

2022



Dorset Local Skills Report



Skills Advisory Panel and Board

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The Dorset Local Skills Report, coordinated by Dorset LEP and developed by the Dorset Skills Advisory Panel & Board in collaboration with partners, provides a useful evidence base for use by any institution or organisation developing skills strategies in Dorset. This main report should be read in conjunction with the Local Skills Report Annex of Key Indicators and the Programme of Skills Activities which can all be found online at dorsetlep.co.uk.

This report is an update on the Dorset Local Skills Report published in 2021 and it incorporates and supersedes that publication to remain the single go-to resource of local skills insights and initiatives. Changes from the previous version of the report are outlined in the review section.

Dorset

Local

Skills

Report

The **Dorset Local Skills Report** draws on evidence of our regional skills and labour market strengths, challenges and future prospects and offers an interim assessment of progress on key indicators and initiatives currently underway.

It is developed through extensive local support and intelligence gathering and aims to act as a springboard for future engagements, creative partnerships and conversations, where a diversity of voices from across the skills spectrum are heard, including employers, educators, learners, and policy makers.

This report is accompanied by **Annex of Key Indicators** and a **two-year programme of Skills Activities**.

The Dorset Skills Advisory Panel and Board is the owner and custodian of this report.

Acknowledgements

With special thanks to all our contributors and especially those most closely involved (listed in alphabetical order):

AECC University College, Air Bearing Solutions, Arts University Bournemouth, Bournemouth and Poole College, Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole Council, Bournemouth University, Careers and Enterprise Company, Dorset and Somerset Training Providers Network, Dorset Council, Kingston Maurward College, NHS University Hospitals Dorset, Pavilion Dance South West, Skills & Learning Adult Community Education, Upton Beach, Weymouth College

The Department for Education grant funds Skills Advisory Panels, the production of a Local Skills Report is a condition of this funding.

A note on references

Where figures are listed, these refer to Dorset Local Skills Report Annex.

Foreword by Luke Rake

It's with great pleasure that I welcome you, on behalf of the Dorset Skills Advisory Panel and Board, to the Local Skills Report 2022 – the authoritative resource for Dorset skills insights and activities.

I've been fortunate to pick up from the sterling work done by former Chair, Professor Emma Hunt, and also have support from a superb team at Dorset LEP who have brought together this data in a way that succinctly and clearly sets out both the challenges and opportunities for the county of Dorset over the next few years. As ever, the wisdom and support of other members of the Skills Board is invaluable in shaping this forward-looking view.

The aim of this update is to highlight changes that have occurred, both due to the pandemic and other shifts in policy and employment, to enable local employers, public sector bodies and others to determine their strategies going forward.

The landscape is turbulent and continues to provide much food for thought. Within the educational landscape alone we have had a new Skills Bill, which highlights the role of Chambers of Commerce, expected developments linked to the Augar report, new qualifications such as T Levels, and a range of other changes. This update thus arrives at a time of considerable change – both in policy and economic terms – and offers a reflection on Dorset's skills journey to date, recent progress made and the strategic direction of travel.



On the latter, the Skills Board is united in its aims to ensure that Dorset's economy, and the fortunes of its people, are supported to thrive. Having reviewed the latest key metrics as a board I am pleased to report that despite the recent waves of change, there is a strong united feeling around the table that our skills strategy and plans are still relevant, even more so in view of the changes seen.

The pandemic has brought significant challenge for all sectors, and also affected the learning and development of our young people as they prepare for the world of work. However, amongst the noise we can still see the resilience of the Dorset economy.

The initial 'big bang' effects we expected to find from the pandemic have not materialised, and a more reflective and pragmatic form of development is starting to dominate. Those who are innovative are continuing to thrive, those who are brave move forward, and there has been some positive movement in metrics regarding GVA.

However, this is not necessarily a rising tide that has lifted all boats. In some cases, the median values of GVA have increased mathematically due to a reduction in the number jobs that are low paid. Whilst this efficiency gain is to be welcomed, as are higher rates of pay, we need to be mindful that those on lower incomes have the opportunities to progress into better work and this is not simply removing that lower income work without replacement.

