also commercial roles (estimators, buyers and Quantity Surveyors).
Digital and technology (c. 3,000 in ICT sector)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is an area where historically there has been limited demand in Cumbria as result of the small size of the digital sector, in part due to the small pool of talent in the county. • The Digital Strategy envisages a significant increase in digital talent in Cumbria, both home-grown and also attracted in. This will require enhanced digital skills development in schools, colleges and the higher education sector.
Haulage and logistics (c. 7,000 employees working in road transport and further 2,000 in postal and courier)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues in Cumbria mirror national ones⁶. The longer term trend had been recruitment challenges in the sector and an older workforce pre-COVID and EU Exit. However, during 2021 the sector has seen: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased rates of retirement from an ageing workforce • Fewer semi-retired drivers coming back to the workforce to meet seasonal demand • Increased demand for drivers. • The sector has responded by increasing wage rates (typically 10% to 12% across Cumbria), this helped retention. These costs are being passed on to users of logistics and in due course to consumers. • There are shortages of qualified HGV drivers as well as transport managers, transport planners, mechanics and trainers.
Manufacturing (c. 38,000 jobs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many manufacturing firms in Cumbria are facing unprecedented levels of staff shortages, across a wide range of roles. This is reflective of the wider contraction in labour supply and strong demand. • The short term shortages are in roles such as fitters and production operatives, where there is scope for boot camps and other short term solutions to help. Longer term skills shortages and recruitment difficulties persist such as electrical engineers, mechanical engineers, production managers, which have been long standing issues in Cumbria.
Visitor economy/ hospitality (25,000 employees in accommodation and food services alone)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The hospitality sector is facing a perfect storm in recruitment and retention, especially but not exclusively in the Lake District. A recent survey (December 2021) of hoteliers, largely located in the Lake District, highlighted that on average around 20% of staff positions were unfilled. This is consistent with a survey for Cumbria Tourism, which found that 17% of posts were unfilled in August 2021. • The staff shortages are across a wide range of roles (from housekeeping, to reception to management roles, not just the widely reported shortage of chefs). • In the Lake District, the staff recruitment challenge has been exacerbated by the loss of rental accommodation used by staff to short term holiday lets (Airbnb).

⁶ Logistics UK Skills and Employment Report 2021

CHAPTER 4 - Skills Strategy



Chapter 3 of this document set out the skills strengths and needs of Cumbria as identified by the SAP. These strengths and needs have been considered by the SAP and Cumbria LEP's broader governance structure including our eight Sector Panels and other Strategy Groups.

The SAP has worked with partners to develop strategies to deliver our ambitions of growing Cumbria's talent pool and ensuring that all residents contribute by sharing prosperity and opportunity. These strategies are aligned to the challenges set out in the previous chapter, encompassing the following five priorities:

A. Nurturing, attracting and retaining talent

The decline in our future workforce needs to be addressed and the LEP's Strategy Groups are working with partners to help attract more people of working age to Cumbria. This is also part of the work programme of the **Labour Supply Working Group** set up by CLEP. The SAP has agreed to focus on the following:

- Our older residents/workers
- Our workless residents (see below)
- Provision of new/innovative paths for careers and education, and
- Young people who leave the county
- Attracting people to work in Cumbria, including those who left in the past.

Older people over 60 will become, an increasingly important part of our actual and potential workforce, given the decline in working age population. We need to develop and build on existing interventions as part of a fuller working lives strategy. There are opportunities to:

- Work with employers to encourage them to consider recruiting and training/developing older people
- Provide suitable support and training for those seeking to re-skill
- Use links into the voluntary and third sector to help recruit older workers
- Ensure that suitable flexible working opportunities are offered in all sectors
- Explore how to tap into the experience and skills of those not wishing to work full time or in paid employment.

The actions underpinning this element of the strategy need to reflect some cross-cutting themes.

- Firstly, in attracting older people into the workforce there may be a need to connect people to opportunities.
- Secondly, the provision of a range of information to highlight the opportunities for reskilling older residents and workers and the routes into these opportunities.
- Thirdly, the development of modular skills programmes to facilitate flexible delivery to this group.

B. Develop and retain higher level skills in our economy

The thin pool of higher-level skills in Cumbria is a barrier to improved productivity and progression. There are good examples of partnerships of employers and skills providers working together to extend the higher education offer to fully reflect the needs of the economy, demonstrating a shared ambition to attract and retain graduates as well as up-skilling the existing workforce. Examples include:

- University of Cumbria's Project Academy with Sellafield Ltd
- University of Cumbria's Institute of Health
- The growth in Higher and Degree Apprenticeships
- BAE Systems, Furness College and the University of Cumbria and the Barrow Learning Quarter
- Partnerships between further education providers and universities.

As the offer continues to grow there is also a need to promote the full range of HE opportunities to our young people, highlighting the range of career opportunities on offer and encouraging younger people to build rewarding careers in Cumbria.

The rates of progress into higher education vary widely and there is a need to make young people and those in the workforce better aware of the opportunities and benefits from obtaining higher levels skills and qualifications whether through full-time traditional study or alternative routes including degree apprentices etc.

The Cumbria Careers Hub's partnership with Hello Future (Cumbria's Uni Connect Programme) will promote the higher education offer to young people, reflecting the breadth of the offer and the progression routes into opportunities. The SAP will continue to support partnerships between schools, further education providers and higher education institutions to encourage more young people to access high education opportunities e.g. Hello Future.

As well as increasing higher level skills, we need also to develop a graduate retention/attraction strategy with a two-pronged approach:

- First, continue to develop long term relationships with those young people who leave to study and then work elsewhere. This needs to build on existing alumni networks of individual school and colleges and develop Cumbria ambassadors and networks in major cities in the UK, supporting projects such as the development of the Cumbrian Award⁷ implemented by Beacon Hill Community School. This activity needs to build on the work of Cumbria Future Leaders and its alumni network as well as the Dream Placement programme.
- Second, support the creation and promotion of **graduate opportunities** in our businesses and organisations to provide the glue to retain our graduates, via graduate placements and secondments, post degree.

C. Create the future (and current) workforce and skills to meet the needs of our economy

The SAP recognises the range of high-quality partnerships between employers and the skills system that deliver the skills needed by sectors across the Cumbrian economy. However, LEP Sector Panels and other partnerships have identified a range of roles where skills shortages exist, for example chefs, food and beverage staff and cross-sector skills shortages such as business and digital skills.

The SAP and partners recognise the need to ensure that young people receive messages and signals about the economy and career opportunities that reflect a changing labour market and the changing skills required to secure opportunities within this labour market.

The strategy for securing the skills needed across our workforce and building the workforce of the future includes:

- Working with our Sector Panels and partners to understand emerging and current skills needs, and supporting our high quality, responsive skills system to enhance their skills offer to meet identified demand.

- Working with land-based sector and partners to develop a sustainable model for land-based education, building upon the report Cumbria Strategy for Post 16 Land Based Education, Skills & Knowledge Transfer.
- Working with the CLEP Clean Energy Sector Panel and other bodies to identify and plan for the long term skills needed for the transition to a net zero economy, locally and nationally.
- Supporting schools, colleges and universities to enhance careers education and work experience across the county, effectively linking young people to the workforce
- Ensuring young people are equipped with the necessary soft skills to be prepared for and then progress in the world of work (building on existing initiatives⁸).
- Ensuring young people are equipped with the necessary digital and creative skills to support innovation in the future and try and offset the adverse impact of the pandemic experience on the development of these.
- Supporting the system to help address the variations and gaps in attainment and progress, which result in lost opportunities and talent .

We are faced by major 'here and now' skills and labour supply challenges that are being addressed by the Labour Supply Action Plan, but also by a host of other activity across the county.

D. Develop our future leaders and managers

There is considerable national evidence that the success of companies in improving productivity and engaging in innovative activity is in very large part due to the quality of and investment in the leadership and management of the business.

Cumbria's employers and skills system work together to develop a range of business management and leadership programmes to meet this challenge.

As the economy changes, so will the skills required of leaders and managers, with the challenge of developing digital leadership and management skills becoming ever more critical.

The SAP has worked to develop the leadership skills focused element of the Cumbria LEP Digital Strategy and has collaborated with our Sector Panels to understand their leadership and management skills needs within sector skills plans.

This work has informed the development of programmes of skills support for future leaders and managers and will continue to inform the development of the skills offer

⁷ The Cumbrian Award aims to support students in understanding about the benefits of living and working in Cumbria through exploring the local area in hope that students will share their reflections of Cumbria with other students whilst at Uni, and that they will be more likely to return.

⁸ Such as activities for young people organised by the Centre for Leadership Performance and funded by business and organisations such as Hello Future

E. Address worklessness and youth unemployment

In engaging with workless households and communities that are not fully engaged with the labour market, employers and the skills system have the opportunity to develop a workforce that has the skills required to address needs identified and bring more people into the workforce.

The challenge in this is the wide range of skills and employment support programmes that are similar, duplicate the offer and not always focused on the specific needs of the county, residents, or employers.

The SAP is committed to working with a range of partners to ensure that the offer is simplified and recognises the different needs of a very diverse cohort e.g. some people will be a long way from the labour market and will need a considerable support, whilst others will find themselves closer to the labour market and need a different support. This is particularly the case in the growth of the unemployed cohort as a result of the pandemic, and the recent increases in the group of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET).

The strategy is to develop an offer that employers can access easily and meets the needs of their business, and one, which provides access for residents at a point appropriate to their needs and facilitates progression towards the labour market.

This will require innovation and collaboration across the skills system and with employers and community partners.

Links to other plans

The skills strategy is also critical to the implementation of other LEP led strategy and plans.

Firstly, the LEP economic recovery strategy, **Restart, Reboot, Rethink** sets out the skills challenges contained within this report reframed to address the priorities emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic. This is reflected throughout this report.

Secondly, **Digital Cumbria – Connected, Capable and Creative: 2021 – 2026** sets out a strategy for digital transformation across the County. The strategy recognises that digital skills are imperative for an economy to thrive in the digital age. This spans inclusivity, so that people can access digital applications in everyday life, through to higher-end skills, so that a talented workforce can both apply existing and introduce new digital applications and techniques to business operations and drive revenue and margin in firms. (See Annex B).

The **Careers Strategy** for Cumbria was launched in 2019 and is delivering an effective support programme for schools, Colleges and providers

to achieve the Gatsby Benchmarks and develop Careers Leaders, communicating labour market information and opportunities to young people and developing a wide range of employer encounters and experience of the workplace. The Careers Hub Strategic Plan produced for the 2021/22 academic year is being implemented to ensure that young people can meet the future needs of the economy and businesses.

These strategies align with other national strategies that reflect the importance of skills as a driver of productivity, innovation, and growth.

The **Plan for Jobs** announced a range of support for employers to build the skilled workforce they need as we emerge from the pandemic and offered skills support and guidance to those seeking to return to employment. The incentives within the plan reflect the strategies we have set out above, focusing on technical training (Apprenticeships and T Levels), routes into employment and skills opportunities (Traineeships, Kickstart and Sector Work Academies) and guidance through an enhanced National Careers Service.

The **Green Jobs Taskforce** launched in November 2020 looks to ensure that we have the immediate skills needed for building back greener, such as in offshore wind and home retrofitting. It aims to develop a long-term plan that outline the skills needed to deliver a net zero economy and to support workers in high carbon transitioning sectors, like oil and gas, to retrain in new green technologies.

Cumbria's ambition is to become a net positive contributor to the UK on clean energy, decarbonising heat, power and transport through offshore wind, nuclear and hydrogen, driving clean growth to support the achievement of net zero by 2050. The SAP will work with the LEP's Clean Energy Sector Panel and other local partnerships to identify the skills and support required for this transition and to support the skills system to develop and provide a skills offer that enables employers to build the workforce of the future.

The **Further Education White Paper**, published in January 2021, sets employers at the heart of the skills system. The proposals within the paper include giving employers a role in designing skills programmes to ensure that the education and training people receive is directly linked to the skills needed for real jobs. It also aims to boost the quality and uptake of Higher Technical Qualifications that provide the skills that our employers need and will provide support to enable people to train and retrain through modular and flexible learning. The aspiration of the SAP is to secure this for skills provision at all levels, including in partnership with our higher education partners.

CHAPTER 5 - Skills Action Plan



This action plan sets out the actions agreed by the Skills Advisory Panel to address the priorities set out in Chapter 3 and the strategy set out in Chapter 4. Each of these actions aligns with one or more of the priorities and is being led by a member of the Skills Advisory Panel.

This section outlines each of the actions agreed, which of the priorities it aligns with, links to national initiatives and any changes as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The actions in summary, which have been updated in 2021 are:

Action areas for Cumbria Skills Action Plan



AA1: Place-based promotional campaign
AA2: Develop a long term relationship with Cumbria's young people
AA3: Build a curriculum for inclusive growth
AA4: Deliver the careers strategy for Cumbria
AA5: Develop a shared understanding of employer demand for and a sustainable offer of higher level skills
AA6: Develop a technical education vision and plan for Cumbria
AA7: Develop bespoke sector solutions to specific skills needs
AA8: Support the development of softer skills and life skills amongst young people
AA9: Develop an escalator model of support for unemployed residents

AA1: Place-Based Promotional Campaign



The SAP will work with partners across the LEP to deliver place-based promotional campaigns to reflect the opportunities available for rewarding careers in Cumbria, recognising the contribution young people make to the Cumbrian economy and their communities, the success of students in Cumbria and the skills and careers that can be secured in Cumbria.

The campaign will focus on young people and those in the workforce looking to locate to Cumbria and will be supported by the Cumbria Careers Hub and other agencies promoting opportunities in Cumbria.

A high priority for young people has been Cumbria Careers Hub providing a wide range of support

and guidance about the opportunities for young people to build rewarding careers in Cumbria. The aim of support is to ensure that young people understand the Cumbrian economy, the vast range of rewarding careers available across all sectors, the diverse nature of these opportunities and the routes through, which they can access these.

For adults, this high priority support has been provided through the delivery of the Jobs Fuse initiative, a programme of co-ordinated careers guidance and skills support linking National Careers Service support with skills support for unemployed programmes.

This action aligns with the following priorities:

SKILLS PRIORITY	Nurturing, attracting and retaining talent	Develop & retain higher-level skills	Create the future (and current) workforce	Develop our future leaders & managers	Address worklessness and youth unemployment
PRIORITIES ADDRESSED					

AA2: The development of a long term relationship with Cumbria's young people



The SAP has identified the development of a long term relationship with young people as a key driver in making the best use of available talent and creating our future workforce. The aim of this project is to maintain a relationship with young people in particular those who leave Cumbria, to promote opportunities in Cumbria that would enable them to build a rewarding career here.

The key aspects of the project are:

- Map the existing offer and identify gaps

- Identify the range of information and messages that could be communicated to young people and routes through, which this could be done
- Develop mechanisms to co-ordinate the production and dissemination of information
- Work with Cumbria Careers Hub to develop effective tracking of students for up to three years in line with Gatsby Benchmark expectations

This project aligns with the following priorities:

SKILLS PRIORITY	Nurturing, attracting and retaining talent	Develop & retain higher-level skills	Create the future (and current) workforce	Develop our future leaders & managers	Address worklessness and youth unemployment
PRIORITIES ADDRESSED					

AA3: Build a curriculum for inclusive growth



The SAP is committed to working with partners to build a curriculum that supports employers and learners to grow, to provide pathways into rewarding careers and employment opportunities, to provide opportunities for upskilling and re-skilling and to demonstrate the impact skills development can have on growth, productivity and progression. This will build on established partnerships between employers, schools, further and higher education providers and the voluntary and community sector. It will also build on national and regional skills interventions such as Careers Hubs, National Careers Service, Apprenticeships, Traineeships, T Levels.

The key elements of this curriculum will include:

- An effective approach to transition at key points
- A clear understanding of employer skills needs
- A technical education vision
- Building an enterprising culture
- A clear understanding of the current and future skills offers
- Demonstrate career pathways across growth sectors
- An approach to digital skills
- Meeting the needs of older workers
- Securing a consistent approach to employability skills
- An employer-led higher- skills offer.

During the COVID-19 pandemic the SAP has worked to simplify and clarify the careers education, skills and employment support for young people, employers, and individuals. This has included the development of:

- Step up Cumbria – a programme of support for young people making the transition from school to further education
- Jobs Fuse – an extension of the National Careers Service to include skills support and guidance for individuals facing unemployment and employers making changes to their workforce
- The Edge – Skills Support for Workforce support employers making changes to their workforce, enabling people to upskill and reskills
- The Link – a programme of employer engagement to link schools with the world of work and facilitate access to employer links for schools and colleges.
- The Key and Journey to work – Skills support for unemployed residents focused on progressing towards, and into employment.
- Cumbria Opportunities – an online tool bringing together careers education, job opportunities and skills opportunities
- Careers Hub support for schools and Colleges – a range of support for young people and careers leaders including virtual work experience and Hello Future
- Youth Hubs – led by DWP and local authorities, a range of local agencies, including colleges, the third sector and the Careers Hub, have established virtual hubs, which will offer face to face support for young people as guidance permits. Located in alternative venues to Job Centre Plus, Youth Hubs will be coordinated by Youth Employment Coaches. Hubs in Barrow, Carlisle and Penrith have been launched to date.

The SAP will work with employers to understand their

skills needs and priorities and work in partnership with the skills system to identify opportunities for development, innovation, growth of the offer and respond to these needs, reviewing progress. This action will be an on-going piece of work as skills needs and employment patterns across the economy are changing rapidly.

The SAP will also support partners in the development of innovative skills initiatives such as the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal, which will drive investment and innovation in rural skills and

support the development of the Citadels project, a new city centre campus for the University of Cumbria, which will expand opportunities for local students and attract new students to the area. The Borderlands Partnership aims to narrow the productivity gap, increase the working age population and deliver inclusive growth across the region.

This action aligns with the following skills priorities

SKILLS PRIORITY	Nurturing, attracting and retaining talent	Develop & retain higher-level skills	Create the future (and current) workforce	Develop our future leaders & managers	Address worklessness and youth unemployment
PRIORITIES ADDRESSED					

AA4: Deliver a Careers Strategy for Cumbria



The SAP is committed to the delivery of the careers strategy for Cumbria. The actions associated with this plan include:

- An approach to careers education for all ages – the promotion of careers opportunities is critical to addressing some of the challenges set out earlier in this report. Improving the understanding of the scope of the Cumbrian economy, the employers that flourish within this unique economy and the opportunities available, will help with retaining young people and encouraging older workers to remain in work. For adult careers education the National Careers Service provides a range of information to inform careers choices. This support has been enhanced during the COVID-19 pandemic to link this to skills support programmes and provide a service to those facing redundancy or unemployment
- A campaign promoting opportunities – this action will ensure that the work of the Careers

Hub and the National Careers Service is linked to place-based initiatives such as the LEP's Your Future/Our Future campaign promoting opportunities for young people to build rewarding careers in the county

- Effective co-ordination of experiences – young people across Cumbria benefit from a wide range of encounters with employers and experiences of the workplace, with many employers working with Careers Leaders in our schools and Colleges to provide work experience, world of work days, mock interviews and a range of other experiences. The challenge is to co-ordinate these projects and identify opportunities to secure support for all young people across the County, including young people within special schools and pupil referral units.

This action aligns to the following priorities:

SKILLS PRIORITY	Nurturing, attracting and retaining talent	Develop & retain higher-level skills	Create the future (and current) workforce	Develop our future leaders & managers	Address worklessness and youth unemployment
PRIORITIES ADDRESSED					

AA5: Develop a shared understanding of employer demand for higher level skills and develop an enhanced, sustainable offer of higher education



The SAP has brought together a range of information and intelligence on current and emerging skills needs from LEP Sector Panels and other networks. This intelligence and information supplement the analysis contained in Annex A and B in this report, which identifies the need

for higher level skills across the breadth of the Cumbrian economy.

To clarify the specific higher-level skills needs of employers the SAP will work with each Sector Panel to identify the occupations, where these skills will be required. At the same time the SAP is

working with higher level skills providers across the area to identify the precise higher-level skills offer. A mapping exercise will then be undertaken to identify gaps in the offer and plans developed to enhance the offer, where required.

In addition to sectoral and occupational level mapping, the SAP will also review the offer to ensure employer needs for higher level leadership, management, digital and enterprise skills are also met. This will have impact across all sectors of the economy.

The SAP will ensure that this activity is aligned

with the implementation of T Levels, supports the continued expansion of higher and degree level Apprenticeships and the introduction of Higher Technical Qualification.

The SAP will support the development of sustainable higher level skills provision in Cumbria that helps increase the level of engagement in higher education and access to higher level skills and qualifications across all ages, including in Barrow's Learning Quarter and at the new Carlisle Citadels campus.

This action aligns with the following skills priorities:

SKILLS PRIORITY	Nurturing, attracting and retaining talent	Develop & retain higher-level skills	Create the future (and current) workforce	Develop our future leaders & managers	Address worklessness and youth unemployment
PRIORITIES ADDRESSED					

AA6: Develop a technical education vision and plan for Cumbria



The SAP has identified the development of a technical education vision and the implementation of a plan to further develop the high quality, responsive skills system that meets the needs of employers and communities.

The aim of the technical education plan will be to bring together a range of information, guidance, and support to enable employers and potential learners to become informed consumers of technical education.

The vision will have the following objectives:

- Identify and promote provider specialisms
- Streamline access for employers
- Share good practice in flexible delivery of skills support
- Drive collaboration between employers and

providers and facilitate the translation of business skills needs into effective responses

- Provide high quality information for learners, employers, and influencers
- Support the development of high-quality pathways within the curriculum for inclusive growth, co-designed with employers
- Promote the high quality, responsive skills system across the county

As part of the work programme of the SAP the technical education plan will also support

- The aims and ambitions set out in the Careers Strategy for Cumbria
- The aims and ambitions of the escalator model of support for unemployed residents

This aligns with the following skills priorities

SKILLS PRIORITY	Nurturing, attracting and retaining talent	Develop & retain higher-level skills	Create the future (and current) workforce	Develop our future leaders & managers	Address worklessness and youth unemployment
PRIORITIES ADDRESSED					

AA7: Develop bespoke sector solutions to specific skills needs



Previously, the LEP Sector Panels had identified the development of sector focused academies as a potential solution to the delivery of skills needs. This model has been explored further and the scale of the Cumbrian economy does not lend itself well to such an approach in most sectors, although there is a possibility that a proposal may emerge for the hospitality sector.

However, the Labour Supply Working Group has identified the need for sector-led and coordinated approaches to specific skills issues around careers

information and advice, collective working by employers on issues such as transport (particularly in the visitor economy sector), meeting current skills shortages via boot camps and other similar responses.

Following on from the closure of Newton Rigg there is ongoing work to ascertain how best to ensure the continued delivery of high quality provision for the land based industries in Cumbria. This is building on the changes that have occurred and new provision developed during 2021.

AA8: Enhance the development of softer skills and life skills amongst young people



This issue has become a more specific and stronger concern as a result of the impact of the pandemic in all its aspects on young people, from primary through to higher education. It has been an area where a range of organisations, employers and schools have been active for several years in Cumbria. Soft skills as well as technical skills are important for new entrants to the labour force across a range of sector including entrants to hospitality, construction and engineering (to help them function effectively with customers, colleagues and in teams).

Clearly, schools and colleges are working on actions to make up for the lost ground in terms of formal education catch-up, supported by national funding and programmes. However, this action is supported locally by collective working of employers, skills providers, the Careers Hub and others (such as the Centre for Leadership) to focus on improving softer skills amongst young people in Cumbria to try and help make up some of the lost ground in terms of the development of these skills.

AA9: Develop an escalator model of support for unemployed residents



The SAP has supported the development of a wide range of skills support and careers guidance to assist unemployed residents in gaining employment. The programmes of support have enabled many people to secure employment. However, the range of support can often seem confusing to both learners and employers, and provision is often provided for a broad client group leading to duplication.

This action aims to secure collaboration to ensure that individuals and employers, who require support can source guidance identifying the right programme for their needs, with this guidance including the identification of next steps in the journey towards employment. This is particularly important with the recent introduction of a variety of new national initiatives, which add to the offer already in place and developed at a local level, and with significant changes in unemployment rates and cohorts across the County.

The key aspects of the project are:

- Map the existing offer and identify gaps – the range of provision offered is significant but may lead to duplication and gaps in provision for some sectors, in some geographies and for some individual needs.
- Develop an escalator model of support – each individual seeking support will require a skills solution that reflects their ambitions and their distance from the labour market. The provision should be structured and communicated in a way that reflects this.
- Maximising flexibilities in funding to support the

solutions identified above and new training initiatives such, as the Lifetime Skills Guarantee

- Communicating opportunities to older workers – utilising routes such as National Careers Service to communicate the range of opportunities available in Cumbria
- Ensuring employers are provided with a range of material that sets out the support available.
- Work with the Voluntary and Community Sector to reflect the work carried out in this critical area of skills support

During the COVID-19 pandemic the SAP has worked to implement a range of support including:

- Step up Cumbria – a programme of support for young people making the transition from school to further education
- Jobs Fuse – an extension of the National Careers Service to include skills support and guidance for individuals facing unemployment and employers making changes to their workforce
- Enhancements to the Key and Journey to Work programmes to support skills support for unemployed residents
- Supported the implementation of the Kickstart initiative
- Developed Cumbria Opportunities – an online tool bringing together careers education, job opportunities and skills opportunities
- Developing a programme of support for young people NEET to secure progression into education and employment opportunities.

