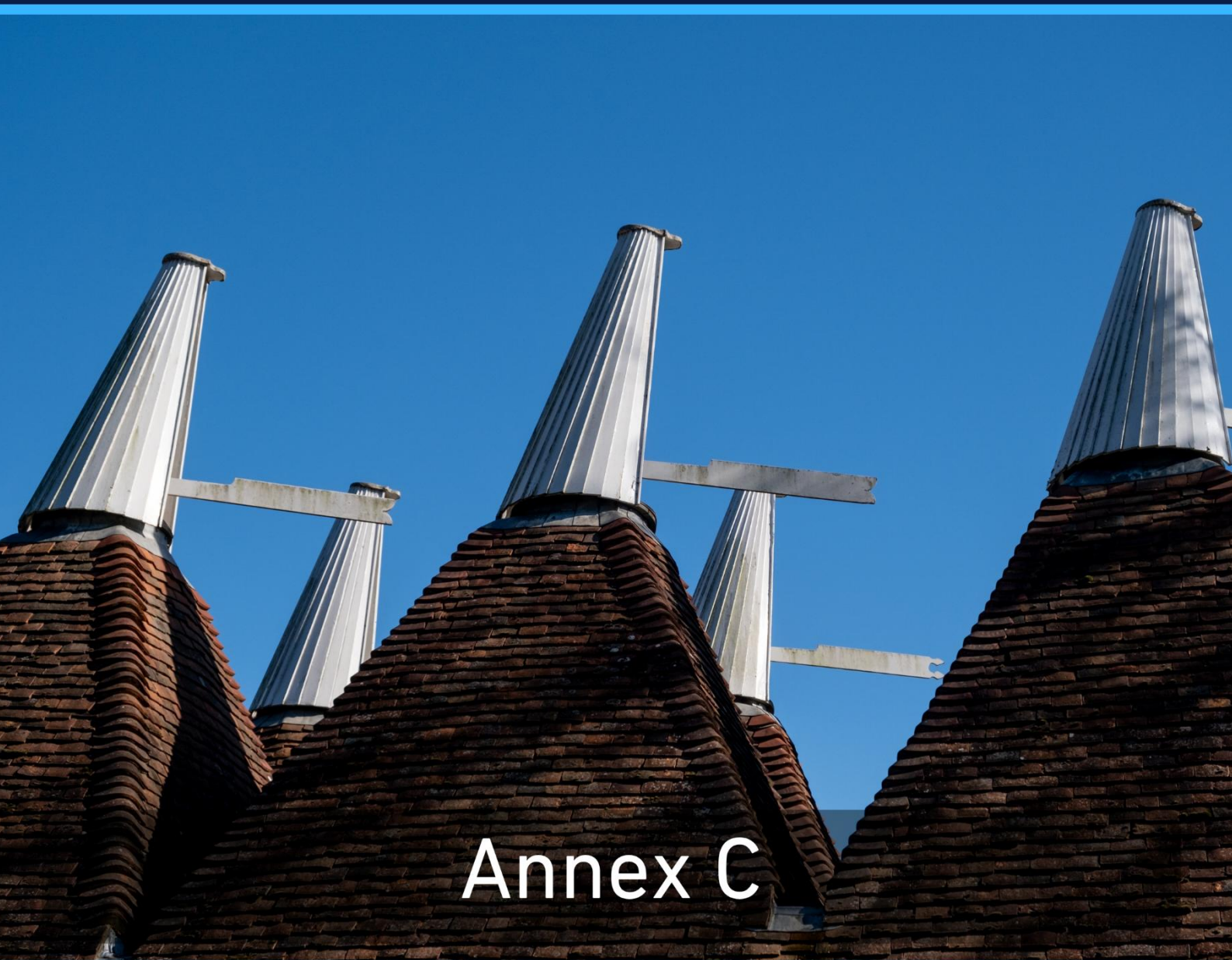


Kent & Medway

Local Skills Improvement Plan

2026 – 2029

Shaping the future workforce for Kent & Medway



Annex C

Annex C – Background and Methodology

The Kent & Medway LSIP (2026–2029) has been developed as an employer-led, evidence-driven plan that aligns explicitly with statutory guidance and the wider national and local strategy context. Its priorities are based on triangulated evidence: structured employer engagement and validation, labour market and district-level analysis (where feasible), and education/training system intelligence to test deliverability. Sector evidence reviews and governance arrangements provide a clear, auditable line from evidence to prioritised needs and agreed actions, including consideration of Net Zero and equality of opportunity.

C1. Outline the evidence base

The Kent & Medway Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) 2026–2029 is underpinned by a triangulated evidence base that combines: (i) employer-led intelligence; (ii) quantitative labour market and economic analysis; and (iii) education and training system intelligence. This integrated approach provides a robust line of sight from local context and employers need to prioritised skills needs and deliverable actions. It reflects the LSIP's statutory purpose as an employer-led plan while ensuring that priorities are corroborated through multiple sources and tested for deliverability.

C1.1 Employer-led evidence: capturing operational skills pressures

A central pillar of the evidence base is a structured programme of employer engagement designed to surface current, operational skills constraints and to validate whether emerging analytical signals reflect lived employer experience. Evidence was gathered through sector and cross-sector roundtables, employer forums, a telemarketing campaign and targeted survey activity. This ensured that the LSIP reflects the practical realities of a predominantly SME economy, including constraints on time, supervisory capacity and the feasibility of training investment.

Ongoing employer validation and insight were also secured through established employer forums, boards and place-based partnership groups operating on a regular cycle. These included Sector Skills Roundtables; the Kent Construction Focus Group; the Kent Manufacturing Focus Group; the Kent Hospitality Focus Group; the Lower Thames Crossing Skills and Employment Board; the Medway Health and Social Care Skills Board; the Major Project Group (Construction); the Skills for Care Registered Managers Forum; and the Skills for Care Training and Development Group. In addition, the Skills 26 Cross Sector Skills Summit provided a structured mechanism for cross-sector challenge and validation, supporting triangulation of emerging findings and enabling iterative refinement of priorities and actions as conditions changed.

Across employer discussions, recruitment pressures were consistently reported to be compounded by work-readiness and employability gaps. Employers referenced common themes such as communication, confidence, reliability, teamwork and resilience. The recurrence of these themes across multiple sectors reinforced that employability is a cross-cutting constraint on labour supply and progression, rather than an issue confined to any single industry.

Employer intelligence also highlighted sector-specific pinch points that can be less visible in published datasets. Construction employers emphasised barriers to scaling placements and apprenticeships, including site-readiness expectations and the practical demands of supervision on live sites. Manufacturing employers described the challenge of replacing experienced staff while adapting to changing technologies and production systems, alongside the continued need for practical competence. Hospitality employers

emphasised attraction and sector perception and consistently identified high-quality work experience as one of the strongest routes into sustained employment.

C1.2 Employer survey intelligence: breadth, patterns and structural issues

Survey and telemarketing intelligence strengthened the evidence base by providing breadth across sectors, business sizes and places, complementing depth gained through forums and roundtables. The employer survey achieved a base of 463 respondents, with the profile reflecting the structure of the local economy: 60.5% of responding businesses employed 9 or fewer people and 29.8% employed 10–49, reinforcing the importance of designing LSIP responses that are accessible, low-burden and practical for SMEs and micro-businesses.

The survey captured recruitment experience, role-specific recruitment difficulty, skills lacking among applicants, workforce capability gaps, barriers to training investment, and appetite for employer, education collaboration (including work experience, mentoring and curriculum input). These findings were used to identify recurring themes and to evidence “latent demand”, where businesses avoid recruiting or engaging in training due to anticipated difficulty, limited capacity or previous experience, strengthening the case for clearer pathways and simpler navigation of support.

To protect confidentiality, personal and identifiable fields were excluded from reporting, and free-text responses were summarised thematically where required, ensuring that engagement breadth could inform LSIP priorities without increasing identification risk.

C1.3 Quantitative labour market and economic analysis: local context and demand signals

Employer-led evidence is complemented by labour market and economic analysis that provides a consistent baseline on local context, demand signals and workforce risk. In the main LSIP evidence pack, this analysis draws on established national datasets and local analytical products to understand broad trends, compare patterns across places, and identify where pressures appear persistent. Within this report, the emphasis is on how analysis was used, rather than on presenting detailed statistics.

To strengthen localism within the evidence base, analysis is interpreted at Kent & Medway and district level wherever data quality permits and is considered alongside place-based intelligence from employers, providers and local stakeholders. This ensures that priorities are anchored in local labour market conditions, sectoral concentration, travel-to-work dynamics and access constraints, and are mapped against relevant local strategy and policy drivers, including the Get Kent & Medway Working Plans.

C1.4 District-level and place-based data sources

District-level analysis was used to ensure that the LSIP reflects differences in local labour supply, sector mix and participation challenges across Kent & Medway. Rather than relying on a single indicator, the approach drew on a range of comparable subnational datasets and administrative series to provide a consistent place-based view and was supplemented by qualitative intelligence from employers and local stakeholders. This combination ensured that the LSIP could distinguish between county-wide themes and district-specific pressures, informing priorities and delivery models that are appropriate to local circumstances.

C1.5 Sector evidence reviews: consistent, locally specific synthesis

To ensure that priority setting is locally grounded and analytically consistent, the LSIP has developed sector evidence reviews. These reviews provided a structured synthesis of each priority sector's local footprint, occupational profile, workforce risks, recruitment challenges and pipeline considerations, alongside the implications for training pathways and provision planning. The reviews were used to test whether pressures were likely to be persistent and material, to identify the most important occupations and skills themes, and to highlight delivery constraints that must be addressed through practical actions.

In practice, this meant that adult social care evidence focused on workforce stability, progression and retention challenges; construction evidence foregrounded site-readiness, capacity for placements and shortages in core trades and supervision; manufacturing evidence emphasised replacement need, adaptability and the balance between practical competence and emerging technical capability; tourism evidence emphasised attraction, work-readiness and placement capacity; fresh food and land-based evidence emphasised the mix of seasonal labour, technical roles and progression routes; and creative industries evidence emphasised the need for local granularity, business capability and inclusive access routes.