We must focus on a contemporary skills agenda. Educators and employers need to work more closely together at all levels, schools, colleges and universities. New curricula such as T Levels, A Level equivalent qualifications preparing students for technical higher education or employment, are soon to be released. Those of us who have worked in education for a long time may be inherently cynical about (yet another) rebranded attempt to create equivalency between technical and academic education, but the reality is that a healthy society needs both. Regardless of the title, we need to ensure that young people have good careers guidance and are fully able to follow their dreams and their chosen career, no matter where they start.

Dorset is a moderately affluent county, but also has areas of particularly poor social mobility, and it is imperative that we aim to improve life chances for all.

There are skills shortages in several areas, and within the rural parts of the county there is both an accessibility and aspiration gap for progression, where far less than national average numbers of young people go to higher education.

We know that Level 4 qualifications are key in developing both technical and higher order employment, hence the LEP's investment in a new flagship university centre in the heart of the rural county.

In conclusion, we need to ensure that we focus not just on skills for now, to meet the employment and workforce gaps, but also on skills for the future.

New industries will help us deal with new challenges. Those, for example, of food security, defence, environmental sustainability, engineering development and through large creative arts sector. This will enable the transformation of the Dorset economy for the benefit of all. It's a fabulous place to live and work, and I hope this report helps in defining the things we need to do.

Luke Rake

Chair

**Dorset Skills Advisory
Panel and Board**

Skills Advisory Panels - Introduction

The national context - introduction by the Department for Education

Since 2018, [Skills Advisory Panels \(SAPs\)](#) have been bringing together employers, skills providers and key local stakeholders to better understand and resolve skills mismatches at a local level.

SAPs are part of Mayoral Combined Authorities and Local Enterprise Partnerships and there are 36 in total across England. The Department for Education (DfE) has supported SAPs with grant funding primarily to produce high-quality analysis of local labour markets and publish [Local Skills Reports](#), which set out the local skills strengths and needs and how the SAP proposes its area addresses its key priorities.

This second iteration of SAPs' Local Skills Reports comes at a time when DfE is Trailblazing new Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs), in eight areas of the country.

Developed by Employer Representative Bodies, LSIPs are part of a suite of reforms launched in DfE's "Skills for Jobs" White Paper that aim to put employers more firmly at the heart of the skills system. An evaluation of the eight Trailblazers will inform the national roll out of the programme.

In the meantime, and before LSIPs are rolled out across the country, it is DfE's intention that Skills Advisory Panels and this Local Skills Report should continue to influence the behaviour of local partners and feed intelligence to central government, including to sectoral focussed skills teams and the national-level [Skills and Productivity Board](#) (SPB).



Department
for Education

Dorset Skills Advisory Panel and Board (SAPB)

The Dorset Skills Advisory Panel and Board (SAPB) is a local partnership that brings together employers, local authorities, colleges, universities and other learning providers to match skills provision to local employment opportunities and employers' needs. The SAPB helps Dorset LEP understand current and future skills needs, labour market challenges, and direct available funding in support of evidence-based skills delivery.

The Dorset Skills Advisory Panel and Board (SAPB) was established in the summer of 2019 when the roles of a Skills Advisory Panel and Skills Board were merged into a single strategic committee with a refreshed membership.

The committee exists to support the growth of an inclusive economy with a highly skilled workforce where skills and employment provision meets business need and the aspirations of individuals.

- It oversees the development and the delivery of a robust local skills evidence base, a Local Skills Report and programme of activities across the county that is firmly grounded in the identified skills needs and priorities in Dorset.
- The SAPB is helping to ensure local people are trained for jobs that are available and enabling both businesses and people to grow and thrive, enhancing employment and progression prospects in the county.
- The SAPB provides the collective leadership and a strategic steer for skills and employment activity across Dorset to deliver on this objective.

The coordination of the panel and its work agenda are supported by Dorset LEP's Head of Enterprise, Skills and Industry and the Skills Analytical officer.

Over the past year, the Dorset SAPB saw some of its original members, including its former chair, moving to pastures new.

The SAPB would like to take this opportunity to express gratitude to Professor Emma Hunt for her essential role in setting up the SAP Board and ensuring its ongoing success over the past two years through collaborative leadership and determination and wish her every success in her new role as a Vice-Chancellor and CEO of Falmouth University.

Emma's reflections on her two years in the SAPB head seat can be read on Dorset LEP's [website](#).