This aligns with the following skills priorities:

SKILLS PRIORITY	Nurturing, attracting and retaining talent	Develop & retain higher-level skills	Create the future (and current) workforce	Develop our future leaders & managers	Address worklessness and youth unemployment
PRIORITIES ADDRESSED					

CHAPTER 6 - Assessment of Progress



Cumbria's Skills Advisory Panel (part of Cumbria LEP's People, Employment and Skills Strategy Group) is the only strategic group in the county focusing on working with employers to develop a shared understanding of skills priorities across Cumbria's unique economy and influencing the development and delivery of the skills offer to meet these needs. The People, Employment and Skills Strategy Group is the thematic arm of the Cumbria LEP Board for all employment, education, skills and careers related issues and provide advice and recommendations to the LEP Board on future investment in line with the current and future needs of the Cumbrian economy.

The SAP has worked together with partners across the LEP Governance structure to identify

the strategic imperatives for skills and brought together leaders from across the skills system to develop responses to these priorities. This has facilitated the development of skills responses focused on challenges arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. The SAP has also worked with the Cumbria Business and Economic Response and Recovery Group to develop and promote skills initiatives and incentives and address employer needs.

Drawing on the skills, knowledge, and expertise from across this partnership the group has made considerable progress in driving forward agreed skills priorities detailed previously.

A summary of progress is set out in the following table:

Intervention / Action Area	Progress
<p>AA1. Deliver a place based promotional campaign to reflect the opportunities available for rewarding careers in Cumbria, recognising the contribution young people make to the Cumbrian economy and their communities, the success of students in Cumbria, the skills and careers that can be secured in Cumbria.</p>	<p>The LEP rebooted both the Our Future (young people) and Your Future (all working age population) campaigns once the pandemic restrictions were eased in summer of 2021. These campaigns are now running, with specific spotlights on individual sectors with for example December 2021 focusing on careers in Health and Social Care to help address the current recruitment crisis.</p> <p>The case studies for the campaigns have been updated to ensure that these strongly align with the sectors currently facing the most acute demand. The supporting materials have also been refreshed for both campaigns to reflect the significant changes that have taken place in the labour market this year.</p> <p>In December 2021, direct marketing material was distributed to all Year 11 students taking them to this resource: Work experience, jobs & employment in Cumbria for young people).</p> <p>This will be followed up by an Our Future promotions Toolkit including social media guidance, imagery and a branding toolkit with be issued to schools. Alongside this, the Careers Hub will distribute Labour Market Infographic posters for Cumbria's key sectors and LMI teaching resources to all secondary schools in Cumbria to support achievement of Gatsby Benchmark 2 and in line with the Careers Hub Strategic Plan 2021/22.</p>
<p>AA2. The development of a long term relationship with Cumbria's young people to inform them of opportunities in Cumbria at every point in their learning journey as well as an approach to the communication of opportunities for older workers.</p>	<p>The Our Future campaign is designed to do this alongside the revised Careers Hub Strategic Plan, introduced for the 2021/22 academic year.</p> <p>The LEP has developed a specific Careers Hub website, which will operate as a standalone tool to be used by a wide range of users, employers and careers leads. The site is fully developed and the team is currently populating this for launch in early 2022. This website will help employers, including SMEs, to better engage with young people, enabling them to give meaningful and impactful careers guidance for their sector. The site will also include up to date LMI resources for Careers Leaders to use with young people.</p> <p>All partners involved in the work of the SAP are working collaboratively to ensure that there are effective links in place to ensure that the workforce is aware of all of the employment opportunities available. This work has been further accelerated, given the current acute staffing challenges that the economy and various sectors are facing, with a Labour Supply Working Group established to address both the 'here and now' labour issues alongside the medium to long terms skills issues. A brokerage function will be an important part of this plan.</p>

Intervention / Action Area	Progress
	<p>In addition to this, the Centre for Leadership Performance (CforLP) have invested surplus revenue to create Cumbria Future Leaders (CFL), which brings together the various youth boards, youth groups and young professional networks and link them with employers and business leaders, build networks and continue to develop their leadership skills. Cumbria Future Leaders is for every young person in Cumbria - focusing on that critical period between 16 and 25. It is their community and the chance to get their voice heard on issues that matter most to them.</p> <p>The network is led by a steering group, made up of representatives from youth groups, youth boards and young professional institutes. Over the last 18 months they have shaped the direction and activities of CFL ensuring that it meets the needs of the young people it serves. There is now a 16-18yr sub-group, recognising the specific needs of this age group.</p> <p>Initial funding secured from Sellafield Ltd has enabled CFL to establish Your Future. Here (YFH) a central hub providing advice, guidance, access to opportunities and experiences for young people in Cumbria seeking jobs and careers across the whole of the county's hugely diverse employment landscape.</p> <p>YFH enables greater connection between businesses and young people, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees can volunteer to take part in career and leadership insights events to share their experiences • Employers can signpost their apprentices and graduates to this service to build networks with peers and continue their own development and feel connected to their local communities • Organising mentoring for young people to build confidence, develop skills and promote an awareness of the workplace • Sponsor and Host events or programmes to increase visibility with young people • Employers can share information and opportunities via our website (plug-in place) and newsletters • Opportunities to consult with young people and gain their opinion and perspective • Early career development programmes for graduates, interns and apprentices • Develop your existing workforce, including confidence, coaching and mentoring.
<p>AA3: Build a curriculum for inclusive growth that builds on strengths across the skills system. This should include:</p> <p>a) An effective approach to transition at key points</p> <p>b) A clear understanding of employer skills needs</p> <p>c) A technical education vision</p> <p>d) Building an enterprising culture</p> <p>e) A clear understanding of the current and future skills offers</p> <p>f) Demonstrate career pathways across growth sectors</p> <p>g) An approach to digital skills</p> <p>h) Meeting the needs of older workers</p> <p>i) Securing a consistent approach to employability skills</p> <p>j) An employer led higher skills offer.</p>	<p>Following a successful application outcome to the Skills Accelerator prospectus, the Strategic Development Fund (SDF) consortium has begun its detailed planning for the projects within the College Business Centre model. Led by Lakes College, a Steering Group consisting of the four FE Colleges, the University of Cumbria, the LEP and the Chamber of Commerce. Operational leads are in place at the four colleges and university. The proposal consisted of five projects - Apprenticeship Hub, Solutions for Business, Digital Hubs, Entrepreneurs in Residence and Curriculum Design Office, with agreement that the Apprenticeship Hub and Digital Hubs workstreams would be prioritised, with a letter of intent issued in October for £379k in relation to the Apprenticeship Hub, and capital funding of £730k to create the Digital Hubs.</p> <p>Three DWP Youth Hubs are now operational in Cumbria, at Barrow, Carlisle and Penrith. An event took place at Carlisle College to formally launch operations on 8 October 2021, attended by John Stevenson MP and Cllr Elizabeth Mallinson, who provided key note addresses. Young jobseekers will be able to take advantage of services in situ at alternative venues to JCPs, with Youth Employability Coaches from Jobcentre Plus providing tailored support to find work or reskill for alternative careers. Planning for the Carlisle Skills Fair has begun and the event will take place on 27 January 2022, hosted at the College.</p> <p>The second stage application for the Institute of Technology for Cumbria was submitted by Furness College in mid-June 2021. This proposal, which focused on developing high level technical training in Health, Manufacturing Engineering and Digital was unfortunately unsuccessful. The partnership is focusing on how the proposed outcomes can be achieved by alternative mechanisms.</p> <p>An application was submitted to the Community Renewal Fund (CRF) in June for a collaborative skills pilot, led by Lakes College. The proposal was endorsed and selected by Cumbria County Council, before moving to review by the Minister. The revenue funding requested was for £500K, to support various partners to deliver targeted investment in skills via kickstart, apprenticeships, the National Skill Fund interventions and T-Levels. Unfortunately, this application was unsuccessful, but partners are exploring how the 'triage' function proposed by the CRF application can be effectively delivered.</p> <p>During July and August, the four Cumbrian Colleges and a range of schools across the county re-launched the renamed Step Up Cumbria, the online vocational and technical skill portal, seeking to provide IAG and taster modules in a variety of technical pathways year 10 and 11 students. The site very quickly gained traction initially attracting 687 users, of which 147 then returned and 87 went on to register as users. The most popular pathways were construction, business / ICT and hairdressing.</p>

Intervention / Action Area	Progress
<p>AA4: Deliver the Careers Strategy for Cumbria including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) delivering a careers system that has a measurable impact on young people - now and in the future b) ensuring all young people have access to careers education - working to remove barriers c) building and sustaining leaders and institutions who can help every young person find their best next step d) Careers education as part of economic recovery promoting all opportunities e) Helping employers build long term sustainable, mutually beneficial partnerships with schools and colleges 	<p>Following additional funding from the Careers and Enterprise Company and Cumbria LEP, the Careers Hub was able to go to full coverage of all relevant institutions in Cumbria in Autumn 2021. It now supports 52 institutions including secondary mainstream, special schools and Colleges continuing to provide guidance and information to develop their careers education practice. The careers strategy is being refreshed to ensure that this reflects the priorities of the Careers and Enterprise Company and local needs.</p> <p>Good progress has been made against each of the benchmarks for high quality careers education (Gatsby benchmarks) with Cumbria amongst the best performing Careers Hubs for encounters with employers and experiences of the workplace. Significant progress has also been made against benchmarks for the stability of careers education programmes, learning from labour market intelligence, linking curriculum learning to careers, encounters with further and higher education and personal guidance.</p> <p>The Link project, delivered by Inspira, continues to provide numerous employer encounters on behalf of CLEP and the Careers Hub, ensuring high-quality work experience and employer encounters for young people, including virtual encounters.</p> <p>A successful virtual Careers fair took place on 20 October 2021, which was an excellent showcase on how the partnership works effectively together.</p> <p>The National Careers Service (18+) continues to provide good coverage across Cumbria, with significant take up in the 18–25 age range and conversations to employment outcomes at the highest level.</p>
<p>AA5: Develop (a) a shared understanding of employer demand for higher level skills and (b) a sustainable offer of higher-level skills:</p>	<p>The scope of this work is focused on Higher Level Skills at Level 3 and above, and includes professional qualifications. Progress has been made in establishing the demand for higher level skills by undertaking consultation activity with each of the LEP's Sector Panels to identify specific requirements and how this fits with their existing skills and learning activity. Feedback identified that employers are looking for far greater flexibility in skills availability and a higher degree of bespoke provision that meets their specific requirements.</p> <p>This work has now been subsumed into the Labour Supply Working Group, which consists of both the supply side (FE, Universities, DWP, private providers etc) alongside the demand side (Sector Panels and businesses), who are working to address both the here and now labour supply issues and the longer term skills pipeline issues. A consultation event took place on 10 January 2022 to explore the proposed priorities.</p> <p>In November 2021 funding for the proposed new Higher Education campus in Carlisle for the University of Cumbria was confirmed. This £70 million project, due to open in the academic year 2026/27 will provide enhanced HE provision for students and employers for Cumbria and the wider Borderlands region.</p> <p>The Government's Town Deal has provided funding for the new Barrow's Learning Quarter. This will feature a new University of Cumbria campus on Barrow Island offering a programme of higher education as well as the transformation of Furness College's sixth form facilities.</p>
<p>AA6: Develop a technical education vision and plan for Cumbria</p>	<p>The development of this vision was in part linked to the bid for an Institute of Technology in Cumbria, which was ultimately unsuccessful. However, the successful bid into the Skills Accelerator has provided the focus for the development of the vision and plan, which link closely to three of the five strands in the SDF work (the Apprenticeship Hub, Solutions for Business and the Enterprise and Entrepreneur Hub).</p> <p>Through the work in taking forward these strands the SDF consortium, with the SAP, will help refine the vision and develop an action plan over the coming year. This will cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Development of high quality routeways - particularly Higher Technical Quals (HTQs) and Degree Apprenticeship routes b) Improving work readiness – here the challenge has increased in the context of COVID-19 disruption to Key Stage 4 and 5 over past 2 years particularly work experience and placement and apprenticeships c) Anticipating skills demand changes – linked to the LSIP d) Providing information for learners and influencers – linked to the Career Hub element

Intervention / Action Area	Progress
	<p>e) Providing engagement with employers at all stages of learning and securing on-going collaboration between employers and the skills system – covered within the 5 themes being piloted via SDF and to include a programmes design phase</p> <p>f) Recognise skills and knowledge obtained outside the classroom - all funded FE providers design and deliver this, and Ofsted assess FE providers' success in developing these skills within two separate graded judgements (Behaviours and Personal Development)</p> <p>h) Enabling employers to become expert customers of the skills system</p> <p>i) Defining delivery methods that will encourage employer participation</p>
<p>AA7: Develop bespoke sector solutions to specific skills needs</p>	<p>The Visitor Economy Sector Panel has been currently scoping out its requirements and expectations of an academy-type facility. The sector is also working on practical solution to transportation issues and shift patterns to increase access to jobs, as well as looking to develop a more co-ordinated approach to explaining career paths to young people.</p> <p>Elsewhere as part of the Labour Supply Working Group, sectors are developing bespoke solution to current labour supply problems (e.g. from logistics to advanced manufacturing). These include access to and support for the local delivery of national bootcamp schemes and the development and engagement with locally developed boot camp style solutions, such as for the ElecTech electronics cluster in south Cumbria/North Lancashire.</p>
<p>AA8: Enhance the development of softer skills and life skills amongst young people</p>	<p>This is a new area for focus and the SAP will develop an action plan aimed at joining up and enhancing the offer for young people.</p>
<p>AA9: Develop an escalator model of support for unemployed residents.</p> <p>Ensure that flexibilities in skills funding are fully influenced by the LEP, understood by employers, and utilised by providers to meet identified needs</p>	<p>Cumbria County Council has continued to operate the Adult Learning Employability Programme, which has run for the last 10 years and is funded through the ESFA's Adult Education Budget. Working in partnership with DWP, Area Partnerships, Refugee Groups and other agencies the programme delivers a wide range of courses to support individuals into employment.</p> <p>Specific programmes are being developed in Copeland and Barrow to deliver 1 to 1 support to unemployed individuals with the view to progress them onto other provision with Cumbria Coounty Council or through partner organisations. There is also a plan to deliver a similar programme in Eden.</p> <p>An additional programme is also in place to support individuals looking to improve general or basic skills. This supplements the employability programme but also supports individuals in employment, who are looking to progress.</p> <p>Accredited and non-accredited provision supporting employed and unemployed individuals to improve their English, with bespoke ESOL provision, is available in all areas of Cumbria. Funding has been secured from the Settlement Team to support this work.</p> <p>In order to support individuals to gain expertise in using digital hardware and software, a programme is being developed for employers to improve skills in the workplace. These courses are accredited and non-accredited.</p> <p>Courses in improving Maths and English skills remain available with learners able to access standalone courses or follow a progression escalator from non-accredited improver courses to functional skills and GCSE.</p> <p>DWP has continued to actively promote all programmes available through the Plans for Jobs and to ensure that the business community is aware of what each of these can offer.</p> <p>Youth Hubs have opened in Penrith, Carlisle and Barrow with matching support from local partners.</p> <p>The SAP sees the LSIP as an opportunity to influence the skills system and the way in which this operates, given that the LSIP specifically requests suggestions on this. The Chamber of Commerce has confirmed that this will be addressed in the LSIP.</p> <p>As new major infrastructure projects are progressed, including the Carlisle Southern Link Road, the A66 dualling and, potentially, new nuclear facilities, there is an opportunity to build and develop the escalator model to access the labour and skills opportunities from these projects to the benefit of Cumbria's residents.</p>

CHAPTER 7 - Case Studies



As outlined in the previous sections of this report Cumbria has many examples of employers and the skills system working together to develop the workforce, provide skills and employment opportunities and support young people in identifying and securing the skills they need to develop rewarding careers.

The examples contained in this section highlight effective collaboration and impact and demonstrate the range of skills support available to employers and individuals across Cumbria.

The case studies set out in this report are:

No	Case Study	Skills Priority				
		Nurturing, attracting and retaining talent	Develop & retain higher-level skills	Create the future (and current) workforce	Develop our future leaders & managers	Address worklessness and youth unemployment
1	Our Future Virtual Careers Fair					
2	Centre for Digital Transformation					
3	Hospitality sector labour supply					
4	Primary Business Partnership					
5	Health skills					
6	Supply chain skills					

Case Study 1: Our Future Virtual Careers Fair



During the pandemic most of the year 11 students in Cumbria missed out on the opportunity to engage directly with a variety of apprenticeship providers, FE & HE provision and employers from various sectors in the county. We were determined not to see this happen again in 2021 and partners made the decision to host a virtual careers fair, which would go ahead regardless of the COVID situation. The Our Future Virtual Careers Fair was organised by Inspira in partnership with Cumbria Careers Hub and Hello Future. After extensive research into the various platforms available, a provider called UK Careers Fair was chosen as this platform had been specifically designed to mirror in-person events, with both attendees and exhibitors in-mind.

The **Our Future Virtual Careers Fair** took place on **Wednesday 20 October**. It was predominantly

aimed at Year 11 students (although there were attendees from other year groups) to help them make informed choices about their future careers and their next steps. It gave them the exciting opportunity to meet employers, training providers, colleges, sixth forms and Cumbria HE providers all in one place. The event was hosted between the hours of 1.30-6.30pm specifically to ensure maximum student participation either whilst at school or at home with parents/carers; we were delighted that over 2,000 students, parents and teacher with school groups could join us.

Attendees had the chance to meet over **85 exhibitors** and the opportunity to network through live or video chat, discuss opportunities and attend live talks.

The Careers Fair had five main zones: apprenticeship and training providers, HE & FE provision, Sixth Forms, employers, and a careers area where young people and their parents/carers could access impartial careers information, advice and guidance. There was also a jobs board advertising the latest apprenticeship and training opportunities, and an activity resource

area filled with downloadable information about employability, skills, and top tips.

The attendees had the opportunity to attend three live talks:

- **Our Future Career Opportunities in Cumbria** (hosted by Enterprise Co-ordinator at Cumbria Careers Hub)
- **Your options after year 11** (hosted by Inspira)
- **How to stand out from the crowd** (hosted by Inspira – with guest speakers; MD at Story Contracting, Director at MT Associates and County Youth Commissioner at Cumbria Scouts).

Engagement and promotion:

The design of the event used a working group, which included school representatives from around the county. This ensured the delivery of a successful, engaging, and meaningful event, which would be highly attended.

The event was promoted to pupils and their parents/carers directly through schools by a mix of assemblies, videos and emails, which highlighted the importance of attending and how to use the platform. Inspira and its partners also externally promoted the event via social media, online advertising, website advertising and PR.

Conclusion and outcomes:

The virtual event was a success attracting over 2,000 participants. It is hard to think of any other event (live or virtual) that has had the ability to facilitate communication between Year 11 students with employers, providers and FE/HE provision from all corners of Cumbria in one place. The three live talks were extremely popular, attracting over 640 viewers in total on the day.

Feedback from the day confirmed that the event was well received and a popular way for students and parents alike to talk with participating organisations and to be able to get excellent careers advice and information.

Attendees:	Over 2000
No of exhibitors:	86
Most popular live talk:	Post 16 options
Number of schools participating:	41
Feedback:	85% of participants enjoyed the event 72% of participants say they now have enough info to plan their next steps

Case Study 2: Centre for Digital Transformation (CDT), University of Cumbria



The University of Cumbria is developing a new, state of the art campus in Carlisle with support from £50 million of Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal funding. This provides an opportunity to extend and develop education provision to support the development of digital skills across Cumbria, which has been identified as a key challenge and need.

The Centre for Digital Transformation (CDT) will eventually be based at the Citadels campus in Carlisle. Its location within Citadels will create a centre of expertise and focus for digital enhancement and innovation at the heart of the campus, enabling flexible, interactive and multimode approaches to and ways of taking up higher education. Staff are currently being recruited with the aim to launch activity (new training modules, course and programmes) during 2023.

The CDT aims to stimulate digital innovation across society and the economy via development of digital capability in University of Cumbria graduates, as well as businesses, employees, and communities. The CDT will:

- Develop a new work-based portfolio of employer-led and employee-responsive programmes for the workplace and workforce
- Create an on-campus portfolio and learning offer that is informed, driven and delivered by digital knowledge and technology, particularly via new programme development
- Enhance the digital capabilities of businesses and employees, as well as communities and residents across the Borderlands and Cumbria. These activities will build on and help Cumbria deliver its digital strategy
- Create digitally capable graduates that are prepared for employment.

The CDT will focus on three key strands - digital **higher education**, digital **growth** and digital **inclusion**.

Digital Higher Education: the Centre will work with the University's Academic Institutes to develop a portfolio of new digital programmes and to refresh the existing portfolio to enhance its digital aspects. The CDT will also engage with students to develop their digital capabilities. This will include:

- (i) Preparing University of Cumbria graduates for a digital world after university.

(ii) Subject-specific digital capability will be developed that will be used in the primary professions associated with their subject.

(iii) Developing students' overall digital skills.

Digital growth: the Centre will support businesses to upgrade and enhance business digital capability through: (1) the creation and operation of a Digital Transformation Programme for business (digitally enabled businesses); and (2) development of a digital development portfolio for employees in businesses (digitally capable people). These will cover a range of areas including: data science and big data; cyber security and secure data management; AI and digital applications; and virtual and augmented reality and simulation technologies

Digital inclusion: the Centre will design and deliver digital development and support programmes and other interventions to individuals and communities that are facing some form of digital exclusion or wanting to become more digitally enabled. This will be an outreach service to residents and communities.

The Centre will provide personal training workshops and interventions that will initially build awareness and then over time allow individuals to build increasing levels of understanding and expertise in digital. The programmes will therefore operate as a ladder towards expertise in digital and related data sciences.



Case Study 3: Visitor economy skills supply

As part of the work being led by the Labour Supply Skills Working Group across Cumbria, the visitor economy has focused on a number of actions that collaboratively and collectively could help address some of the acute and chronic skills shortages in the County and especially the Lake District.

There are multiple strands to this collective work, which is being coordinated by CLEP and Cumbria Tourism (CT) and includes:

- Working with employers to engage them in using recruitment support to tourism businesses. Inspira can work with individual businesses to tailor a training programme and promote it to those who are seeking employment. If the individual passes the training programme the business must offer them an interview. This is the practical delivery of the national Kickstart programme.

- Cumbria Tourism have led on a marketing approach to prompting tourism jobs and careers in Cumbria and it as a place to live. As part of #theperfectplacetobe campaign, Cumbria Tourism had already been promoting the county as "the perfect place" not only to visit, but also as a more permanent base to build a life and career. In 2022 a new campaign was launched focused on three main groups: (a) 16-18 year olds (school leavers, college leavers and gap year students); (b) visitors from out of county looking for long-term lifestyle changes; and other local audiences including the semi-retired and (c) residents living in more urban areas who may not have considered jobs in the Lakes.
- Key activity included a range of digital and social media content, alongside a series of free webinars for businesses, media relations and high-level lobbying to bring wider attention to the issue. A 'toolkit' for businesses was developed including practical advice and marketing materials to help them actively support the campaign and, in turn, increase the number of people choosing the Lake District, Cumbria as #theperfectplacetowork.
- This is being honed into a specific focus on promoting jobs and careers opportunities in the tourism sector in those main concentrations of worklessness in Cumbria (especially Barrow). A Jobs Fair was arranged by Cumbria Tourism and the Federation of Small Businesses in Barrow in September 2021 alongside partners from Local IQ, Job Centre Plus and Inspira. The jobs fair had 25 stands showcasing opportunities in the tourism sector in Cumbria.
- Developing collective approaches to transport challenges in the sector by gathering intelligence on transport and staffing issues and then working with transport operators and employers on solutions.
- As part of the efforts to promote jobs and careers in the sector the Lake District Hotels Association members are working together to fund to employ an ambassador-style post to change the perception and increase awareness of the opportunities of working in the hospitality industry. The post will work with Cumbria Careers Hub, Inspira for Life and the secondary schools/colleges in Cumbria. They will also work with DWP and other partners. The main focus will be to: (a) go into schools to talk to students; and (b) explore the opportunity to set up an LDHA branded apprenticeship programme, work experience opportunities etc.



Case Study 4: Primary Business Partnership

Programme details & aims

Primary Business Partnership is a free brokerage and sign posting service in West Cumbria, which connects primary schools and businesses to support career-related learning in the classroom. It coordinates all the great work taking place in a single go-to 'plug-in place' and ultimately helps schools and businesses to forge stronger and more collaborative links.

Volunteers from local businesses, secondary schools, colleges, and communities support the needs of the schools and inspire young people to Dream Big about their future and link learning to real work examples. The Centre for Leadership Performance (CforLP) delivers facilitated sessions in local primary schools designed to meet their needs. We work with local businesses to facilitate conversations between teachers and pupils to develop their activities within schools, ensuring that it fits with curricula and is relevant and impactful.

CforLP also runs development sessions and fully facilitated workshops, which enable employers and volunteers to develop their skills and remove barriers to engagement.

