

Agenda item 4

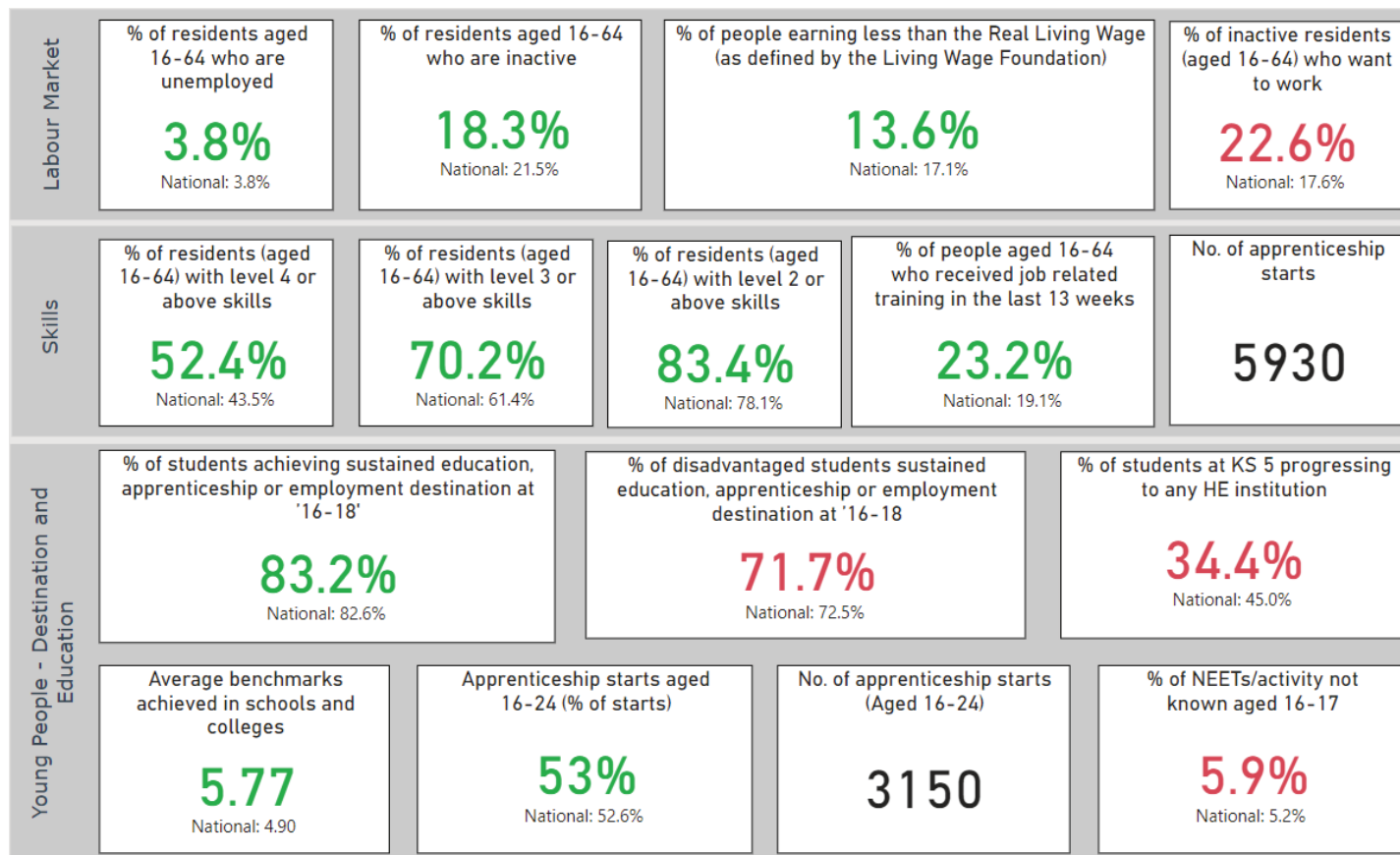
Employment and Skills Advisory Panel - update



Purpose

- Chaired by LEP Board members – Joanne Rumley with Chris Grier. Newly convened following a June 2023 refresh of the [Employment & Skills Plan](#). The West of England Employment and Skills Advisory Panel (ESAP) has a key responsibility in overseeing and guiding the strategic planning and implementation of skills related services and support within the region. It will ensure that the region effectively realises the vision outlined in the Employment and Skills Plan.
- The ESAP will also oversee key strategic skills activity which will enable us to deliver this vision, notably the implementation of the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP), led by Business West, and the rollout and continued development of Skills Connect – a key priority for the Metro Mayor.
- Members of the Panel will play a key part in shaping policy choices and endeavours related to skills education, training, and the growth of the workforce. The ESAP will rely on input and specialist advice gained from additional research, sectoral ‘deep dives’ and on input from subject matter and sector experts.