C1.6 Education and training system intelligence: pathways, feasibility and constraints

The evidence base also considered the supply-side landscape, nature, distribution and constraints of education and training provision, to ensure that priority needs translate into deliverable actions. This included understanding how learners progress through apprenticeships, technical education and higher-level routes, and identifying delivery constraints such as placement capacity, tutor availability and the accessibility of training models for SMEs. Employer engagement repeatedly reinforced that feasibility depends on practical enablers, including clearer employer contact points, shared or pooled models for SMEs and simpler navigation of funding and administration.

Further and higher education providers were engaged as strategic partners throughout LSIP development to ensure that employer-identified skills needs could be translated into deliverable pathway and curriculum responses. Provider partners contributed intelligence on the local provision footprint and progression routes (including technical education, apprenticeships and higher-level pathways), and tested feasibility by identifying delivery constraints that shape what can be implemented at pace and at scale, including placement capacity, tutor availability and the accessibility of delivery models for SMEs.

This strategic partnership was embedded through the LSIP's governance and assurance arrangements, including senior FE and HE representation within the Skills Advisory Panel (SAP), alongside independent training providers and wider system partners. This ensured that LSIP priorities and actions were subject to structured challenge not only on "what employers need", but also on "what the system can deliver" and what enabling conditions must be strengthened for delivery to succeed.

Provider partnership working also supported system co-ordination and alignment, including discussion and development of joint approaches to employer engagement and advisory mechanisms spanning FE and HE, strengthening the interface between business need, curriculum currency and progression pathways across the region.

C1.7 Triangulation and assurance: from evidence to priorities and actions

Across all components, the LSIP evidence base was designed to provide a robust line of sight from employer experience to prioritised skills needs and deliverable actions, avoiding reliance on any single dataset or engagement channel. Employer insights were used to interpret labour market signals and to identify where demand is persistent, structural and locally specific, while quantitative analysis provided scale and trend context and education/training intelligence tested feasibility. Quantitative analysis provided scale and trend context; sector reviews ensured consistency of interpretation; and education and training intelligence tested deliverability. This triangulation strengthened confidence that the identified priorities represent the most material local skills constraints and that proposed actions align with employer need, local conditions and delivery capacity.

C1.8 LSIP development methodology: from evidence gathering to publication

The LSIP was developed through a defined sequence of stages designed to ensure that evidence is both employer-led and actionable, with a clear, auditable line from evidence capture to prioritised needs and agreed actions. Evidence gathering combined (i) structured employer engagement and validation, (ii) labour market and economic analysis (interpreted at Kent & Medway and district level where data quality permits), and (iii) education and training system intelligence to test feasibility and delivery constraints.

Stage 1 focused on evidence capture. Employer insight was gathered through sector and cross-sector roundtables, established employer forums and boards, and a telemarketing and survey programme to broaden reach across the business base, including SMEs and micro-businesses. In parallel, quantitative analysis was used to establish baseline context and identify demand signals, and provider/system intelligence was gathered to understand the local training landscape, pathways and constraints (including placement capacity and tutor availability).

Stage 2 focused on synthesis. Evidence was consolidated into sector evidence reviews and cross-cutting themes to test whether skills pressures were persistent, material and locally specific, and to identify the occupations, skills and delivery conditions most likely to determine impact. The synthesis process deliberately avoided reliance on any single dataset or engagement channel, using triangulation to strengthen confidence in findings.

Stage 3 focused on validation and challenge. Emerging conclusions and draft priorities were iteratively tested through sector structures and cross-sector challenge mechanisms, ensuring that analytical signals reflected employer experience and that the LSIP remained grounded in operational workforce realities. This step also strengthened deliverability by testing “what would have to be true” for actions to succeed, including the practical enablers required for SMEs to participate.

Stage 4 translated validated needs into prioritised skills needs and agreed actions, maintaining the statutory distinction between Part 1 (Local Skills Needs) and Part 2 (Agreed Actions). Actions were framed so that the LSIP’s priorities are not only evidenced, but capable of being progressed within local delivery capacity through clear ownership, monitoring arrangements and feedback loops that support continuous improvement and evidence refresh.

C1.9 Scope of evidence sources and reference register

To demonstrate the full scope of evidence used to determine the LSIP's prioritised skills needs, a reference register is maintained covering local and national datasets, sector bodies' labour market intelligence, employer-led engagement outputs, major programme and infrastructure intelligence, and education and training provision sources. The register provides transparency and auditability by enabling the reader to trace how sector conclusions and cross-cutting themes are grounded in published evidence and locally gathered employer insight.

C2. National and Local Policy Alignment

The Kent and Medway LSIP has been developed in full alignment with Skills England's statutory guidance for the 2026–2029 cycle. It maintains a clear three-year horizon, focuses on the most significant local skills priorities, draws on robust employer and labour market evidence, and translates that evidence into a focused set of agreed actions with identified delivery partners. It also reflects the required LSIP design principles by setting out a clear strategic and economic context, distinguishing explicitly between local skills needs and the actions needed to address them, and demonstrating how relevant national and local plans were used to inform the final plan.

The LSIP is structured to separate the articulation of need in **Part 1: Local Skills Needs** from the response in **Part 2: Agreed Actions**. This creates a clear evidence-to-action framework, enabling employers, providers and partners to understand both the priority issues and the practical steps required through curriculum planning, collaborative delivery and investment decisions. It also strengthens the LSIP's role as a practical reference point for provider planning in line with guidance on annual accountability statements and the Local Needs Duty for 2026 to 2027.

The LSIP has not been developed in isolation. National policy formed the starting point for the plan, with regional and local strategies then used to interpret and apply that framework in a Kent and Medway context. This approach is consistent with statutory guidance that LSIPs should reflect and support wider strategies and plans, including the **Industrial Strategy, Local Growth Plans, Local Get Britain Working Plans, Net Zero and environmental objectives, and equality of opportunity considerations**. To meet this requirement, the Kent and Medway LSIP included a structured review and mapping of the principal national and local strategies, plans and intelligence sources shaping skills, employment and growth policy.

At national level, the LSIP drew directly on Skills England's guidance for developing LSIPs, **The UK's Modern Industrial Strategy 2025** and associated sector plans, the **Get Britain Working White Paper**, the **Post-16 Education and Skills White Paper, Meeting skills needs: annual accountability statements and the Local Needs Duty (2026 to 2027)**, and the **Clean energy jobs plan**. These were not treated as background references only; they were actively used to shape the LSIP's scope, sector prioritisation, cross-cutting themes and delivery focus. Skills England's guidance established the overall parameters for the LSIP, including the distinction between Part 1 and Part 2, the three-year horizon, and the requirement to link local evidence to wider strategic priorities. **The Industrial Strategy and sector plans** were used to test which nationally defined growth-driving sectors, supply chains and enabling functions were most relevant to Kent and Medway. **The Get Britain Working White Paper** informed the LSIP's treatment of economic inactivity, progression and the integration of work, health and skills. **The Post-16 Education and Skills White Paper**,

together with the guidance on **annual accountability statements and the Local Needs Duty**, strengthened the LSIP's relevance to provider planning, progression routes, collaborative curriculum responses and accountability. **The Clean energy jobs plan** ensured that low-carbon capability, decarbonisation and workforce transition requirements were embedded across the LSIP rather than treated as a standalone issue.

At regional and local level, the LSIP was informed by the **Kent and Medway Economic Framework**, the **Kent and Medway Local Growth Plan evidence base**, the **Get Kent and Medway Working Plan**, and the **Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy**. Together, these documents ensured that the LSIP reflected the area's wider economic ambitions and place-based priorities. **The Economic Framework** positioned productivity, sustainability and inclusion as the core long-term ambitions for the local economy to 2030. **The Local Growth Plan evidence base** identified clear local growth opportunities and comparative strengths, including Energy, Digital and Technologies, Ports/Transport/Logistics, and Agri-Food and Agri-Tech. **The Get Kent and Medway Working Plan** ensured that the LSIP considered labour market participation, progression and the barriers preventing residents from entering and sustaining employment. **The Energy and Low Emissions Strategy** translated national Net Zero ambitions into place-based workforce and skills priorities.

This alignment was reinforced by wider strategic and economic intelligence on Kent and Medway's economy and labour market. That evidence showed that the area is a large and growing economy with significant spatial variation, a strong gateway role, and an employment profile shaped by both foundational sectors and tradable and enabling activities. It also confirmed that Kent and Medway is heavily SME-dominated, with more than 90 per cent of businesses classified as microbusinesses. This has direct implications for LSIP delivery: employer engagement and training models must work for smaller firms with limited capacity to navigate complex skills provision. The same intelligence also identified important structural constraints, including a lower-Level 4+ qualification rate than the England average, lower employee job density, under-representation in some knowledge-intensive sectors, and participation barriers linked to health, geography and uneven labour market opportunity.

This local intelligence sharpened the LSIP's approach to sector prioritisation. While Kent and Medway has a below-average national share of employment in the Industrial Strategy's growth-driving sectors overall, it has clear and credible strengths in Energy, Digital and Technologies, Ports/Transport/Logistics, and Agri-Food and Agri-Tech, alongside system-critical foundational sectors such as construction and health and care. This enabled the LSIP to align with national growth priorities in a realistic and evidence-based way by focusing on the sectors, supply chains and enabling functions where Kent and Medway has demonstrable relevance, strategic assets or significant workforce demand.

Taken together, this policy and evidence mapping informed the LSIP in four practical ways. First, it provided the national policy framework against which local employer evidence was tested and prioritised. Second, it shaped sector selection by assessing local strengths against nationally defined growth-driving sectors and supply chains. Third, it identified the cross-cutting themes that needed to run through the LSIP, including digital adoption, productivity, pathway clarity, progression, employability, inclusion and low-carbon transition. Fourth, it strengthened the LSIP's practical value by ensuring that agreed actions are capable of informing provider planning, local partnership delivery and wider funding and commissioning discussions.

Overall, the Kent and Medway LSIP demonstrates alignment with statutory guidance not only through its structure and employer-led methodology, but through the deliberate application of relevant national and

local strategies, plans and intelligence. National policy and strategy provided the framework for what the LSIP needed to address and how it needed to be structured; local plans and evidence ensured that those national priorities were translated into a realistic, place-based and deliverable response for Kent and Medway. The result is a plan that supports the government's wider growth, skills, participation and Net Zero agenda while remaining rooted in local economic context and employer need.