The SAPB would also like to thank Diane Grannell, David Walsh and Nigel Evans for their support and valued contribution as members of the SAPB and wish them all a happy retirement.

Welcome on board to new chair Luke Rake and new members Heidi Cooper-Hind, Phil Sayles, Julia Howe and Jon Bird.

Updated membership and terms of reference are now published on Dorset LEP's website – dorsetlep.co.uk/skills-board-committee.

Dorset Skills Advisory Panel and Board (SAPB)



Luke Rake - Chair
Principal & Chief Executive of
Kingston Maurward College



Professor Lesley Haig
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Julia Howe
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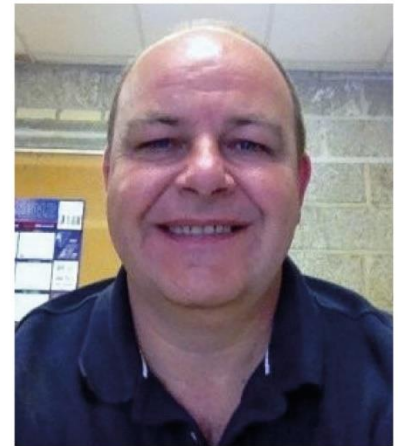
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Skills strengths and needs | local context

Located in the south coast of England, Dorset offers its residents a unique natural and cultural environment, combining quality rural, urban and coastal life.

Half of the county is a designated area of outstanding natural beauty, home of the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site, and boasting the vibrant urban centres of Bournemouth and Poole.

With 100 miles of coastline, the award-winning beaches of Bournemouth, Sandbanks, Swanage and Weymouth, and the harbours of Poole, Portland and Christchurch, Dorset is an example of sustainable living, where economic growth is pursued in synergy with the environment.

THE PLACE: DORSET'S NATURAL AND ECONOMIC CONTEXT



Mix of rural, coastal, and urban

Dorset has more to offer than just beaches. It is setting the standard for 21st century urban lifestyles at the heart of a picturesque coastline and rural countryside. The local councils merged from 9 to 2 in 2019, forming the primarily urban Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council, and predominantly rural Dorset Council, thus facilitating joint working and efficiency of local services, while striving to preserve the unique features of each place.



Population growth

Dorset is an attractive place to live. The population (c.776,800) has grown by 12% over the past decade with higher population density in Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole, which together form an emerging city region - the 15th most populated district in England¹ - grown by 14% since 2001 and expected to reach 400,000 by 2024², closely following Bristol. Dorset's population however is among the most aged in UK with considerably lower proportions of residents under the age of 50 than nationally (Figure 9).



Employment rates

Historically, employment in Dorset compares favourably to national levels with consistently lower unemployment and higher employment rates and these trends have persisted in the past two years (Figure 6).



Economy and productivity

Over the 20 years preceding the pandemic, Dorset saw its economic output doubling, reaching £18.6 bn in 2019³. In comparison with other areas, it has seen a sustained, but subdued output growth in contrast to its consistently higher employment rates. Labour productivity has been persistently below the national average, the gap increasing year on year and reaching circa £4.90 per hour worked in 2019. Applied to the number of hours worked, this creates an 'output gap' of almost £3bn per annum (Figure 7).



Business environment

Dorset offers a fertile environment for young businesses to spring up and prosper within top business survival rates (61% 3-year survival vs 53% nationally, Figure 5). The 32,900+⁴ active businesses create exciting innovations and opportunities with Micros and SMEs⁵ at the heart of the local economy (98%, Figure 4). Whilst Dorset LEP localities remained firmly among the top UK entrepreneurial hotspots in 2020, unfortunately the pandemic led to fewer business formations in Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole, but business start-ups grew by over a third in Dorset Council creating the 10th highest start-up growth from 2019 in the UK⁶.