The Ambition

The programme aims to help each school create effective and mutually beneficial school-business partnerships. It aims to raise the aspirations of children and young people and give them new, enriching and stimulating experiences. Career-related learning in primary schools helps young people understand why they are learning and what they are working towards. By giving learning purpose and goals, young people can make the connection between what they do in school and how that prepares them for later in life. This links to the theme of making best use of available talent in Cumbria.

There are 400 business volunteers waiting to help schools in different ways including aspiration workshops, CPD, site visits, face to face sessions with children. :

Outcomes to date

In the last 2 years of the programme it has:

- Delivered activities to over 7,350 children
- Worked with 325 volunteers
- Delivered workshops from 62 businesses

"Evidence suggests that career - related learning in primary schools has the potential to help broaden children's horizons and aspirations, especially (though not exclusively) those most disadvantaged. Schools are encouraged to develop policies, curriculum and practices that best suit their local circumstances, and give impetus to building strong local partnerships."

Education and Employers Research, 2019, What works? Career related learning in primary schools
To learn more visit www.primarybusinesspartnership.org.uk

Case Study 5: Designing and delivering new training and education for the health sector in Cumbria



The University of Cumbria's Institute of Health is a major provider of much needed key practitioners to the health and social care sector across Cumbria. These include nurses, midwives, physiotherapists, radiographers, occupational therapists, paramedics and social workers to name a few. As a direct response to the growing need for midwives across Cumbria, the Institute of Health worked with local NHS Trust's across the region to establish the workforce requirements for the medium to longer term and worked at pace to implement a plan, which not only provided much needed midwives but also developed new programmes that resulted in different entry points to a range of programmes to inspire aspirations amongst individuals, who would otherwise never have considered midwifery as a career.

Built on extensive partnership working with the NHS this resulted in a new 3-year degree programme, the introduction of a midwifery degree apprenticeship as well as a Masters in midwifery programme, attracting a range of students from diverse backgrounds and providing them with an entry point to a professional career in midwifery. Student numbers doubled between 2019 – 2021 and the university invested in both academic resource and a new state of the art midwifery suite, in addition to the sim lab and provided contemporary clinical skills using high tech simulation manikins and equipment. This has enabled the university to provide hospital and community based clinical learning scenarios that enhance the students learning and application to real life in the NHS.

Finally, on the basis of solid partnership working, the university has developed student led virtual midwifery antenatal classes for women in the local communities, which are supervised by a midwifery lecturer, as well as currently working towards the UNICEF Baby Friendly Initiative accreditation. As one of the first universities in the North West region to implement the national midwifery practice assessment document as an electronic version on PARE: Midwifery On-going Record of Achievement (MORA) and our BSc (Hons) Midwifery programme Leader is leading on a sub-regional North West MORA group to share our experiences of using this. Higher education has a pivotal role to play in working with partners across the region, responding to workforce needs and developing creative and wide-ranging opportunities to attract a diverse range of individuals into much needed elements of the local workforce.



Case Study 6: Co-creating a new degree in Supply Chain and Logistics with BAE Systems (Submarines) and the University of Cumbria.

A new University of Cumbria degree level programme in Supply Chain and Logistics has been developed in partnership with BAE Systems (Submarines), creating a genuine industry-academia collaborative approach. In late Autumn 2020 a series of workshops with BAE Systems and the University of Cumbria explored synergies between the two organisations. This resulted in a programme designed to bring academic rigour to support the future direction of supply chain management in the sector and to provide wider access to advanced skills for suppliers of all sizes, by offering a set of professional pathways for students in a highly employable field.

From the University, the Institute of Business, Industry and Leadership brought leadership, project management and supply chain knowledge, including learning from working with other employers on programmes such as the Project Academy with Sellafield Ltd. BAE brought a strategic vision and extensive subject matter expertise.

BAE subject matter experts led the academic team through operational processes, such as a warehouse tour. These interactions formed an ongoing dialogue where specific challenges became clearer and academic staff could test the relevance of theory to the needs of the business. The result was a programme based on helping learners develop the skills and knowledge to enquire, research and develop in their own specific area of this vast subject, based on a broad, high level, foundation of generic supply chain theory and practice. It shows the potential for industry to utilise the programme to upskill the existing workforce in order to exploit new and emerging technologies.

Accessibility was a critical success factor to enable learners from a wide range of academic and industrial backgrounds to participate effectively. The programme is modular, with a ladder of achievement from a basic University Certificate through to the BSc (Hons) via a series of progressive awards, thereby reducing the perceived risk of embarking on a multi-year programme with only a single outcome. The first module is an introduction to Higher Education, and this is supported by the development of a cadre of coaches and mentors to support learning in the workplace. Each module has been scheduled to enable a balance between work and study.

Today's supply chain leadership needs to have the capability to learn from experience then to design and deliver strategic change, all within the operational and legislative constraints of a highly regulated industrial sector. The process of co-design allows for an opportunity develop more suitable and bespoke learning interventions that meet the current and future needs of business. This programme is a new resource for businesses across Cumbria to provide an accessible and rigorous professional development route for their people. It will help drive effectiveness in supply chain management and enable opportunities for growth and exports

CHAPTER 8 - Looking Forward



The previous sections of this report outline the challenges facing employment and skills in Cumbria, demonstrates the strengths that Cumbria has across its unique economy, and the breadth of employer engagement with our high-quality, responsive skills system where they are at the heart of innovation in skills support and delivery.

The report also demonstrates that the skills priorities identified prior to the pandemic are still relevant, albeit with a change in focus and with increased emphasis on addressing the current acute skills and labour supply issues.

It is with this in mind that this section of the report looks forward and draws together the various strengths, challenges and opportunities that exist for skills development across the county.

Firstly, there is a clear need to simplify the skills system to enable employers and individuals as users of the skills system to efficiently access the support they need when they need it. The development of the technical education vision and the on-going development of Cumbria Opportunities, aligned with effective promotion of the skills offer will enable employers, young people, those in work and unemployed residents to become informed consumers of skills support. The SAP will work with employers and through the LSIP to understand their challenges and work with the skills system to simplify what can often be a complicated skills offer. The work on the technical education vision and plan being progressed through the SDF partnership will focus effort on that very important area of skills for Cumbria.

The continued drive to enhance careers education will enable young people to understand the world of work, the Cumbrian economy, and the opportunities for rewarding careers across the county. Cumbria Careers Hub has continued to support schools and Colleges in the development of careers education practice and innovative projects, some receiving national recognition – it has recently moved to ensure comprehensive coverage across the county. The LEP's Sector Panels are clear that further involvement in careers education is critical to developing the future workforce of the future. The SAP will continue to engage with employers, schools, and Colleges to secure the high-quality careers support young people, and that employers have identified as priority.

In discussions with employer partners and the SAP the challenge of flexible skills delivery has emerged. At a time when employers are facing challenges relating to the pandemic the need for increasingly flexible methods of delivery from our skills system is increasing. The innovation developed during the pandemic in supporting skills delivery to employers and individuals can be built upon to continue upskilling and reskilling the economy will require and as set out in Restart, Reboot and Rethink. The SAP will continue to work with our employers to identify the methods of support they need and share these with the skills system to facilitate the on-going innovation in skills delivery.

The higher-level skills offer has continued to grow with the increase in degree level Apprenticeships and the development of the Barrow Learning Quarter as examples of this. The SAP supports the development of the Citadels project, a new city centre campus for the University of Cumbria, which will expand opportunities for local students and attract new students to the area (due to open in 2026). As these developments continue we will look to our employer partners to continue to identify the specific higher level skills that they need to enable their businesses to grow and prosper, which will enable the SAP to support proposals for the on-going enhancement of the offer. This will be aligned to the SAP's on-going review of the skills offer and work with Sector Panels to ensure the skills offer meets needs.

As the effects of the pandemic on employment become clearer the need for a co-ordinated approach to skills support and careers guidance for unemployed residents is critical. There are many programmes of support available, each offering a mix of skills delivery and guidance and targeted broadly at the same cohort. The SAP will work with partners to secure effective targeting and the development of an approach that recognises the distance the individual is from the labour market and the rapid changes in the skills needed to secure employment, working with the national schemes such as Kickstart and Restart, where that is possible.

Finally, the acute labour shortages that have emerged require an urgent and dynamic response. The SAP fully supports and is involved in the work of the Labour Supply Working Group and associated Action Plan, which takes a holistic approach to addressing Cumbria's labour challenges.

Local Skills Report

Annexes – January 2022 Update

Annex A: Core Indicators



Introduction

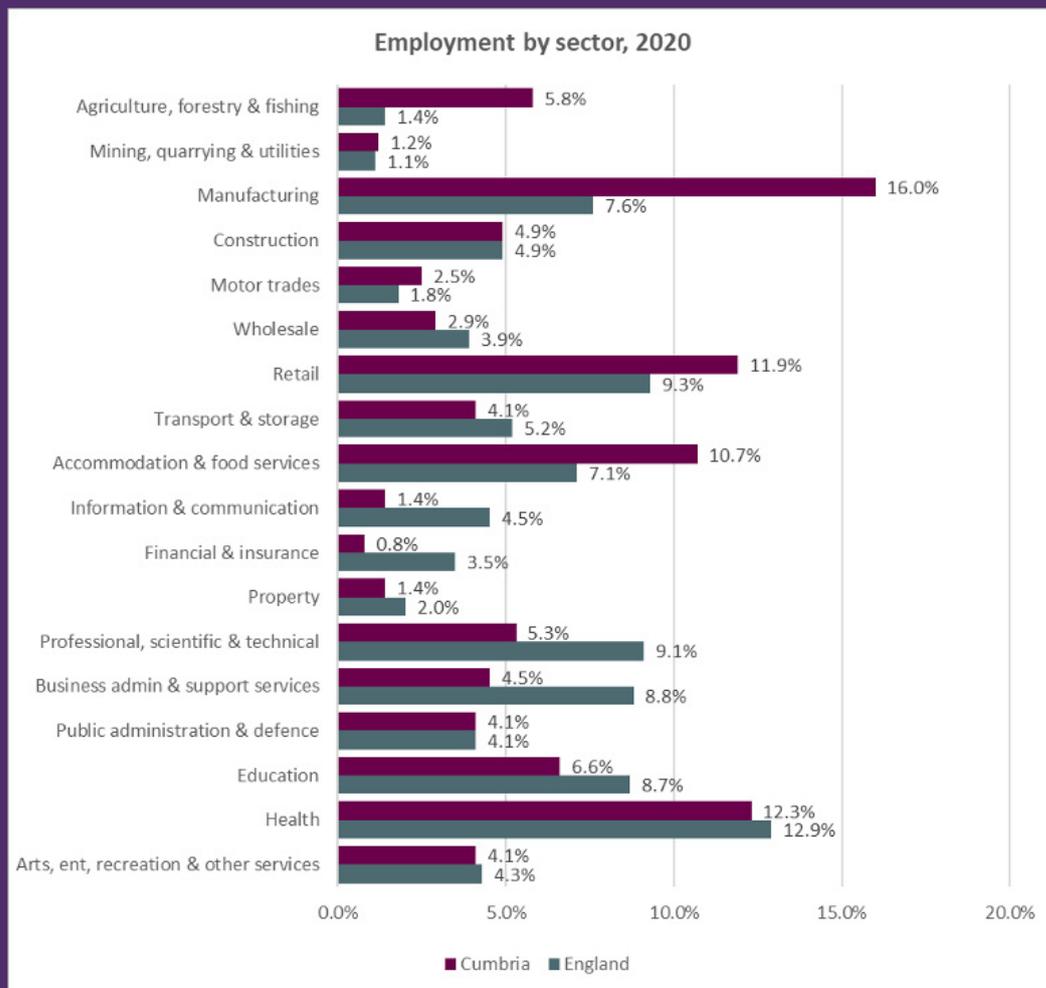
The core indicators in Annex A and the additional analysis in Annex B act as an insight into the key aspects of Cumbria's labour market. The core indicators in Annex A have been selected by DfE to cover aspects of the labour market and skills landscape, which are likely to be relevant across all areas. This means that consistent data and analysis is available for all areas, which will help those looking across reports from different areas to understand the national picture.

In addition to the core indicators, additional indicators using locally sourced data and intelligence is contained in Annex B. Interpretation and narrative has been provided by local analysts and the Cumbria People Employment and Skills Strategy Group (PESSG), which acts as the Skills Advisory Panel (SAP) in Cumbria.

LOCAL LANDSCAPE

Local Landscape - Summary

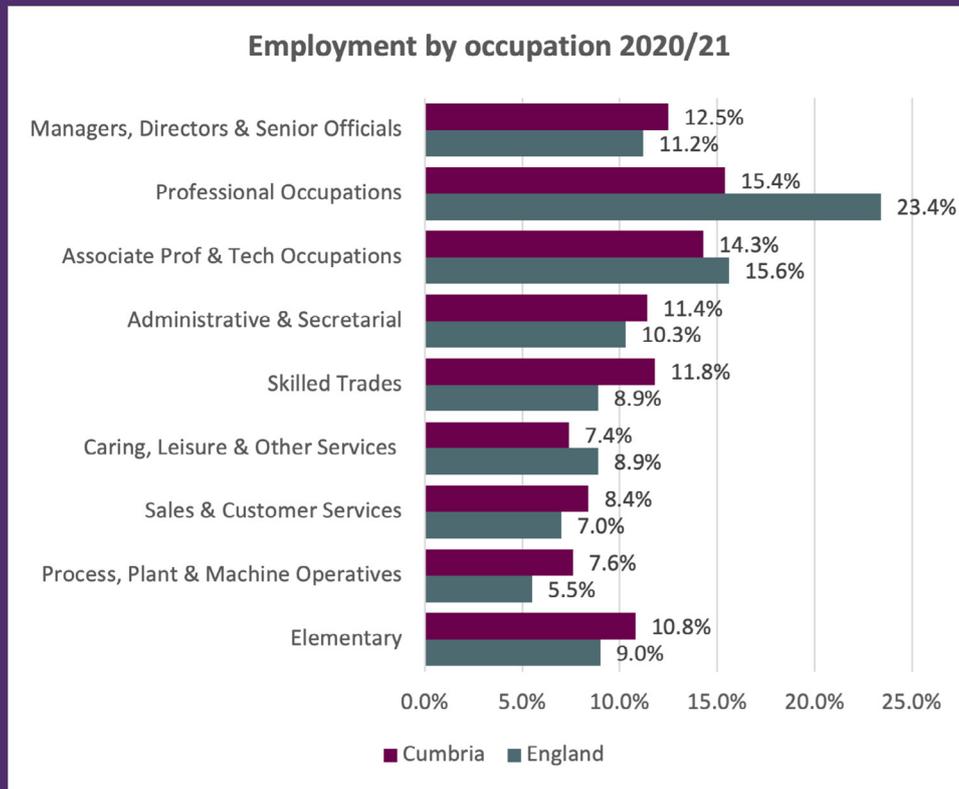
- Cumbria's geography – its size and location – is a key driver of the county's economic structure and performance.
- Cumbria has an unusual “poly-centred” industrial structure and the £12 billion economy has particular strengths in
 - o agriculture/land-based industries and tourism
 - o food manufacturing and nuclear and advanced manufacturing
- Cumbria also has strengths in logistics, construction, some technical services and in social care (linked to the elderly population).
- Cumbria LEP's 8 Sector Panels account for about 60% of the economy.
- There are wide variations across the county in economic success and performance, in large part because of the location and concentration of different industrial sectors.
- Cumbria has a series of to some degree overlapping but distinct economic areas. This means that the industrial structure varies widely. At a local level some areas have a high and indeed overly high degree of dependence on certain sectors and businesses.
- Relative productivity performance is poor to middle ranking in a UK context. Cumbria sits 13% to 15% behind national productivity levels and productivity performance is patchy across sectors (and geographies).
- Much of the relative productivity difference is caused by Cumbria's industrial structure, but there is some evidence of below national productivity rates in some sectors, especially in private sector services and digital/creative.
- Cumbria overall performs better on other economic measures such as employment rate, relatively high wage levels and average household incomes, but this varies between areas within the county.
- Cumbria is one of only 5 LEP areas to have experienced working age population decline over the past 5 years and 10 years and has experienced the biggest decline of those 5 LEP areas over both time periods resulting in a labour supply deficit.
- The tight labour market in Cumbria has been exacerbated over the past 18 months by a range of factors – significant demand for labour across multiple sectors simultaneously since mid-2021; loss of EU workers; early withdrawal from the labour market; more mobility across occupations and sectors.
- These are national issues but are concentrated in Cumbria due to its small and relatively self-contained labour pools together with the previously observed looming labour supply deficit. The result has been labour shortages impacting directly or indirectly on all sectors and leading to increased wages, and so costs, or to reduced capacity/output.



Employment by sector: Cumbria's biggest employing sectors are manufacturing, health, accommodation & food services, retail and professional, scientific & technical services, which between them account for over half of employment. All these sectors contribute to one or more of the LEP's 8 priority sectors, designated as such either for their local specialism and/or potential for growth. Cumbria has over twice the national average concentration of employment in manufacturing and in some parts of the county, notably Copeland and Barrow, this concentration accounts for a third of all employment due to significant nuclear and defence manufacturing capability. Alongside this major manufacturing base is a significant land-based and tourism dependent rural economy giving Cumbria a unique sectoral structure. Cumbria has lower than average proportions of employment in financial services, IT and in professional, scientific & technical services.

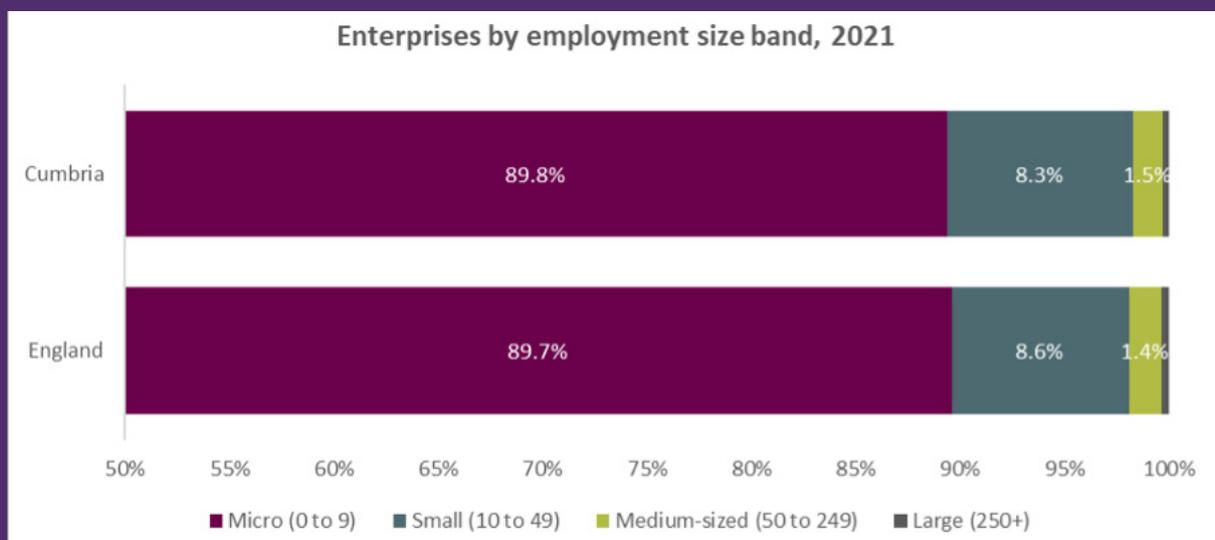
Whilst much of the local manufacturing base has been protected to some degree from the worst economic impacts of COVID, the same cannot be said for the substantial visitor economy, which has been hugely impacted by repeated closures and travel restrictions. The extensive use of furloughing, with parts of Cumbria consistently having had the highest rates in the country, is evidence of the impact on the sector and its workforce. The reliance of other sectors in the county on trade from the visitor economy has also been exposed by the pandemic. The pre-existing demographic trend of a rapidly declining resident working age population alongside migration changes resulting from the UK's exit from the EU and demand for labour across multiple sectors in the second half of 2021 have resulted in a very tight labour market with resultant major impacts on business costs and operational capacity.

Source: Business Register and Employment Survey, 2020 (published 2021)



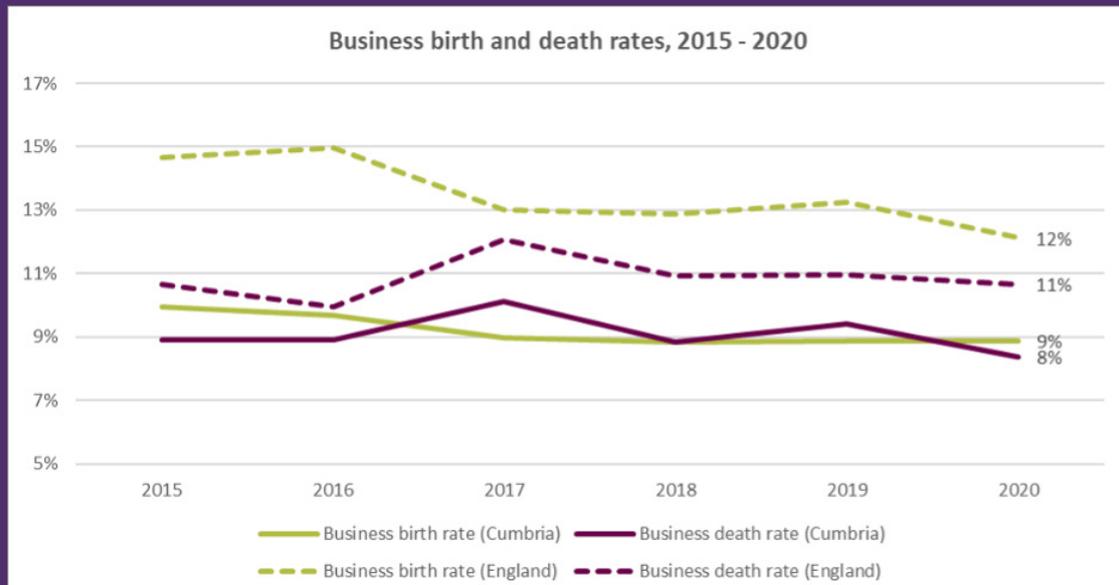
Source: Annual Population Survey, July 2020–June 2021

Employment by occupation: The biggest employing occupations in Cumbria are professional/associate professional occupations, managers/directors/senior officials, administrative & technical occupations and skilled trades. The concentration of jobs in skilled trades is well above the national average (and the second highest of any LEP area), a finding linked to the substantial manufacturing sector in the area and which leads to significant demand for Apprenticeships. There are similar concentrations in process, plant and machine operative occupations and elementary occupations. However, the area has lower concentrations in some higher level occupations, particularly in professional occupations and whilst this is partly a reflection of the sector structure in the area, it is also a feature known to cause recruitment and growth challenges for local businesses.



Source: UK Business Counts, 2020

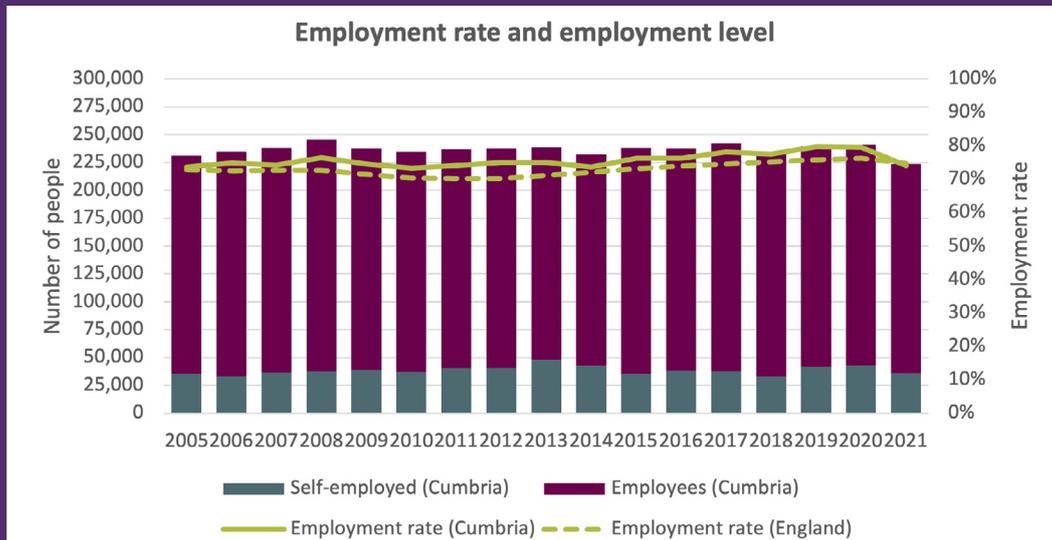
Enterprises by employment size band: In common with most areas, the registered business base in Cumbria is predominantly made up of micro and small businesses with 90% of registered enterprises employing fewer than 10 people, in addition to a substantial number of small, unregistered businesses, which are not captured by these statistics. Many of the smaller businesses are facing particular challenges as a result of COVID-19, which will have far reaching consequences for their growth potential and on plans to recruit new staff, particularly young people or those requiring training. Despite the predominance of small businesses, the geography of Cumbria means that in some areas there is significant employment dependence on a small number of large firms with the health of the local labour market strongly linked to trends within these firms and their supply chains.



