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LSIP

Local Skills
Improvement Plan
Warwickshire

'This Local Skills Improvement Plan has been approved by the Secretary of State in accordance with the requirements of section 1 of the Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022, and the relevant published statutory guidance.'

INTRODUCTION AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Warwickshire stands at an important moment in its economic development, with technological change, sectoral diversification and shifting labour market demands reshaping the skills required across the county. The Warwickshire Local Skills Improvement Plan, led by Coventry and Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce and developed in partnership with Warwickshire County Council (WCC), sets out a clear, evidence-led and employer-driven vision for a post-16 technical education and training system that is more agile, responsive and aligned to the realities of modern work. Drawing on extensive employer surveys, meaningful engagements, themed solutions workshops and detailed research, the LSIP synthesises a rich body of intelligence from engagements with almost 700 employers, education providers and civic partners into a shared plan for action. This has been developed for employers, colleges, independent training providers, Higher Education institutions, civic partners and communities, each of whom will continue to play a critical role in ensuring that Warwickshire's workforce has the skills and opportunities needed to thrive.

The value of the LSIP lies in its ability to reflect employer insight and translate it into practical, collaborative and achievable priorities. Employers across Warwickshire, large and small, rural and urban, and spanning sectors from manufacturing and logistics to care, hospitality, digital and the creative industries, have been clear about the challenges they face and the changes they need. They highlight significant gaps in everyday leadership and management (L&M) capability, particularly among first-time managers, and call for training that is flexible, relevant and rooted in real workplace challenges. They express strong appetite for digital, data and AI skills, yet many lack confidence in knowing what to prioritise or how to embed these tools safely and effectively within their organisations. Employers also report persistent difficulties in recruiting people with foundational employability skills and describe fragmented, unclear and inconsistent entry pathways that limit young people's exposure to real work and constrain the county's future talent pipeline. Across all sectors, employers emphasise the need for shorter, modular, accessible training opportunities that can be integrated into the working day, along with a simpler, more coordinated skills system that reduces duplication and makes it easier to find and engage with relevant support.

In response, the LSIP identifies five core priorities to drive improvement across the skills system. These include strengthening leadership and management capability through work-integrated and employer-shaped development; building digital, data and AI confidence through practical, sector-specific skills and clear guidance on safe use; improving work-readiness and developing stronger, more coherent entry routes into employment; expanding flexible, modular, blended and workplace-based training that reduces time and cost barriers; and addressing system fragmentation by enhancing visibility and coordination across provision. Central to achieving all five priorities is a strengthened Warwickshire Skills Hub, working with education providers and established education provider networks to provide a clear and trusted front door into the skills system, supporting diagnostics, brokerage, communication, funding navigation and employer-education provider collaboration.

The LSIP complements and reinforces Warwickshire's wider strategic ambitions, including the Warwickshire Employment and Skills Strategy and the Get Warwickshire Working Plan, and aligns closely with the opportunities presented by devolved adult skills funding from 2026. By drawing together employer insights with local and national strategic priorities, the plan supports a coherent, place-based approach to skills that strengthens pathways into good work, drives innovation and productivity, and ensures that residents and businesses can benefit from the county's economic opportunities.

Ultimately, the Warwickshire LSIP is a call to action for employers, education providers and partners. It seeks to play an active role in supporting the creation of a skills ecosystem for Warwickshire that is easier to navigate, more responsive to employer needs and better equipped to support individuals throughout their working lives. Through sustained collaboration and shared commitment, Warwickshire can build a workforce that is ready for the future - one that supports business growth, strengthens communities and enhances the county's long-term economic resilience.

STRATEGIC AND ECONOMIC CONTEXT

Warwickshire is home to a diverse and dynamic economy, shaped by a blend of high-value industries, strong employer networks, and a varied local labour market. The county encompasses five district and borough areas, North Warwickshire, Nuneaton and Bedworth, Rugby, Stratford-on-Avon, and Warwick, each contributing distinct strengths to the wider economic landscape. WCC's growing role as a strategic authority, supported by forthcoming devolved powers over adult skills from 2026, marks a significant shift in its ability to coordinate and commission skills provision across the county.

Strengths

Warwickshire's economy is both high performing and tech intensive. It generates approximately £20.4 billion in GVA, supported by a labour market that continues to outperform national averages. Employment stands at 80.9%, compared with 75.5% nationally, underpinned by a buoyant business base and significant labour inflows, with net in commuting of +18,299 workers. These indicators highlight the county's attractiveness as a place to work, as well as the scale of opportunity that can be leveraged through a more locally steered skills system.

The county's sectoral strengths strongly mirror several national Industrial Strategy priority areas. Warwickshire has an over representation of professional, scientific and technical services; manufacturing; transport and storage; and digital and creative industries. Its global reputation is reinforced by the internationally recognised Silicon Spa cluster in Leamington Spa, Warwick and Southam - one of the UK's largest and most successful games development ecosystems - responsible for more than 3,000 high skill roles and contributing over £1 billion annually to the UK economy.

Advanced manufacturing and engineering remain core pillars of Warwickshire's economy. The presence of high value employers, for example, the engineering and development operations at Gaydon, continues to anchor demand for digital, data driven and automation related skills. These sectors are at the forefront of emerging technologies and rely increasingly on a workforce equipped for rapid innovation and adaptation.

Challenges

Nevertheless, alongside these strengths, secondary evidence from Annex C's Summary Evidence Briefs indicates that Warwickshire faces several cross-cutting workforce challenges. Skills shortages in digital adoption, AI related capabilities, and technical specialisms feature prominently across multiple sectors, reflecting both national trends and the county's strong orientation towards high tech and innovation driven industries. Employers also consistently highlight the need for improved work-readiness, clearer early career pathways, and stronger progression routes - particularly from Level 2 and Level 3 into higher technical qualifications and work-based upskilling. These challenges are compounded by inconsistencies in first step employability support across districts and a shortage of specialist teaching capacity in emergent technologies.

Opportunities ahead

Warwickshire's emerging devolved powers represent a major strategic inflection point. From August 2026, the county will have control over adult skills funding, enabling it to tailor adult learning more closely to local sector needs, employer expectations and priority growth areas. This includes the ability to commission flexible modular provision, strengthen pathways into higher level technical learning, and coordinate a county wide skills offer that reduces duplication and improves access for residents and employers. The future devolution framework also enhances Warwickshire's capacity to align the county's employment and skills strategy with its wider economic plans, including its ambitions for low carbon construction, digital transformation and inclusive growth.

What the LSIP is trying to achieve

WCC has already established a strong strategic foundation through the Warwickshire Employment and Skills Strategy, and the Get Warwickshire Working Plan. These plans emphasise the critical importance of boosting employability, progression, inclusive access to training, and stronger links between employers and education providers.

Sitting within this broader strategic ecosystem, the Warwickshire LSIP is focused on supporting the development of a unified, evidence-led, employer-shaped skills system that can respond quickly and effectively to the county's evolving economic landscape. Grounded in extensive employer engagement, rigorous research, and collaborative solution-design, the LSIP aims to ensure that education providers, employers, civic partners, and communities work together to address current and emerging skills gaps across leadership and management, digital and AI capability, and future workforce development. By aligning local provision with employer-defined priorities, strengthening pathways into good work, improving access and flexibility in training, and supporting innovation in delivery models, the LSIP contributes to the realisation of the county's ambitions to enhance productivity, widen opportunity, and equip residents and businesses to thrive.



SECTION 1

LOCAL SKILLS NEEDS



Warwickshire's economy is evolving rapidly, shaped by technological change, strong sectoral specialisms and shifting employer expectations. Section 1 of the LSIP draws on a rich and rigorously assembled evidence base to identify the county's priority skills needs for the next three years. This evidence - outlined in detail in Annex C - combines quantitative surveying of 391 employers and extensive meaningful engagements and cross-sector solutions workshops with 197 and 88 employers, education providers and civic partners respectively, supported by desk research drawing on national datasets, Skills England publications, local economic strategies and ONS labour market intelligence. Together, these sources provide a robust, triangulated picture of employer demand and system readiness, validating the LSIP's conclusions and aligning them clearly with both national and local strategic priorities.

This extensive evidence gathering identified five overarching priorities for Warwickshire's skills system:

- Priority 1: Strengthening leadership and management capability through work-integrated development
- Priority 2: Building digital, data and AI confidence to support technology adoption
- Priority 3: Developing a future ready workforce through enhanced work- readiness and clearer entry pathways
- Priority 4: Expanding flexible, modular and accessible training to reduce participation barriers
- Priority 5: Improving system navigation, visibility and co-design across the skills ecosystem

These challenges are felt across the county's diverse economy, including advanced manufacturing, logistics, health and social care, tourism and hospitality, and agriculture and other land-based and rural industries, where workforce access, training delivery and infrastructure constraints shape skills demand in distinct ways. These priorities also strongly mirror the priorities of the Modern Industrial Strategy, which highlights digital transformation, advanced manufacturing, clean growth and high-value services as national growth drivers. Warwickshire's notable concentrations in professional, scientific and technical services, transport and storage, digital and creative industries - including the globally recognised Silicon Spa cluster - and advanced manufacturing reinforce this alignment, demonstrating that the county's economic trajectory sits squarely within national ambitions.

The LSIP's findings also directly support WCC's strategic priorities, including the Warwickshire Employment and Skills Strategy, and Get Warwickshire Working Plan, which collectively emphasise employability, progression routes, digital capability, inclusive access to training and more coherent employer-education provider collaboration. The robust evidence base confirms these themes: employers continue to face longstanding shortages in skilled technical roles, widespread gaps in foundational employability skills, persistent difficulties with digital capability and confidence, and significant time, cost and accessibility barriers that limit engagement with training. These issues are reinforced throughout the survey data, qualitative interviews and workshop insights, as well as Skills England intelligence on emerging and future demand in digital, engineering, logistics, construction and care.

Broader labour market analysis shows Warwickshire to be a high performing, tech intensive economy, with above average employment rates, strong labour inflows and a buoyant business base. At the same time, the evidence confirms growing pressures: declining entry level opportunities, fragmented pathways from education into work, rising employer expectations around digital and AI literacy, and inequalities in access for rural communities and under represented groups. These challenges, together with the opportunities presented by devolved adult skills funding from 2026, underscore the need for a more agile, coherent and employer shaped skills system capable of responding to both current and emerging skills needs.