Table C2 below summarises the principal national and local plans and intelligence sources reviewed, why they were relevant, how they were used, and where that influence is reflected in the LSIP.

Plan / strategy / evidence source	Why it is relevant	How it was used to inform the LSIP	Where reflected in the LSIP
Skills England: Guidance for developing a Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP)	Sets the statutory framework for the 2026–2029 LSIP cycle, including the three-year horizon, focus on critical local skills needs, employer-led engagement, links to other plans, and consideration of Net Zero and equality of opportunity.	Used to determine overall LSIP scope, structure, prioritisation approach, and the expectation that national and local strategies should be actively reflected in the plan.	Overall LSIP design; distinction between Part 1 and Part 2; prioritisation methodology; strategic context section.
The UK's Modern Industrial Strategy 2025 and Industrial Strategy sector plans	Establishes the national growth-driving sectors and wider growth mission against which local plans should be considered.	Used to test which nationally significant sectors, supply chains and enabling functions are most relevant to Kent and Medway, and to inform local sector prioritisation and the treatment of strategic growth opportunities.	Strategic context; sector prioritisation; references to nationally relevant growth sectors, supply chains and enabling functions.
Get Britain Working White Paper	Sets the national direction on reducing economic inactivity and improving employment outcomes through better integration of work, health and skills.	Used to ensure the LSIP reflects not only employer demand but also wider participation, progression and pathway issues that affect labour market performance.	Cross-cutting themes; pathway clarity; employability and progression actions; links to the local Working Plan.
Meeting skills needs: annual accountability statements and the Local Needs Duty (2026 to 2027)	Strengthens expectations that providers should show how provision responds to LSIPs, local needs, local growth plans and Get Britain Working Plans.	Used to strengthen the LSIP's role as a practical planning reference for providers and to reinforce the importance of collaborative local curriculum responses.	Provider-facing framing in Part 2; references to provider planning, accountability and collaboration.

Post-16 Education and Skills White Paper	Sets the wider national reform context for post-16 skills provision, responsiveness to employer need, and stronger progression within the skills system.	Used to frame the LSIP within the evolving post-16 system and reinforce the importance of progression, higher-level technical skills and provider responsiveness.	Strategic framing; progression narrative; provider response sections.
Clean energy jobs plan	Provides the national framework for workforce requirements linked to clean energy ambitions and Net Zero transition.	Used to embed low-carbon, clean energy and environmental workforce needs within the LSIP's priorities and actions, particularly as cross-cutting skills themes.	Net Zero and decarbonisation references; cross-cutting skills; sector workforce implications.
Kent and Medway Economic Framework	Provides the overarching local economic vision to 2030, focused on productivity, sustainability and inclusion.	Used to anchor the LSIP in the wider local economic strategy and ensure alignment with long-term ambitions around talent, resilience, growth and inclusive opportunity.	Strategic and economic context; framing of productivity, sustainability and inclusion.
Kent and Medway Local Growth Plan evidence base	Identifies locally evidenced growth opportunities, growth-driving sectors and areas of comparative strength in Kent and Medway.	Used to inform sector prioritisation and test where local growth opportunities align with employer demand and national priorities.	Sector selection and analysis; growth narrative; references to Energy, Digital and Technologies, Ports/Transport/Logistics and Agri-Food/Agri-Tech.
Get Kent and Medway Working Plan	Provides the local framework for reducing inactivity, improving employment outcomes and strengthening system coordination across work, health and skills.	Used to ensure the LSIP reflects local labour market participation barriers, progression challenges and the need for joined-up pathways and delivery.	Cross-cutting actions; employability and progression narrative; LSIP relationship to wider local employment support.
Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy	Translates climate and decarbonisation objectives into a local place-based framework for a low-carbon economy.	Used to ensure Net Zero and environmental goals were reflected in local workforce planning and transition-related skills priorities.	Decarbonisation narrative; environmental goals; cross-sector low-carbon skills references.

C3. Environmental and Net Zero Goals

Statutory guidance requires LSIPs to consider the skills needed to support Net Zero, climate adaptation and wider environmental goals. Kent & Medway's LSIP addresses this by embedding sustainability-related

capability within the sectors where evidence indicates clear and growing relevance, rather than treating green skills as a standalone theme detached from delivery.

In construction and the built environment, this includes capability aligned to retrofit and low-carbon approaches to the built environment, alongside the skills needed to implement modern methods and standards. In manufacturing and engineering, the LSIP recognises transition pressures associated with technology adoption and process change (including Industry 4.0) and the associated need for adaptable technical and maintenance skills that support decarbonisation and resource efficiency. In fresh food, agriculture and horticulture, the LSIP emphasises skills relevant to sustainable production, resource management and resilience. Across sectors, the LSIP places emphasis on transferable, future-facing skills that enable adaptation as technologies, standards and business models evolve, consistent with the expectation in statutory guidance that plans consider Net Zero and wider environmental goals and draw on relevant local strategies where they exist.

C4. Equality of Opportunity

In line with statutory guidance, the LSIP has given full consideration to equality of opportunity in both its development and implementation. The ERB recognises that barriers to participation, progression and retention in education, training and employment often sit alongside employer-identified skills shortages and can limit the extent to which residents and businesses benefit from economic growth. Equality of opportunity has therefore been treated as a core consideration in shaping local priorities, actions and delivery expectations, not as a separate or secondary issue.

Throughout the development of the LSIP, account was taken of the experiences of groups that can face additional barriers to learning and employment. This includes young people at risk of becoming NEET, care leavers, learners with SEND, adults with low qualifications, unemployed and economically inactive residents, people with health conditions or disabilities, service leavers, prison leavers and those with experience of the youth justice system, and individuals living in rural, coastal or otherwise less well-connected communities. The LSIP also acknowledges that occupational segregation and uneven participation remain challenges in some sectors, and that broadening access to entry and progression routes is crucial to improving inclusion and strengthening workforce resilience.

To ensure these issues were reflected properly, the evidence-gathering process was considered alongside the wider support landscape across Kent and Medway. This includes local authority services, employability and careers partners, DWP-linked provision, SEND and inclusion support, and organisations working with groups facing barriers to labour market participation. Relevant infrastructure includes Kent County Council and Medway Council services, the Kent and Medway Careers Hub, Jobcentre Plus, supported employment and supported internships, and organisations supporting care leavers and armed forces communities.

The LSIP process, considered alongside wider local intelligence and the broader delivery context, highlighted practical and structural barriers affecting both learners and employers. These include transport constraints, particularly in rural and coastal areas; limited flexible or locally accessible provision; low awareness of routes into priority sectors; insufficient confidence and work readiness among some learners; weak transitions between education, support and employment; limited high-quality placements; and capacity challenges among employers, particularly SMEs, in offering inclusive recruitment, progression and in-work support. This reinforces the need to judge opportunity not simply by whether provision exists, but by whether pathways are visible, accessible, navigable and realistic for those facing the greatest barriers.

The current support landscape also demonstrates the importance of aligning skills responses with wider employability and progression support. In Kent and Medway, this includes Connect to Work, Skills Bootcamps, supported employment and supported internships, and DWP-linked pathways such as sector-based work academy programmes (SWAPs). The LSIP also recognises the role of local bodies and initiatives supporting groups more likely to face entrenched disadvantage in the transition to adulthood and employment, including care leaver local offers, the Care Leaver Progression Partnership, The Young Lives Foundation, the Kent and Medway Civilian-Military Partnership Board, and support available through the Armed Forces Covenant and Career Transition Partnership.

Evidence gathered through the LSIP process, viewed alongside the wider support landscape, has informed the plan's emphasis on clearer and more accessible pathways into priority sectors, stronger transitions from education into work, improved placement quality, closer employer-provider collaboration, and delivery models that reduce avoidable barriers to participation. It has also reinforced the need to align mainstream skills provision with employability, pre-employment and progression support where necessary to help learners move towards and sustain employment.

This has shaped expectations for implementation. In taking forward LSIP actions, partners will be expected to consider which groups may be least likely to access or benefit from provision, what barriers may affect participation, completion, progression and retention, and what adjustments to outreach, referral routes, delivery models, employer engagement and learner support may be needed to widen inclusion. This includes improving the visibility of routes into priority sectors, ensuring provision is delivered in ways that are realistic for those with transport, health, caring or confidence-related barriers, and supporting employers to strengthen inclusive recruitment, placement and progression practice.

Continued collaboration across employers, providers, local authorities and relevant support services will remain important, consistent with the direction of the Get Kent and Medway Working Plan developed jointly by Kent County Council, Medway Council, Jobcentre Plus and the NHS Kent and Medway Integrated Care Board. Equality of opportunity will therefore remain an active consideration in LSIP implementation and review. The ERB will continue to expect that implementation partners consider whether actions are widening participation, improving progression and retention, and avoiding unintended exclusion arising from inflexible delivery models, inaccessible locations, limited placement capacity or narrow recruitment practices. Equality of opportunity is treated within the LSIP as a core condition of effective skills planning and delivery, helping employers to access a broader and more diverse talent pool while ensuring that the benefits of skills investment are shared more widely across Kent and Medway.