Regional performance



- Regional performance against national picture remains largely **positive**
- **Underperforming** areas are a key priority for investigation and targeted funding interventions
- e.g. NEET funding recently released through Mayoral Priority Skills Fund
- Building on recent positive trends apprenticeship provision remains a key priority

Employment & Skills Plan - Objectives

The arching objectives of the new Employment and Skills Plan are:



Delivering these objectives, the regional skills portfolio stands at circa £60m per annum delivering support or training interventions to over 30,000 residents through:

- Skills Connect
- Mayoral Priority Skills Fund
- Future Bright
- Careers Hub
- Adult Skills Fund
- Skills Bootcamp
- UK Shared Prosperity Funding
- Multiply
- We Work for Everyone
- Apprenticeship engagement

Objectives of the Employment and Skills Advisory Panel



- a) To develop a clear understanding of current and future skills needs and the West of England labour market by -
 - I. Bringing sectoral expertise and insight;
 - II. Using intelligence and research to determine further areas for deep dive or further research
 - III. Identifying emerging trends, technologies, and labour market changes that may impact skills requirements in the West of England Combined region.
- b) Identify key sectors and industries experiencing skills shortages and the nature of skills required.
- c) Provide recommendations on strategies to address skills gaps and improve the alignment between education and training programmes and labour market demand.
- d) Advise on the development of initiatives that will contribute to the development of a skilled and adaptable workforce that meets the needs of current and future employers.
- e) Monitor the progress and impact of skills development programmes in the West of England Combined Authority region.
- f) Foster collaboration among employers, education providers, government agencies, and community organisations to enhance skills development and workforce planning efforts.
- g) Monitor changing labour market issues and emerging risk and support delivery partners to find solutions to these.
- h) Share best practice in recognition of national approaches.

Progress to date

- The new ESAP will meet for the third occasion on January 16, 2024.
- The group have begun critically reviewing each of the five Employment Skills Plan objectives discussing areas of opportunity and need by sector and the challenges of delivery faced by providers.
- Business West have commenced the first task and finish group. A ‘deep dive’ research piece to identify and map green skills pathways to greener careers for the region.
- Business West will be assigned three further research undertakings in January around
 - The feasibility of a teaching academy to address gaps in teachers knowledge around:
 - Digital and new and emerging technologies
 - Green skills
 - ESOL – English for Speakers of Other Languages
 - Maths
 - Understanding current apprenticeship enrolment and achievement challenges and potential solutions
 - Understanding the regions need in relation to energy transition

Looking forward

- Combined Authority's skills officers continue to work closely with Unitary Authority colleagues and wider stakeholders to critically review and future-proof the skills system.
- Together, through the ESAP and wider commissioning satellite groups, the teams are preparing a strategic case for investment funding to realise the regional Employment and Skills Plan.
(Committee March 2024)
- Key activity includes:
 - Moving towards an outcome/benefit model of delivery
 - Continue the success of Skills Connect with a phased development plan encompassing a fully inclusive approach to jobs and training
 - Critically examining funding for adult skills, ensuring the future resilience of the Adult Skills Fund for 25/26 academic year
 - Developments towards regional approaches to ESOL and Apprenticeships
 - Make learning and upskilling even more flexible to benefit residents and the regions employers
 - More opportunity for funding innovate test and learn projects and with visible routes to market or further skills funding
 - Continued support for employers to develop teams particularly SMEs

Considerations for LEP board

- Comments and observations on the focus of the Employment and Skills Advisory Panel
- Feedback on current and future skills challenges from an employer perspective
- Suggestions for a 'deep dive' investigation into a current regional trend or issue