Taken together, the following section offers a clear, evidence-led understanding of Warwickshire's priority skills needs and the structural issues that underpin them. It provides a compelling foundation for the changes and actions set out in Section 2, and a strong mandate for a more responsive, integrated and forward-looking skills system that supports business growth, strengthens workforce participation and ensures all communities can access the opportunities of a modern, dynamic economy.

PRIORITY 1: STRENGTHENING LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT CAPABILITY THROUGH WORK-INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT

Evidence gathered through the Warwickshire LSIP process shows that employers across sectors recognise leadership and management capability as central to workforce development, retention, productivity and organisational culture. This was reinforced through quantitative surveying, meaningful employer engagements, and the dedicated L&M Solutions Workshop. While good practice exists, the evidence demonstrates significant gaps in core management capability, particularly in SMEs and in first time or “accidental” managers, alongside clear employer appetite for modular, practical, and work integrated development opportunities.

Employers also emphasised the operational pressures that limit engagement - most notably time, cost, and lack of accessible, relevant provision - indicating a need for flexible and responsive approaches.

Employers highlighted substantial gaps in everyday management skills. Specifically, in the Leadership and Management Development Solutions Workshop, employers repeatedly raised ‘significant gaps in fundamental leadership skills, particularly among first-time managers,’ including ‘lack of confidence, difficulties managing people, handling difficult conversations, conducting performance reviews, and managing absence or wellbeing issues.’ In some cases, it was said that ‘managers hold responsibility without sufficient authority, leading to over-reliance on HR and reduced effectiveness.’

In the Higher-Level Skills Solutions Workshop, employers described clear demand for accessible Level 4–6 leadership and management development that supports progression for experienced staff without requiring full degree level commitment. Participants consistently stressed that higher level leadership capability is critical to driving productivity, retention and organisational culture, yet remains underserved by existing provision. Employers expressed particular interest in modular, bite sized leadership development that can be delivered through blended or workplace integrated models, allowing progression into higher level qualifications over time while minimising disruption to operations.

These gaps have direct impacts on retention, morale, and organisational culture, especially in people intensive sectors such as care and hospitality.

While core themes were shared across sectors, employers also articulated distinct sector-specific needs.

SECTOR-SPECIFIC EVIDENCE	
Health and Social Care	• Leadership capability directly affects retention, wellbeing, and culture; evidence emphasises that sectors like care identify L&M development as ‘critical for improving retention, morale and organisational culture.’ • Care employers value training that supports ‘emotional intelligence, inclusive leadership and employee wellbeing.’ • One meaningful engagement respondent said they prefer working with trainers who have first-hand sector experience, as “we prefer doing training with someone who has worked in the field of care... face to face encourages more interactions.”
Engineering and Manufacturing	• Employers report progression challenges where technically strong staff step into leadership without structured support. • The Leadership and Management Development Solutions Workshop highlighted the need for ‘more structured and accessible management training’ for new supervisors rising from operational roles. • Sector SMEs struggle with project-based assessment requirements in apprenticeships; ‘the requirement for project-based assessment can be challenging for SMEs with limited capacity.’
Hospitality and Retail	• Employers balance complex staffing models with significant retention pressures. • Feedback shows a desire for “particularly supervisory and leadership training,” and flexible delivery suitable for shift-based operations.
Transport and Logistics	Leadership development needs are tied to compliance, safety and changing regulations; one employer stressed training “must reflect real-world requirements and be updated regularly” to keep pace with operational realities.

Professional Services	Employers reported challenges progressing staff into higher level administration or team leadership roles, emphasising gaps in planning, communication and confidence.
Agriculture and Land-Based Industries	• Need for sector-specific leadership and management training (e.g. farm/business management, people supervision, employment skills) rather than generic cross-sector provision • Strong preference for practical, in-person delivery grounded in real operational environments • Particular importance of entry-level pathways aligned to land-based roles

Source: Warwickshire LSIP employer engagements, detailed in Annex A

Barriers preventing employers from addressing leadership and management gaps include time and operational pressures. LSIP survey data found that 43% of businesses reported “difficulty releasing staff / time pressures” as a barrier to providing more development, making it the most cited barrier to providing more training or development opportunities. This was reflected in the Leadership and Management Development Solutions Workshop, which discussed the difficulty of releasing staff for training, particularly in small organisations where employees perform multiple roles as major barrier to engagement in training.

“The main barriers are time and capacity, as it’s difficult to release staff to attend training events without affecting day-to-day operations.” – Meaningful engagement participant

“A main barrier for us would be knowing if the training is going to be worthwhile as if we spend 3 hours on training then need to know whether it is applicable.” – Meaningful engagement participant

Cost and funding complexity establish further barriers. 36% of surveyed businesses identified the cost of training as a barrier. The Leadership and Management Development Solutions Workshop cited that limited budgets further restrict business investment in training, leading many organisations to rely on internal training approaches, which may not always provide the breadth or quality of external provision. Employers emphasised that investment in leadership development must be justified through clear, measurable outcomes. However, there is often a lack of clarity around the impact of training, making it difficult to assess value. Employers highlighted the need for better evidence linking training to outcomes such as productivity, retention, employee engagement and organisational performance.

“Employers are held back from engaging fully with training and upskilling due to unorganised training providers and high costs. Current economic pressures and tough times also make it difficult to prioritise training.” – Meaningful engagement participant

Employers also expressed frustration with training that is too generic or not aligned to their specific needs. Overly broad programmes that combine multiple topics (e.g. finance, AI, leadership) can lack clarity and relevance, while long, fixed programmes are difficult to accommodate. There is a clear preference for targeted, modular and sector-relevant provision that can be adapted to different organisational contexts.

Limited awareness and system fragmentation can also be a barrier - many employers expressed interest in better understanding the provision and support available.

“I would like to see more visibility around what training opportunities are available, including clearer information about grants and funding that businesses may be entitled to.” – Meaningful engagement participant

Taken together, the evidence demonstrates that employers across Warwickshire are not seeking more leadership and management training in abstract – but they are seeking training that is different in design, delivery and relevance to that which they have previously encountered. Employers are clear that effective leadership development must be rooted in the real conditions of their workplaces and aligned to the pressures they face, particularly the acute time, cost and capacity constraints experienced by SMEs. They want provision that is practical, immediately applicable, and responsive, rather than generic or overly theoretical, and they consistently emphasised the value of training that can be integrated directly into day-to-day operations through work based, experiential and modular approaches.

Across sectors, employers expressed a strong appetite for development that is tailored to their context, built around short, flexible modules, and capable of supporting progression for both first time managers and more experienced staff. The evidence highlights that businesses value training which strengthens core people management capability, supports wellbeing focused and inclusive leadership, and is delivered in ways that minimise disruption through blended, on site or hybrid formats.

By responding to these challenges, the Warwickshire LSIP can create a leadership and management ecosystem that genuinely strengthens organisational performance, supports workforce retention and underpins long term productivity across the county.



PRIORITY 2: BUILDING DIGITAL, DATA AND AI CONFIDENCE TO SUPPORT TECHNOLOGY ADOPTION

Evidence from the Warwickshire LSIP employer survey, meaningful engagements and the Digital Skills, AI and Adoption of New Technologies Solutions Workshop show strong appetite for digital tools and AI, but also clear gaps in confidence, capability and system support, particularly for SMEs.

Qualitative engagements highlight that, across sectors, employers are already identifying digital and AI as core skills gaps rather than “nice-to-have” extras. Asked what the main skills or recruitment challenges their organisation is facing right now are, employers explicitly referenced: “low level digital skills not work ready,” “AI literacy” and “digital and cyber.”

These concerns sit alongside wider recruitment challenges, indicating that basic digital capability is now seen as part of being “job ready” across a range of roles – from administration and hospitality through to care, construction and engineering.

Workshop feedback on Digital Skills, AI and Adoption of New Technologies notes that many organisations are ‘at a basic stage of adoption, using tools such as ChatGPT or Copilot without fully understanding how to embed them into workflows or generate measurable value,’ suggesting that employers need support to move from experimentation to confident, strategic use.

The LSIP survey shows that most businesses are investing in training, providing a foundation on which to build targeted digital and AI support.

Most businesses surveyed (66%) reported that between 76–100% of their workforce had received training in the past 12 months. 69% of services firms reported that 76–100% of their workforce had received training. Among manufacturing firms, this figure was lower at 54%.

However, this training is often in house and informal, rather than structured, formal provision. The most commonly reported type of training accessed by businesses in the past 12 months was in-house specialist training delivered by staff (reported by 58% of firms). Qualitative evidence reinforces this picture.

“We mainly use in-house training to be able to address any issues.” – Meaningful engagement participant

“All training needs to be done in house as there are no courses for exactly what we do.” – Meaningful engagement participant

The Digital Skills and AI workshop recognises this as a strength, noting ‘widespread engagement with informal and self-directed digital learning’ and a ‘learn by doing culture,’ but also emphasises that these skills are ‘often not fully aligned with workplace requirements’ without structured support and guidance.

Indeed, employers repeatedly report uncertainty about which digital and AI capabilities they should prioritise, and how these link to business value. The workshop highlights ‘significant challenges in identifying what digital skills are required within their organisations and how to access appropriate training.’ This lack of clarity and brokerage is a core confidence issue: many employers know they ‘should be doing something’ on digital and AI, but are unsure where to start, what’s trustworthy, or how to measure impact.

The LSIP survey confirms that time and cost are the dominant barriers to increasing training and development, and as with leadership and management provision, this includes digital and AI training. Given that digital and AI training is often seen as ‘additional’ rather than core, these pressures can particularly limit engagement with new technologies.

The Digital Skills and AI workshop also identifies low confidence and trust as a major brake on adoption. Employers participating in the workshop raised concerns around data security, GDPR compliance and potential data breaches, and a widespread fear particularly among older workers that AI may replace jobs rather than enhance them. These concerns suggest that some organisations may be actively avoiding use of digital and AI tools, even where there is clear potential to improve productivity.

Linked to this, feedback from the digital workshop warns that digital transformation risks widening existing inequalities, with older workers, individuals with low digital confidence, and those without access to devices or reliable internet facing significant barriers to participation. These risks are particularly acute in rural areas, where limited connectivity and access to devices constrain participation in digital learning and slow the adoption of digital and AI technologies.