Source: ONS Business Demography, 2015 – 2020 (published 2021)

Business birth and death rates: Business birth rates (measured by registration for VAT/PAYE) have both traditionally run below the national average - i.e. fewer businesses start-up as a proportion of total registered businesses but fewer also cease to be registered. In addition, in Cumbria these “birth” and “death” rates are similar, in contrast to the national picture where births consistently run above deaths (although this has narrowed). This suggests a good degree of stability in the local economy, supported by further data from the same dataset showing that once registered for VAT/PAYE, Cumbrian businesses are more likely to remain so than average. However, it can also be argued that the data suggests a lower level of dynamism and possibly in entrepreneurial activity. Despite this, other data sources suggest that significant activity takes place below the VAT/PAYE thresholds measured by these statistics and that with appropriate business support, many of those micro businesses can be encouraged to grow and become employing organisations. COVID-19 has presented many challenges for the growth prospects of smaller firms but local surveying during the pandemic has shown a willingness to flex and adapt to changing circumstances and the challenge will be to harness and develop this in the post-pandemic recovery phase and beyond.

¹. Banksearch Consultancy start-up data / FAME live business database (including non-registered enterprises)

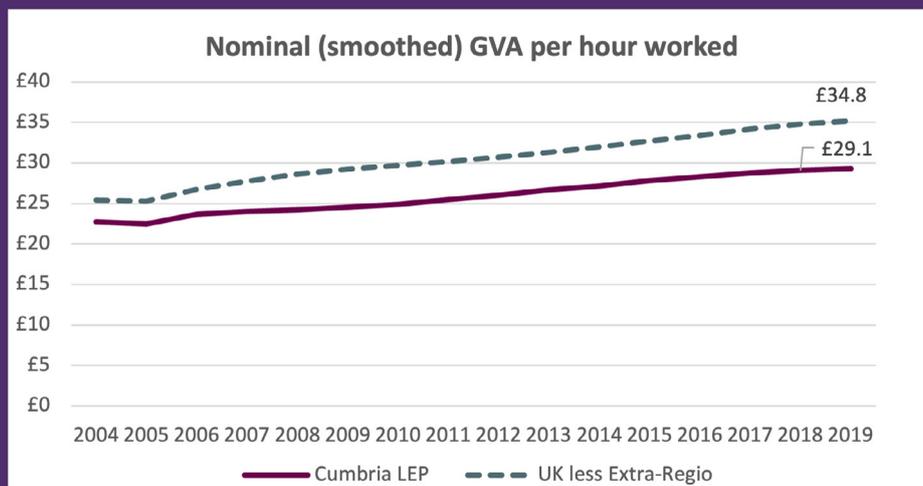


Source: Annual Population Survey, 2005 - 2021

Employment rate and level: Cumbria's employment rate has consistently been above the national average and had changed relatively little in recent years but survey data for the year ending June 2021 suggests the rate has fallen significantly in Cumbria (from 80% to 74%) whilst remaining stable in England. Even allowing for survey reliability, this appears to be a genuine fall and takes Cumbria's overall employment rate down to the national average and most probably reflects the significant impact of COVID-19 on Cumbria's labour market.

The LEP-wide average has always masked variations within the area and for example the most urban part of the county, Barrow, has always had an employment rate significantly below that of the LEP area and country. Linked to this, the economic inactivity rate in Barrow is also higher than average meaning a lower proportion of the working age population is available for work and this is in part due to high rates of poor health and low rates of high level qualifications among residents. In contrast, the more rural areas consistently have employment rates above the LEP average and this remained the case in the year to mid-2021 in Eden and South Lakeland despite the pandemic impact on these areas, although the gap did narrow. These areas have smaller proportions of working age residents and the high employment rate, whilst a positive feature, also presents challenges for recruitment and for economic growth as labour supply is limited by demographics, a feature that has become particularly acute in the latter half of 2021.

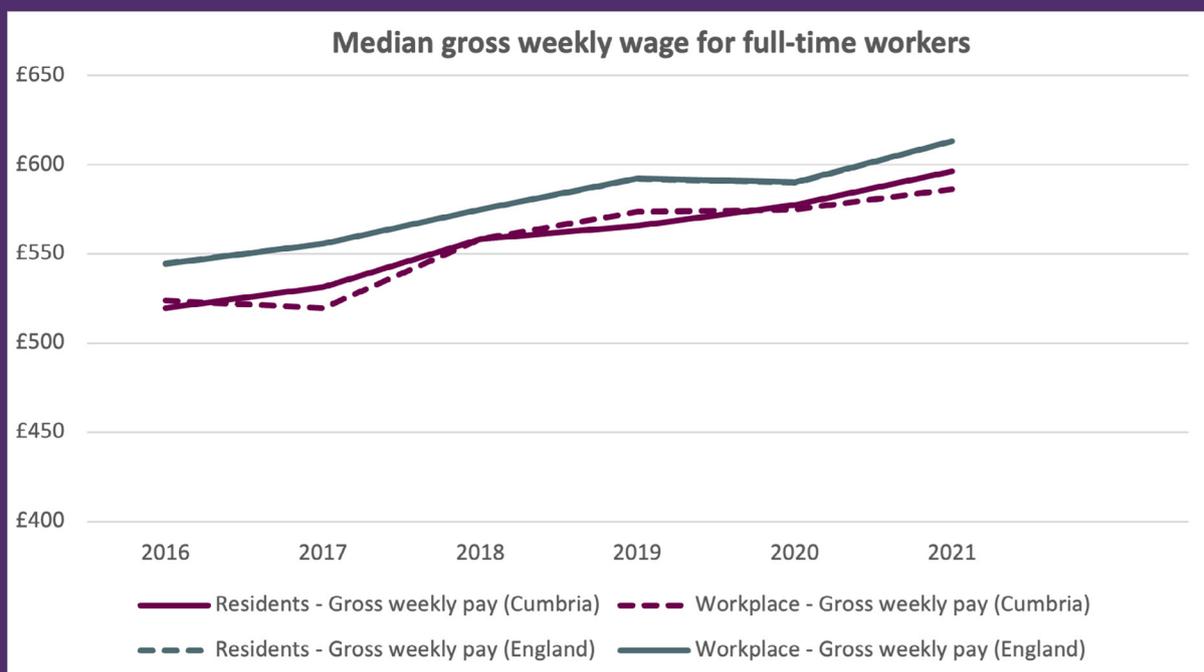
Allerdale stands out as the district with the biggest fall in employment rate, down from 84% to 73% taking it below the national average, although survey reliability may be exaggerating the scale of change.



Source: ONS Subregional Productivity, 2004 - 2019 (published 2021)

Nominal GVA per hour worked: Cumbria derives over a quarter of total Gross Value Added from the manufacturing sector (more than double the national average) and also derives more than the national average from land-based and visitor economy related activities. Conversely, Cumbria derives a lower share of total GVA from high value sectors such as computing/digital, financial services, professional scientific & technical services. This mix of sectors, together with the particular activities within certain sectors, is largely responsible for productivity levels that run below the national average for the LEP area as a whole and also for disparities within the area. Productivity is higher in those parts of the area with a significant manufacturing presence and lower in areas where land-based and visitor economy activities dominate.

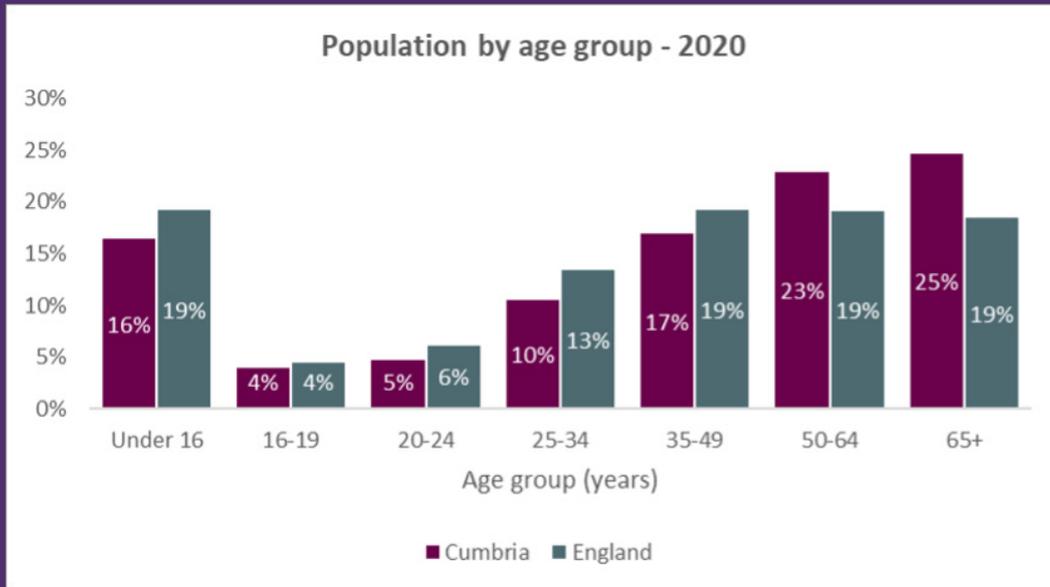
It follows that areas with high productivity are generally those with higher average pay rates and this is true within Cumbria. However, those areas with the highest average pay in Cumbria are also those with highest levels of unemployment and deprivation presenting a major challenge in lifting those outside the labour market into employment and improved prosperity.



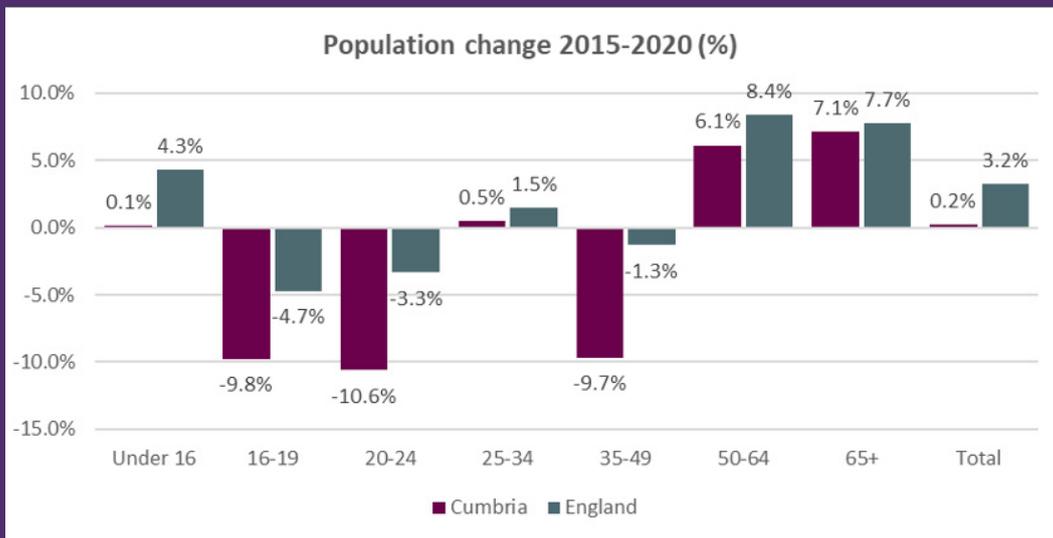
Source: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, 2016 - 2021

Median gross weekly wage for full-time workers: Average earnings for full time workers are estimated to be below the national average for Cumbria as a whole, both for residents in Cumbria (97% of England) and for jobs located in Cumbria (96% of England). However, earnings are significantly higher than average in areas where manufacturing employment dominates. This is especially true in Copeland where full time workplace earnings are 154% of the England average, largely as a result of the significant nuclear activity in the area. In contrast, workplace earnings for full time jobs located in South Lakeland and Allerdale are less than 85% of the national average.

The LEP area as a whole is a relatively self-contained labour market and as a result there is little overall difference between resident and workplace earnings. However, there is commuting between districts and in more rural areas such as Eden, South Lakeland and Allerdale, resident earnings are higher than workplace earnings, reflecting both the nature of employment in those areas and the level of outward commuting to employment centres elsewhere in the county.

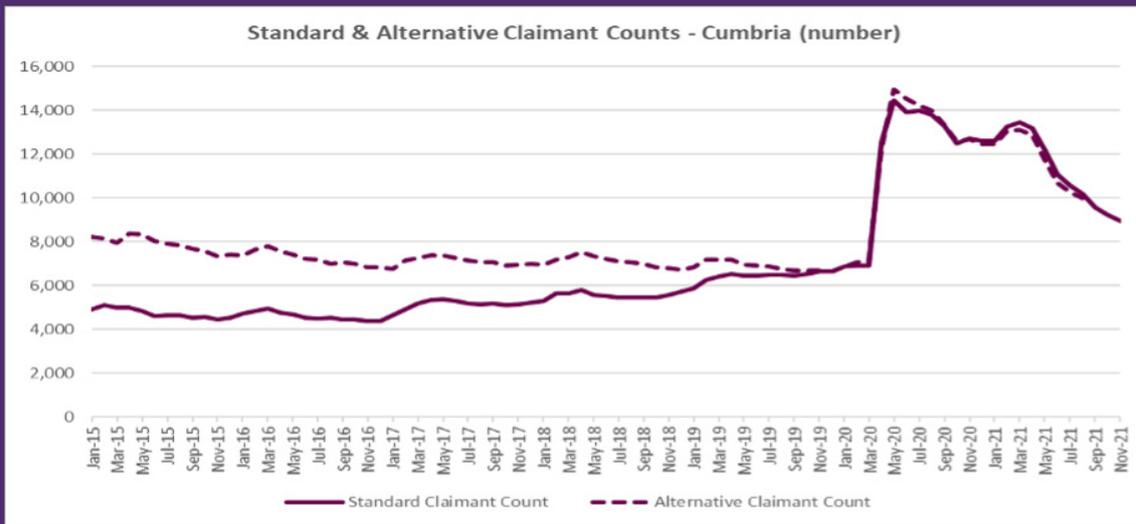


Source: ONS Mid-Year Population Estimates, 2020

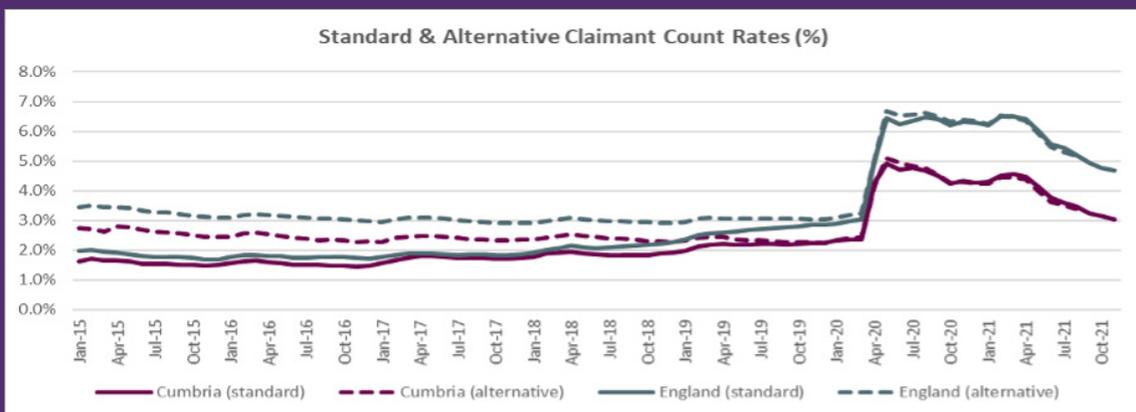


Source: ONS Mid-Year Population Estimates, 2020

Population by age group: Cumbria has relatively fewer young residents and more older ones than the national average and has seen barely any population growth in recent years (0.2% since 2015 compared to 3.2% nationally). Of particular note is that Cumbria's working age population has fallen by over 7,000 since 2015, which is contrary to increases in this age group in other areas. Projections suggest this trend will continue and Cumbria could see a further reduction of over 15,000 residents aged 16-64 by 2030. Although, increases in economic activity rates, especially for over 60s, are expected to offset this to some degree, a net decline in the available labour force is still anticipated, which presents obvious challenges for the labour market and could act as a constraint on post-pandemic recovery and future economic growth. However, the pandemic, and in particular the use of technology and the shift to more remote ways of working resulting from it, present an opportunity to promote Cumbria as a place to live, work and invest.



Source: ONS claimant count & DWP Stat Xplore, January 2015 – November 2021

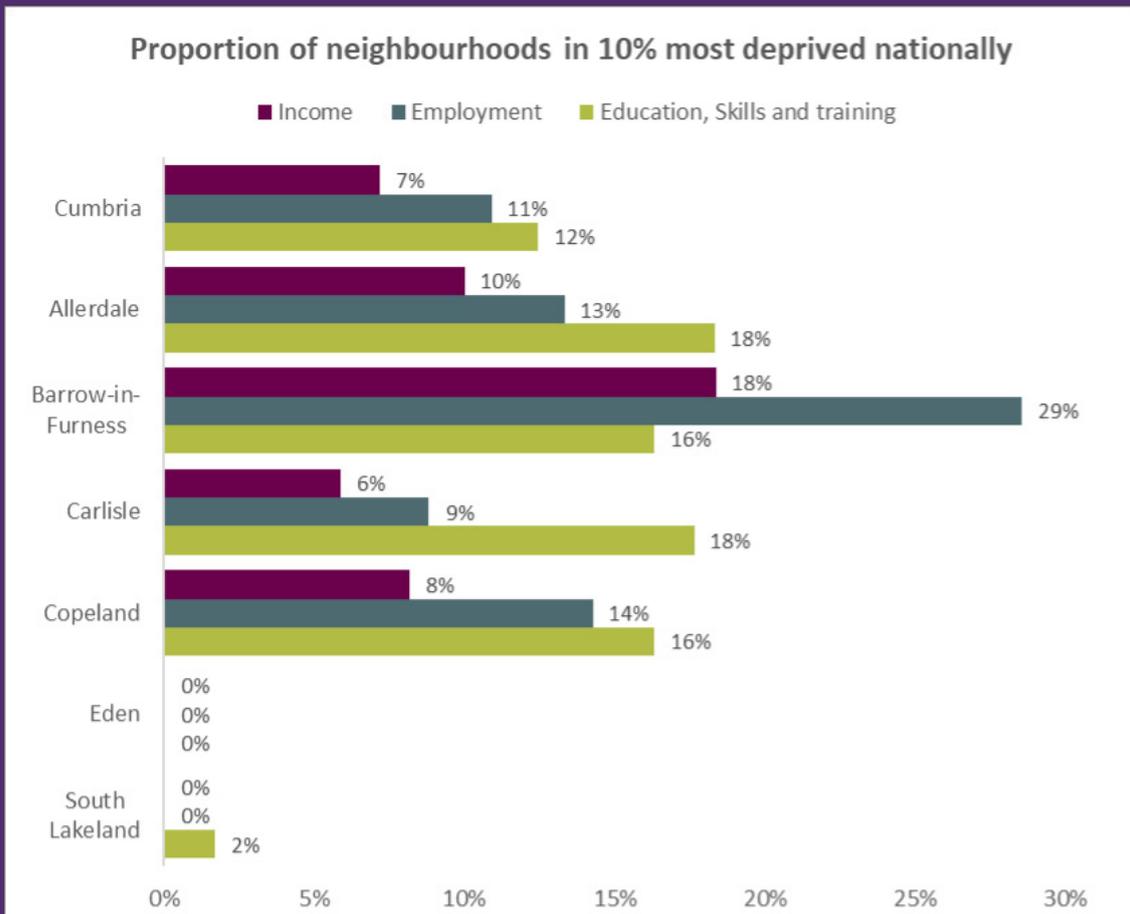


Source: ONS claimant count & DWP Stat Xplore, January 2013 – November 2020

Claimant Count and Alternative Claimant Count: Cumbria's claimant rates have historically run below the national average although this is not the case in all parts of the county – there are concentrations of unemployment in Barrow, the west coast and in parts of Carlisle that are close to, and at times in excess of, national rates. In particular, claimant rates for young adults in Barrow are above the national average, despite average NEET rates and high levels of apprenticeships. The pandemic saw steep rises in claimant numbers in Cumbria that were particularly concentrated in those areas hitherto relatively little impacted by unemployment, notably Eden and South Lakeland where much employment is reliant on the visitor economy.

Since the pandemic peak in July 2020, claimant volumes have fluctuated in line with the imposition and lifting of economic restrictions, rising and falling more quickly than nationally, although the overall rate has remained below the national rate throughout. This demonstrates both the flexibility and vulnerability of the labour market in Cumbria and there are risks that as the labour market becomes more competitive, those furthest away from employment will find it even harder to find work and inequality could deepen. Support for the newly unemployed and for young unemployed are a priority in Cumbria's pandemic economic recovery strategy, alongside the delivery of the Labour Supply Action Plan and of effective information, advice and guidance.

Note: the Alternative Claimant Count models the impact of the rollout of Universal Credit, under which a broader span of claimants is eligible to claim and is a more consistent measure over time than the Standard Claimant Count (counts and rates have converged as the rollout has neared completion).



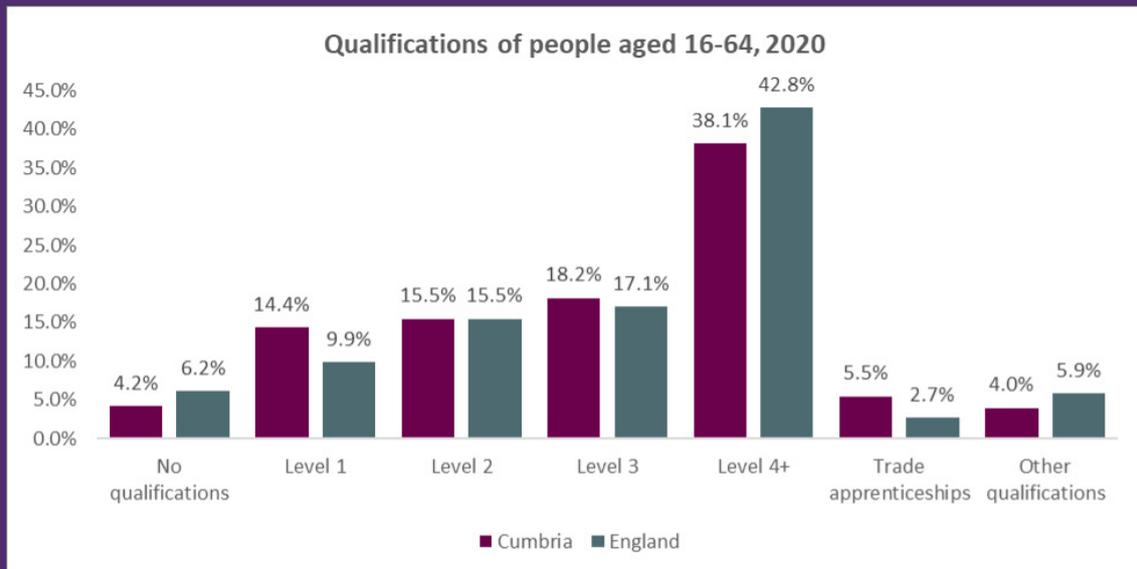
Source: Index of Multiple Deprivation, MHCLG, 2019

Income, Employment and Education deprivation: Levels of deprivation, especially relating to employment and skills, vary considerable across the LEP area – the west and in particular Barrow, has more deprivation “hot spots” compared to the east of the county. This is despite the former areas having some of the highest apprenticeship rates in the country, mostly linked to the significant manufacturing presence in these areas. The key challenge is to narrow the attainment gap and ensure that young people and those furthest away from the labour market are provided with the skills and support to be able to take advantage of the opportunities available and reduce levels of deprivation.