C5. Describe the Governance Structure

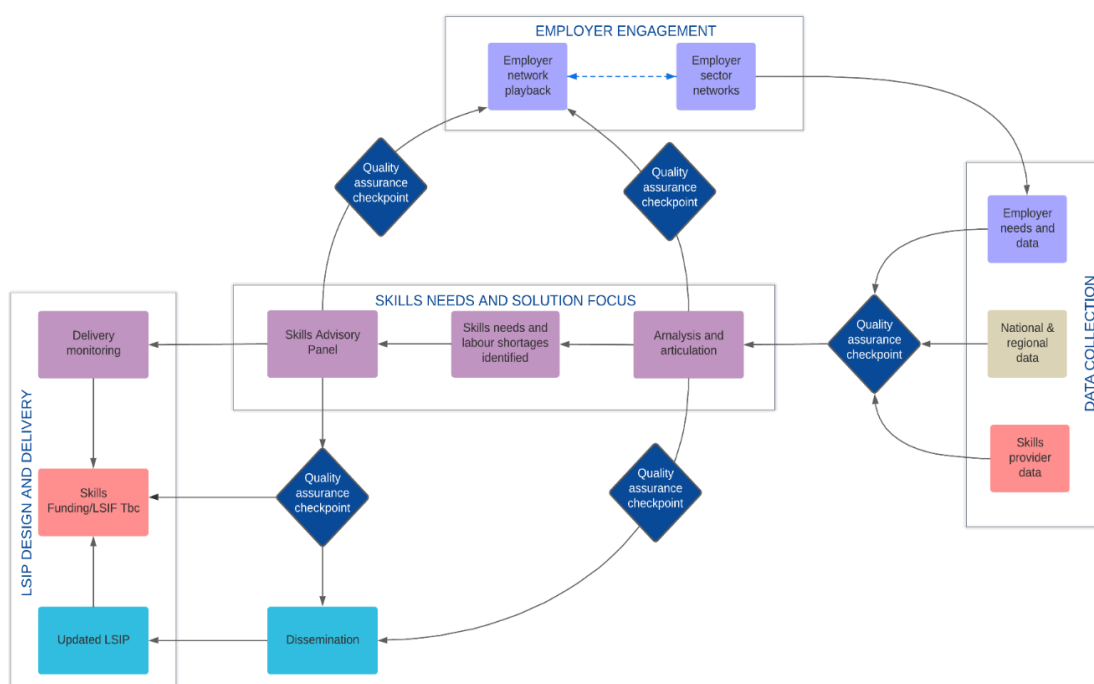
Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce (KICC) is the appointed Employer Representative Body (ERB) for the Kent & Medway LSIP. As ERB, KICC provides strategic leadership, convening power and accountability for maintaining the LSIP as an employer-led plan, ensuring that priorities remain grounded in employer need and that actions are progressed through partnership delivery.

C5.1 ERB leadership and programme management

Operational delivery is managed through KICC's core LSIP team, which coordinates evidence gathering, stakeholder engagement, drafting, consultation and publication. The LSIP team is supported by wider Chamber functions, including communications, events and membership, to sustain engagement at scale, maintain regular contact with employers and partners, and ensure that findings and priorities are disseminated effectively across the system.

C5.2 Decision-making and assurance arrangements

Strategic oversight and assurance are provided through the Skills Advisory Panel (SAP), which provides strategic oversight, challenge and direction to the development and ongoing implementation of the Kent & Medway LSIP. The SAP brings together senior representatives spanning Further Education, Higher Education, independent training provision, local authorities, the Department for Work & Pensions, and careers and employability partners, and employer representation ensuring that decision-making reflects both employer demand and practical delivery considerations across the system. The Panel validates and constructively challenges emerging findings from employer consultations, research and sector engagement; advises on emerging labour market trends, sector priorities and skills system changes; and provides strategic scrutiny of LSIP-funded and LSIP-aligned activity to ensure that recommended actions are realistic, deliverable and focused on the most material skills constraints. In practice, this provides a structured route for testing evidence interpretation, resolving cross-sector issues, and maintaining a clear line of sight from prioritised needs to agreed actions, with members also expected to contribute intelligence from their organisations and networks and champion collaborative solutions. Meetings are primarily held online, with additional sessions convened as required; during the intensive LSIP development period, the SAP agreed a cadence of meetings every six weeks (via Teams) to maintain momentum, provide timely challenge, and support the programme timeline. The SAP operates under a formal conflicts framework to protect the integrity of assurance: members complete and maintain a Register of Interests, make agenda-specific declarations (including nil returns) at the start of meetings, and proportionate mitigations are agreed and recorded in the meeting record/minutes where relevant. Governance records are maintained to provide transparency and an auditable trail (including recording decisions and maintaining an action/impact log), strengthening confidence in the evidence-to-action logic and supporting alignment with wider place-based objectives, including the Get Kent & Medway Working Plans.



Members of the SAP are listed below:

Lead	Kent and Medway Local Skills Improvement Plan
Further Education	East Kent Colleges Group MidKent College North Kent College
Higher Education	University of Kent University of Greenwich Canterbury Christ Church University
County and Unitary Authorities	Kent County Council Medway Council
Independent Training providers	Represented by Kent Association of Training Providers (KATO)
Careers and Employability Partners	DWP The Kent and Medway Careers Hub The Education People CXK/National Careers Service
Employers	Represented by Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce

In practice, the SAP has shaped local skills priorities by translating statutory expectations into specific local choices and delivery focus. SAP meetings formalise the shift to a more occupationally-led approach, including the expectation to focus on occupations (and SOC alignment) rather than broad sector descriptions, so that priority needs and actions are expressed in a way that supports provider planning and accountability requirements. The SAP has also provided structured validation of which priorities are most material for Kent & Medway, including confirming the draft's core set of priority sectors and ensuring cross-cutting issues are treated as system conditions that must be addressed for sector delivery to succeed. Through this challenge function, the SAP has reinforced the inclusion and framing of key cross-cutting themes, such as digital capability (including AI), decarbonisation/Net Zero, employability (including English and maths) and SME engagement/navigation, so that they are consistently reflected across sector actions rather than treated as standalone ambitions. The SAP has also directly influenced the LSIP's approach to system alignment and deliverability, including actions to support earlier access to LSIP intelligence for colleges to inform statutory planning (e.g., accountability statements) and maintaining Annexes as "living documents" that can be refreshed as evidence and delivery conditions change. Finally, SAP discussions have driven practical follow-through on priority implementation, capturing actions to incorporate external feedback into the draft and to promote and connect relevant initiatives (e.g., employer engagement activity and programmes referenced through SAP updates) to strengthen delivery traction against agreed priorities.

Strategic alignment is reinforced through the Kent & Medway Economic Partnership (KMEP), which operates as the region's county-wide economic growth board and provides the strategic interface between the LSIP and wider place-based growth priorities, including delivery of the Kent & Medway Economic Framework. Formal reporting and escalation is routed through the Kent & Medway Employment Task Force, ensuring LSIP priorities are considered alongside the region's employment and skills agenda and embedded within established governance arrangements. This approach maintains clear join-up between employer-led skills priorities and the decisions and delivery mechanisms held by local authorities and system partners, supporting coordinated action and accountability across the skills and employment landscape.

C5.3 Employer voice, validation and sector oversight

Employer validation is secured through a combination of sector-specific and cross-sector structures. Sector Skills Roundtables and the established employer focus groups provide continuity of employer voice and enable iterative refinement as conditions change. For priority sectors with distinct governance ecosystems, the LSIP aligns with and draws intelligence from relevant boards and partnership groups, including the Medway Health and Social Care Skills Board and Skills for Care forums, and programme-based groups such as the Major Project Group (Construction) and the Lower Thames Crossing Skills and Employment Board. The Skills 26 Cross Sector Skills Summit provides additional system-wide challenges and an opportunity to test priorities and actions across a broad employer audience.

Employer Forums
Kent Construction Focus Group
Kent Manufacturing Focus Group
Kent Hospitality Focus Group
Skills for Care Registered Managers Group
Medway Health and Social Care Skills Board
Major Projects Group (Construction)
Fresh Food Production and Horticulture Task Force
Careers Hub Cornerstone Employers Group
Electrotechnical Training and Careers Alliance
Industry 4 Council

C5.4 Partner coordination and delivery interfaces

Delivery relies on coordinated action across further education, higher education, independent training providers, local authorities and wider partners. Governance therefore includes planned interfaces with provider and stakeholder networks to support translation of LSIP priorities into curriculum and delivery responses. These interfaces are used to share evidence, clarify employer requirements (including work readiness and technical competency expectations), identify barriers to delivery (such as placement capacity and tutor availability) and agree practical mitigations.

C5.5 Monitoring, reporting and continuous improvement

The governance framework includes arrangements for monitoring progress against agreed actions and for maintaining the LSIP as a live plan. This includes regular review of delivery activity; structured feedback loops from employer forums and partners; and periodic refresh of evidence to ensure responsiveness to economic change and emerging opportunities. Actions are framed to support accountability by clarifying ownership, intended outcomes and the mechanisms through which progress will be reported and reviewed. Where delivery constraints are identified, the governance framework provides a route to agree corrective actions, escalate systemic issues and, where appropriate, update priorities to remain aligned with employer need.

C5.6 Transparency and documentation

To support transparency, governance records are maintained for key decisions, consultation stages and validation activity. This includes maintaining a clear audit trail from evidence sources and engagement outputs to prioritised needs and agreed actions and documenting how stakeholder input has been considered. This strengthens confidence in the integrity of the LSIP as an employer-led plan and supports partners to align activity accordingly.

Overall, the Kent & Medway LSIP (2026–2029) is underpinned by a transparent and auditable approach that connects employer insight to prioritised skills needs and deliverable actions. The development methodology is intentionally triangulated, combining structured employer engagement and validation, labour market and district-level analysis (where feasible), and education and training system intelligence, so that priorities are both locally grounded and tested for practical delivery constraints. This strengthens confidence that the LSIP focuses on the most material skills pressures over the three-year horizon and maintains a clear distinction between Part 1 (skills needs) and Part 2 (agreed actions).

Governance arrangements led by the ERB, supported by strategic and employer-led oversight and established sector and cross-sector forums, provide assurance that priorities remain employer-led, consistently interpreted, and capable of being progressed through partnership delivery. Finally, the inclusion of monitoring, feedback loops and evidence refresh arrangements supports continuous improvement, ensuring the LSIP can remain responsive to changing economic conditions while maintaining due regard to Net Zero considerations and equality of opportunity expectations set out in the guidance.

C6. Evidence sources used to determine LSIP skills needs (reference register)

This annex summarises key evidence sources drawn upon in developing and validating the LSIP skills needs, including sector workforce intelligence, labour market analysis, policy and programme documentation, and provision intelligence. URLs are provided for verification (accessed March 2026 unless otherwise stated).