At the same time, younger people may have strong informal digital skills but lack the ability to apply these effectively in professional contexts.

Employers also report gaps in soft skills and workplace capability, noting that some employees may be able to generate outputs using AI but lack the ability to interpret, validate or communicate results effectively. This imbalance undermines both adoption and trust in digital tools.

While digital and AI needs are cross cutting, the evidence highlights important sectoral nuances in how confidence and capability gaps are experienced.

The digital workshop notes ongoing shortages in advanced digital roles such as software development, data engineering and cyber security, alongside sector-specific training in areas such as logistics automation, digital construction tools or AI-enabled customer processes. The workshop feedback also emphasised that digital construction tools and green technologies are becoming essential within construction.

In health and care, digital and data skills are increasingly central to safe, effective provision. The digital workshop notes that these sectors require digital competencies in data handling and technology-enabled care. At the same time, meaningful engagements highlight wider workforce pressures - including low pay, retention issues and the importance of communication and empathy - which can crowd out time for formal digital upskilling. There is therefore a need for integrated support that builds digital confidence alongside people centred inclusive leadership.

Warwickshire's digital and creative sector - including gaming, immersive media, and digital marketing clusters around Leamington Spa ('Silicon Spa') - is recognised as a priority growth sector within the county, and the digital workshop highlights these industries' demand for 'advanced digital and interactive skills.' While many businesses in these clusters already have high levels of technical expertise, they still report challenges in sourcing specialist talent in areas like data engineering and cyber and ensuring non technical staff can confidently work with AI enabled tools (e.g. in marketing, client management and production support). This underlines the importance of transferable digital skills and AI literacy across whole organisations, not just technical teams. Employers emphasised the need for such higher level digital skills development that focuses on applied use cases, workplace integration and business value, rather than abstract or purely technical training.

Across the survey, meaningful engagements and the Digital Skills & AI workshop, employers describe a clear set of supports that would help them build digital, data and AI confidence and adopt technology at pace.

Many employers already rely on internal experts and want to build on this with structured support for 'digital champions' and peer learning models. The workshop notes the effectiveness of peer-led learning and the role of internal 'digital champions' in supporting adoption and describes these individuals as a bridge between formal training and day to day practice.

To overcome fragmentation and low confidence, the digital workshop recommends a single, coordinated entry point for digital skills support as an active brokerage service, helping employers to identify their specific digital skills needs and navigate available provision, potentially through an AI or digital skills diagnostic tool.

This mirrors wider LSIP calls to simplify system navigation and improve access to support via a coordinated entry point, such as the Warwickshire Skills Hub.

Employers are also explicit that funding design can either enable or block engagement with digital and AI upskilling.

“Skills funding could be more flexible by supporting targeted training in emerging areas like AI, especially for customer interactions.” – Meaningful engagement participant

To build confidence in AI specifically, employers are asking for guidance on governance and safe use. The workshop recommends that training include a strong focus on AI governance, GDPR compliance and ethical use of technology, with clear guidance and practical examples on how to manage risks.

At the same time, the LSIP evidence stresses the need for a more inclusive approach to digital skills, expanding community-based learning, providing accessible and jargon free training, and supporting individuals with low confidence or limited access to technology, so that digital transformation does not exacerbate existing inequalities.

Building digital, data and AI confidence is fundamental to unlocking Warwickshire's future productivity and competitiveness. The evidence shows that employers are eager to embrace new technologies but need clearer pathways, more relevant and flexible training, and practical support to adopt digital tools with confidence. By simplifying access to provision, strengthening workplace integrated learning, and ensuring funding and guidance keep pace with rapid technological change, the LSIP can help every sector - from manufacturing and logistics to care, construction and the creative industries, benefit fully from digital innovation. This priority provides a platform for a more agile, inclusive and future ready skills system that supports both business growth and wider economic resilience.



PRIORITY 3: DEVELOPING A FUTURE-READY WORKFORCE THROUGH ENHANCED WORK-READINESS AND ENTRY PATHWAYS

Employers across Warwickshire are clear that building a future ready workforce depends on the development of much stronger entry routes into employment and a step change in work-readiness. Evidence gathered through employer surveys, meaningful engagements and solutions workshops shows that current pathways from education into work are often fragmented, hard to navigate and not consistently aligned with real job roles. At the same time, businesses report persistent gaps in core employability skills and digital capability, even where they are willing to train for technical skills on the job.

Employers describe a twin challenge: ongoing shortages in skilled and technical roles, and a lack of job-ready candidates with the behaviours, experience and digital skills needed to thrive in modern workplaces.

Employers participating in meaningful engagements consistently highlighted ongoing difficulties in recruiting for skilled and technical roles, particularly within construction, engineering, and manufacturing, with trades such as carpentry and specialist roles like grinders proving especially hard to fill, largely due to a shortage of candidates with the required practical experience and hands-on expertise. Engineering roles were also frequently identified as challenging, with many organisations noting that these gaps are long-standing rather than new, often requiring businesses to invest in internal training to bridge the skills shortage.

“Finding the right apprentice to meet higher level administration roles in the service industry has been challenging.” – Meaningful engagement participant

Alongside technical skills gaps, employers raised concerns about the overall quality and work-readiness of applicants. Many reported that candidates lack relevant qualifications, practical experience, and essential soft skills such as communication, reliability, and willingness to engage. There were also recurring concerns around low levels of digital capability, including emerging areas such as AI and cyber skills, which are becoming increasingly important across sectors. In customer facing industries such as hospitality and care, employers emphasised the importance of attitude and interpersonal skills, which are often found to be lacking.

‘Employers identify a significant gap in core employability skills, including communication, teamwork, reliability and professionalism, and report that individuals frequently lack understanding of basic workplace expectations, such as timekeeping, appropriate behaviour and effective communication. This results in increased supervision requirements, slower productivity and additional training costs.’
– Employer insights, Developing a Workforce for the Future Solutions Workshop

Solutions workshop evidence reinforces these findings. Employers identified weak and fragmented entry pathways into employment as a core challenge, noting that entry routes are often unclear, inconsistent and increasingly difficult to access, particularly for young people. Young people were perceived to lack awareness of available career opportunities due to limited exposure within the education system, especially in sectors such as engineering and manufacturing, and it was posed that this challenge has been compounded by a reduction in entry-level roles and limited opportunities for meaningful work experience, particularly at pre-16 level where activities are often restricted to observation rather than hands-on engagement.

Employers describe this disconnect as feeding directly into work readiness problems, suggesting that individuals struggle to gain the experience and confidence needed to enter employment, creating a disconnect between education and the labour market and contributing to rising youth unemployment and inactivity.

"What stops us is finding people with actual basic skills for example we have got a graduate working that lacks on basic skills." – Meaningful engagement participant, asked about what stops them from engaging more fully with training and upskilling support

In response, employers are already investing significant time and resource in developing work readiness internally. Meaningful engagement participants reported that they are "having to bring people in with good admin skills and then having to do a lot of in-house training." Some have introduced recruitment tests - for example, "an excel test during the recruitment process to be able to see that people are as good on excel as they say they are" - or use rigorous exams and training to ensure staff are competent before starting work.

Work based and work integrated models are consistently viewed as most effective for building future ready skills. In the developing a workforce for the future solutions workshop, employers identified work-based learning as one of the most effective approaches to developing a future-ready workforce, highlighting the value of apprenticeships, internships and structured on the job training that enable individuals to gain practical experience while developing core workplace competencies such as communication, teamwork and problem-solving. Project based learning and industry exposure are similarly valued, as critical in improving workforce readiness, particularly for young people entering the labour market.

For many potential entrants, particularly those furthest from the labour market, systemic barriers limit participation. The solutions workshop discussed barriers to inclusion and participation for under represented groups including service leavers, SEND learners, neurodiverse individuals, ethnic minority groups and returners, with employers citing education systems that prioritise academic knowledge over practical skills and challenges related to unconscious bias, complex recruitment processes and lack of guidance on inclusive practices as contributing factors.

Place based barriers further constrain access: transport and digital access were identified as significant barriers to workforce participation, particularly in rural areas, with limited public transport, high travel costs and misalignment with shift patterns restricting access to both employment and training. Some rural workplaces explicitly require driving licences to access sites, which can act as a barrier for young people and those without private transport. Digital exclusion - including lack of devices, connectivity and confidence - also limits participation in online learning and digital first recruitment processes, reinforcing inequalities.

To address these challenges, and enhance work-readiness and entry pathways, employers called for a consistent and clearly articulated 'first step' pathway into employment, developed across Warwickshire, ensuring that individuals can move seamlessly from education into work.

To tackle visibility and exposure, the solutions workshop also proposed earlier and more consistent employer engagement in schools, including teacher encounters, project-based learning and sector awareness initiatives such as summer schools and industry-led activities. Micro placements and shorter, flexible work experience opportunities were suggested to reduce the burden on employers, particularly SMEs, while still providing learners with real workplace exposure.

Employers also emphasised the importance of systematically embedding work-readiness and foundational skills across all stages of education and training, so that individuals are prepared not only technically but also behaviourally for the workplace.

Additionally, employers requested guidance and training to create inclusive workplaces and adapt roles to meet diverse needs, alongside simplified and more accessible recruitment processes. Digital inclusion is a central part of this, with calls to improve access to devices, connectivity and digital skills required

for online learning and job applications to prevent widening inequalities as digital and AI tools become embedded across roles.

Taken together, the LSIP evidence demonstrates a strong and consistent call from Warwickshire employers for an integrated approach to work readiness and entry pathways. Businesses are clear that they cannot secure a future ready workforce by focusing solely on technical skills or isolated programmes. Instead, they are asking for a coordinated system that provides clear, visible and sector relevant routes into employment, systematically embeds work readiness and foundational skills across education and training, offers flexible, modular, work integrated learning that fits around real operational pressures; and removes barriers to inclusion, participation and progression for all communities.



PRIORITY 4: EXPANDING FLEXIBLE, MODULAR AND ACCESSIBLE TRAINING TO REDUCE PARTICIPATION BARRIERS

Employers across Warwickshire are already investing significantly in training, but the evidence collected by the LSIP shows a clear and consistent demand for more flexible, modular and accessible provision that better fits operational pressures, workforce needs and sector-specific contexts.