SKILLS SUPPLY

Skills Supply – Summary

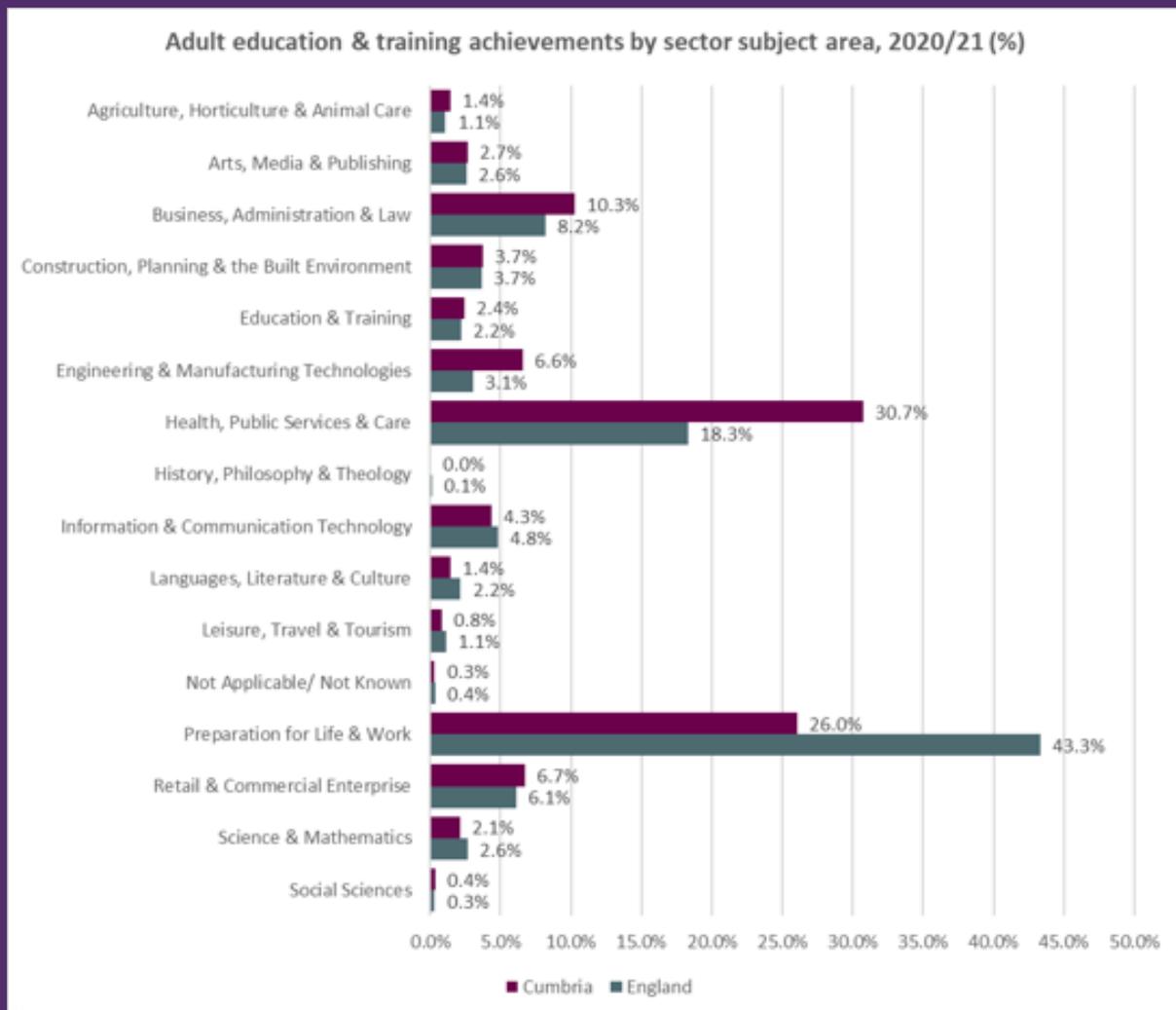
- Cumbria faces a challenging workforce supply issue. There is already a very tight labour market and limited spare capacity; forecasts suggest a severe worsening of overall skills supply relative to need and there is a need to consider how to:
 - o Retain and attract more people of working age
 - o Retain and attract more people with high level skills
 - o Encourage more of our older residents to enter or stay in the labour markets
 - o Find ways to increase employment rates amongst those out of the labour markets.
- We have an ageing workforce, which is also driving a growing need for replacement demand and ways to upskills the existing workforce.
- The proportion of the workforce with higher level qualifications has increased considerably since 2007 (from 25% to 38%) but there is still a significant gap on the national average (around 43%).
- In absolute terms, there is a relatively thin pool of higher levels skills (measured by qualifications or occupations), which despite increasing as a proportion of overall skills, has varied little in absolute volume terms. There is also growing demand on this pool, which is spread across the county in what are in effect separate labour markets.
- The evidence suggests there is strong performance in vocational education and training, with a well-functioning apprenticeship system with strong employer engagement.
- The school system performs relatively well overall but this masks wide variations between individual schools and geographies and there are concerns about the performance and progress of disadvantaged pupils at GCSE level.
- Overall unemployment rates are low, but youth unemployment rates are above average in some areas.
- There are significant concentrations of worklessness and low skills in some of our communities - often ones with large and important employers and growing employment (e.g.Barrow) - and the pandemic risks widening this inequality gap.



Source: Annual Population Survey, January –December 2020. Note: significant margins of error around the data for Cumbria

Qualification levels: Cumbria has a lower proportion of its workforce qualified to level 4 or more than either regionally or nationally although this gap has narrowed over the last decade. The proportion with level 3 qualifications is slightly higher than average as is the proportion holding a trade apprenticeship (the latter group does not include modern apprenticeships, which are included under the relevant level). This reflects the importance of manufacturing and skilled trades especially in the west and south of the county.

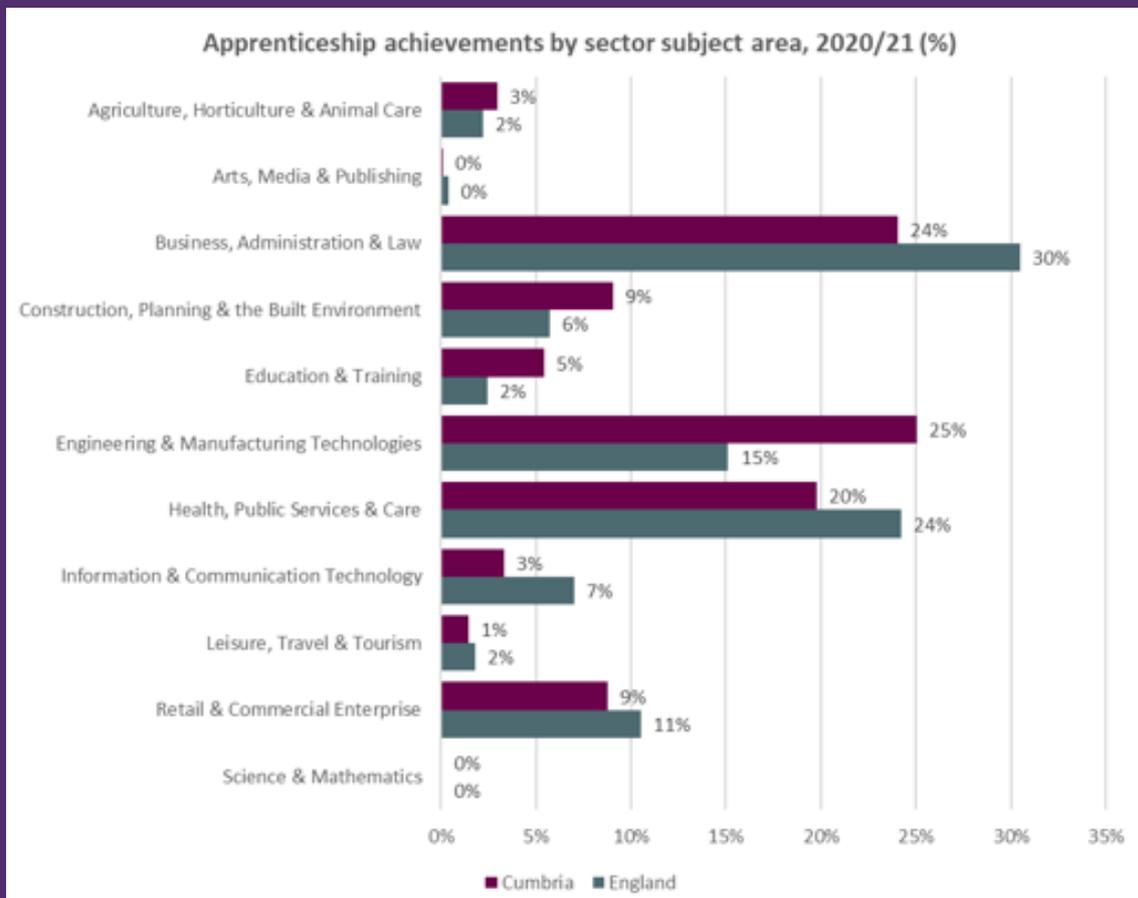
As well as having one of the lowest proportion of residents with high level qualifications, Cumbria has the smallest pool of such individuals in absolute terms and this volume has changed little over the past decade. Taken alongside Cumbria's geography this means the availability of higher level skills is modest at county level and particularly so within each travel to work geography. As a result the labour market for higher level skills is particularly thin, creating an issue for employers and also in attracting people to live and pursue a career in Cumbria. This is despite around 3,000 Cumbrian residents achieving HE qualifications each year and a similar volume of HE qualifications being delivered by HE institutions within the county.



Source: Further Education & Skills data, DfE (published 2021)

FE Education and Training Achievements: Cumbrian residents (aged 19+) achieved over 7,000 adult education and training learning aims in the 2020/21 academic year (through funded training), a slight increase on 2019/20. Over a quarter of these were in “preparation for life & work”, although this proportion was well below the national average (43%). Conversely, Cumbria delivered a higher proportion of achievements in health, public services & care, in business administration & law and in engineering & manufacturing technologies (although volumes were low in the latter). These achievements reflect the nature of the economy and demographics in Cumbria and also the demand for skills from employers in industry sectors relative to the national average.

Compared to the previous year, the volume of funded achievements rose by 12% in Cumbria, which is a bigger increase than nationally (4%). However, this varied significantly by subject area. The number of achievements in business, administration & law fell in Cumbria by 23% compared to a rise of 17% nationally. There were also above average decreases in leisure, travel & tourism (-42% v -25%) and in science & mathematics (-22% v -6%). Conversely, there were above average increases in health, public services & care (41% v 18%) and in retail & commercial enterprise (32% v 7%). There was also an increase in engineering & manufacturing technologies achievements, which was broadly in line with the national increase (36% v 33%).

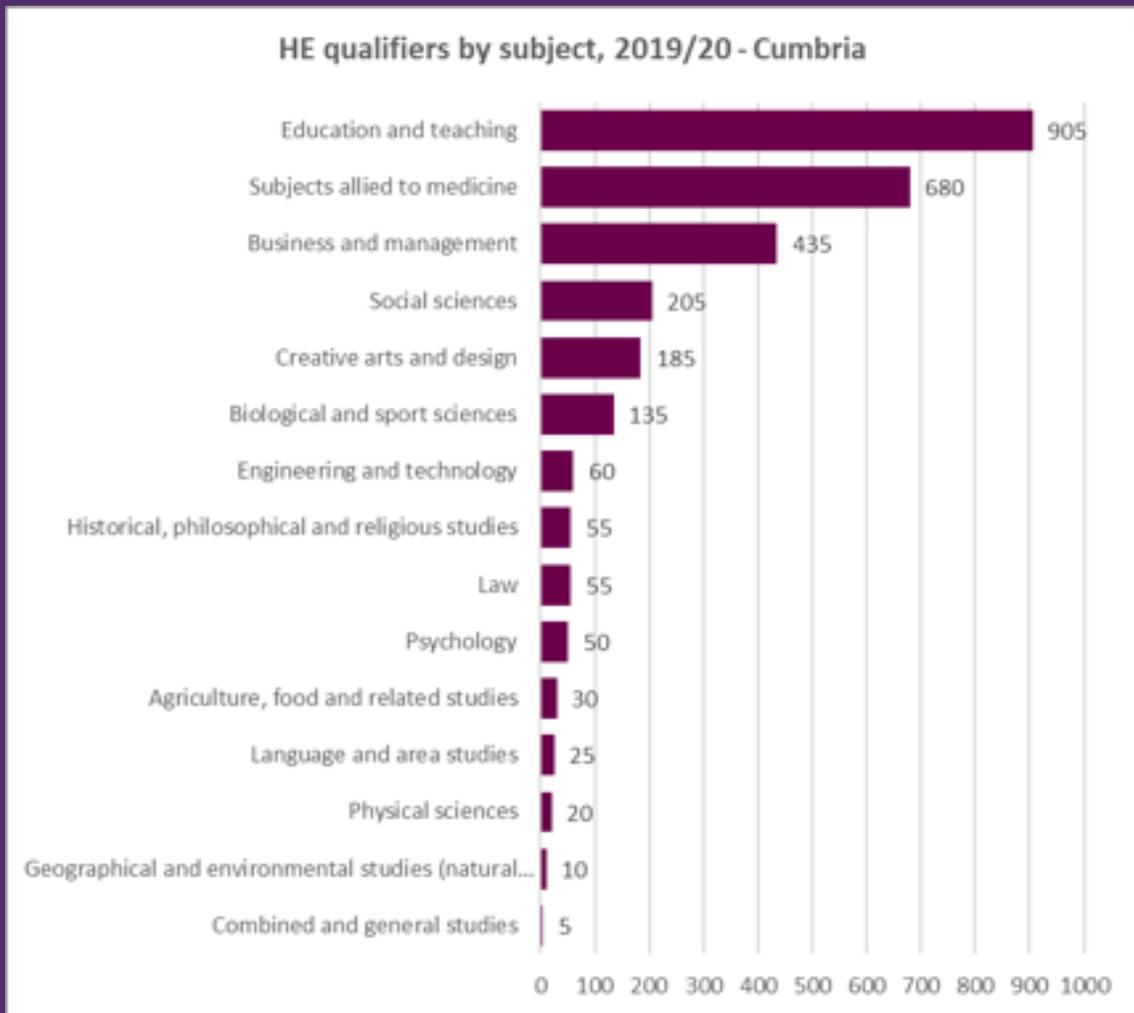


Source: Apprenticeships data, DfE (published 2021)

Apprenticeship Achievements: Cumbrian residents achieved 1,885 Apprenticeships in 2020/21 with a quarter of these in engineering & manufacturing technologies, significantly higher than nationally and reflecting the strong involvement with apprenticeships from businesses in this sector. A further quarter of achievements were in business, administration & law and a fifth in health, public services & care although in both cases these proportions were lower than nationally.

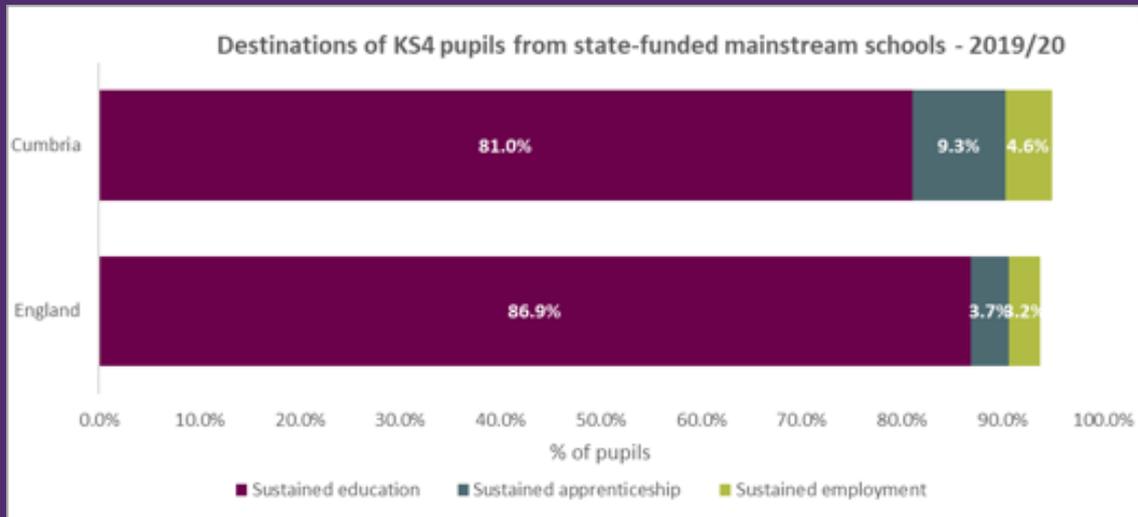
The volume of apprenticeship achievements has been falling year on year – the volume in 2020/21 was 7% down on the previous year and 30% down on two years ago. The scale of reduction is greater in Cumbria than nationally -30% over 2 years v -15% nationally.. The only two subject areas to experience an increase in achievements over two years are education & training and information & communication but in both cases the volumes are small. Achievement volumes have fallen markedly in the biggest sector subject area, engineering & manufacturing technologies with 44% fewer achievements in 2020/21 than in 2018/19, a fall of 374 achievements. Business, administration & law and retail & commercial enterprise both saw over 100 fewer apprenticeship achievements in 2020/21 compared to 2018/19. This, together with the previous data on FE achievements, indicates a clear shift away from retail & commercial enterprise, which has seen falling volumes and a falling share of activity across both activity streams.

The number of Apprenticeship starts in 2020/21 held up remarkably well considering the onset of the pandemic with 3,580 starts, which is just 70 fewer than in 2019/20. There were falls in a number of subject areas however, (agriculture, horticulture & animal care, construction, engineering & manufacturing technologies and retail & commercial enterprise). These were offset by increases in health, public services & care and in business, administration & law.



Source: HESA, 2019/2020 qualifiers (published 2021)

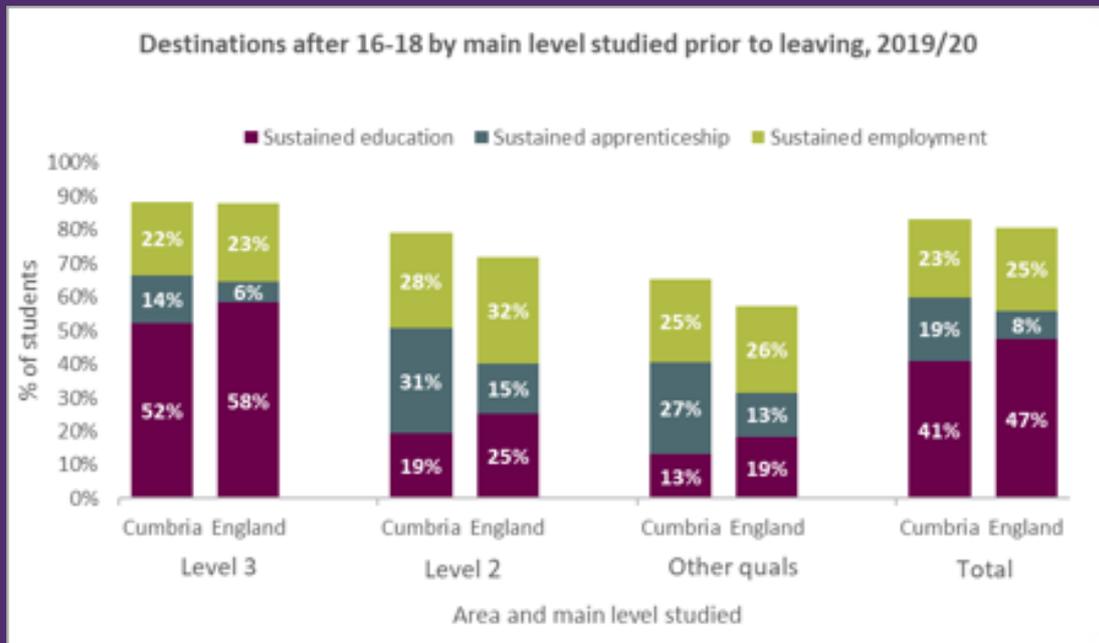
HE Qualifiers: There were 2,865 HE qualifiers in Cumbria in 2019/20, a third of them in education & teaching and a quarter in subjects allied to medicine, both well in excess of the England profile and reflecting the range of provision at the University of Cumbria. It should be noted however, that this data only captures HE provision by the University of Cumbria (including its London and Lancaster campuses) and not that provided by other institutions with a presence in Cumbria. Therefore it does not fully reflect the HE offer in the county or the demand for HE from Cumbrian residents and businesses.



Source: KS4 destination measures, DfE 2019/20 (published 2021)

KS4 destinations: Cumbria has a slightly higher proportion of KS4 (16 years) pupils going into sustained learning or employment destinations than nationally (95% v 94%) and in particular a higher proportion into a sustained apprenticeship (9% v 4%) with a correspondingly lower proportion in sustained education. The level of entry to apprenticeships is the highest of any local education authority in England (excluding the Isles of Scilly). This is in line with Cumbria's long tradition of apprenticeship delivery and is in large part driven by demand from the substantial manufacturing sector and its supply chain.

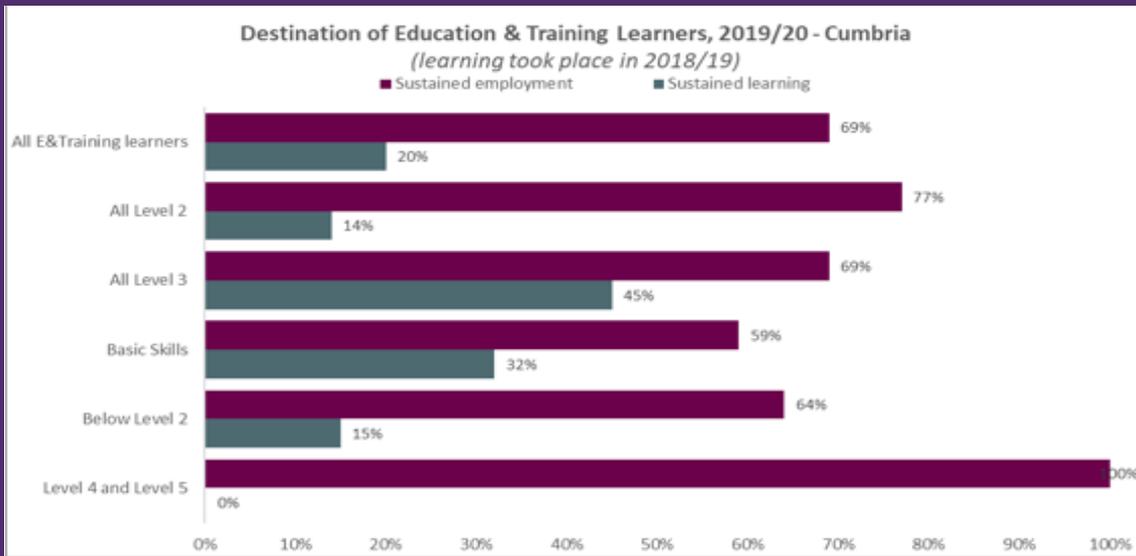
There are signs that the pandemic may be having an influence on young people's choices and opportunities. During 2021 there was reduction of in the proportion of 16/17 year olds in Cumbria participating in apprenticeships or in employment with regulating training compared to the previous year. This is likely to reflect a reduction in employer opportunities and / or potentially some caution among young people at a time when the economy is still subject to uncertainty and pressure.



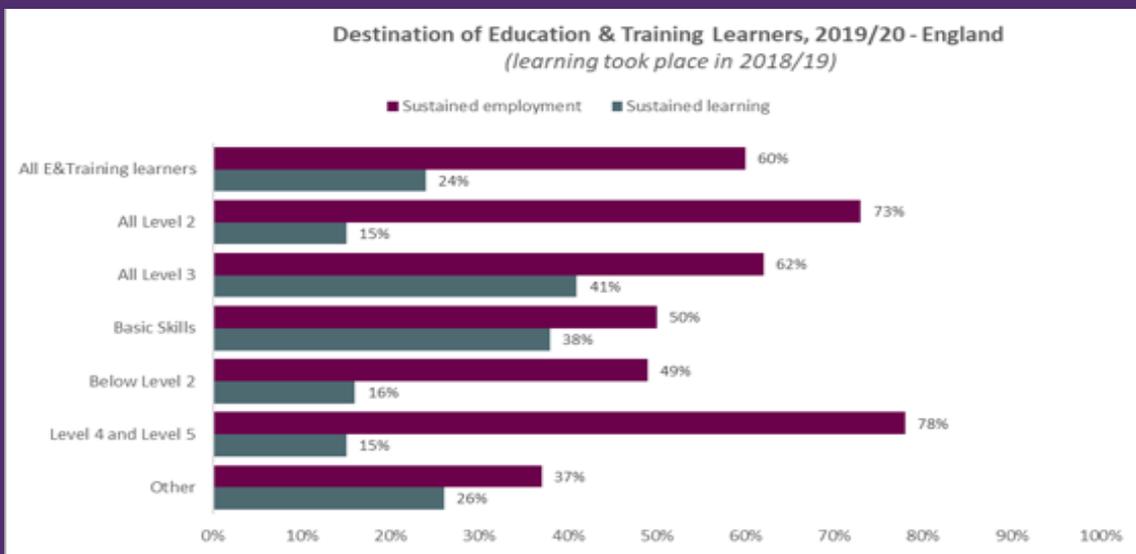
Source: 16-18 Destination Measures (State-funded schools and colleges), DfE, 2018/19 (published 2020)

KS5 destinations: In Cumbria, 83% of Key Stage 5 leavers (16-18 education) from 2018/19 were in a sustained employment or learning activity in 2019/20, which is above the national average of 81%. Almost a fifth of these (19%) were in a sustained apprenticeship, more than double the national average (8%). Proportionately fewer were in sustained education (41% v 47%).

The importance of apprenticeship routes in Cumbria is evident from the fact that across all levels of study at 16-18, the proportion leaving to enter an apprenticeship was double the national average. In the case of those that had studied at level 2 in KS5, almost a third (31%) went on to an apprenticeship destination.