C6.1 National and local Policy

Skills England, Guidance for developing a Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP), GOV.UK. Available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-skills-improvement-plans/guidance-for-developing-a-local-skills-improvement-plan-lsip>

Department for Education, Meeting skills needs: guidance on annual accountability statements 2026 to 2027 and the Local Needs Duty, May 2026. Available at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/69fc4fe6e71c4cdf4026b828/Accountability_statements_and_the_Local_Needs_Duty_2026_to_2027_May.pdf

Department for Business and Trade, The UK's Modern Industrial Strategy 2025 / Industrial Strategy Sector Plans, GOV.UK. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/the-uks-modern-industrial-strategy-2025> and

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/industrial-strategy-sector-plans/sector-plans>

HM Government, Get Britain Working White Paper, GOV.UK. Available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/get-britain-working-white-paper/get-britain-working-white-paper>

Department for Education, Department for Work and Pensions and Department for Science, Innovation and Technology, Post-16 education and skills white paper, GOV.UK. Available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/post-16-education-and-skills-white-paper>

Kent & Medway Economic Partnership, Kent & Medway Economic Framework, March 2024. Available at:

<https://www.kmep.org.uk/app/uploads/2024/03/Kent-Medway-Economic-Framework-Web-Version-March-2024.pdf>

Kent & Medway Economic Partnership, Kent & Medway Local Growth Plan Evidence Base, February 2026. Available at:

<https://www.kmep.org.uk/app/uploads/2026/02/Final-Local-Growth-Plan-Evidence-Base.pdf>

Department for Business and Trade, Industrial Strategy Sector Plans, GOV.UK. Available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/industrial-strategy-sector-plans/sector-plans>

Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, Clean energy jobs plan, GOV.UK. Available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/clean-energy-jobs-plan>

C6.2 Adult Social Care – workforce intelligence, policy and provision sources

Skills for Care: Kent and Medway ICB workforce summaries and local area reports.

<https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Adult-Social-Care-Workforce-Data/workforceintelligence/resources/Reports/Local/>

DHSC: Care workforce pathway guidance and workforce development funding instruments.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/care-workforce-pathway-for-adult-social-care>

Kent County Council: Adult Social Care strategy and related commissioning documentation.

<https://www.kent.gov.uk/>

Provision and innovation examples: Medway College of Social Care –

<https://www.medwaycollegeofsocialcare.org.uk/> ; Kent & Medway Care Record –

<https://www.kmhealthandcare.uk/kent-and-medway-care-record> EKC Assistive Technology suites –

<https://www.ekcgroup.ac.uk/news/>

C6.3 Construction and the Built Environment – labour market intelligence and major programme sources

Regional market and skills analysis for the construction sector in the South East of England: Main report, SQW, March 2026. <https://sectechub.co.uk/obj1-1>

CITB: Construction Skills Network regional forecasts and workforce evidence.
<https://www.citb.co.uk/insights-and-reports/>

Kent Analytics: Construction sector statistical bulletins and related place-based analysis.
<https://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/strategies-and-policies/economic-and-community-development-policies/kent-analytics>

Lightcast: labour market analytics (client-provided extracts for Kent & Medway districts). <https://lightcast.io>

National Highways: Lower Thames Crossing jobs, skills and education materials.
<https://nationalhighways.co.uk/our-roads/lower-thames-crossing/jobs-skills-and-education/>

C6.4 Creative Industries – local sector statistics, national estimates and place-based intelligence

Kent Analytics: Creative industries statistical bulletin and local sector profile.
https://www.kent.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/208682/Creative-Industries-statistics.pdf

ONS: Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES) methodology and guidance.
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/surveys/informationforbusinesses/businesssurveys/businessregisterandemploymentsurvey>

DCMS: Creative industries employment and GVA estimates.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/dcms-sector-economic-estimates>

Skills England: Sector skills needs assessment (Creative Industries). <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/>

Place-based assets and investment examples: Maidstone Studios – <https://maidstonestudios.com/> Creative Estuary – <https://www.creativeestuary.com/> Medway Docking Station – <https://www.medway.gov.uk/>

C6.5 Fresh Food, Agriculture, Horticulture and Viticulture – sector strategy, labour supply and pathways

Kent Analytics: Food and drink production statistical bulletin and sector analysis.
https://www.kent.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/208684/Food-and-drink-production-industries-in-Kent.pdf

Growing Kent & Medway: programme documentation and Workforce 2030 Agri-food Skills Strategy.
<https://www.growingkentandmedway.co.uk/>

UK Parliament / Home Office: Seasonal Worker visa evidence and policy review documentation.
<https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/>; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/seasonal-worker-visa-review>

DfE: T Level pathway documentation (Agriculture, Land Management and Production).
<https://www.tlevels.gov.uk/students/subjects/agriculture-land-management-production>

C6.6 Manufacturing and Engineering – sector statistics and labour market intelligence

Kent Analytics (Kent County Council) (2026) Manufacturing industries in Kent (statistical bulletin; includes enterprises, jobs, GVA, qualifications and apprenticeships).

https://www.kent.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/208687/Manufacturing-industries-in-Kent-report.pdf

Office for National Statistics (ONS) – Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES) open access (employment estimates by industry and geography; latest 2024).

<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/datasets/newbres6pub>

Office for National Statistics (ONS) (2025) UK business; activity, size and location: 2025 (IDBR-based business counts).

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/businessindustryandtrade/business/activitysizeandlocation/bulletins/ukbusinessactivitysizeandlocation/2025>

Office for National Statistics (ONS) (2024) Enterprises in Medway and Kent (ad hoc release, reference 1883).

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/businessindustryandtrade/business/activitysizeandlocation/adhocs/1883enterprisesinmedwayandkent>

Office for National Statistics (ONS) (2025) Regional economic activity by gross domestic product (GDP), UK: 1998 to 2023 (includes balanced regional GVA industry breakdowns).

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/regional-economic-activity-by-gross-domestic-product-uk-1998-to-2023>

Make UK and BDO (2024) Regional Manufacturing Outlook 2024 (regional output, orders, investment intentions and sector structure). <https://www.makeuk.org/insights/reports/regional-manufacturing-outlook-2024>

Make UK (2025) Making it Smarter: Global lessons for accelerating automation & digital adoption in UK manufacturing (robotics density and digital adoption). <https://www.makeuk.org/insights/reports/making-it-smarter-global-lessons-accelerating-automation-digital-adoption-uk>

Lightcast (UK) – Labour Market Analytics (methodological and product overview for local labour market insight and forecasting). <https://lightcast.io/uk/starts-with-landing>

EngineeringUK (2023) Engineering skills needs – now and into the future (commissioned research by Lightcast). <https://www.engineeringuk.com/research-and-insights/our-research-and-evaluation-reports/engineering-skills-needs-now-and-into-the-future/>

Made Smarter (South East) (accessed 2026) Adoption programme information and eligibility (South East). <https://www.madesmarter.uk/adoption/in-my-region/south-east/>

North Kent College (2024) Kent & Medway Industry4Council launch (news) and LSIP Kent & Medway project update on Industry 4 Council launch. <https://www.northkent.ac.uk/news-events/news/new-council-launches-to-tackle-skills-gaps-across-kent-and-medway>; <https://kentemployerskillsplan.org/project-updates/kmfg-march/>

HM Government (HMRC) (accessed 2026) Full expensing and 50% first-year allowance – guidance on capital allowances. <https://www.gov.uk/capital-allowances/full-expensing>

HM Government (DESNZ/BEIS) (2021, updated 2022) Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener; and Climate Change Act 2008 (legislation establishing the 2050 target).

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/net-zero-strategy> ;
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/27/contents>

Canterbury Christ Church University (accessed 2026) Kent & Medway Engineering, Design, Growth and Enterprise (EDGE) Hub. <https://www.canterbury.ac.uk/business/edge-hub>

Office for National Statistics (ONS) (2024–2025) Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) – employee earnings bulletin and regional-by-industry dataset (Table 5).
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/bulletins/annualsurveyofhoursandearnings/2024>;
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/datasets/regionbyindustry2digiticashetable5>

C6.7 Tourism and the Visitor Economy – local intelligence and provision sources

Kent County Council: Brand Kent and visitor economy intelligence. <https://news.kent.gov.uk/>

Kent Analytics: Tourism industry statistical bulletin and local sector analysis.
https://www.kent.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/208688/Tourism-Industry-in-Kent-report.pdf

Provider and facility examples: EKC Group – The Yarrow Hotel. <https://www.broadstairscollege.ac.uk/public-facilities/the-yarrow-hotel/>; Kent Adult Education Skills Bootcamps –
<https://www.kentadulteducation.co.uk/learning-with-us/skills-bootcamps/>

C6.8 Ports, Transport and Logistics – regional and national intelligence

Kent Analytics (Kent County Council), “Transportation and storage industries in Kent” (Statistical Bulletin, January 2026). https://www.kent.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/208689/Transportation-and-storage-industries-in-Kent.pdf

Kent & Medway Economic Partnership, “Kent & Medway Local Growth Plan Evidence Base” (Final Report, February 2026). <https://www.kmep.org.uk/app/uploads/2026/02/Final-Local-Growth-Plan-Evidence-Base.pdf>

Port of Dover, “Key facts & figures”. <https://www.portofdover.com/corporate/about/key-facts/>

Logistics UK, “Powering change: building a credible plan for decarbonising road logistics”.
<https://logistics.org.uk/research-hub/reports/powering-change-building-a-credible-plan-for-decar>

Logistics UK, “Decarbonising Logistics Report: The journey to net zero” (May 2022).
<https://logistics.org.uk/research-hub/reports/decarbonising-logistics-report>

North Kent College, National Maritime Training Centre. <https://www.northkent.ac.uk/commercial-courses/national-maritime-training-centre>

Kent Analytics, “Kent facts and figures” (data portal landing page). <https://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/information-and-data/facts-and-figures-about-kent>

C6.9 Health, Life Sciences and Med-Tech – regional intelligence

Discovery Park, New STEM Sixth Form Set to Open at Discovery Park. <https://discovery-park.co.uk/new-stem-sixth-form-carbon-6/>

Locate in Kent, Centre of Excellence for life science and innovation (Discovery Park support brochure). <https://locateinkent.com/app/uploads/2023/12/LIK-2023-Discovery-Park-Support-Brochure-Digital-v3-1.pdf>

Canterbury Christ Church University, The STEM Hub. <https://www.thestemhub.org.uk/>

Kent Choices (The Education People / Kent County Council commissioned platform), Turner Schools Carbon 6 STEM Career Pathway at Discovery Park (Bio, Chem, Phy & Maths).