The survey data shows that businesses are already favouring delivery models that can be tailored and accessed flexibly.

Most businesses surveyed by the LSIP (65%) reported that they provide training support for all employees, and two-thirds (66%) reported that between 76–100% of their workforce had received training in the past 12 months.

The most commonly reported types of training accessed by businesses in the past 12 months were in-house specialist training delivered by staff (58%), digital learning platforms such as LinkedIn Learning (42%), and short, modular programmes (17%).

This pattern is similar across sectors: services firms most commonly use in house training (59%) and digital learning platforms (47%), with 18% using short, modular programmes, while among manufacturing firms 54% use in house training, 26% use digital platforms and 13% use short, modular programmes.

These data suggest that employers are already gravitating towards modular, bite-sized and digitally enabled provision, especially where it can be integrated into the working day and aligned with specific business needs, rather than long, generic programmes.

The Higher Level Skills Solutions Workshop confirms that demand for flexibility is particularly acute at higher levels. Employers reported that traditional higher level programmes are often inaccessible due to minimum credit requirements, inflexible timetables and extended duration. As a result, many organisations defer investment in higher level development, despite clear skills gaps. Employers strongly supported the expansion of modular, stackable higher level provision that allows individuals to build advanced skills incrementally, combine learning with work, and progress towards larger qualifications over time. This approach was seen as particularly critical for SMEs, where long term release of staff for higher level study is rarely feasible.

Despite relatively high levels of recent training activity, employers report significant barriers that flexible and modular training needs to address. The LSIP's quantitative surveying also found that difficulty releasing staff or time pressures (43%) and the cost of training (36%) were the most commonly reported barriers to providing more training or development opportunities, followed by difficulty finding relevant courses, reported by 10% of businesses. These barriers are felt in both services and manufacturing, with services firms most likely to cite difficulty releasing staff or time pressures (45%), and manufacturing firms most likely to cite the cost of training as a barrier (39%).

Qualitative evidence from Meaningful Engagements reinforces that time, cost, relevance and accessibility are the main friction points. Employers also point to access and navigation issues, indicating a need for more accessible, clearly signposted provision.

"The main barrier to engaging with training and upskilling support is the cost of the programs." – Meaningful engagement participant

"Overall the main things that stop us from engaging more is the cost of training and having the time to be able to do it." – Meaningful engagement participant

“The main barrier is the time commitment required for training. Employers often have to prioritise client work over training, making it difficult to be available and fully engage with upskilling opportunities.” – Meaningful engagement participant

“The main barriers are understanding what training opportunities are available, along with considerations around competence and cost.” – Meaningful engagement participant

When asked what would most help them to meet their skills needs, businesses explicitly prioritise more flexible and modular training options, and tailored, sector-specific provision that, where appropriate, can be brought into the workplace and tailored to their context.

The three thematic Solutions Workshops, on Leadership and Management Development, Digital Skills, AI and Adoption of New Technologies, and Developing a Workforce for the Future also each, independently confirm that modular, flexible and accessible training is a shared priority for employers and a necessary condition for improving participation and outcomes.

Taken together, this evidence demonstrates that employers across Warwickshire are already using flexible modes such as digital platforms and short, modular programmes, but face persistent barriers of time, cost, relevance and access. They are explicitly calling for shorter, modular, blended and workplace-based training, underpinned by more flexible funding and clearer information, and this need is reinforced and specified further through co-designed solutions in leadership, digital skills and workforce development.

Expanding flexible, modular and accessible training is not just a preference but a practical necessity if participation in training is to increase, particularly for SMEs that struggle to release staff and absorb costs.



PRIORITY 5: IMPROVING NAVIGATION, VISABILITY AND CO-DESIGN ACROSS THE SKILLS ECOSYSTEM

Improving system navigation, visibility and co-design across Warwickshire's skills ecosystem emerged as a core employer priority throughout the LSIP evidence base. Across Quantitative Surveying, Meaningful Engagements, and the Solutions Workshop Findings, businesses consistently reported that the skills system feels fragmented, difficult to access, and insufficiently aligned to real business needs. Employers noted that while individual pockets of strong provision exist, the overall system lacks clarity, coordination and an accessible "front door" through which businesses, particularly SMEs, can understand what support is available and how to engage with it.

These challenges are particularly pronounced for rural and land-based employers, including those operating in agriculture, forestry and dispersed rural locations. Evidence gathered through LSIP workshops highlights that smaller rural businesses often face compounded barriers when engaging with the skills system, including limited capacity to navigate provision, reduced local availability of training, higher travel costs and constraints linked to digital connectivity. As a result, generic system improvements do not always translate into improved access for rural employers without targeted brokerage and place-sensitive support.

Throughout meaningful engagements, Warwickshire employers across a broad range of sectors repeatedly described the skills system as unclear, time-consuming to navigate, and difficult to match to business needs. One employer noted: "Visibility... has not been great with communications across skills", while another stated that their main barrier was "knowing if the training is going to be worthwhile" given the time investment required. Another described the core barrier simply as "knowing where to go".

Similarly, the Solutions Workshop Findings for Leadership & Management, Digital Skills and Workforce for the Future all identified system fragmentation as a central constraint. For example, the Leadership & Management workshop concluded that 'there is limited awareness of what is available, how to access it, and which education providers are most appropriate,' noting that employers perceive both 'overload and inaccessibility' within the system.

Each of the three thematic Solutions Workshops (Leadership & Management; Digital Skills & AI; Workforce for the Future) concluded that co-design must be embedded systematically to ensure relevance. In Leadership & Management, stakeholders agreed that employers must help shape content, delivery and assessment approaches to ensure alignment with workplace realities. Similarly, in Digital Skills, employers emphasised the need for training designed around real business use cases, practical application and industry-specific contexts, and in Workforce for the Future, the workshop identified collaboration as essential for creating relevant pathways, noting employers' call for provision that reflects real job roles and supports progression.

Employers were clear that they find the most value in training when they are involved early and meaningfully in shaping it. In the meaningful engagements, employers consistently emphasised the importance of relevance, flexibility and practical alignment to day-to-day work

"The biggest influence would be the relevance of the training making sure it meets what we need." – **Meaningful engagement participant**

Employers also identified the value of co-design in the Quantitative Surveying, with 24% specifically indicating willingness to co-design course content where provision is relevant, practical and accessible.

Differences by sector were visible in several parts of the evidence.

SECTOR-SPECIFIC EVIDENCE	
Manufacturing	• More likely to request tailored sector-specific provision (19%), compared with services (14%). • Reported higher challenges in finding relevant courses (9%) and in holding capacity to release staff. • Meaningful Engagements frequently referenced engineering and technical roles where provision is too generic or insufficiently aligned to niche needs.
Construction	• Employers highlighted persistent shortages in key trades such as carpentry and specialist engineering (e.g. grinders), noting that existing provision does not align well with hands-on skill requirements. • Employers emphasised the need for more industry-relevant, practical and employer-shaped provision.
Health and social care	• Noted heavy reliance on in-house training and a strong need for specific qualifications and compliance-related provision. • Training needs to reflect real-world context, including language accessibility and hands-on learning. • Co-design is seen as essential for creating sector-specific pathways.
Hospitality	• Employers identified cost of training and ability to release staff as major barriers. • Requested more modular, short and on-site delivery. • Strong appetite for supervisory and leadership skills training if accessible.
Digital and Tech-Adjacent Sectors and Roles	• Employers emphasised the need for provision that keeps pace with rapid technological change. • Digital Skills workshops highlighted low trust and confidence in AI tools, and the need for applied, case-based examples to support adoption.
Agriculture and land-based industries	• Face distinct challenges navigating the skills system, driven by dispersed geographies, often small business size, limited capacity and reduced access to locally delivered provision. • Evidence highlights a heightened need for active brokerage, rather than passive signposting, to help rural employers identify relevant training, assess delivery feasibility (in-person versus digital), and navigate barriers linked to transport, travel cost and connectivity. • Less likely to engage where provision assumes easy access to urban centres or reliable digital connectivity, even where relevant training exists elsewhere in the county. • Employers place particular value on a trusted, place-sensitive 'front door' that can broker locally appropriate solutions, support coordination across providers, and reduce the time and administrative burden of navigating a fragmented system.

Source: [Warwickshire LSIP employer engagements, detailed in Annex A](#)

Across each of the evidence sources set out in Annex C, businesses identified clear, repeated system-level needs, including the bolstering of Warwickshire Skills Hub as a visible, trusted “front door” for employers, clearer communication about what exists, simplified access to funding and reduced bureaucracy, and more sector-specific pathways developed in collaboration with industry and co-design of training to meet each organisation’s specific operational realities.



SECTION 2

AGREED CHANGES/ACTION NEEDED

The following section sets out the practical, collaborative changes required to deliver the employer defined priorities identified through the Warwickshire LSIP evidence base. Building on extensive employer insight, co designed workshop outcomes and structured analysis of local economic needs, this section moves from diagnosis to delivery, describing how Warwickshire's skills system must evolve over the next three years to become more agile, coherent and responsive. The changes presented here reflect clear, repeated messages from employers: the need for flexible, modular and workplace integrated training; simpler and more consistent pathways into employment; stronger digital and AI confidence; and a coordinated system that is easier to navigate, particularly for SMEs. These actions form a shared agenda for employers, education providers, civic partners and strategic bodies, ensuring that each plays a defined role in creating a skills ecosystem that is fit for the future.

Crucially, this section also outlines the system conditions needed to underpin these actions - most notably the strengthening of the Warwickshire Skills Hub as a visible, trusted front door to skills support across the county, working alongside education providers and established education provider networks. Together, the priorities and actions described here provide a clear framework to help ensure that Warwickshire's skills system remains dynamic, employer-led and aligned to the county's strategic ambitions for productivity, inclusion and growth.



PRIORITY 1: STRENGTHENING LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT CAPABILITY THROUGH WORK-INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT

Evidence gathered through the Warwickshire LSIP process demonstrates that employers across the county require a more coordinated, flexible and work-integrated approach to developing leadership and management capability. Through quantitative survey data, in-depth meaningful engagements and the dedicated Leadership & Management Solutions Workshop, employers consistently identified the need for practical, modular learning that fits around operational pressures, is rooted in real workplace challenges, and is clearly mapped to progression pathways. Addressing this priority requires a shift in how leadership development is funded, coordinated, delivered and supported across Warwickshire.