3 [Regional gross value added](#)

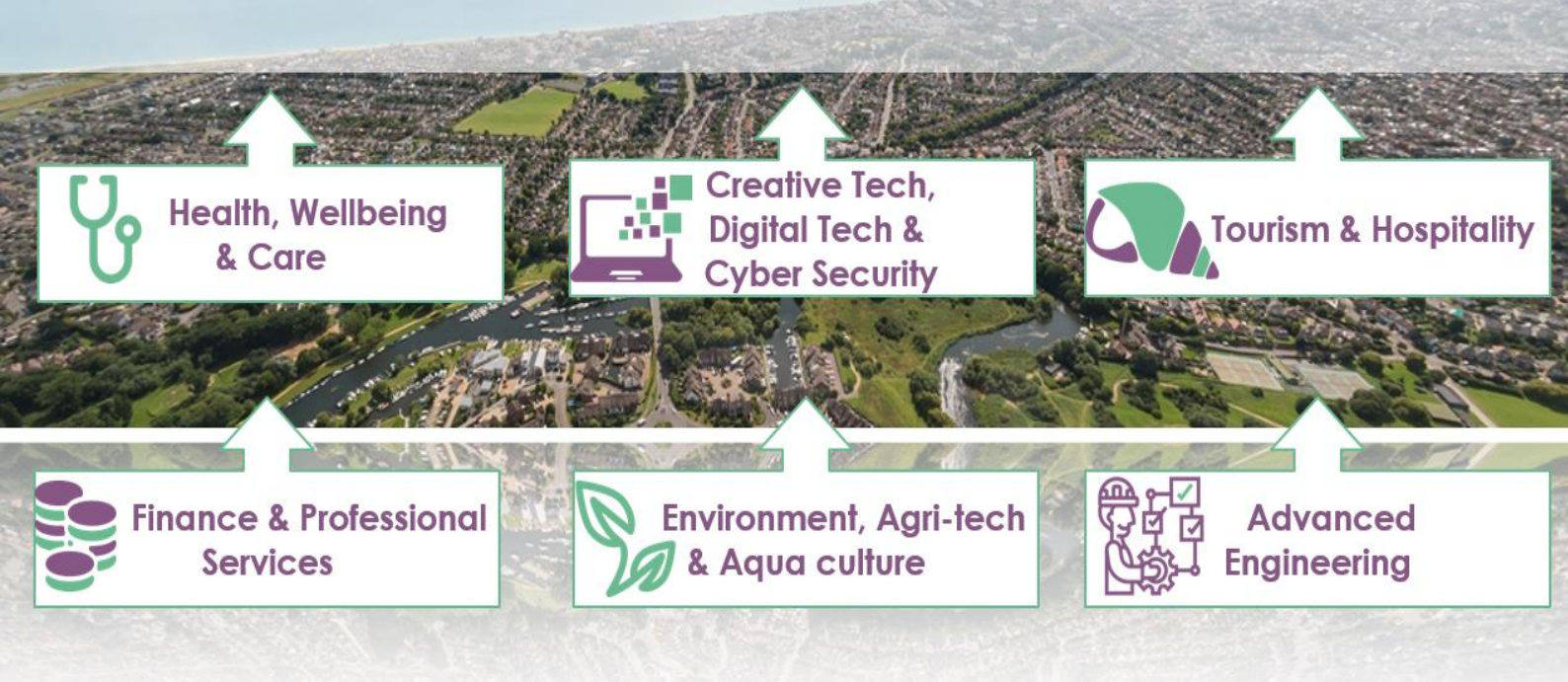
4 ONS Inter Departmental Business Register, 2021

5 SME – Small and Medium Enterprise - with <10 employees or <£1m turnover

6 [Centre for entrepreneurs. Business Start-up Index.2020](#)

1 Population Estimates 2020. ONS

2 ONS Population Projections, 2020, 2018 based



THE PLACE: KEY ESTABLISHED AND GROWTH SECTORS

Over the past two years Dorset's sectors have shown resilience within a whirlwind of change and its business will be in the front line of new arrangements for international trade, movement of people, new Net Zero requirements, and ongoing shifts in workers' and customers' behaviour due to Covid-19, all the while adjusting to demographic and technological change.

Historically, Dorset has known strengths in tourism, healthcare, finance and agriculture among others and areas of growth are emerging in advanced engineering, agri-tech, fin-tech, green, defence, security and cyber, as well as health innovation, digital and creative.

The top sectors of higher industrial concentration include Finance and Insurance (1.4x), Real Estate (1.4x), Accommodation and Food (1.3x) and Agriculture (1.2x) while the top 5 industries in terms of economic output are property, retail, manufacturing, health and construction.