<https://www.kentprospectus.co.uk/courses/detail/stem-career-pathway-biology-chemistry-physics-maths-146820>

Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust, Health and care partnerships.

<https://www.kentcht.nhs.uk/about-us/health-and-care-partnerships/>

UK Science Park Association (UKSPA), Kent Science Park. <https://www.ukspa.org.uk/kent-science-park/>

Kent County Council, Business in Kent. <https://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/information-and-data/facts-and-figures-about-kent/economy-and-employment-data/business-in-kent>

Discovery Park, Location | Discovery Park | Leading Science Park in Kent, UK. <https://discovery-park.co.uk/location/>

NHS England, NHS Long Term Workforce Plan (v1.2). <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/nhs-long-term-workforce-plan-v1.2.pdf>

C6.10 Clean Energy and Net Zero for Kent and Medway – supporting sources

Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ), Clean energy jobs plan.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/clean-energy-jobs-plan>

Kent County Council (with Medway Council and district partners), Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy (KMELES). https://www.kent.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0009/112401/Kent-and-Medway-Energy-and-Low-Emissions-Strategy.pdf

Kent County Council, Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy (strategy landing page). <https://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/strategies-and-policies/service-specific-policies/environment-conservation-and-waste-policies/environmental-policies/kent-and-medway-energy-and-low-emissions-strategy>

Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ), Clean Power 2030 Action Plan.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/clean-power-2030-action-plan>

Department for Education (DfE), Apply to become a Technical Excellence College (Wave 2) includes Clean Energy TECs. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-to-become-a-technical-excellence-college>

Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ), Apply for the Heat Training Grant: discounted heat pump training. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/heat-training-grant-for-heat-pumps>

Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ), Warm Homes Skills Programme: successful projects. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/warm-homes-skills-programme-successful-projects>

Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ), Warm Homes Skills Programme: guidance (competition guidance PDF).

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6841b4c3578282a4b102c0ba/warm-homes-skills-fund-competition-guidance.pdf>

C6.11 Cross-cutting labour supply and workforce context – supporting sources

Home Office: immigration and visa statistics (official series). <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics>

Migration Observatory: analysis of migration trends relevant to labour supply.

<https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/>

Office for National Statistics (ONS) — Census 2021: Highest level of qualification (Dataset TS067).

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/datasets/TS067/editions/2021/versions/1>

ONS — Education, England and Wales: Census 2021 (bulletin).

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/educationandchildcare/bulletins/educationenglandandwales/census2021>

ONS— Vacancies and jobs in the UK: September 2025 (Vacancy Survey statistical bulletin, PDF).

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/bulletins/jobsandvacanciesintheuk/september2025/pdf>

ONS — Vacancy Survey (quality/methodology information referenced in ONS metadata catalogue).

<https://ons.metadata.works/browser/dataset/410/0>

Department for Education (DfE) — Employer skills survey: 2024 (official statistics release)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/employer-skills-survey-2024>

DfE / IFF Research — Employer skills survey 2024: Full UK research report (PDF).

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/69205d2db303fcb3352e5347/Employer_skills_survey_2024_full_UK_research_report.pdf

Government Office for Science / PwC — The wider economic impacts of emerging technologies in the UK (research conducted in 2023; published on GOV.UK). <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-wider-economic-impacts-of-emerging-technologies-in-the-uk/the-wider-economic-impacts-of-emerging-technologies-in-the-uk-html>

Lightcast — Labour Market Intelligence (organisation/source page). URL: <https://lightcast.io/>

Lightcast — UK Job Postings dataset documentation. <https://docs.lightcast.dev/datasets/uk-job-postings>

C6.12 Education and training intelligence – supporting sources

Department for Education (DfE) further education data / “DfE Statistics” for FE learning aims and enrolments for under 19s in Kent & Medway, Further education and skills data (FE data library) – GOV.UK.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/fe-data-library-further-education-and-skills>

Department for Education (DfE) “Further education and skills” official statistics (adult education and training participation, including the reporting change to tailored learning), Release home – Apprenticeships

(Academic year 2024/25) – Explore Education Statistics (DfE). <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/apprenticeships/2024-25>

Department for Education (DfE) "Further education and skills" official statistics (adult education and training participation, including the reporting change to tailored learning), Release home – Further education and skills (Academic year 2024/25) – Explore Education Statistics (DfE).

<https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/further-education-and-skills/2024-25>

Local authority collected participation/NEET management information (DfE publication based on NCCIS tracking; used for NEET rates and "not known"), participation in education, training and NEET age 16 to 17 by local authority (Academic year 2024/25) – Explore Education Statistics (DfE). <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/participation-in-education-training-and-neet-age-16-to-17-by-local-authority/2024-25>

Department for Education (DfE) destinations measures for students completing Key Stage 5 / 16–18 study (used for the KS5 destinations table), Destinations of key stage 4 and 5 students: 2024 – GOV.UK:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/destinations-of-key-stage-4-and-5-students-2024>

Provider returns collected for Annex D from the three FE college groups in Kent & Medway plus a small selection of independent training providers. No public URL (this is primary evidence gathered directly from providers for the purposes of the annex; the annex includes a disclaimer that the authors cannot take responsibility for accuracy and that responsibility remains with providers).

University returns collected for Annex D (census of students as at December 2025) from:

- University of Greenwich
- University of Kent
- Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU)
(plus noted joint awards referenced in the narrative)

No public URL (this is primary data returned by universities for the annex).

C7. Employer narrative: what the employer survey evidence tells us

The employer survey provides one of the clearest, most current snapshots of business need across Kent and Medway in Winter 2025. Taken as a whole, the evidence sets out a consistent picture of workforce pressure, recruitment friction, and unmet training need across multiple sectors and localities. Crucially, it does more than describe short-term hiring difficulty; it exposes structural weaknesses in the talent pipeline, alongside persistent gaps in employability and job-ready capability. This makes the survey an important component of the LSIP evidence base, providing direct employer insight into what is limiting growth, service delivery, and productivity across the regional economy.

A small-business economy requires low-burden, practical skills solutions: The survey responses are dominated by micro and small businesses, with most employing fewer than nine staff. This is not incidental; it reflects the underlying structure of the Kent and Medway economy, where smaller firms form the backbone of employment and local supply chains. The implications for skills delivery are clear and unavoidable. Smaller employers typically operate with limited headroom, minimal dedicated HR capacity, and constant operational pressures that constrain their ability to step away from the day-to-day to engage with training, recruitment processes, or complex support offers. If the LSIP is to succeed in translating priorities into measurable change, the system response must be designed around this reality: provision and engagement must be accessible, flexible, and low burden, with clear pathways and straightforward points of entry for micro-employers.

Survey sector profile aligns with the LSIP's priority focus: Employer representation is strongest in Construction, Other Services, Wholesale and Retail, Manufacturing, and Health and Care. These sectors are not only significant local employers; they also sit at the centre of regional delivery pressures and economic ambition, including the need to staff essential services and support development and regeneration. The survey therefore reinforces and validates the LSIP's emphasis on priority sectors: the most visible workforce constraints reported by employers are concentrated in the same parts of the economy that matter most for local resilience, growth, and competitiveness. This alignment strengthens confidence that the LSIP is addressing the right areas of demand and targeting intervention where it will have the highest system value.

Employer responses indicate geographically widespread workforce pressure: The highest levels of engagement were recorded in Tonbridge and Malling, Medway, Ashford, and Canterbury. These districts include major centres of economic activity, with concentrations of business parks, industrial estates, and retail hubs, alongside areas experiencing significant development and regeneration. The geographic pattern is instructive: it indicates that workforce challenge is not limited to isolated hotspots. Instead, the evidence points to pressures that are present across the region, with variations in intensity but consistent underlying themes. This reinforces the need for an LSIP response that is both place-aware and regionally coherent, ensuring that interventions reach areas of high demand while remaining scalable and applicable across Kent and Medway.

Recruitment challenge is persistent and the survey points to "latent demand": A strong message from employers is that recruitment remains difficult across multiple sectors. Importantly, the survey also shows that a significant proportion of employers reported not having tried to recruit recently. This must be interpreted with care. It does not signal that labour demand has eased; rather, the evidence suggests a form of latent demand shaped by employers' experience of the labour market. Some businesses appear reluctant to recruit because previous recruitment attempts have been unsuccessful; others are cautious in the context of wider uncertainty; and some anticipate that roles will be hard to fill and therefore avoid advertising. In effect, the survey indicates that the true extent of recruitment pressure may be understated by headline "recruiting/not

recruiting” measures, because employer behaviour adapts to persistent scarcity. The LSIP must respond to this by addressing both the flow of new entrants and the practical barriers employers face in accessing talent and training.

Where employers do recruit, skills mismatch is constraining hiring outcomes: Among employers who have recruited, the evidence points to two reinforcing problems. First, many employers experience role-specific shortages, particularly in technical and hands-on occupations, while some sectors report shortages that are structural and enduring. Second, employers also identify employability deficits among applicants, including issues with reliability, communication, and problem-solving. These findings confirm that the challenge is not only one of volume (insufficient numbers entering key roles), but also one of alignment (a mismatch between what employer’s need and what applicants can demonstrate at point of entry). This is a decisive signal for LSIP implementation: the system must strengthen the pipeline into priority roles while simultaneously improving job readiness and in-work progression through accessible upskilling.

In several sectors, recruitment difficulty is systemic rather than episodic: A proportion of employers describe recruitment as a major problem affecting multiple roles at the same time. This “constant, across-the-board” struggle is reported most strongly in Health and Social Care, Hospitality, Construction, and Manufacturing. The survey narrative links this to a combination of labour pool scarcity, competition between employers, and challenges of role attractiveness, including unsociable hours or pay not reflecting responsibility and skill requirements. This is an important distinction: it indicates the need for strategic, sector-led workforce solutions rather than short-term vacancy responses. Where recruitment challenges are systemic, the LSIP must support coordinated action that strengthens entry routes, improves progression and retention, and ensures that training and education offers match real operating realities in the workplace.