Action 1: Utilise Warwickshire Skills Hub (and other, digital engagement), as a clear, coordinated "Front Door" for leadership and management support in the county, by bolstering capacity and raising awareness of the support available

Employers repeatedly reported that the current skills ecosystem is fragmented, difficult to navigate and poorly understood, with limited awareness of what is available, how to access it, and which education providers are most appropriate. This was reinforced through workshop discussions, where participants called for a more joined-up system that actively helps businesses identify the right training at the right time.

To address this, employers called for the strengthening of a visible and trusted entry point - building on existing capabilities within the Warwickshire Skills Hub to support route-mapping, advice and diagnostic services.

Employers want a function that provides clear information on available training, eligibility, delivery formats, expected outcomes and funding options. Bolstering Warwickshire Skills Hub and raising awareness of this as a "front door" for skills support across the county will help reduce the administrative burden on more employers, increase confidence in engaging with education providers and ensure that leadership and management support is easier to access for organisations of all sizes.

Action 2: Develop modular, flexible and SME-focussed leadership pathways

Across the employer survey and meaningful engagements, there is a strong and consistent demand for shorter, more flexible training options. Survey data shows that 30% of employers want easier access to short, flexible training, while 23% reported they would benefit from short, modular courses that fit around work. Employers stressed that long or generic programmes are difficult to release staff for and often fail to meet sector-specific needs.

The Solutions Workshop echoed this, with employers calling for more modular, stackable pathways spanning Level 3 to Level 5+ that allow managers to build skills over time. These should build on the modular offering developed in response to the previous West Midlands and Warwickshire (WMW) LSIP by Skills West Midlands and Warwickshire (Skills WMW), to support distinct cohorts - first-time managers, aspiring leaders and experienced supervisors - and enable employers to select modules aligned to immediate needs, such as managing difficult conversations, absence management, decision-making or team leadership. A further developed suite of modular options would give employers the flexibility they need while still enabling progression towards recognised qualifications.

Action 3: Embed work-integrated and experiential learning approaches

A central theme across engagements and the Solutions Workshop was the value of work-integrated learning, reflecting the strong employer preference for approaches grounded in real organisational

practice. Employers reported that leadership capability develops most effectively through a 'learn–apply–reflect' model, closely aligned with a 70-20-10 framework, in which most learning occurs through experience and coaching, supported by targeted formal training.

As such, Warwickshire's leadership and management offer must embed real business challenges, live projects, problem-solving tasks and reflective activities within its design. Employers also emphasised that post-training follow ups such as structured check-ins, mentoring or coaching - are essential to translating learning into behavioural change and performance improvement. These approaches were strongly endorsed in the co-design workshop, where employers highlighted their effectiveness in ensuring that development translates into measurable impact.

Action 4: Expand flexible, blended and on-site delivery models

Time constraints remain one of the biggest barriers to leadership development. Survey results show that 43% of businesses face difficulty releasing staff / time pressures, while meaningful engagement responses frequently cited the challenge of stepping away from day-to-day operations.

Discussing leadership and management provision specifically, employers agreed that this must be highly flexible, offering:

- bite-sized sessions (typically up to three hours or half-day formats),
- on-site workplace delivery where possible,
- hybrid models that combine face-to-face learning with online flexibility, and
- recorded content to allow asynchronous access.

Workshop feedback emphasised that these blended models are essential for engagement, particularly among SMEs and shift-based sectors such as hospitality and care, as well as farms, forestry and dispersed rural workplaces. Face-to-face learning remains important for building confidence and communication skills but must be balanced with formats that minimise disruption to operations.

Action 5: Strengthen Employer-Education Provider Collaboration and Co Design

Employers repeatedly expressed the need for training that reflects the realities of their sectors and organisational contexts.

The Leadership and Management Development Solutions Workshop demonstrated strong appetite for more structured, ongoing co-design mechanisms that enable employers to shape programme content, delivery modes and assessment approaches. Participants emphasised the value of real-world case studies, employer-defined challenges and strong communication between education providers and businesses during programme delivery. Strengthening these partnerships will ensure that leadership development remains practical, relevant and responsive to changing business needs, particularly in areas such as digital and AI-related leadership capability.

Action 6: Improve Flexibility in Funding and Remove Barriers to Participation

Cost is a key barrier for many employers. Survey findings show that 36% of businesses identified the cost of training as a significant barrier to participation in training, while during meaningful engagements employers frequently reported complex or unclear funding rules that discourage take-up.

To support wider participation, LSIP partners must work with local and national stakeholders to increase the flexibility of the Adult Skills Fund (from August 2026) and explore more flexible use of apprenticeship funding - such as modular approaches and backfill support for SMEs. Employers also highlighted the importance of subsidies or shared-funding models, as well as clearer communication around available funding and eligibility. Addressing these barriers is essential for enabling SMEs, in particular, to invest in leadership capability.

Action 7: Embed inclusive, health-aware and people-focussed leadership practices

The evidence shows that employers recognise leadership development as essential to workforce wellbeing, retention and inclusive practice. In sectors such as care, employers stressed that leadership capability helps reduce staff turnover, improve morale and support team culture. Meaningful engagements highlighted gaps in emotional intelligence, inclusive leadership and the ability to support staff with mental health or muscular skeletal health related needs.

Therefore, leadership development programmes must integrate inclusive management, wellbeing leadership, and people-centred approaches as core components. This aligns with wider Warwickshire initiatives such as the Get Warwickshire Working Plan and Work Well, reinforcing the links between strong leadership, workforce participation and employment outcomes.

Action 8: Develop a clear, consistent, co-designed approach to measuring impact

Employers emphasised the need for greater clarity around the value and impact of leadership and management training. They highlighted the absence of consistent measures linking leadership and management development to outcomes such as productivity, employee engagement, retention or reduced absence.

To address this, the LSIP proposes that Warwickshire establish a clear, standardised impact measurement framework co designed with employers and education providers. This should set out expected outcomes from leadership development pathways, along with mechanisms to track progress over time. Sharing case studies and evidence of ROI will also help build employer confidence and encourage ongoing investment in leadership development.



Expected outcomes, impacts and measurement framework

ACTION	OUTCOMES	IMPACTS	MEASUREMENT
Action 1: Utilise Warwickshire Skills Hub (and other, digital engagement) as a clear, coordinated “Front Door” for leadership and management support in the county, by bolstering capacity and raising awareness of the support available	• Employers have a clear, visible, trusted single entry point for L&M support. • Improved awareness of training, delivery formats and funding options. • More employers, especially SMEs, access brokerage and diagnostic support.	• Higher uptake of L&M provision across sectors. • Reduced system fragmentation and lower administrative burden for employers. • Better matching between employer needs and training offers due to enhanced diagnostics.	• Employer reach: Number of businesses accessing L&M advice/diagnostics via the Hub. • Engagement quality: Employer ratings on clarity, relevance and ease of navigation. • Conversion metrics: % of referrals that translate into actual L&M training uptake. • SME participation: Increased share of SMEs receiving support through the Hub.
Action 2: Develop modular, flexible and SME-focussed leadership pathways	• A suite of short, stackable modules (Levels 3–5+) tailored for first-time, aspiring and experienced managers. • Employers able to ‘pick and mix’ modules aligned to immediate operational needs. • Greater flexibility for SMEs with limited release capacity.	• Increased participation in L&M training, especially SME-led engagement. • Improved managerial skill development through incremental, customisable pathways. • Stronger progression towards recognised qualifications without long programme commitments.	• Uptake and completion: Number of participants enrolled in modular pathways; module-by-module completion rates. • Progression data: Number progressing from standalone modules to full pathways or qualifications. • Employer satisfaction: Feedback on relevance, flexibility and immediate workplace applicability. • SME engagement growth: Year-on-year rise in SME participation in modular learning.
Action 3: Embed work-integrated and experiential learning approaches	• L&M programmes incorporate live projects, workplace problem-solving and reflective practice. • Employers receive structured follow-up (coaching, mentoring, applied tasks). • Learning becomes more practical and immediately applicable.	• Improved workplace behaviours (communication, confidence, performance management). • Measurable improvements in productivity and team effectiveness. • Increased transfer of learning into real-world organisational performance.	• Behavioural change indicators: Pre- and post-training assessments of confidence, communication and management capability. • Applied learning evidence: Submission and evaluation of workplace projects or reflective logs. • Employer-reported improvements: Productivity, team functioning, reduced conflict/escalations.

			Follow-up engagement: % of participants receiving coaching/mentoring and its reported value.
Action 4: Expand flexible, blended and on-site delivery models	- Greater availability of bite-sized sessions, hybrid formats and onsite delivery. - Reduced time-release constraints for employers. - Increased accessibility for shift-based, rural and high-pressure sectors.	- Higher participation across sectors with previously low training engagement (care, hospitality, manufacturing). - Reduced disruption to operations and improved feasibility of regular skills development. - More inclusive, geographically accessible training offers.	- Delivery mode mix: % of provision delivered through hybrid, onsite or bite-sized models. - Accessibility metrics: Attendance rates across rural, shift-based and SME employers. - Time-release improvement: Employer reports of reduced operational disruption.
Action 5: Strengthen Employer-Education Provider Collaboration and Co Design	- Employers involved in shaping content, delivery, case studies and assessment models. - Provision becomes more sector-specific and responsive. - Continuous improvement loops between employers and education providers.	- More relevant and practical L&M training aligned with workplace realities. - Higher employer satisfaction and stronger trust in provision. - Improved curriculum agility in response to evolving business needs.	- Co-design participation: Number and diversity of employers engaged in co-design activities. - Curriculum adjustments: Frequency of employer-driven content updates. - Quality feedback: Employer evaluation of programme relevance and alignment with real-world challenges. - Partnership strength: Repeat involvement rates from employer contributors.
Action 6: Improve Flexibility in Funding and Remove Barriers to Participation	- Clearer guidance on funding routes, eligibility and supported modular provision. - More flexible Adult Skills Fund and apprenticeship funding mechanisms. - Subsidies/backfill support enabling SME participation.	- Higher employer uptake of funded or partially funded L&M training. - Reduced financial barriers for SMEs. - Increased utilisation of devolved adult skills funding for leadership development.	- Barrier reduction: Decline in employers citing cost/funding complexity as a barrier (survey measure). - SME subsidy utilisation: Volume of SMEs benefiting from subsidised or co-funded provision. - Budget reach: Proportion of L&M training financed via devolved funding streams.