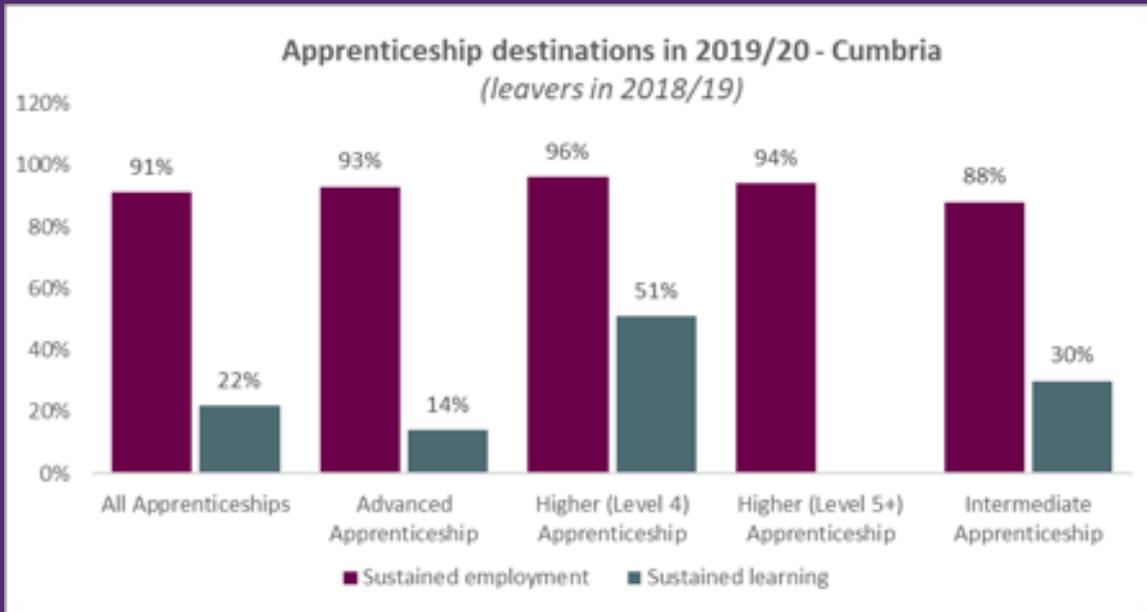
Source: FE outcome based success measures, 2019/20 achievements, DfE, (published 2021)



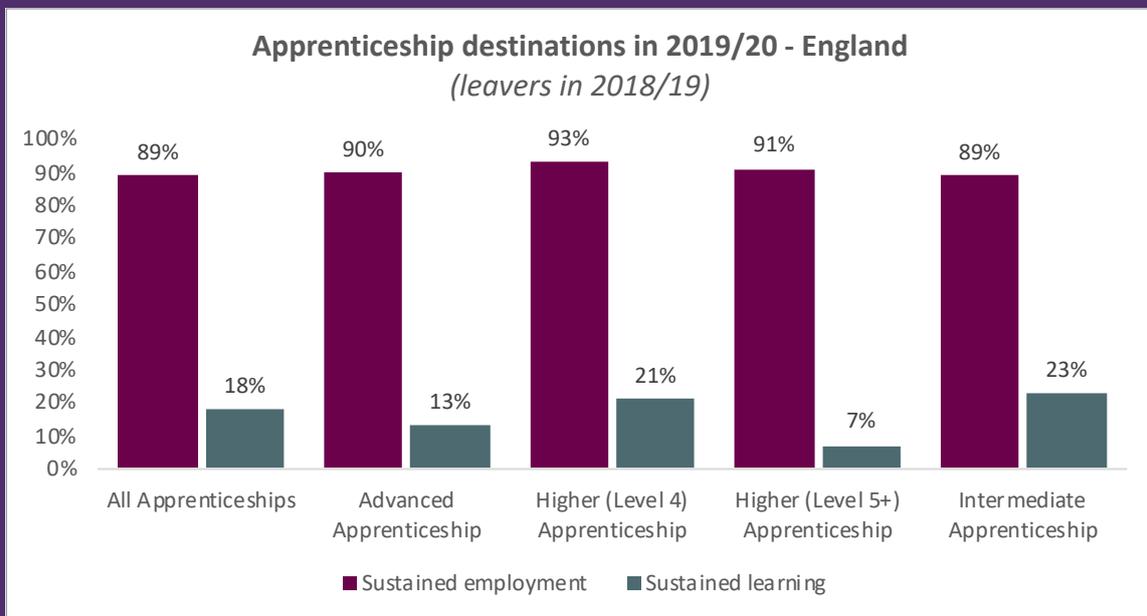
Source: FE outcome based success measures, 2019/20 achievements, DfE, (published 2021)

FE and skills destinations: Cumbria had over 5,800 Education & Training Skills leavers in 2018/19 and of these 69% were in sustained employment when followed up the following year meaning that over 4,000 leavers entered the labour market (this does not include apprenticeships). This proportion is higher than the national average of 60%. The highest employment outcomes were for those who had been studying at level 4/5 (very small volumes) and at Level 2

A fifth of learners were in sustained education the year after leaving learning, which is slightly below the national average (20% v 24%). However, the proportion of leavers after Level 3 study who were in sustained learning was higher in Cumbria than nationally (45% v 41%).

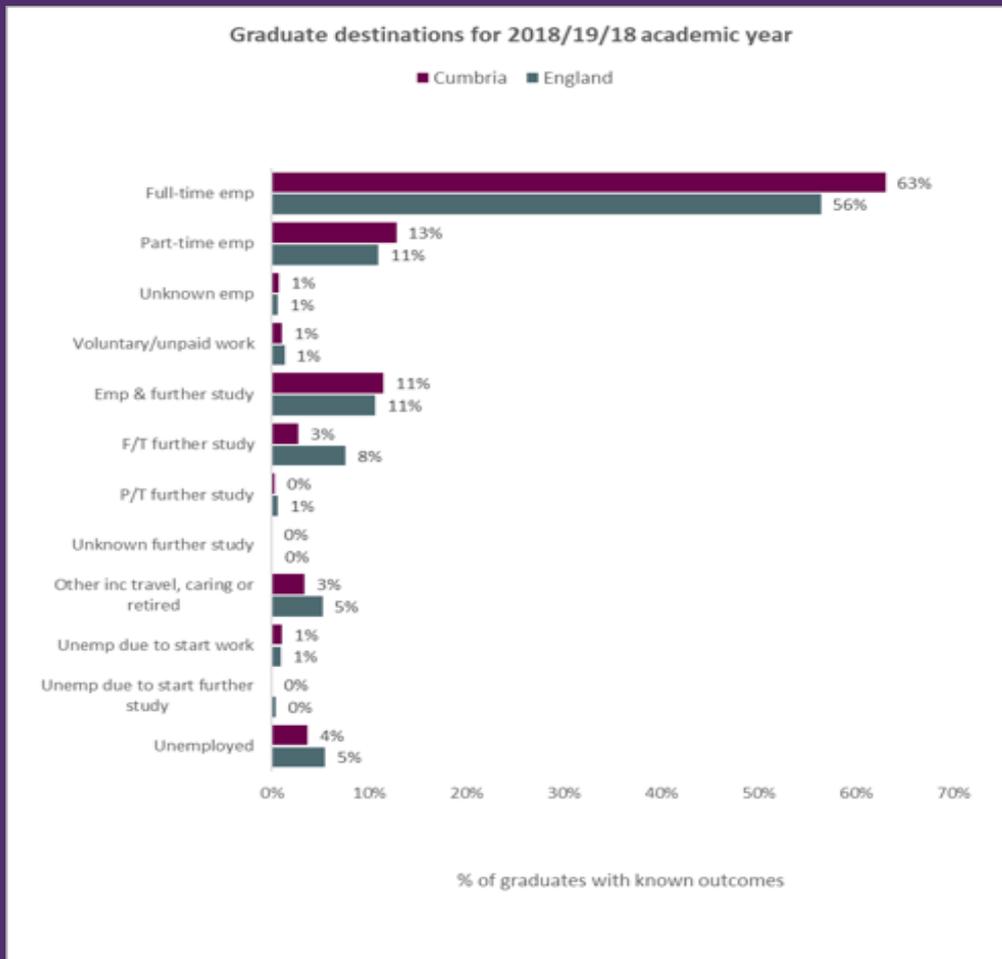


Source: FE outcome based success measures, 2019/20 destinations, DfE (published 2021)



Source: FE outcome based success measures, 2019/20 destinations, DfE (published 2021)

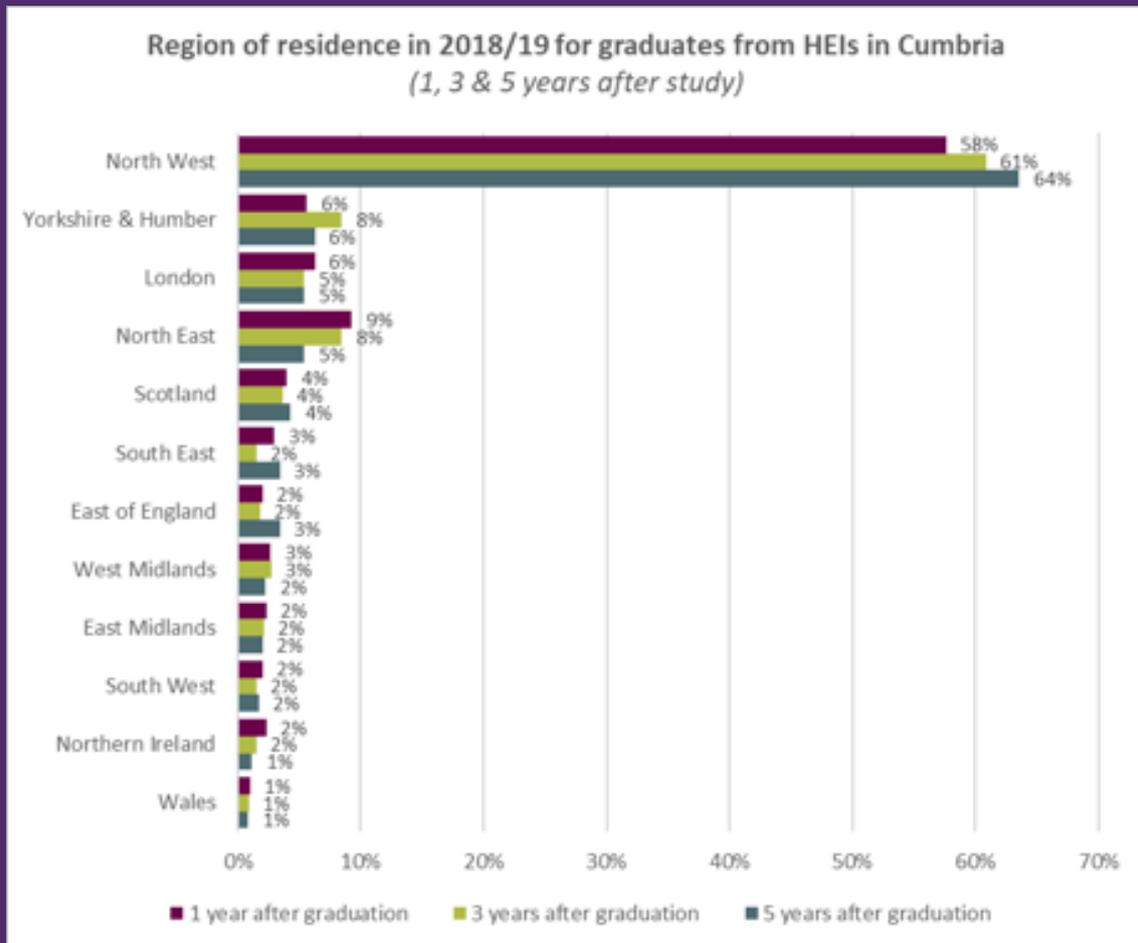
Apprenticeship destinations: Cumbria has a marginally higher proportion of Apprenticeship leavers entering sustained employment than nationally and this is mirrored across all levels. This is also true for progression into learning and reflects Cumbria's very well established and significant Apprenticeship provision, which accounts for a much more significant element of post 16 learning than is the case elsewhere.



Source: HESA, 2018/19 graduates (published 2021)

HE graduate destinations: Unlike the earlier HE qualifiers data, this data on HE destinations does include some provision offered by providers other than the University of Cumbria, although UoC still accounts for half the total. In addition, the data does not distinguish between different campus locations. This means that for example, all University of Cumbria outcomes are included irrespective of whether the student studied at the Cumbria, Lancaster or London campuses and anyone studying in satellite locations in Cumbria such as the Dalton Institute will not be included. Similarly, data for NCG cannot be isolated just for the Carlisle campus and has therefore not been included.

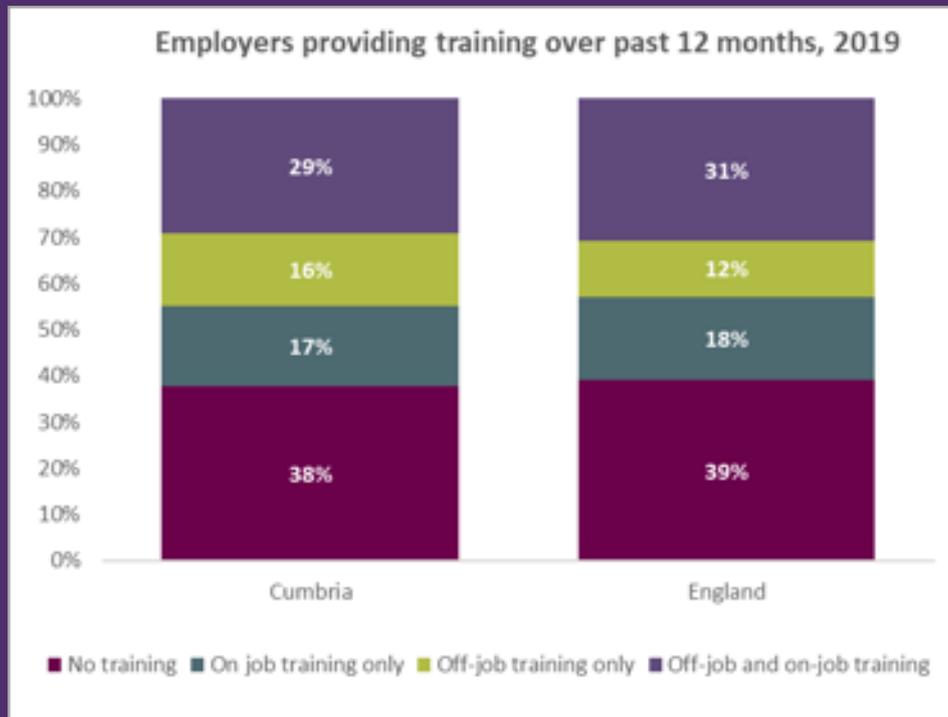
Taking those caveats into account, employment outcomes for graduates learning at Cumbrian headquartered institutions are higher than the England average – 63% entering full time employment compared to 56% nationally. Across other outcomes the proportions are broadly similar although fewer in Cumbria go on to full time further study



Source: Graduate Outcomes in 2018/19, HESA, (published 2021)

Graduate retention: This data captures current region of residence for students who graduated from the University of Cumbria 1, 3 and 5 years previously and suggests a high degree of retention within the North West (two thirds are resident in the region after 5 years).

As with other HE data, there are limitations and this dataset only captures destinations for students from the University of Cumbria (including those who studied at the Lancaster and London campuses) and not for other HE provision that takes place in Cumbria. In addition it does not go below region and therefore it is not possible to assess how many students who studied in Cumbria remain in the county after study, nor does it show how many students who studied elsewhere may end up in Cumbria after study.



Employer Skills Survey, 2019 (published 2020)

Employer provided training: The incidence of employer training is similar in Cumbria to nationally (72% providing some form of training compared to 71%). The highest proportion provide both off the job and on the job training (almost half of those providing training offering both types). Local survey data from the Cumbria Business Survey (conducted Q4 2020) suggests these levels of training dropped during the pandemic (56% providing training) and that, understandably, this was mostly in off the job training. The survey also showed continued uncertainty about future training with only 54% definitely planning any in the next 12 months. The main reason given for not training was the businesses didn't feel any was required (65% of those not planning training) with much lower proportions saying their business was too small (12%), that there was no funding for training (8%) or citing COVID related issues (7%).

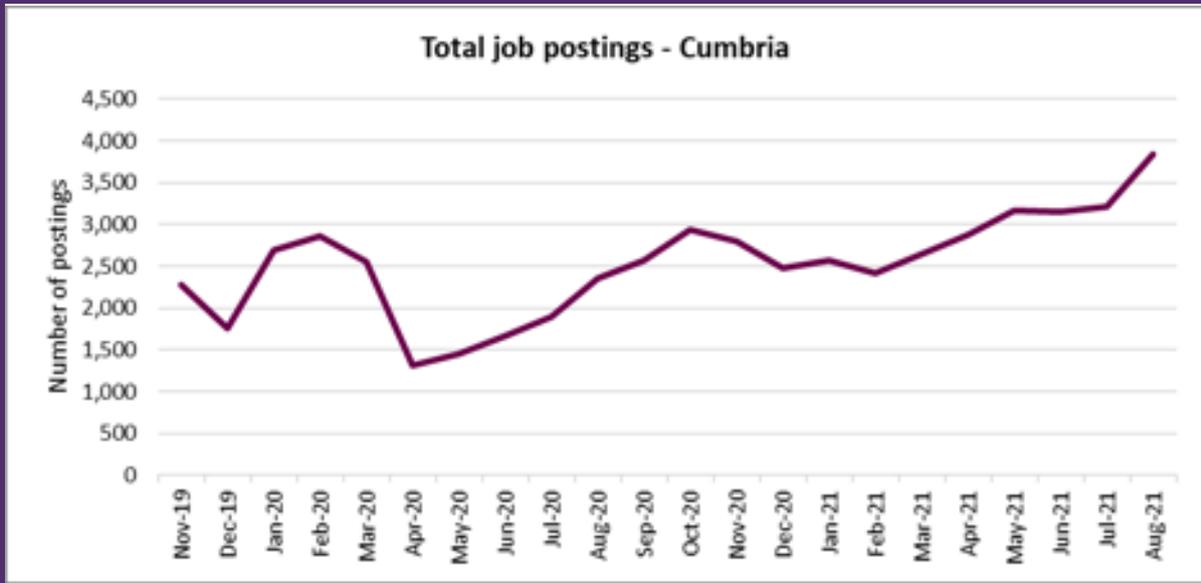
Also from the Cumbria Business Survey 2020, we can see that 49% of private sector business have a training plan and/or a training budget with the propensity to have these increasing with business size and also being more prevalent among businesses in private sector education, health and finance businesses. The existence of training plans and budgets is an important factor in the likelihood of a business engaging in training activity - 61% of businesses that have provided off the job training have a training plan in place whereas only 21% of those that haven't provided any training do. This suggests that supporting businesses in taking a planned approach to training is a key area in increasing levels of participation.

Further details of the Cumbria Business Survey are in Annex B and the full report will be published in Spring 2021.

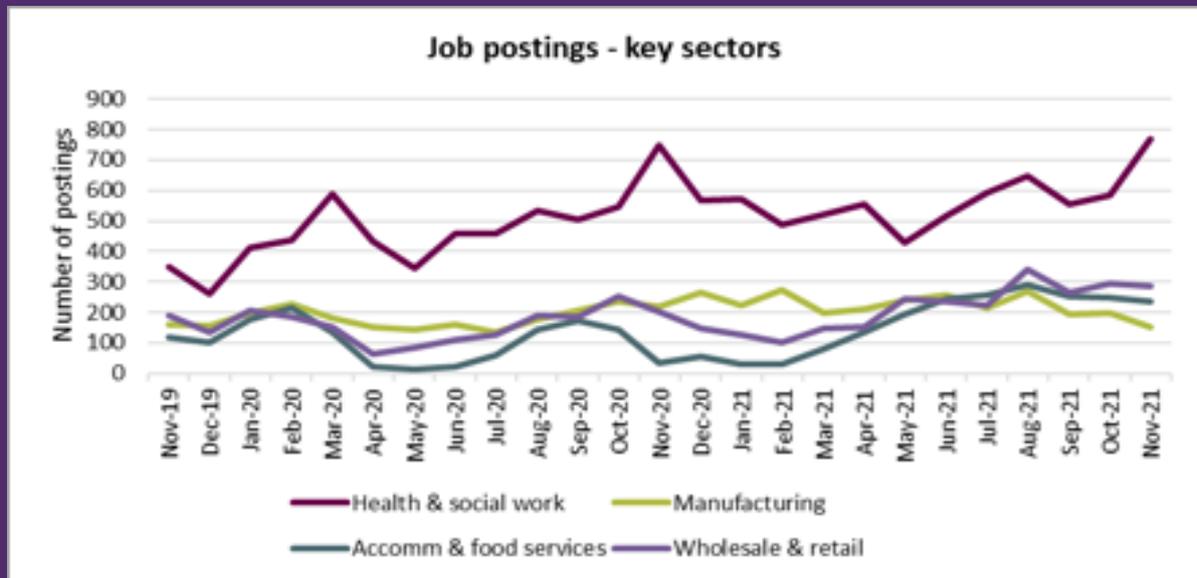
SKILLS DEMAND

Skills Demand - Summary

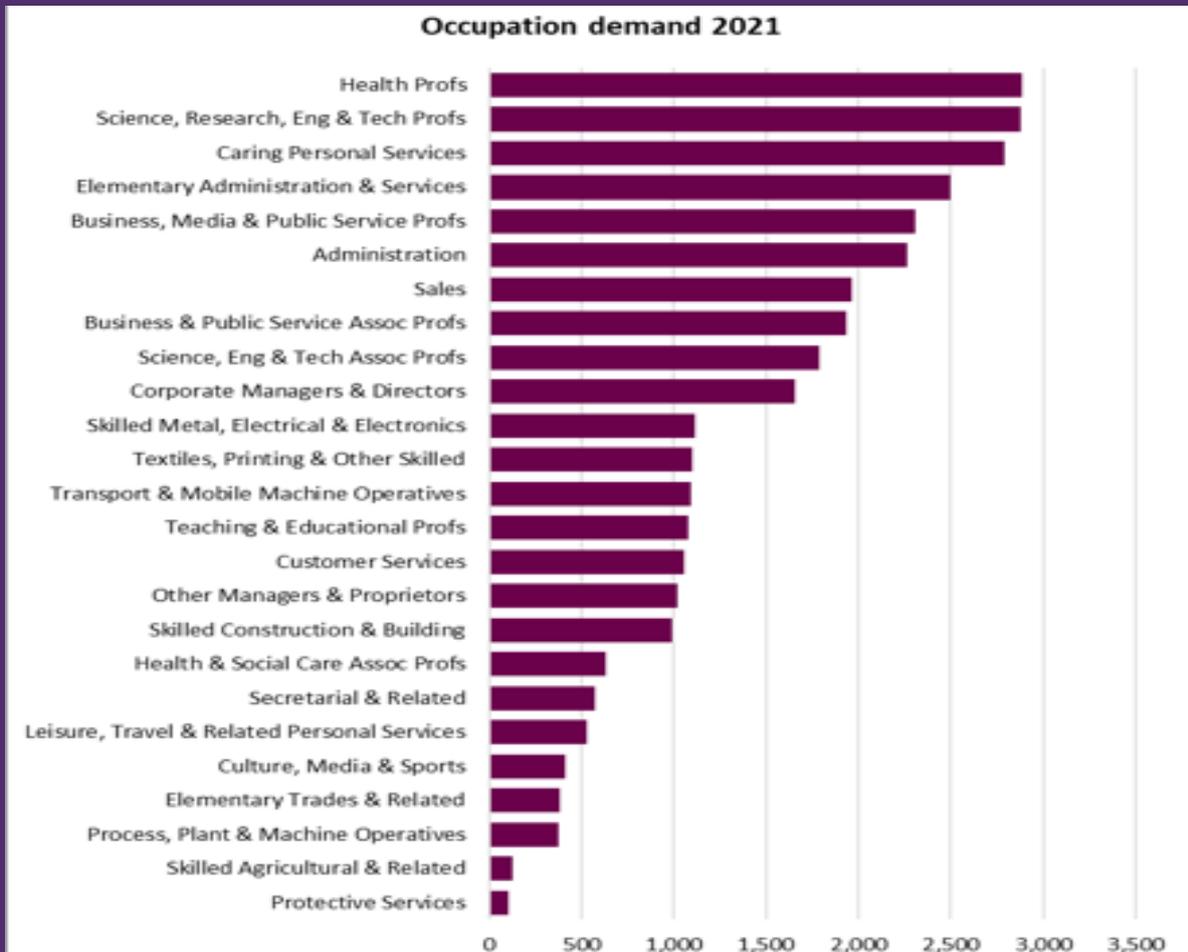
- There has been a limited employment growth in recent years and projections suggest this will continue in the next 10 years, lagging behind that of the nation as a whole.
- Despite limited employment growth, there will be significant demand from the need to replace existing staff, a factor exacerbated by the ageing profile of the workforce and a declining pool of working age residents.
- Projections suggest a net demand for 90,000 jobs to be filled in the next 10 years whilst estimates suggest only around 3,000 young people will join the workforce each year
- Demand will be most acute in caring & personal service occupations, sales occupations, managers and health professionals.
- Over a third of replacement demand jobs are expected to require level 4 or above qualifications, which is higher than the current share of such qualifications among the working age population.
- The prevalence of hard to fill vacancies in Cumbria is above the national average and this is particularly acute in manufacturing and hotels & restaurants, sectors, which between them account for more than a quarter of employment.
- A fifth of businesses in Cumbria report skills gaps among their current workforce and many report that these are having a major impact on their business.



Source: Labour Insight (EMSI Burning Glass) 2021



Source: Labour Insight (EMSI Burning Glass) 2021



Source: Labour Insight (EMSI Burning Glass) 2021

Online vacancies: Labour Insight is a tool, which uses web scraping technology to monitor online job boards (with adjustments to counter cross posting where possible). The dataset is quite volatile and not all sectors use online recruitment to the same degree so it should only be viewed as a monitor of broad trends rather than a precise measure of volumes.