A weak pipeline from full-time education is a defining risk to workforce sustainability: One of the most significant findings in the survey is the limited evidence of employers recruiting directly from full-time education. Many employers report that they have not recruited from this group and, in the past two to three years, received no applicants at all from those leaving education. This is not a marginal issue: it represents a fundamental pipeline weakness with direct consequences for workforce replacement, productivity, and sector sustainability.

The most plausible explanation indicated by the narrative is a disconnect between young people and local employers, particularly SMEs. If young people are not applying, it suggests they may not know the employers exist, may not understand the roles on offer, or may not see the sectors as desirable. It also implies that engagement between schools, colleges, and local SMEs is inconsistent, limiting visibility of pathways and undermining transition into work. The LSIP must therefore treat employer-education connectivity as a core system requirement, not an “add-on”: earlier exposure, clear routes, and meaningful employer involvement in preparing young people for work are essential to rebuilding the pipeline.

Preparedness of young entrants is mixed, with employability behaviour as a recurring gap: For those employers who have recruited from education, views on preparedness are mixed, ranging from “very well prepared” through to “poorly prepared”. The evidence points to variability between individuals, with some young people demonstrating strong technical potential but weaker workplace behaviours. Employers highlight gaps in punctuality, resilience, confidence, communication, and broader sector awareness. This is a direct call to action for the skills system: technical learning alone is not sufficient if it is not matched by the behaviours and applied capability needed to perform effectively in real workplaces. The LSIP response must prioritise work readiness alongside technical competence, including structured employer engagement,

stronger work experience opportunities, and more consistent collaboration between employers and education providers to bridge the transition from learning to sustained employment.

Sector signals reinforce the urgency of pipeline and job-readiness reform: The survey's sector-level insights reinforce the wider narrative and sharpen its implications. Construction employers report persistent shortages in skilled trades, difficulty attracting young people, and very low levels of applicants from education, alongside concerns about practical readiness in new entrants and an urgent pipeline issue amplified by an ageing workforce. Health and Social Care employers describe severe recruitment difficulties and high turnover, with barriers linked to pay relative to responsibility and a near-total absence of applicants direct from education; preparedness concerns are focused on communication, confidence, and resilience. Wholesale and Retail employers identify high volumes of entry-level vacancies with fewer technical skill gaps, but continued challenges around reliability and core employability, alongside competitive pressure from other sectors. Manufacturers highlight shortages in engineering and machine operative roles, a need for stronger digital and technical awareness, difficulty promoting the sector to young people, and limited local training options aligned to emerging technologies. The "Other Services" category is mixed, but employers identify inconsistent training pathways and a clear need for flexible, affordable training that smaller employers can access and use. Across these examples, the themes are consistent: employers need a more reliable pipeline, better work readiness, and training provision that is responsive, relevant, and reachable.

Collectively, the survey evidence confirms that Kent and Medway face a misaligned talent pipeline, particularly from education into local work, alongside persistent shortages in critical sectors, widespread employability gaps, and an urgent requirement for accessible, locally delivered training. It also underlines that the employer base is predominantly small business, which requires engagement and delivery models that are practical and proportionate.

Employers are not asking for abstract reform. They are asking for clear visibility of training, coherent pathways into work for young people, more work-ready applicants, and training that reflects real-world demands. They also want support to navigate recruitment and workforce development in a labour market where scarcity and competition are embedded features. This evidence reinforces the LSIP's guiding principles: an employer-led approach that is collaborative, sector-focused, and grounded in what businesses can realistically engage with and implement.

C8. Employer Survey: Overview of Questions and Responses

This section summarises findings from a campaign survey of employers across Kent and Medway. It provides an overview of responses on recruitment experiences, skills gaps, workforce development activity and barriers to training, to inform local discussions on how education and training can better align with employer need.

Personal and identifiable fields (e.g., company name, contact details) have been excluded from this report.

Q1. What sector is your business in?

Base: 463 respondents.

Response option	Count	% of respondents
f. Construction	90	19.4%

q. Other service activities	76	16.4%
g. Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	64	13.8%
c. Manufacturing	44	9.5%
o. Human health and social work activities	32	6.9%
h. Transportation and storage	28	6.0%
k. Financial and insurance activities	22	4.8%
m. Professional, scientific and technical activities	20	4.3%
i. Accommodation and food service activities	18	3.9%
p. Arts, entertainment and recreation	13	2.8%
d. Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply	13	2.8%
a. Agriculture, forestry and fishing	12	2.6%
j. Information and communication	11	2.4%
l. Real estate activities	11	2.4%
n. Administrative and support service activities	7	1.5%
b. Mining and quarrying	1	0.2%
e. Water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation activities	1	0.2%

Q2. How many people does your business employ?

Base: 463 respondents.

Response option	Count	% of respondents
a. 9 or fewer	280	60.5%
b. 10-49	138	29.8%
c. 50-249	37	8.0%
d. 250+	8	1.7%

Q3. Within Kent and Medway, where is your principal employment site?

Base: 463 respondents.

Response option	Count	% of respondents
l. Tonbridge and Malling	68	14.7%

h. Medway	62	13.4%
a. Ashford	56	12.1%
b. Canterbury	55	11.9%
c. Dartford	43	9.3%
i. Sevenoaks	40	8.6%
g. Maidstone	35	7.6%
d. Dover	25	5.4%
j. Swale	21	4.5%
e. Folkestone and Hythe	21	4.5%
f. Gravesham	19	4.1%
k. Thanet	18	3.9%

3. Recruitment experience

Q4. Thinking of your recent recruitment experiences, which of the following best describes your experience?

Base: 463 respondents.

Response option	Count	% of respondents
d. We have not tried to recruit anyone recently	188	40.6%
b. Recruiting staff in certain roles is sometimes a problem for us	120	25.9%
a. We have no problems recruiting the staff we need	118	25.5%
c. Staff recruitment is a major problem for us	37	8.0%

Role-specific recruitment difficulty (by occupation group)

Q5. What type of roles do you find it hard to recruit at the moment?

The following items capture difficulty recruiting for specific role groups. Bases vary by role.

a. Managers

Base: 92 respondents.

Response option	Count	% of respondents
Not a problem	41	44.6%
Sometimes a problem	37	40.2%

Major Problem	14	15.2%
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b. Professionals / highly skilled specialists

Base: 131 respondents.

Response option	Count	% of respondents
Sometimes a problem	64	48.9%
Major Problem	44	33.6%
Not a problem	23	17.6%

c. Technical and skilled support roles

Base: 127 respondents.

Response option	Count	% of respondents
Sometimes a problem	63	49.6%
Major Problem	33	26.0%
Not a problem	31	24.4%

d. Skilled trades

Base: 104 respondents.

Response option	Count	% of respondents
Sometimes a problem	41	39.4%
Major Problem	34	32.7%
Not a problem	29	27.9%

e. Sales and customer service roles

Base: 95 respondents.

Response option	Count	% of respondents
Not a problem	57	60.0%
Sometimes a problem	29	30.5%
Major Problem	9	9.5%

f. Care, leisure and other service staff

Base: 36 respondents.

Response option	Count	% of respondents
Not a problem	19	52.8%
Sometimes a problem	14	38.9%
Major Problem	3	8.3%

g. Machine operatives

Base: 50 respondents.

Response option	Count	% of respondents
Sometimes a problem	18	36.0%
Major Problem	16	32.0%
Not a problem	16	32.0%

h. Jobs that don't require any specialist skills

Base: 78 respondents.

Response option	Count	% of respondents
Not a problem	55	70.5%
Sometimes a problem	12	15.4%
Major Problem	11	14.1%

4. Skills lacking among applicants (recent recruitment)

Q6. Thinking about your recent recruitment experiences, which of the following technical and practical skills tend to be lacking among applicants?

Base: 157 respondents (multi-select).

Response option	Count	% of respondents
i. Specialist skills, knowledge and understanding needed to perform the role	89	56.7%
b. Knowledge of using specialist software packages (e.g., project management, accounting, publishing software, etc.)	53	33.8%

e. More complex numerical and statistical skills and understanding	40	25.5%
c. Advanced/ specialist IT skills (e.g., programming and development)	39	24.8%
f. Writing instructions, manuals and reports	37	23.6%
a. Basic IT skills (e.g., knowledge of Word, Excel and Outlook)	34	21.7%
d. Basic numeracy skills	33	21.0%
h. Adapting to new equipment or materials	30	19.1%
g. Manual dexterity	30	19.1%
n/a	8	5.1%
N/A	6	3.8%
don't recruit anybody	1	0.6%
Attitude, people don't want to work	1	0.6%
Customer service skills	1	0.6%
none	1	0.6%
none of the above	1	0.6%
everyone is fine	1	0.6%
It is harder to find people for the outside jobs whilst it is easier to employ for office roles	1	0.6%
The warehouse staff are the most difficult to recruit for	1	0.6%
QA roles seem to be most difficult to recruit for	1	0.6%

Q7. And which of the following personal and people skills and attributes tend to be lacking?

Base: 157 respondents (multi-select).

Response option	Count	% of respondents
a. Ability to manage own time and prioritise tasks	76	48.4%
f. Managing their own feelings, or handling the feelings of others	61	38.9%
c. Customer handling skills	58	36.9%
d. Managing, motivating and setting objectives for other staff	49	31.2%

e. Sales skills	37	23.6%
b. Team working	27	17.2%
n/a	12	7.6%
none	8	5.1%
N/A	5	3.2%
None	3	1.9%
house keeping	1	0.6%
TECHNICIANS	1	0.6%
N/a	1	0.6%
if they're lacking, they don't employ them	1	0.6%
no	1	0.6%
people want to work around children's school times, which isn't suitable for the employer	1	0.6%
none of the above	1	0.6%
nothing	1	0.6%
not applicable	1	0.6%

5. Recruitment from education & preparedness

Q8. Over the past 2-3 years, have you recruited anyone directly from full-time education (e.g., a school or college leaver or an Apprentice)?

Base: 463 respondents.