Action 7: Embed inclusive, health-aware and people-focussed leadership practices	• L&M programmes include wellbeing, inclusive leadership and emotional intelligence. • Managers better equipped to support staff mental health, wellbeing and inclusion. • Improved leadership quality in people-intensive sectors (care, hospitality).	• Enhanced staff morale, wellbeing and engagement. • Reduced turnover and improved retention. • Stronger organisational culture, reduced absence and improved team cohesion.	• Wellbeing indicators: Changes in staff engagement, wellbeing and satisfaction measures. • Retention trends: Reduction in turnover in participating organisations. • Leadership behaviours: Increased use of inclusive and wellbeing-focused practices (self-assessment + employer feedback).
Action 8: Develop a clear, consistent, co-designed approach to measuring impact	• A county-wide impact measurement framework for L&M development. • Shared definitions of success across education providers and employers. • A stronger evidence base for L&M return on investment.	• Greater transparency about the effectiveness of L&M training. • More consistent quality assurance across the county. • Stronger employer confidence and ongoing investment in leadership development.	• Framework adoption: Number of education providers implementing the standardised impact model. • Outcome reporting: Regular data on productivity, retention, engagement and absence improvements. • ROI case studies: Volume and quality of employer case studies shared across sectors. • Continuous improvement: Evidence of iterative programme enhancements based on impact data.



PRIORITY 2: BUILDING DIGITAL, DATA AND AI CONFIDENCE TO SUPPORT TECHNOLOGY ADOPTION

Building digital, data and AI confidence has emerged as a clear priority for employers across Warwickshire. Evidence from the employer survey, meaningful engagements and the dedicated Digital Skills, AI & Adoption of New Technologies Solutions Workshop demonstrates that businesses increasingly recognise the need for digital capability at all levels. Yet they face persistent barriers including low digital confidence, uncertainty about what skills are needed, fragmented provision, a lack of trusted guidance, and limited time and capacity to release staff for training. To address these challenges, the LSIP must lead a coordinated shift towards more accessible, role-relevant and employer-led digital and AI skills development.

Action 1: Utilise Warwickshire Skills Hub (and other, digital engagement) as a clear, coordinated “Front Door” for digital skills support in the county, by bolstering capacity and raising awareness of the support available

A consistent message from employers and from the Digital Skills & AI Solutions Workshop was again, the difficulty in navigating digital training options and identifying what is genuinely useful for their business. Much like the Leadership and Management Solutions Workshop, the digital workshop highlighted a fragmented system and lack of clarity on skills needs and recommends developing a single, coordinated entry point for digital skills support, functioning as an active brokerage service, including a diagnostic tool to assess organisational readiness and recommend tailored pathways.

To deliver this, the LSIP recommends strengthening Warwickshire Skills Hub and utilising incoming Adult Skills Funding to bolster capacity, develop diagnostic capabilities and increase awareness of this ‘front door’ entry point as a critical resource for the county. This would help enable effective delivery of digital and AI readiness diagnostics, provide tailored training recommendations, signpost to appropriate funding routes, and broker connections between employers, education providers and digital specialists.

Action 2: Expand modular, flexible and sector specific digital and AI training

Employers consistently call for short, flexible, bite-sized provision that fits around work pressures. The LSIP survey found that 30% of businesses want easier access to short, flexible training, and manufacturing firms particularly value sector-specific provision (19%). The Digital Skills & AI workshop also emphasises the need for bite sized and modular learning, introductory ‘What is AI?’ workshops, and role specific sessions to build confidence and generate early wins. Employers highlighted that modular learning enables a ‘pick and mix’ approach and supports continuous learning over time.

To respond to identified demand, the LSIP proposes the development of a Warwickshire Modular Digital Skills Programme, including:

- An optional digital and AI readiness diagnostic via Warwickshire Skills Hub
- Short, stackable AI and digital modules (e.g., data literacy, cyber hygiene, AI basics, digital construction tools, logistics automation).
- Community-based or locally delivered digital provision with support for those without reliable internet or smart devices
- Sector-tailored content for manufacturing, construction, logistics, care and creative industries.
- Modules that can stack into recognised qualifications over time.
- Delivery formats designed around SME needs - half-days, 2–3 hour sessions, hybrid and online options.

To address major barriers identified in the Digital Skills and AI workshop, including a lack of trust in AI, concerns about data security and GDPR, and 'cultural resistance' driven by fear that AI may replace jobs, a Warwickshire Modular Digital Skills Programme should include clear, jargon-free guidance on safe, ethical and compliant use of AI.

Action 3: Scale work-integrated digital and AI learning

The digital workshop also noted that workplace embedded learning using a 'learn–apply–reflect' model can be particularly effective, enabling teams to integrate digital and AI tools into real processes and achieve measurable gains. The LSIP therefore additionally recommends that work-integrated and applied learning models be scaled, to include on-site digital adoption visits by education providers or digital specialists, practical demonstrations using real business use cases, implementation follow-ups and coaching, and expert support with building internal processes and workflows around digital tools.

This aligns directly with co designed workshop recommendations and employer requests for practical and applied support.

Action 4: Develop and support digital champions and peer learning networks

The workshop highlighted the strong impact of internal "digital champions" who help colleagues translate digital and AI concepts into practical, everyday use. These champions support uptake, reduce fear, and help build trust - especially important where older or less confident staff may be hesitant.

To build on this, the LSIP proposes the development of a Warwickshire Digital Champions Network, to train sector-specific digital champions in SMEs and larger employers, provide shared resources, peer-learning and toolkits, facilitate cross-employer learning and case study sharing and build a county-wide culture of digital confidence and experimentation.

Action 5: Increase inclusion and widen access to digital and AI skills

The workshop identifies a risk that digital change "widens existing inequalities," with older workers, those with low digital confidence, rural populations and people without access to devices or reliable connectivity being particularly disadvantaged.

Employers also reported gaps in soft skills necessary for effective digital adoption - e.g., interpreting AI outputs, communicating insights, or making decisions.

To address this, inclusion must be embedded into all digital skills activity, by supporting community-based digital skills learning and adult confidence-building programmes, ensuring training materials are accessible, jargon-free and flexible, providing device/connection access where needed through community hubs and combining digital skills with soft skills (communication, critical thinking) for effective workplace performance.



Expected outcomes, impacts and measurement framework

ACTION	OUTCOMES	IMPACTS	MEASUREMENT
Action 1: Utilise Warwickshire Skills Hub (and other, digital engagement) as a clear, coordinated “Front Door” for digital skills support in the county, by bolstering capacity and raising awareness of the support available	- Employers access a trusted single-entry point for digital and AI skills support. - Increased awareness of digital training options, funding routes, and diagnostic tools. - More employers, especially SMEs, receive tailored digital readiness assessments and brokerage support.	- Higher uptake of digital and AI training across sectors. - Reduced system fragmentation, making the digital skills system easier to navigate. - Improved alignment between employer needs and available provision.	- Number of employers completing digital/AI readiness diagnostics. - Employer satisfaction with clarity, relevance and ease of navigation. - Conversion rate from diagnostic to actual training. - Growth in SME engagement via the Skills Hub.
Action 2: Expand modular, flexible and sector specific digital and AI training	- A suite of short, stackable digital and AI modules, including AI basics, data literacy, cyber hygiene, and sector-specific content. - Employers able to ‘pick and mix’ modules aligned to business needs. - Increased flexibility and uptake among SMEs.	- More employees developing baseline digital and AI confidence. - Workforce better equipped with role-relevant and sector-specific digital skills. - Increased progression into higher-level digital qualifications over time.	- Number of learners enrolled in digital/AI modules, completion rates per module. - Progression data from modules into longer pathways or qualifications. - Employer satisfaction with relevance, accessibility and workplace applicability. Growth in SME participation in digital training.
Action 3: Scale work-integrated digital and AI learning	- More hands-on, applied digital training, including workplace demonstrations, adoption visits, implementation support and coaching. - Stronger alignment between training content and real workplace processes.	- Increased adoption of digital and AI tools in day-to-day workflows. - Improved productivity linked to digital process improvements. - Growth in employer confidence in using and embedding AI tools safely.	- Evidence of workplace application (use-case demonstrations, implementation plans). - Employer-reported improvements in productivity, efficiency or workflow. - Uptake of follow-up coaching/implementation support.
Action 4: Develop and support digital champions and peer learning networks	- Establishment of a Warwickshire Digital Champions Network to support peer learning and internal adoption. - Sector-specific champions capable of supporting colleagues and reinforcing digital confidence.	- More sustainable, long-term digital adoption within organisations. - Reduced fear, mistrust or perceived risk associated with AI tools. - Improved cross-employer knowledge exchange and best-practice sharing.	- Pre- and post-training assessments of digital confidence and capability. - Number of champions trained and active across sectors. - Participation in peer-learning, communities of practice and knowledge-sharing sessions. - Employer feedback on the effectiveness of champions in driving internal adoption.

Action 5: Increase inclusion and widen access to digital and AI skills	• Broader access to digital skills training for groups at risk of digital exclusion. • Availability of accessible, jargon-free, community-based digital learning. • Integration of soft skills (communication, decision-making, critical thinking) into digital learning.	• Reduced digital divide and more equitable participation. • Improved workplace inclusion, confidence and progression. • Stronger digital capability across the entire workforce (not only technical roles).	• Participation rates among priority groups and underserved communities. • Digital access metrics (device access, connectivity support, community hub usage). • Pre- and post-programme digital confidence assessments. • Employer feedback on improved workplace performance and inclusion.
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PRIORITY 3: DEVELOPING A FUTURE-READY WORKFORCE THROUGH ENHANCED WORK-READINESS AND ENTRY PATHWAYS

Employers across Warwickshire have clearly articulated, through survey responses, meaningful engagements and co-designed Solutions Workshops, that developing a future-ready workforce requires fundamental improvements to work-readiness and the visibility, coherence, and accessibility of entry pathways into employment. Evidence shows fragmented routes, declining entry-level opportunities, gaps in essential employability skills, and systemic barriers that constrain both young people and adults seeking to enter or progress in work. Whilst there is evidence that some employers are actively looking to tackle these themselves, internally, addressing this priority at scale requires a shift towards a more coordinated, employer-informed, and flexible system that supports seamless transition into work and equips individuals with the behavioural, practical and digital competencies needed to thrive.