The impact of the pandemic is very evident in spring/early summer 2020 as is the strong labour demand, which followed the first lockdown. There was a further drop in job postings as we went into the second lockdown in winter 2020 before a further surge in postings in spring into summer 2021 with postings in November 21 were 58% higher than two years previously.

Where sufficient information exists, the web scraping assigns postings to industry sectors and looking at the 4 broad sectors, which traditionally account for the highest proportion of postings in Cumbria it can be seen that recruitment in manufacturing has remained relatively stable throughout. However, the impact of lockdowns and economic restrictions on hospitality and retail sector recruitment has been much more pronounced with steep declines followed by equally steep increases. The more recent pressure on health recruitment, particular in social care, is also evident.

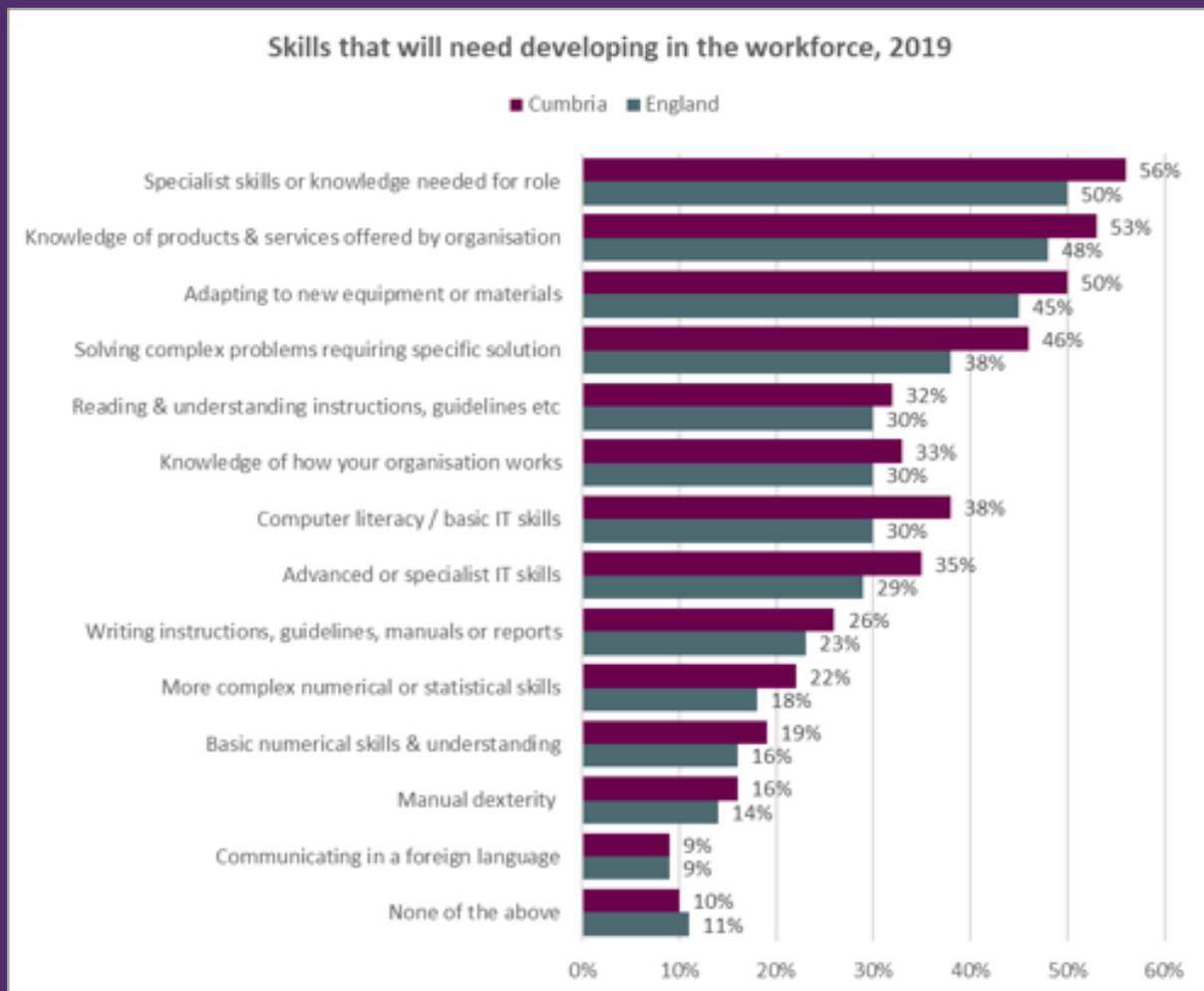
Occupations most in demand in 2021 were those in healthcare (including social care), engineering and general business and administration roles. The biggest increase in demand compared to 2019 was in caring personal services where over 1,000 more job postings were made in 2021 than in 2019, reflecting the impact of the pandemic on recruitment to this sector.

Cumbria LEP	
Occupations with highest forecast growth (2017-2027)	Occupations with lowest forecast growth (2017-2027)
1. Caring personal service occupations	1. Secretarial & related occupations
2. Customer service occupations	2. Process, plant & machine operatives
3. Health & social care associate professionals	3. Textiles, printing & other skilled trades
4. Corporate managers & directors	4. Skilled metal, electrical & electronic trades
5. Business, media & public service professionals	5. Elementary trades & related occupations

Source: Working Futures, 2017-2027 (published 2020), 2017 LEP boundaries

Occupation growth forecasts: These Working Futures projections were generated before the COVID-19 pandemic and also before the nature of the UK's exit from the EU had been agreed and the authors acknowledge that the macro forecast is “probably at the more conservative end of the spectrum in terms of the negative magnitude of GDP impacts following Brexit”. Therefore they should be treated with a degree of caution in light of the significant economic shock experienced by the UK economy in the past 12 months – a 9.9% downturn in GDP in 2020, record levels of redundancy despite job support measures, and increasing evidence of the disparity of labour market impacts across sectors, occupations, age groups, income groups and geographies.

At the time of the Working Futures projections, minimal employment growth of just 0.2% per annum between 2017 and 2027 was anticipated in Cumbria, equating to 5,200 additional jobs. Despite projections of relatively minimal net employment growth, when replacement demand (through retirement, job movers and other labour market change) is factored in, this translates into over 90,000 potential opportunities, half of them in senior level occupations (associate professional and above). This total requirement for new skills brought by net change and replacement demand has major implications for the skills sector in order to ensure residents, both employed and unemployed, are equipped with the skills to take advantage of the opportunities that are presented.



Source: Employer Skills Survey, 2019 (published 2020)

Skills that need developing: Among those businesses interviewed in 2019 for the national Employer Skills Survey anticipated a requirement for new skills in the following year, more than half identified specialist skills/knowledge needed for the role and a similar proportion knowledge of products & services offered by the organisation and adapting to new equipment or materials. Lower down the list came more generic skills such as computer literacy and numerical skills. These are generally in line with the national trends, although Cumbrian respondents were slightly more likely to specify demand for each of the skills mentioned.

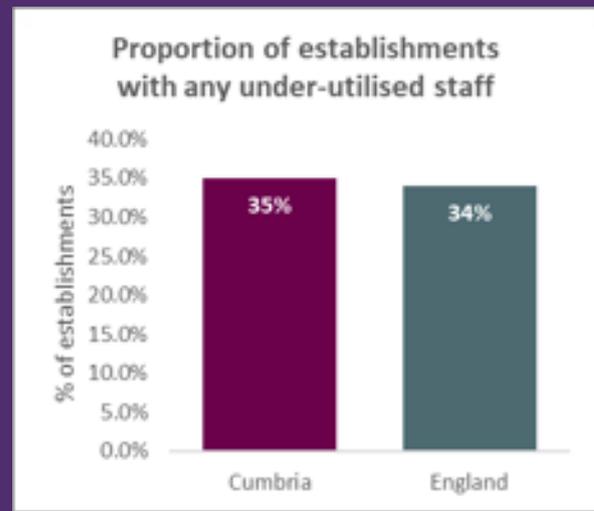
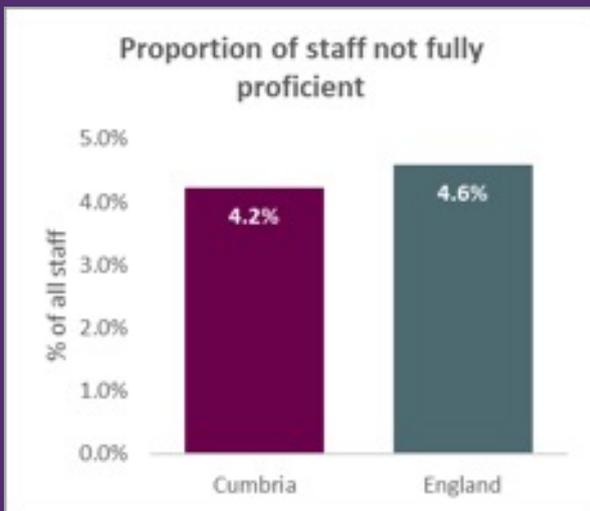
Local survey data from the Cumbria Business Survey (conducted Q4 2020) suggests that a fifth of private sector businesses believed that skills gaps already existed among their workforce. This was more prevalent among “skills active” businesses where a quarter identified current skills needs compared to just 10% of those that aren’t skills active (i.e. undertake training, have a training plan or have a training budget). In line with the national survey on future demand, it was technical & practical skills specialise to the sector, which were most prevalent current need followed by advanced IT/software skills, management skills, problem solving skills, customer handling and basic computer literacy. When probed further, the technical & practical skills related mostly to IT-related skills.

Further details of the Cumbria Business Survey are in Annex B.

MAPPING SKILLS SUPPLY AND DEMAND

Skills Supply and Demand - Summary

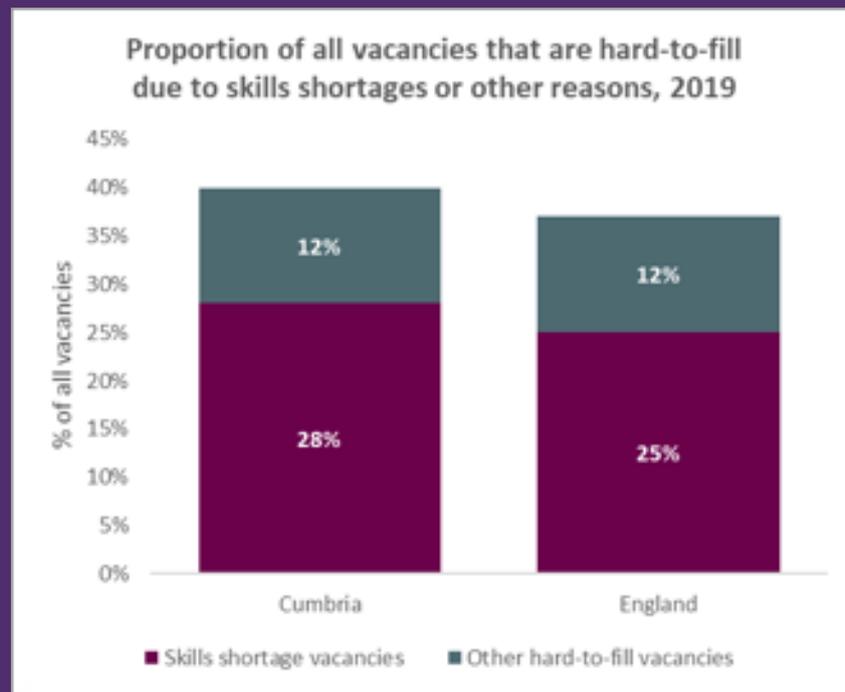
- Cumbria faces a challenging workforce supply issue. There is already a very tight labour market with limited spare capacity and forecasts suggest a severe worsening of overall skills supply relative to need. Much of this is due to demographic change reducing the overall supply of labour rather than directly being an issue of a skills mismatch. As such, the solutions are complex and challenging. In particular there is a need to consider how to:
 - o Retain and attract more people of working age;
 - o Retain and attract more people with high level skills;
 - o Encourage more older residents to enter or stay in the labour markets;
 - o Find ways to increase employment rates amongst those out of the labour markets.
- Cumbria has an ageing workforce, which is also driving a growing need for replacement demand and ways to upskill the existing workforce.
- The proportion of the workforce with high level qualifications has increased considerably but there is still a significant gap on the national average.
- In absolute terms, there is a relatively thin pool of higher levels skills (measured by qualifications or occupations) and growing demand on this pool, which is also spread across the county in what are in effect separate labour markets.
- The evidence suggests there is strong performance in vocational education and training, with a particularly well-functioning apprenticeship system and strong employer engagement.
- The school system performs reasonably well overall. However, there are some concerns about the performance and progress of disadvantaged pupils at GCSE level.
- Overall unemployment rates are lower than nationally, even since the COVID-19 pandemic, but youth unemployment rates are high in some areas.
- Even with limited anticipated overall employment growth, there will be significant demand from the need to replace existing staff, a factor exacerbated by the ageing profile of the workforce and a declining pool of working age residents.
- Projections suggest a net demand for 90,000 jobs to be filled in the next 10 years whilst estimates suggest only around 3,000 young people will join the workforce each year.
- Demand will be most acute in caring & personal service occupations, sales occupations, managers and health professionals.
- At least a third of replacement demand jobs are expected to require level 4 or above qualifications, which is higher than the current share of such qualifications among the working age population.
- There are significant concentrations of worklessness and low skills in some communities, often ones with large and important employers and growing employment (e.g. Barrow) – and these disparities have been amplified by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The prevalence of hard to fill vacancies in Cumbria is above the national average and this is particularly acute in manufacturing and hotels & restaurants, sectors, which between them account for more than a quarter of employment.
- A fifth of businesses in Cumbria report that there are skills gaps among their current workforce and many report these are having a major impact on their business. However, these frequently relate to competition for staff with relevant skills and in some cases to a reluctance to invest in training, rather than lack of suitable training being available in the area.



Source: Employer Skills Survey, 2019 (published 2020)

Proficiency of workforce: The national Employer Skills Survey conducted in 2019 suggested that 4.2% of staff in Cumbria were not fully proficient, just below the national average of 4.6%, which equates to approximately 10,000 staff. Taken alongside the earlier evidence on skills needs, we can assume that most of this relates to specialist skills/knowledge needed for the role, knowledge of products & services offered by the organisation and adapting to new equipment or materials.

The same survey suggests that around a third of businesses have under-utilised staff, i.e. staff with both qualifications and skills more advanced than required for their current job. This proportion is in line with the national average where it is most prevalent in hotels & restaurants and arts & other services. In some cases this will be out of choice (e.g. for lifestyle reasons or temporary employment) but in other cases it will arise from a lack of suitable employment and/or career progression opportunities in the local area. This is a particular challenge in a rural county such as Cumbria with dispersed populations, long distances between employment centres and a significant volume of small businesses.



Source: Employer Skills Survey, 2019 (published 2020)

Hard-to-fill and skills shortage vacancies: The national Employer Skills Survey conducted in 2019 suggested that around 15% of businesses in Cumbria had at least one vacancy and that half of these businesses were finding at least one of them hard to fill (similar to national average). Looked at in terms of the number of vacancies (rather than businesses), 40% of vacancies in Cumbria were deemed hard to fill, slightly above the national average, and in two thirds of these the difficulty related to the availability of skills rather than other factors. This suggests that although the issue of hard to fill vacancies might only be affecting a relatively small proportion of businesses, for some it may be having a significant impact on their ability to recruit.

In Cumbria hard to fill vacancies were more likely to occur in middle skill and service-intensive occupations than nationally and less likely to occur in high skill occupations. The main reasons given by businesses for vacancies being hard to fill were there not being enough people interested (higher in Cumbria than nationally), low number of applicants with required skills (lower in Cumbria than nationally) and remote location/poor public transport (significantly higher in Cumbria than nationally).

Annex B: Additional analysis and references



Local Landscape - overview

Cumbria has the following key sectoral strengths and other assets:

- A major concentration of **manufacturing** and engineering:
- **Nuclear reprocessing**, decommissioning, environmental management and associated engineering skills with £2 billion pa supply chain spend and national research bodies and university research.
- **National nuclear submarine Programme.**
- Range of advanced manufacturing activity in plastics, rubber, paper and engineering.
- Food manufacturing from large multi-nationals to artisan producers.
- Major **tourism** sector – 47 million visitors to Cumbria support around 8% of GVA and around 38,000 jobs (more when supply chain and multiplier effects are taken in to account). Supports jobs in food and beverages, accommodation, retail, transport and other sectors.
- Significant **land-based industries** (agriculture and forestry). Cumbria has major concentrations of sheep, beef and dairy cattle and associated upstream (dairy, feed stuff etc) and downstream (food processing) activity.
- Strategic road and rail location for the North of England and Scotland (M6/A66) and important road transport sector in Carlisle (linked to motorway location).
- Although, not a major source of direct employment, there are important **energy assets** in Cumbria (beyond the nuclear sector):
 - Offshore wind farms (20% of UK capacity)
 - Oil and gas (Morecambe Bay/Irish Sea)
 - Tidal power potential in Solway Firth and Morecambe Bay
 - Biomass and micro hydro.
 - Major water assets and supplier of water to North West.
 - Other natural assets and associated natural capital and ecosystem services.
- Largest concentration of protected landscapes in UK (Lake District National Park now a World Heritage Site, large part of Yorkshire Dales National Park, Hadrian's Wall WHS, three AONBs).
- Lowest population density of any LEP in England: space to visit and air to breathe.
- University of Cumbria is located in Carlisle and Ambleside (and with smaller campuses in Barrow and Workington); Lancaster University is within 20 miles of south Cumbria; the University of Manchester and UCLAN both have facilities in Cumbria.

Annex B: Additional analysis and references

- Extensive and successful vocational training sector (FE Colleges and private providers).

Cumbria has the following key challenges and issues:

- Patchy and underperforming levels of productivity with significant productivity gaps on all measures caused largely by the sectoral mix.
- Declining working age population, which is projected to continue.
- Thin pool of higher level skills spread across a large geographical area.
- An innovation 'gap' and weak ecosystem.
- Low rate of business start-ups and enterprise.
- Few faster growing firms: in both absolute and relative terms fewer businesses that grow faster.
- Deep pockets of worklessness and deprivation including concerning levels of unemployment among young adults in some areas.
- Several areas are heavily dependent on one or two sectors and in some instances one major employer.
- Infrastructure connectivity challenge: in a physical and digital sense given the needs of our dispersed population, labour force and economy.

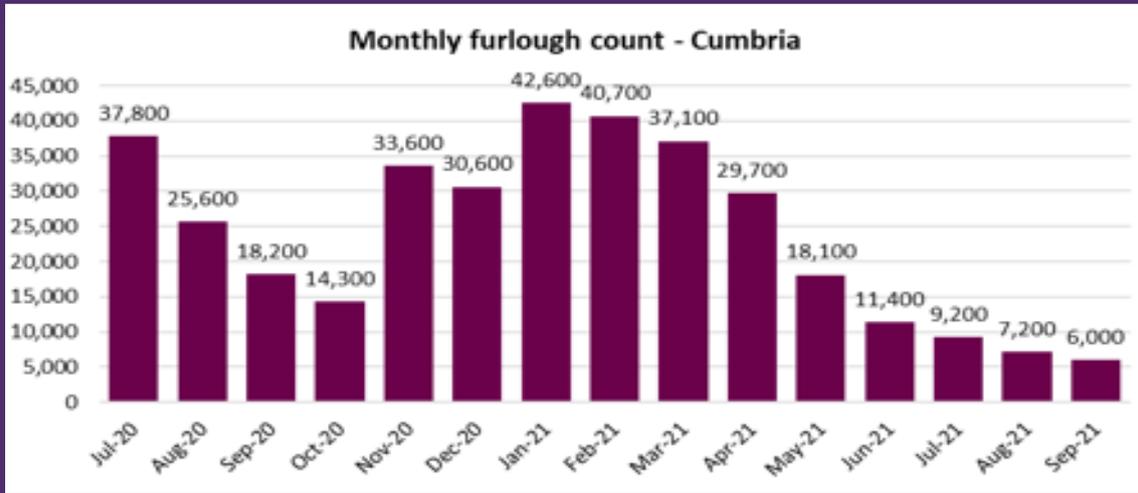
Cumbria's labour market during the Coronavirus pandemic.

- By the end of Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS / furlough) in September 2021 the total number of unique employments furloughed in Cumbria at least once at any time since the scheme started totalled 93,800.
- South Lakeland and Carlisle had the highest volumes of furloughed residents since the start of the scheme, 24,100 and 21,500 respectively. In contrast Barrow and Copeland both had fewer than 10,000 furloughed residents (9,100 and 9,400 respectively).
- Approximately 42% of all eligible employments held by Cumbrian residents have been furloughed at least once since the scheme started. This is above the UK and England averages of 39% and 40%.
- Two years ago, there were 218,740 payrolled employees resident in Cumbria (seasonally adjusted). This fell to the low point of 213,018 in March 2021 before recovering and since the easing of the second lockdown there has been substantial recovery in employment levels, which are now above those seen two years ago – 220,730 in November 2021.
- Claimant unemployment (those actively seeking work) was 6,910 immediately before the pandemic (Feb 2020) and had more than doubled to 14,475 in May 2020. Although, it has fallen since then, the count in November 2021 was still 8,960, which is 2,300 more than the same month two years ago (Nov 2019).
- The impact was uneven around Cumbria – the claimant count quadrupled in South Lakeland by May 2020 and remains more than double the pre-pandemic level. Eden also saw an above average increase in claimants while the increases in Barrow and Copeland were below the national average.
- Despite the increases in unemployment, the claimant rate has remained at or below the national average in all parts of Cumbria throughout the pandemic.

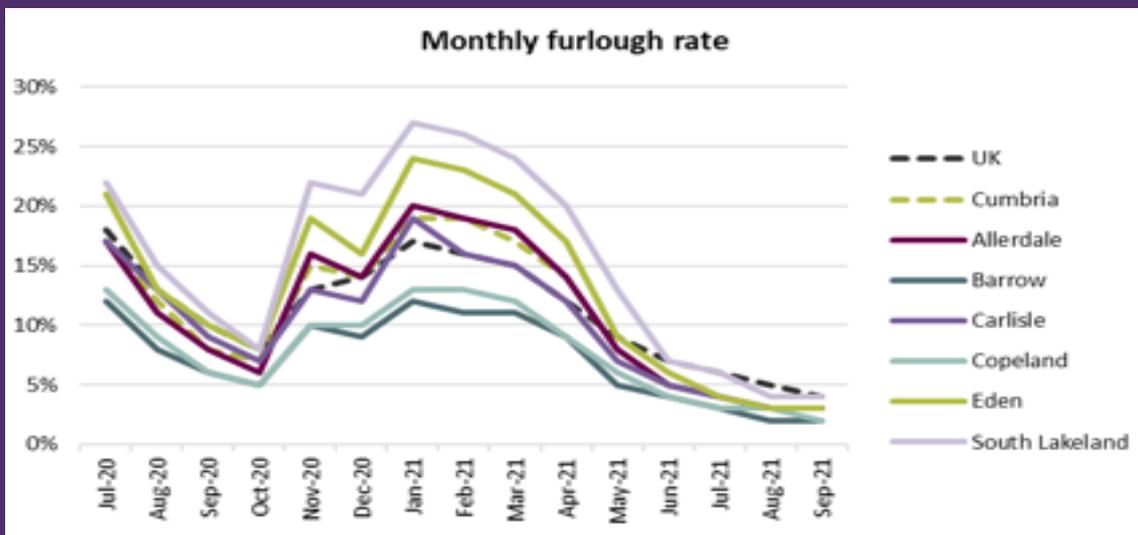
Annex B: Additional analysis and references

- Noticeable in Cumbria has been the rise in Universal Credit claimants claiming whilst in work. This has continued to increase even as restrictions eased in summer 2021 and in Nov 2021 the number of working claimants was 145% higher than two years earlier. This compares to the number of claimants in the searching/planning/preparing group, which was 49% higher and the number not required to seek work, which was 105% higher. As a result there are more working claimants in Cumbria than those searching for work, a trend not seen nationally and indicates that although payrolled employment has increased, the type and quality of jobs are not always sufficient to prevent employees from requiring top-up benefits.
- Vacancy levels dropped sharply during each lockdown and there was a record surge in summer 2021 as many sectors faced significant challenges recruiting sufficient staff. The high level of job postings has continued through the Autumn and in November 2021 there were 3,604 postings, 58% more than two years previously.
- In particular, postings in the health sector are 120% higher than two years ago whilst those in hospitality are 100% higher and retail postings are 52% up.
- In addition to pressures from the pandemic there have been concurrent pressures arising from the UK's exit from the EU and these have combined to reduce the availability of overseas nationals to the labour market. The number of overseas nationals applying for National Insurance Numbers whilst resident in Cumbria fell by 52% in 2020/21 but within this, the number applying from EU countries (historically the largest group) fell by 82%. Compared to five years ago, there were 1,500 fewer applications from overseas nationals (68% fewer overall and 90% fewer from the EU).