Response option	Count	% of respondents
c. No – and we haven't had any applicants or work experience placements, as far as I know	263	56.8%
a. Yes	153	33.0%
b. No – but we have had applicants directly from full-time education and/ or we offer work experience to young people	34	7.3%
d. Don't know	13	2.8%

Q9. Thinking about the people you have recruited directly from full-time education, how well prepared do you think they were to work in a business like yours?

Base: 153 respondents.

Response option	Count	% of respondents
b. Well prepared	44	28.8%
c. Neither well prepared nor poorly prepared	41	26.8%
a. Very well prepared	26	17.0%
d. Poorly prepared	24	15.7%
e. Very poorly prepared	15	9.8%
f. Don't know	3	2.0%

Q10. Thinking about young people leaving education in general, how well prepared do you think they are to work in a business like yours?

Base: 463 respondents.

Response option	Count	% of respondents
c. Neither well prepared nor poorly prepared	156	33.7%
d. Poorly prepared	124	26.8%
e. Very poorly prepared	80	17.3%
b. Well prepared	54	11.7%
f. Don't know	36	7.8%
a. Very well prepared	13	2.8%

Q11. In what ways are young people poorly prepared for work?

Base: 212 respondents (multi-select).

Response option	Count	% of respondents
a. Lack of experience	160	75.5%
b. Don't have the right attitude	130	61.3%
c. Lack of ability to manage own time and prioritise tasks	121	57.1%
e. Difficulty in managing their own feelings, or handling the feelings of others	96	45.3%

f. Lack of the right qualifications	95	44.8%
d. Lack of team working skills	83	39.2%
too young	1	0.5%
Poor IT skills	1	0.5%
difficult to say	1	0.5%
soft skills	1	0.5%
Young people like to try a lot before settling	1	0.5%
Expensive insurance	1	0.5%
n/a	1	0.5%
n/A	1	0.5%
need to be over 18	1	0.5%
As long as they have the right attitude	1	0.5%
phone	1	0.5%
driving	1	0.5%
tools, transport	1	0.5%
niche business	1	0.5%
depends on the person	1	0.5%
no practical skills	1	0.5%

Note: a small number of additional free-text responses were provided; these are summarised thematically later in the report.

6. Workforce capability and internal skills gaps

Q12. Thinking about your existing workforce overall, which of the following statements best applies to you?

Base: 463 respondents .

Response option	Count	% of respondents
a. Our existing workforce has the skills and capabilities to fully meet the needs of our business	325	70.2%
b. We have some gaps in skills and capabilities	126	27.2%
c. We have significant gaps in skills and capabilities within the business	12	2.6%

Q13. What skills do you consider your business is currently lacking?

Base: 138 respondents (multi-select).

Response option	Count	% of respondents
b. Knowledge of using specialist software packages (e.g., project management, accounting, publishing software, etc.)	56	40.6%
i. Specialist skills, knowledge and understanding needed to perform the role	52	37.7%
c. Advanced/ specialist IT skills (e.g., programming and development	35	25.4%
specialist software)	35	25.4%
f. Writing instructions, manuals and reports	32	23.2%
e. More complex numerical and statistical skills and understanding	26	18.8%
h. Adapting to new equipment or materials	26	18.8%
a. Basic IT skills (e.g., knowledge of Word, Excel and Outlook)	25	18.1%
d. Basic numeracy skills	21	15.2%
g. Manual dexterity	15	10.9%
none	4	2.9%
n/a	4	2.9%
N/A	2	1.4%
Certain tickets he quoted - courses cost a lot of money	1	0.7%
marketing and after sales	1	0.7%
house keeping	1	0.7%
Sales skills	1	0.7%
Quantity	1	0.7%
experience	1	0.7%
Missing additional managing skills, more people able to do management	1	0.7%
social media training	1	0.7%
N\A	1	0.7%

sales	1	0.7%
Quantity	1	0.7%
multitask	1	0.7%
social media	1	0.7%
Ai might need to know trends	1	0.7%

Q14. And which of the following personal and people skills and attributes tend to be lacking?

Base: 138 respondents (multi-select).

Response option	Count	% of respondents
a. Ability to manage own time and prioritise tasks	65	47.1%
d. Managing, motivating and setting objectives for other staff	46	33.3%
f. Managing their own feelings, or handling the feelings of others	42	30.4%
c. Customer handling skills	37	26.8%
e. Sales skills	32	23.2%
b. Team working	30	21.7%
n/a	17	12.3%
N/A	8	5.8%
none	5	3.6%
none of the above	2	1.4%
experience	1	0.7%
Quantity	1	0.7%
relevant apprenticeships but due decrease in mining industry	1	0.7%
Work Ethic	1	0.7%
Mindset needed is different however	1	0.7%
no	1	0.7%

7. Future preparedness (3–5 years)

Q15. Looking ahead to the next 3–5 years, how well prepared do you feel your business is to meet the future skills needs of your sector?

Base: 436 respondents.

Response option	Count	% of respondents
b. Well prepared	189	43.3%
a. Very well prepared	137	31.4%
c. Neither well prepared nor poorly prepared	77	17.7%
f. Don't know	15	3.4%
d. Poorly prepared	13	3.0%
e. Very poorly prepared	5	1.1%

Q16. What are the main reasons your business feels unprepared for future skills needs?

Base: 18 respondents (free text).

Responses (indicative only): Common themes referenced across responses include workforce supply/pipeline issues, limited training availability, time/capacity to train, uncertainty about future demand/funding, and succession/retirement concerns.

8. Workforce development, training routes and barriers

Q17. There are several ways in which a business might develop the skills of its own workforce. Which of the following applies to you?

Base: 463 respondents (multi-select).

Response option	Count	% of respondents
a. We offer our own in-house training and development	370	79.9%
e. We pay for staff to access training/ development from industry bodies and professional associations	229	49.5%
b. We pay for staff to attend training provided by private sector providers	222	47.9%
c. We pay for staff to attend training provided by local colleges	78	16.8%
f. We don't currently offer or pay for staff training and development	60	13.0%

d. We pay for staff to attend training/ development provided by universities	38	8.2%
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Q18. Do you think any of following present a barrier to your business in terms of accessing training and development for your workforce?

Base: 463 respondents (multi-select).

Response option	Count	% of respondents
g. We don't experience any barriers in enabling our workforce to access training.	172	37.1%
b. We can't afford to release staff	166	35.9%
a. We can't afford the financial cost	141	30.5%
d. We are unsure about the quality and suitability of what might be available	110	23.8%
e. We don't have sufficient management time and capacity to plan for training and development	86	18.6%
c. Lack of interest from staff	84	18.1%
n/a	8	1.7%
N/A	4	0.9%
Costly but they do training using various providers for different sectors.	1	0.2%
volunteers	1	0.2%
self employed	1	0.2%
HR related barriers	1	0.2%
none	1	0.2%
None	1	0.2%
agency and 3rd party staff, re-education is important and initial education. redoing courses for construction is important.	1	0.2%
no need for training, so there are no barriers	1	0.2%
will be retiring so no need to access training	1	0.2%
Their biggest problem is that they do not have the money to be able to get more staff or pay for better training	1	0.2%
no training available from professional bodies locally	1	0.2%

9. Employer–education collaboration and follow-up

Q19. Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce and its partners are working to make local education and training more relevant to local employers. Which of the following might apply to you?

Base: 463 respondents (multi-select).

Response option	Count	% of respondents
a. We would like to be able to access more short courses	230	49.7%
b. We would consider offering short work experience (i.e., over several days)	225	48.6%
g. We would consider mentoring young people	221	47.7%
c. We would consider offering longer work experience placements (i.e., over several months)	212	45.8%
e. We would consider hosting student visits at our company	168	36.3%
h. We would consider advising on the curriculum	147	31.7%
f. We would consider helping with teaching	146	31.5%
d. We would consider offering students industry projects to work on	136	29.4%
n/a	21	4.5%
N/A	15	3.2%
None	5	1.1%
none of the above	5	1.1%
none	3	0.6%
not sure	2	0.4%
None of the above	2	0.4%
None - too specialist	1	0.2%
would consider all but lack of time	1	0.2%
Would not invest in short term training/ employment	1	0.2%
freelancers he works with	1	0.2%
more towards preparing for the workspace and also mindset.	1	0.2%
None plus nature of business	1	0.2%

ALREADY OFFERING SCHEME	1	0.2%
nothing	1	0.2%
no time available	1	0.2%
they are contractors of very specialist job, and they don't have resources to offer any of the above	1	0.2%
Doesn't apply to them as they are a 2-man band and don't need training	1	0.2%
none of above	1	0.2%
they will be closing in the near future	1	0.2%
The Enterprise Allowance scheme - should be accessible- departments of work and pension schemes	1	0.2%
students don't have cscs course so can't go on site	1	0.2%
Moving to larger premises	1	0.2%
can't comment at the moment	1	0.2%
too specialist to offer any of these	1	0.2%
N/a	1	0.2%
none apply	1	0.2%
Their work is not guaranteed. E.g they might not have a job for 3 weeks so it is not right for work experience visits etc	1	0.2%
Would all depend on insurance for what they do	1	0.2%
For the right person would consider offering some of the above but business is quite specialised and niche	1	0.2%
do not have the time	1	0.2%
no time for that	1	0.2%

Q20. Are you happy to be contacted again.....?

Base: 463 respondents (multi-select).

Response option	Count	% of respondents
a. About the results of this research?	287	62.0%
d. None of the above	156	33.7%
b. Would you like to be kept informed of employer-led skills initiatives across Kent and Medway?	129	27.9%
c. Would you be interested in engaging in other activities related to skills and workforce development such as roundtables?	85	18.4%

Overall, the survey evidence highlights that while many businesses feel broadly capable today, skills gaps and recruitment challenges persist in key roles and skill areas, alongside practical constraints such as time and cost of training. The findings provide a clear evidence base to support targeted employer-led action on short courses, work experience, mentoring and curriculum engagement to strengthen the local skills pipeline.

Notes on interpretation

- 1) Bases vary by question. Some questions are only answered by respondents for whom the question is applicable (e.g., recruitment from education, role-specific recruitment difficulty).
- 2) For multi-select questions, counts reflect the number of respondents selecting an option; percentages are calculated as a share of respondents who answered the question.
- 3) Free-text responses are summarised thematically to reduce the risk of identifying individual organisations.