The following changes and actions have been co-designed with employers and endorsed through the wider evidence gathered through the LSIP.

Action 1: Strengthen and Map Clear, Coherent Entry Pathways into Employment

Solutions Workshop findings highlight that current entry routes are fragmented and often lack visibility, with young people having limited exposure to sectors such as engineering and manufacturing and poor understanding of available career options. Employers also report the erosion of meaningful pre-16 work experience opportunities and the decline of entry-level roles, which creates a disconnect between education and the labour market and contributes to rising youth unemployment and inactivity.

Warwickshire has an opportunity to address this through the development of a Warwickshire First Step Pathway, which:

- maps all existing pre-employment programmes, work experience offers, T Level placements, apprenticeships and sector-based work academies.
- enables consistent, structured and visible routes for school leavers, NEET young people and career changers.
- aligns provision to employer demand and local growth sectors.

Employers, through workshop co-design, have also specifically called for earlier and more consistent engagement between education and employment, including teacher encounters, real-world project-based learning, summer schools and industry-led activities.

The LSIP proposes delivery of this through the expansion of micro-placements and shorter, flexible work experience opportunities, coordinated through a central hub such as Warwickshire Skills Hub - that reduces the burden on SMEs while enabling genuine workplace exposure.

Action 2: Embed work-readiness and foundational employability skills across all stages of provision

Survey data and meaningful engagements confirm widespread gaps in essential workplace behaviours, including punctuality, communication, teamwork, reliability and professionalism. Employers report that many candidates are "not job ready," lack "basic skills," and "don't turn up on time and don't want to engage." These gaps increase onboarding costs, reduce productivity and undermine retention.

Workshop participants agreed that work-readiness needs to be systematically embedded across pre-employment programmes, FE curricula, apprenticeships and adult training. Key actions include:

- integrating practical, applied learning approaches such as workplace simulations, real-life scenarios and project-based tasks.
- defining and embedding employer-agreed behavioural expectations within curricula.
- strengthening English, digital and workplace communication skills, including email etiquette and reporting

Embedding these competencies from early education through to employment pathways will equip individuals to transition more smoothly into the workforce and reduce employers' need to fill foundational gaps internally.

The development of these foundational employability skills may also be supported through enabling modular pathways that can be 'picked and mixed' to develop specific skills as required (e.g. digital literacy, communication, supervisory skills). This approach directly responds to employer calls for training that is relevant, targeted, and immediately applicable.

Action 3: Improve Inclusion and Widen Participation to Unlock the Full Talent Pipeline

Employers highlight multiple barriers faced by under represented groups, such as service leavers, SEND learners, neurodiverse individuals, ethnic minority groups and those returning to work. Many of these challenges relate to inflexible recruitment practices, lack of workplace adjustments, or limited visibility of opportunities.

To widen participation, the LSIP and its partners should seek to develop targeted pathways that provide mentoring, confidence-building and adjustments such as flexible working or assistive technology, and share best-practice, peer to peer guidance and case studies with employers on simplifying recruitment processes, increasing transparency and workplace adaptation.

Workshop evidence stresses that inclusion cannot be separated from workforce development; widening participation expands the available workforce and strengthens retention.

Improving inclusion and widening participation must also include addressing place-based barriers, such as limited public transport and high travel costs in some areas of the county, shift patterns misaligned with bus or rail services, and digital exclusion due to lack of devices, connectivity or confidence. These barriers disproportionately affect rural communities and disadvantaged groups.

This should include exploring subsidised travel schemes or employer shuttle/transport solutions, expanding localised or community-based training hubs and improving digital access by providing devices, connectivity support and accessible digital learning options.



Expected outcomes, impacts and measurement framework

ACTION	OUTCOMES	IMPACTS	MEASUREMENT
Action 1: Strengthen and Map Clear, Coherent Entry Pathways into Employment	• A single, mapped, visible set of entry routes (pre-employment, T Levels, apprenticeships, SBWAs, micro-placements). • Young people, NEETs and career-changers experience clearer, more consistent routes into work. • Increased employer engagement in early exposure activities (teacher encounters, project-based learning, industry-led activities). • Greater availability of varied work-experience models, including shorter and more flexible micro-placements.	• Improved work-readiness among young people and new entrants. • Higher participation in early-career pathways and reduced youth unemployment/inactivity. • Stronger alignment between education/training and labour market demand. • Increased employer confidence in entry-level recruitment.	• Pathway visibility & coherence: Number of mapped routes published; employer/education provider adoption rates. • Engagement metrics: Volume of employer encounters, micro-placements, teacher–employer interactions. • Progression data: Learner transitions into apprenticeships, employment, or further training. • Employer feedback: Satisfaction with pathway clarity and readiness of applicants.
Action 2: Embed work-readiness and foundational employability skills across all stages of provision	• Employer-agreed behavioural competencies embedded across FE, apprenticeships, adult training. • Improved access to applied, work-integrated learning (simulations, real-life project-based tasks). • Stronger baseline in digital, communication, teamwork and professionalism across all learners. • Modular options allowing learners to ‘pick and mix’ specific foundational skills (e.g., digital literacy, communication).	• Reduced employer onboarding costs and fewer “job-readiness” gaps. • Faster productivity ramp-up for new starters. • Increased retention and reduced supervision burden. • More consistent employer satisfaction with entry-level candidates across sectors.	• Skills competency data: Pre- and post-programme assessments of soft skills, communication, digital skills. • Employer satisfaction: Surveyed confidence in job-readiness of new entrants. • Learner progression: Rates of successful transition into work and apprenticeships. • Reduction in employer-reported gaps: Fewer complaints around punctuality, communication, workplace behaviours.

Action 3: Improve Inclusion and Widen Participation to Unlock the Full Talent Pipeline	• Targeted pathways developed for underrepresented groups (SEND, neurodiverse, service leavers, returners, ethnic minority groups). • Employer adoption of inclusive recruitment practices and reasonable adjustments. • Reduced place-based barriers through community-based delivery, subsidised transport solutions and improved digital access. • Improved availability of mentoring, confidence-building and accessible training resources.	• Larger, more diverse local labour pool available to employers. • Increased workforce participation from groups previously facing barriers. • Stronger progression and retention of diverse employees. • Reduced inequalities exacerbated by digital or geographic exclusion.	• Participation metrics: Uptake from priority groups; completion rates for inclusive pathways. • Access indicators: Device/connectivity support usage; transport scheme uptake; rural participation rates. • Employer practice change: Adoption of inclusive recruitment and workplace adjustments. • Employment outcomes: Progression into work, sustained employment and retention for underrepresented groups.
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PRIORITY 4: EXPANDING FLEXIBLE, MODULAR AND ACCESSIBLE TRAINING TO REDUCE PARTICIPATION BARRIERS

Employers across Warwickshire have been clear, through quantitative surveying, meaningful engagements, and the three co designed Solutions Workshops, that they feel current training models too often fail to align with operational realities, workforce capacity, sector specific needs and the pace of technological and economic change. Addressing participation barriers requires a step change in how training is designed, funded, delivered and accessed. The following agreed actions directly reflect employer insight and the solutions co developed with education providers and stakeholders.

Action 1: Expand short, modular and stackable training provision

As outlined in regard to other priorities, employers consistently called for shorter, targeted learning options that reduce disruption and allow staff to develop skills incrementally. Survey findings show that short, modular programmes are already used by 17% of businesses and are particularly popular in the services sector (18%), but engagement appears to be constrained by limited availability and relevance.

Meaningful Engagements repeatedly emphasised that “shorter and sharper courses would be more beneficial”, that long courses “put people off,” and that modular formats would better enable businesses to train staff without compromising service delivery.

Across all three Solutions Workshops, modularity emerged as a primary design principle. In the Leadership & Management workshop, employers consistently pointed to the need for more modular, work-integrated and flexible training and recommended developing modular, stackable pathways allowing employers to select targeted modules based on immediate needs, rather than committing to full qualifications. Likewise, the Digital Skills workshop identified bite-sized and modular learning as the most effective way to build digital and AI capability, particularly for SMEs with limited release time for staff.

As such, the LSIP encourages partners to develop a coordinated suite of short, modular, stackable courses across priority areas, including leadership, digital/AI, technical skills and work-readiness. These modules should ‘stack’ into recognised qualifications where appropriate, supporting both immediate business needs and long-term progression.

The LSIP recommends utilising local employer co-design across all flexible and modular training development, with regular engagement mechanisms and industry-led content review to ensure provision reflects real business challenges, and secure employer buy-in and endorsement.

Action 2: Increase flexibility in delivery models (hybrid, online, workplace-based)

Survey findings show strong demand for flexible delivery, with 22% of businesses seeking more online or hybrid options, 23% seeking short, modular courses that fit around work, and 15% requesting on-site, workplace delivery to reduce travel and time pressures.

Meaningful Engagements provided rich qualitative evidence for this shift: employers called for online and on-site combinations, “one-to-one training delivered in the business,” and training modes that align with different workforce needs and learning styles. Care sector employers highlighted the importance of face-to-face provision in their sector to address language barriers and ensure comprehension for practical duties.

The Solutions Workshops reinforced this, identifying blended delivery as essential across themes. The Leadership and Management Development workshop participants emphasised the need for shorter sessions and hybrid approaches, noting that fully online delivery risks engagement if not interactive. Digital employers described hybrid learning as vital for building confidence and fostering peer interaction while ensuring flexibility.

Among meaningful engagement participants, there was also some interest in shared funding and/or pooled employer consortia, and support for temporary, in-house trainers who can deliver provision to groups of three or four employers at a time, where those employers share a similar sector and similar training needs.

The evidence suggests demand for provision across the county to be more flexible, with hybrid, online, workplace based and short in person options, delivery tailored to sector needs (e.g., on site provision for hospitality, care, agriculture, forestry and land-based businesses; digital hybrid solutions for office based roles; applied workshop delivery for manufacturing), and innovative approaches to convening minimum cohorts.

Action 3: Improve accessibility by reducing fundamental time and cost barriers

The LSIP's quantitative survey found that 43% of businesses cite difficulty releasing staff / time pressures and 36% cite the cost of training as the main barriers to participation. These findings are echoed consistently across meaningful engagements, where employers described training as "hard to schedule," "expensive," and difficult to justify when operational demands take priority.