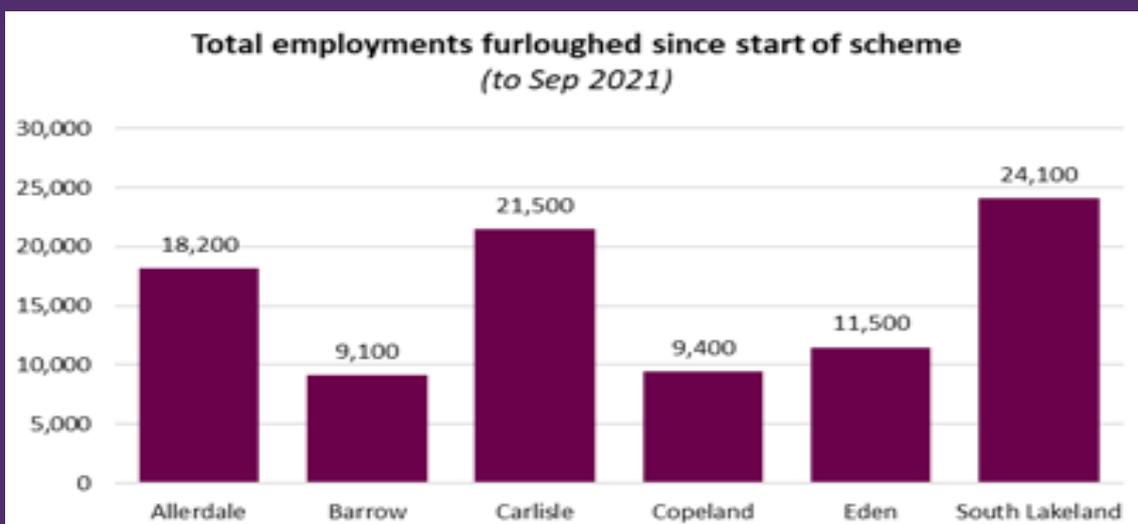
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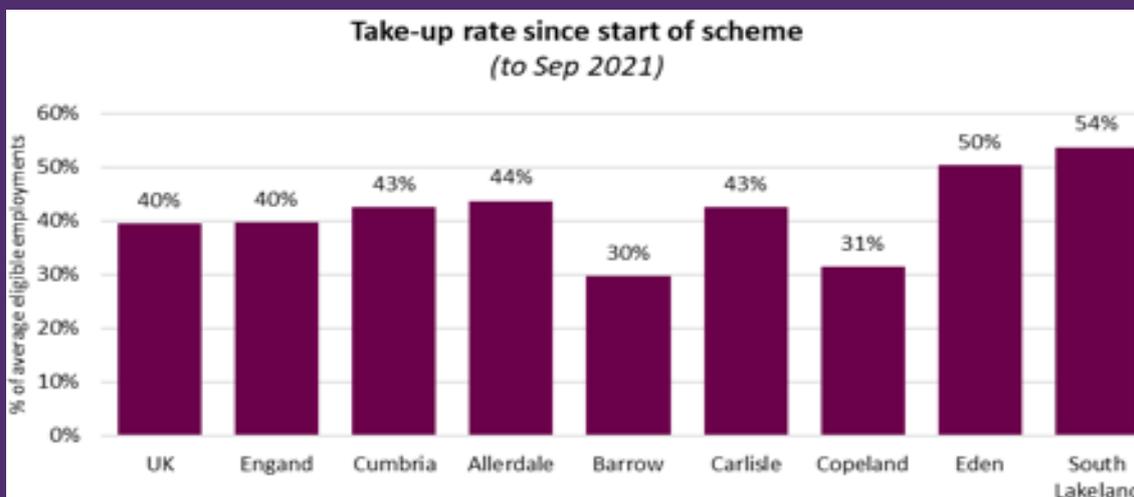
Source: HMRC



Source: HMRC



Source: HMRC



Source: HMRC

Furlough: Monthly furlough data shows that there were 37,800 furloughed jobs in July 2020, falling steeply to 14,300 in October 2020 following the end of the first lockdown before rising steeply again as restrictions were imposed once again. The number peaked in January 2021 at 42,600 before falling steeply again down to 6,000 at the end of the scheme in September 2021.

Throughout the pandemic, Cumbria's furlough numbers have risen more steeply than nationally as restrictions were imposed and then fallen more quickly in response to the lifting of restrictions.

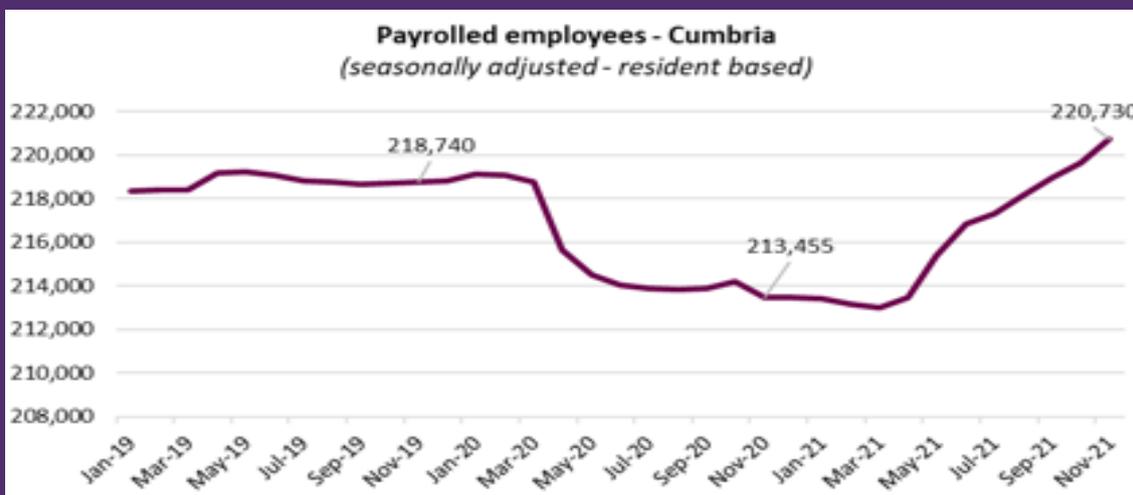
On average, South Lakeland has accounted for almost a third of furloughing in Cumbria despite only having a fifth of eligible residents. Conversely, Barrow and Copeland have both had a lower share of furloughed employments than their share of eligible residents. This reflects their different economic make up and the prevalence of furloughing in certain sectors more than others.

Data showing the number of furloughs as a percentage of jobs eligible to be furloughed shows that Cumbria's furlough rate overall has been above the UK average at times when economic restrictions were in place but has been at, or just below, the UK rate at other times. However, this has varied widely within the county. South Lakeland has consistently had one of the highest local authority furlough take-up rates in England – one and a half times higher than nationally in some months. Eden's take-up rates have also been higher through most of the pandemic, only falling below in June 2021. In contrast, Barrow and Copeland have consistently had furlough take-up rates that are well below the UK average and which have been among the lowest in the country.

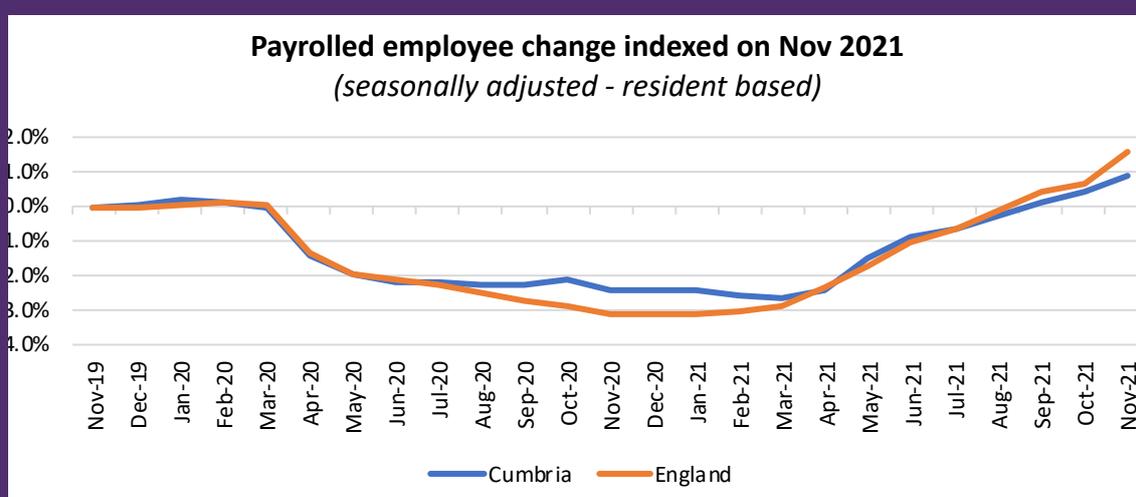
Across the whole life of the CJRS scheme, 93,800 unique jobs in Cumbria had been furloughed at least once. This is approximately 43% of eligible jobs, which is higher than the national average and especially so in South Lakeland and Eden where the proportions were 54% and 50% respectively.

The two sectors, which have had the most furloughed employments during the pandemic are accommodation & food services and wholesale & retail. In January 2021 (the peak month for which we have sector data), there were more than 14,000 furloughed employments in accommodation & food services and over 8,000 in wholesale & retail with these two sectors accounting for over half of all furloughing in Cumbria.

HMRC don't provide sector furlough rates for local areas but as a broad estimate, up to 50% of accommodation & food services employees were furloughed in January 2021 as were around 40% of those in arts, entertainment & recreation and in other services (which includes activities such as hairdressing). By the end of the scheme there was less variation between sectors with the proportions ranging from 2% (manufacturing) to 7% (other services).



Source: HMRC (note: data includes furloughed employees paid through PAYE)



Source: HMRC (note: data includes furloughed employees paid through PAYE)

Payrolled employment: HMRC now publish data on payrolled employees (reported through the PAYE Real Time Information system). This is available on a monthly basis and is therefore useful for monitoring labour market conditions.

Two years ago in Nov 2019 there were 218,740 payrolled employees resident in Cumbria (seasonally adjusted). Apart from a slight recovery in summer 2020 when the first lockdown eased, employment continued to fall through to the low point of 212,107 in Feb 2021. Since the easing of the second lockdown there has been substantial recovery in employment, which is now higher than the same time of year two years ago – reaching 220,730 in November 2021.

Using Nov 2019 as a base month, it is evident that employment levels in Cumbria broadly tracked the national trend during the first half of the pandemic. After the first lockdown however, employment growth was stronger locally, reflecting the significance of the hospitality sector locally. More recently, employment growth in Cumbria has lagged behind the national picture once again.

CUMBRIA BUSINESS SURVEY 2020

The Cumbria Business Survey 2020 was conducted in Q4 of 2020 with a representative sample of 1,700 employing businesses (excluding public sector and not for profits). It was commissioned by Cumbria County Council, Cumbria LEP, all 6 District Councils and Cumbria Chamber of Commerce) and covered a range of topics including trading & investment, business performance & plans, barriers to growth, innovation, digital technology, low carbon, skills, EU and COVID-19 impact. The full report will be published on the Cumbria Observatory website in Spring 2021 (see References for link).

Training & Development

Around half of Cumbria establishments (49% overall) have either a training plan that specifies in advance the level and type of training their employees will need in the coming year in place (42%) or a budget for training expenditure (33%).

Just over half of establishments (56%) had arranged or funded staff training or development for employees at their site. This is a lower proportion than in 2015/16 (61%) and 2013 (62%). Training may have been lower priority in 2020 against the challenges faced during the COVID-19 pandemic and there are likely to have been fewer new starters.

More than half of establishments (54%) plan to provide training in the next year (41% off-the-job training and 48% on-the-job). The most frequently mentioned reason for not planning training is that all staff are fully proficient i.e. there is no need for training (65% of those not planning training). This is more likely to be the case in small establishments where the range of skills required may be narrower.

There is a wide range of other reasons for not planning training, including that the establishment is small (12%); that there is no money for training (8%); COVID-19 issues (7%); it being low priority at present (5%); general uncertainty (3%), and that no training is available in the relevant subject area (2%). Most reasons given reflect circumstances, sometimes constraints, within the business rather than supply issues.

Opportunities for Employment & Work Experience

Overall, around two-thirds of establishments plan or hope to offer work experience opportunities of any description in the next 12 months (63%).

More than a quarter plan or hope to offer apprenticeship opportunities for 16 to 24 year olds (28%), while fewer (18%) plan or hope to offer these opportunities for older people (aged 25 and over).

Almost two-fifth of respondents (38%) reported that their establishment plans to offer employment opportunities for young people.

One in six respondents (18%) reported that their establishment plans to offer other technical education opportunities.

A third of all respondents (33%) reported that their establishment plans to offer higher level skills development for staff.

More than a quarter of respondents (28%) reported that their establishment plans to offer work experience/taster opportunities (including virtual formats) and volunteering opportunities are likely to be offered within 18% of establishments.

Site visits are likely to be a feature within around a fifth of establishments (21%) and around one in six establishments plan to undertake activities in local schools or colleges or universities to promote careers in their sector in the next 12 months (17% within schools; 16% within colleges or universities).

Cumbria Business Survey 2020 (cont.)

Further data from the Cumbria Business Survey 2020 on skills needs confirmed that skills gaps remain among the Cumbrian workforce and their prevalence may have increased since 2015/16 (although the sample base was different, which may explain some of this variance).

Skills Gaps

More than a fifth of respondents (22%) identified skill gaps within their establishment, and this represents a significantly higher proportion than in 2015/16 (14%). Reflecting the number of employees and the scope for skill shortfalls, the propensity to report skill gaps increases with establishment size from 18% where there are fewer than 10 employees to 36% where there are between 25 and 99 employees, to 46% in establishments with 100 or more employees.

In terms of where skill gaps lie, technical and practical skills, or skills specialist to sectors predominate (63% of those reporting skill gaps). Advanced IT or software skills are next most frequently mentioned as skill gaps (42%), followed by management skills (34%). While featuring heavily as skills in which the workforce is lacking, IT/computer-based skills also feature in terms of specific technical or practical skills that are needed (21% of those specifying technical or practical skills).

Employer demand – West Cumbria

Lakes College West Cumbria produced a paper in February 2021 on employer skills demand, particularly considering the impact of the pandemic. This was based on local market intelligence, conversations with employers and conservative mitigating activities expected to take place as lockdown restrictions ease. The College's main areas of provision are STEM subjects, nuclear, constructions, civils and health & social care, supported by a broader offer, which includes arts, computing & business, public services, sport, catering, education and early years. The college is also an HE provider in engineering, construction and the sciences.

The full paper is available to members of the People, Employment & Skills Strategy Group (PESSG) for Cumbria but some key skills needs identified by West Cumbrian businesses were:

Nuclear sector - technical skills at level 4-6, civil engineers, civil site manager, quantity surveyor, nuclear specialists, asset & facilities managers, electrical engineers, mechanical & electrical design, control & automation.

Construction – civil engineers, civil site managers, heavy civils & plant, quantity surveyors, scaffolders.

Engineering & manufacturing –management upskilling from level 4-6, support service upskilling, safety, health & environment, technical short courses, lean manufacturing, digital, food manufacturing, quality control, basic & advanced digital skills.

Health & social care –digital, leadership, technical, managerial.

Digital –baseline digital, machining & manufacturing technology, computer aided design, digital marketing, IT professionals.

Business support – quality, marketing, social media, website development, higher management.

DIGITAL STRATEGY

Overall skills priorities

- Developing a high-quality skills and training offer that is focused on the needs of the employer and wider economy (see curriculum for growth).
- Promoting digital as a career option for young people (see Careers Strategy).
- Encouraging lifelong learning including the uptake of basic digital skills for those unable to use technology.
- Improving the adaptability of the workforce to future changes – by developing digital capability
- Support the capacity of schools to nurture and develop children's digital capabilities - through formal education by embracing technology and encouraging its use in the classroom. Deliver targeted school-business engagement activities focused on the STEM requirements of future employers.
- Enabling education professionals to be digitally enabled - ensure schools are plugged into the leading digital networks and have resources to access appropriate digital equipment and software to enable pupils to learn with the latest digital applications.
- Continuing to align the further and higher education curriculum with business needs – further and higher education institutions to deliver curriculum and content that is relevant to employers needs and emerging trends in the digital sector.

Specific higher level skills needs as identified:

- digital design
- digital tools for innovation
- data analysis
- insight visualisation
- simulation
- automation
- artificial intelligence
- data capture
- data manipulation
- data storage
- data curation
- cloud-based development, mapping and management
- coding and
- cyber-security.

References / Links

Document / Data Source	Link
Cumbria LEP Skills Evidence Base 2019	Skills evidence base
Cumbria LEP Local Industrial Strategy Evidence Base 2019	Cumbria LIS evidence base
Cumbria LEP Local Industrial Strategy 2019	Cumbria LIS
Cumbria Intelligence Observatory (monthly labour market briefings)	Labour Market Briefings
Cumbria Intelligence Observatory (home page)	Cumbria Intelligence Observatory
Labour Insight job postings (available via subscription)	EMSI Burning Glass
Banksearch Start-Up data (available via subscription)	Banksearch Consultancy Ltd
Cumbria's Economic Forward Look Sept 2021	Available on request from Cumbria LEP

Annex C: Labour supply working group action plan

PRIORITY	ACTIVITY	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY	TIMESCALE	OUTCOME
1. Growing the Labour Pool	1.1 Develop a case to government to secure greater number of foreign workers.	Labour Supply Working Group	January 2022	Increased labour pool available to businesses.
	1.2 Ensure that all businesses understand how they can currently access foreign labour.	Labour Supply Working Group	January 2022	Greater access to foreign labour.
	1.3 Work with DWP to map specific return to work activity in line with supply and demand in key locations.	CLEP Project Lead	January 2022	Increased understanding of the matching capacity in the system.
	1.4 Develop a 'virtual' matching service linking supply and demand.	CLEP Project Lead	February 2022	Increased placement of people into jobs.
	1.5 Develop and implement a campaign focussed on extending working life, promoting return to work by those returning to the labour market.	CLEP	January 2022	Greater return to work of those currently outside of the workforce.
	1.6 Actively target organisations with early retirees (e.g., blue light services and blue-chip companies) to encourage new careers in new sectors.	CLEP	January 2022	Increased retention of skills and expertise to help address current labour shortages.
	1.7 Encourage undergraduates in local and the surrounding areas to seek flexible part-time employment in Cumbria.	Careers Hub/University of Cumbria	February 2022	Increased labour pool available to businesses.
	1.8 Promote Cumbria as 'your next challenge' location for ex-Armed Forces.	CLEP	February 2022	Increased resilient labour pool available to businesses.
	1.9 Re-launch an enhanced Your Future campaign.	CLEP	December 2021	Cumbria's employment offer is promoted widely.
	1.10 Implement the 'place to be' campaign to promote Visitor Economy job opportunities.	Cumbria Tourism	Ongoing	Careers in the visitor economy promoted widely.
	1.11 Develop and Implement the Warm Welcome Charter, ensuring that this embraces the whole family.	CLEP Project Lead/Labour Supply Working Group/ Janet Garner	February 2022	Increased inward migration and retention of those coming into Cumbria.

Annex C: Labour supply working group action plan

PRIORITY	ACTIVITY	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY	TIMESCALE	OUTCOME
2. Retain Our Future Talent	2.1 Develop and implement a revised Careers and Enterprise Strategy to ensure that all key careers are effectively promoted.	CLEP/Careers Hub	January 2022	Young people are aware of the breadth of careers available.
	2.2 Re-launch an enhanced and improved Our Future campaign to promote careers in Cumbria.	CLEP/Careers Hub Janet Garner/ Gill Haigh	December 2021	Young people are aware of the breadth of careers available.
	2.3 Encourage young people to have a year in business and industry prior and during University.	Careers Hub/University of Cumbria	February 2021	Increased labour supply and awareness of local career opportunities.
	2.4 Create an integrated careers pathway, which brings together opportunities within a wide range of businesses.	CLEP Sector Panels	April 2022	Increased availability of career paths outside of major employers.
	2.5 Develop a co-ordinated programme of skills and careers fairs to ensure that all major opportunities are show cased.	Careers Hub	April 2022	Increased awareness of careers options and reduced demand on employers time.
	2.6 Develop a Future Leaders mentoring programme.	Labour Supply Working Group	April 2022	New cohort of leaders developed.
	2.7 Develop a programme of activity that demonstrates careers options in different localities for example showing young people in Barrow the Visitor Economy in the Lake District.	Janet Garner/Gill Haigh	April 2022	Young people are aware of the breadth of careers available.
	2.8 Develop and implement a Graduate Retention Programme.	University of Cumbria	May 2022	Greater number of graduates are retained in Cumbria.

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PRIORITY	ACTIVITY	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY	TIMESCALE	OUTCOME
3. Affordable and Available Housing Supply	3.1 Map accommodation availability in demand hotspots.	CLEP Project Lead	March 2022	Better understanding of the housing challenges and opportunities.
	3.2 Complete a mapping exercise of market demand in letting agencies.	CLEP Project Lead	March 2022	Better understanding of the housing challenges and opportunities.
	3.3 Develop new solutions to areas of high demand, including Pop and Drop pods.	Labour Supply Working Group	May 2022	Increased housing availability for the workforce.
	3.4 Encourage employers to consider their accommodation offer as part of their employment package.	Labour Supply Working Group	March 2022	Housing supply issues considered as part of the employment offer.
4. Improve Transport Connectivity	4.1 Finalise and implement the Cumbria Transport and Infrastructure Plan (CTIP).	Cumbria County Council/ CLEP	January 2022	Addressing the needs of the economy prioritised in transport strategy.
	4.2 Ensure that public transport routes prioritise links to work and education.	Cumbria County Council/DfT/ Operators	December 2021	Increased public transport availability.
	4.3 Promote Cumbria's connectivity within the context of the UK.	CLEP	February 2022	Cumbria's 'heart of the UK' location better understood.
	4.4 Develop a funding bid for the provision of innovative travel solutions to link supply and demand.	Labour Supply Working Group	TBC	Funding available to develop innovative solutions to getting people to work.
5. Address Systemic Issues	5.1 Identify the systemic skills and labour issues that need to be addressed.	LSIP Working Group Gill Haigh/ Janet Garner	March 2022	System better reflects the needs of the economy and businesses.
	5.2 Ensure that the updated Local Skills Report identifies the reasons for shortages in key professions.	PESSG	January 2022	Better targeted solutions are put in place.
	5.3 Host an event for local authority planning leads (members and officers) to showcase the accommodation challenges affecting the workforce.	Labour Supply Working Group	March 2022	Awareness of the impact of accommodation shortages are fully understood by decision makers.

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PRIORITY	ACTIVITY	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY	TIMESCALE	OUTCOME
6. Great Place to Work	6.1 Develop the Modern Workplace Charter.	Labour Supply Working Group	April 2022	Cumbria offers a great location to start, build and develop a career.
	6.2 Identify equality, diversity and inclusion employer champions and effectively promote these.	Labour Supply Working Group	April 2022	Cumbria is seen as an open and inclusive location.
	6.3 Encourage Employers to create exemplary working environments.	Labour Supply Working Group	April 2022	Greater numbers of people are encouraged to stay or come to build their career here.
	6.4 Run a Great Place to Work Competition.	Labour Supply Working Group	June 2022	Cumbria's employment offer is promoted widely.
	6.5 Use Cumbria's exceptional natural and cultural offer to promote careers in the County.	CLEP	December 2021	National understanding of the lifestyle offer accompanying the careers opportunities available.
7. Upskilling and Reskilling the Workforce	7.1 Use the LSIP Focus Group sessions to explore business requirements.	Chamber of Commerce/LSIP Working Group	February 2022	Employers requirements better understood.
	7.2 Identify what upskilling means to employers.	CLEP Project Lead.	May 2022	Employers requirements better understood.
	7.3 Map how the existing offer (quality, format, quantity etc) meets employers need.	CLEP Project Lead	June 2022	Better understanding of gaps in provision.
	7.4 Commission provision to address the gaps.	PESSG	July 2022 onwards	Provision responds to business demand.
8. Address the Productivity 'Opportunity'	8.1 Ensure that productivity improvements are embedded in all business support activity advice.	CLEP	December 2021	Businesses think about how different systems, processes etc could reduce demand.
	8.2 Actively promote all programmes, tools and funding that target productivity improvements.	Business Support Providers	April 2022	Businesses think about how different systems, processes etc could reduce demand.

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PRIORITY	ACTIVITY	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY	TIMESCALE	OUTCOME
9. Develop an Apprenticeship Strategy	9.1 Complete an analysis of apprenticeship performance data.	Cumbria Intelligence Observatory	March 2022	Key performance issues are understood.
	9.2 Develop an evidential apprenticeship strategy that reflects labour market priorities.	PESSG	May 2022	Activity reflects strategic priorities.
	9.3 To develop a Pan-County Apprenticeship Brokerage Service.	Strategic Development Fund Strategy Group	March 2022	Apprenticeships model simplified for employers.
10. Promote Cumbria's skills and learning offer	10.1 Identify exemplars of the HE, FE, Secondary and Independent skills and learning offer.	PESSG	March 2022	Cumbria's skills and learning excellence is captured.
	10.2 Use these case studies to promote Cumbria's skills and learning offer through the Your Future campaign.	CLEP	April 2022	Cumbria's excellent skills and learning offer is promoted within and outside of Cumbria.

LOCAL SKILLS REPORT 2021