Solutions Workshop recommendations call for greater flexibility in funding and delivery, including support for 'protected learning time', shorter courses, micro-credentials, and reduced administrative complexity, especially for SMEs.

LSIP partners have a critical opportunity to utilise devolved powers over adult skills funding to deploy flexible, transparent funding models that support release time, short courses, modular delivery, and reduced bureaucracy, making it easier for SMEs and frontline sectors to participate in formal training.

Expected outcomes, impacts and measurement framework

ACTION	OUTCOMES	IMPACTS	MEASUREMENT
Action 1: Expand short, modular and stackable training provision	- Greater availability of short, targeted, modular courses across leadership, digital/AI, technical skills and work-readiness. - Provision that enables learners to build skills incrementally and flexibly, without long programme commitments. - Training that reflects real-world operational needs via systematic employer co-design.	- Increased participation in training, particularly by SMEs and time-poor sectors. - Improved relevance and immediacy of training, leading to faster skill application in the workplace. - Stronger progression opportunities, with modular courses able to 'stack' into recognised qualifications.	- Uptake & completion: number of learners enrolled and completing individual modules. - Progression: numbers progressing from standalone modules into full pathways or qualifications. - Employer satisfaction: relevance, sector-fit, and immediate workplace applicability. - SME engagement: year-on-year increase in SME participation in modular provision.
Action 2: Increase flexibility in delivery models (hybrid, online, workplace-based)	- A significantly expanded offer of hybrid, online, workplace-based and short in-person delivery models. - Better alignment of training modes with sector needs (e.g., face-to-face for care; hybrid for digital roles; onsite practical sessions for	- Increased training participation across sectors that struggle most with release time (care, hospitality, manufacturing). - Improved accessibility for rural employers and shift-based teams. - Better learner engagement due to delivery modes that match learning	- Mode mix: proportion of training delivered via online, hybrid, onsite or short in-person models. - Accessibility metrics: attendance and completion rates across rural areas, SMEs and shift-based sectors. - Operational impact: employer reports of reduced disruption and greater feasibility of

	• manufacturing). • Reduced disruption to operations through shorter, more adaptable formats.	• preferences and operational realities.	• training. • Engagement quality: learner and employer feedback on the effectiveness of flexible formats.
Action 3: Improve accessibility by reducing fundamental time and cost barriers	• Reduced financial barriers through more flexible, transparent use of devolved adult skills funding. • Simpler, clearer funding routes that support short, modular and workplace-based provision. • Increased uptake among SMEs due to reduced administrative and cost burdens. • Potential introduction of protected learning time, micro-credentials and simplified processes.	• Higher employer uptake of training that was previously inaccessible due to time and cost constraints. • Tangible reduction in the proportion of businesses citing cost and time-release as barriers. • More equitable engagement across sectors and business sizes, especially SMEs.	• Barrier reduction: reduction in survey responses citing time/cost as primary barriers. • Funding utilisation: number of SMEs accessing subsidised or co-funded provision; proportion of training funded via devolved mechanisms. • Participation growth: increases in employer and learner engagement following funding reforms. • Administrative simplification: employer ratings of clarity, ease of access and reduced bureaucracy.



PRIORITY 5: IMPROVING NAVIGATION, VISABILITY AND CO-DESIGN ACROSS THE SKILLS ECOSYSTEM

A strengthened, well resourced Warwickshire Skills Hub, working with education providers and the collaborative foundations of existing education provider networks, emerges from the LSIP evidence as a critical system wide priority underpinning every other action in this plan. Across employer surveys, meaningful engagements and all three thematic Solutions Workshops, businesses consistently described the skills system as fragmented, difficult to navigate and overly time consuming, with many unsure where to go or how to identify relevant, high quality provision. The call for a clear, trusted and coordinated 'front door' was wide-spread, employers want a single place that simplifies access, provides tailored diagnostics, brokers connections, consolidates information on funding, and reduces the administrative burden that currently prevents many - especially SMEs - from engaging. Resourcing the Warwickshire Skills Hub to further fulfil this role, leveraging its successes in the county to date, is therefore not a standalone action but a foundational enabler.

This priority directly supports leadership and management development by improving visibility and relevance, accelerates digital and AI adoption through structured guidance and brokerage, strengthens work readiness and entry pathways by coordinating employer-education engagement, and unlocks participation in flexible, modular training by providing clear route mapping and communications.

In short, the ability of Warwickshire's skills system to deliver on any of its priorities depends on a visible, collaborative and well-resourced Skills Hub at its centre, and further advancing education provider collaboration across the county.

The successes to date of Warwickshire Skills Hub establish a strong foundation on which to build to address system fragmentation and employer navigability challenges in the county. The county has a clear opportunity to bolster the Skills Hub through the further advancement of established collaboration between education providers, and the 'no wrong door' approach to collaborative employer engagement established by Skills WMW in response to the previous, WMW LSIP. Partners might look to utilise incoming Adult Skills Funding to increase capacity, develop diagnostic capabilities and increase awareness of the Hub, to provide a centralised, visible, trusted skills gateway, providing:

- Clear route-mapping across qualifications, modular training, work-based options, and funding.
- Active brokerage that helps employers identify the most relevant provision.
- Direct communication channels tailored for SME time pressures and capacity constraints.
- Proactive outreach, ensuring employers no longer need to 'hunt' for support.

With this remit, Warwickshire Skills Hub would be well placed to develop and deliver a coordinated, multi-channel communication plan that consolidates information on training and funding opportunities, uses clear, plain-English course descriptions that reflect practical business needs, promotes success stories and co-designed interventions to build confidence, and targets SMEs through direct outreach, employer networks, employer representative organisations, and digital channels.

A strengthened Warwickshire Skills Hub would also be an opportune platform to digitally convene the proposed Warwickshire Modular Digital Skills Programme, Warwickshire Digital Champions Network and Warwickshire First Step Pathways.



OUTCOMES	IMPACTS	MEASUREMENT
• A clear, visible and trusted single 'front door' to the county's skills system, with underpinning 'no wrong door' collaboration • Clear route mapping across qualifications, modular programmes, work based pathways and funding. • Consistent, accessible information on training options, education providers, delivery formats and eligibility. • Active skills brokerage, helping employers identify the right training at the right time. • Tailored communication channels for SMEs, ensuring support is accessible despite time and capacity pressures. • Proactive outreach, so employers no longer need to 'hunt' for information or navigate multiple disconnected systems. • A platform capable of digitally hosting and coordinating county wide initiatives, including: - Warwickshire Modular Digital Skills Programme - Warwickshire Digital Champions Network • Warwickshire First Step Pathways	• Reduced fragmentation and a more coherent skills ecosystem overall. • Increased employer engagement, particularly among SMEs who previously struggled to identify relevant provision. • Higher uptake of training across leadership & management, digital/AI, employability, and modular training pathways due to improved visibility and simpler navigation. • Better alignment between employer needs and provision, supported by strengthened diagnostics and brokerage. • Improved employer confidence in the skills system, reducing perceptions of overload and inaccessibility. • Stronger employer-provider collaboration and co-design, as the Skills Hub becomes a convening and coordination mechanism. • Greater accessibility of skills and training, especially for time-poor, resource-constrained SMEs. • Acceleration of digital and AI adoption, because employers receive trusted guidance, diagnostics and tailored signposting.	System Navigation & Visibility Metrics: • Number of employers accessing the Skills Hub. • SME share of users. • Repeat engagement or returning users. • Employer satisfaction with clarity, relevance and ease of navigation. • Reduction in employers reporting "not knowing where to go." • Conversion rates from enquiry → referral → training uptake. • Number of diagnostic assessments completed. • Number of matched referrals to appropriate provision. Co design & Collaboration Metrics: • Employer participation in co design, including contributions to: - Curriculum shaping - Development of modular pathways - Sector specific content • Frequency and effectiveness of employer-provider collaboration, e.g., co designed programmes, case studies, pilots. System wide Outcome Measures: • Uptake of modular, digital and leadership programmes, attributable to improved visibility. • Improved employer satisfaction with the overall skills ecosystem. • Reduced administrative burden, measured by survey feedback on bureaucracy, clarity and effort required. Outreach & Communication Metrics: • Reach and engagement of multi-channel communication campaigns. • Website/portal usage analytics, click throughs and time to find information benchmarks. • Engagement through employer representative organisation networks and targeted SME channels.

TAKING THE LSIP PRIORITIES FORWARD

Delivering the priorities set out in Section 2 will require sustained collaboration across the county's skills ecosystem, building on the strong partnerships already established through the LSIP process. Working closely with education providers, employer representative organisations, local authorities, and other stakeholders, including DWP Job Centre Plus, we will ensure that the recommendations of the LSIP remain aligned to employer needs and county strategies, practicable, and capable of being implemented at pace. We will also continue to work collaboratively with partners to develop understanding of how skills needs and challenges vary across different parts of Warwickshire, to inform targeted interventions.

Additionally, we will bring together Trade Unions to contribute to the ongoing development and implementation of the Warwickshire LSIP, in recognition of the important role they play in skills development, and in representing the wider workforce voice.

To keep employer voice at the heart of delivery, the LSIP will establish a dedicated Employer Steering Group, comprising employer representative organisations and sector leaders drawn from across the county's diverse economy, to ensure a fair representation from businesses of all sectors and sizes. This group will provide continuous strategic input, validate emerging solutions, and act as a sounding board to ensure that actions remain grounded in real-world operational needs. The Steering Group will be supported by the LSIP Operational Board, which will provide expert oversight, coordinate activity among partners, and monitor progress against each priority area. The Warwickshire LSIP Operational Board also includes an interface with the West Midlands LSIP, with representatives from the West Midlands Combined Authority invited to attend and contribute. Representatives of WCC are also invited to attend the West Midlands LSIP Operational Board meetings. This approach ensures alignment where relevant and sharing of best practice between the two adjoining geographical areas. Together, these governance arrangements will ensure that the LSIP remains dynamic, evidence-led and strongly anchored in employer demand - enabling Warwickshire to progress with confidence into implementation and secure tangible improvements in skills, productivity and opportunity across the county.



SKILLS SHAPED BY BUSINESS IN WARWICKSHIRE

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