Health, Wellbeing & Care

The largest employment sector in Dorset accounting for 15% of all employed in the county (49,000), Healthcare has the highest growth in employment projected nationally and this trend is set to be more pronounced in Dorset with 7,000 more projected by 2027. With ageing demographic and added pandemic pressures, projections are certainly reflected in elevated sector demand. However, employment levels saw reverse trends, as employer competition over limited staff pool is intensifying and demand is overtaking supply amidst health and residential care settings in Dorset experiencing considerable staff shortages.

Dorset is working on these challenges by bringing together medtech, biotech, life sciences and digital partners with the NHS,

Dorset LEP, local authorities, Bournemouth University and University Hospitals Dorset behind the ambition to be at the forefront of innovation that delivers improved health and wellbeing for communities, supports staff development and turns Dorset's 'demographic crunch' into an economic and research strength⁸.

Dorset already has one of the leading integrated care systems called Our Dorset, the Dorset Intelligence & Insight Service (DiiS) offers one of the most advanced population health intelligence data in the UK and Dorset's Innovation Hub is piloting ground-breaking workforce solutions before being rolled out across the NHS system.

Dorset LEP also is leading the way on One Health capitalising on the links between human, animal and environmental health.

7 Working Futures 2017-2027

8 Dorset Investment Prospectus - Wellbeing

Creative, Digital & Cyber

Dorset is a fast growing creative and digital hub, and among the best destinations for digital entrepreneurs. With the potential to be a world-leader in creative and digital tech, BCP ranked first in the UK for tech start-ups, which represented 28% of all businesses created in 2019, outperforming the national average (8%) and tech hubs such as London's Camden (13%)⁹. Aside from thriving enterprise, the sectors also creates high skilled – high paid jobs, employing over 13,270 people in Dorset with wages around 30% higher than the average in the county. Areas of expertise include visual effects, gaming, animation, digital agencies, app creation, digital products, and post-production. Dorset has the [largest film school outside of London](#), and is home of the [National Centre for Computer Animation](#), [The Centre for Digital Entertainment](#) and the [International VFX Hub](#). Digital and creative businesses based in Dorset include [Outpost VFX](#), [Amuzo Games](#), [The Emerge Group](#), [Bright Blue Day](#), tech for good champions [3 Sided Cube](#) and many more are supported by Silicon South locally. Dorset is also a fast-growing cyber security hub with cyber specialists such as ESET and LiMETOOLS well established here.

Tourism, Hospitality & Culture

A traditional tourist hotspot, Dorset has higher employment concentration in tourism, hospitality, retail and entertainment with a quarter of Dorset's workforce employed. Unsurprisingly, local hotels, restaurants and retailers had a continued exposure to the ups and downs of the pandemic measures, changes in consumer behaviour, and financial pressures over the past two years. As many other places, Dorset's high streets saw the disappearance of some of shopping's biggest names – including Debenhams, Topshop, Topman, Miss Selfridge and Burton¹⁰. Employment as a result declined by 8% with 7,000 fewer employed in 2020 compared to a year earlier, and a further decline appears to have taken place in 2021 (Figure 32). Yet, innovative high-street solutions are looking to transform the shopping experience and see the rise of creativity and craftsmanship with smaller independent shops offering sustainable local products and repairs.

⁹ The CFE business start-up index 2020 cyb

¹⁰ [How Dorset's high streets performed in 2021](#), Bournemouth Daily Echo, December 2021

Finance & Professional Services

Financial services are particularly well established both in employment and economic outputs, employing 14,000 people and contributing £1.4 billion (8%) to the economy¹¹. Largely driven by emerging 'Fin-Tech', growth is dependent on software and technical skills availability. Bournemouth and Poole are locations of choice for market leaders Ageas, Barclays, Deutsche Bank, LV= Liverpool Victoria, Nationwide and JPMorgan whose Bournemouth campus has 4,000 employees.

Environment, 'Agri-tech' and Aquaculture

Part of the South West - the region producing more food than Scotland - and housing the largest farm area in England with over 25,000 commercial farm holdings, Dorset has agriculture at its heart¹². With 8000 employee jobs, agriculture is worth £ 706 million. The sector's 'agri-tech' innovations will grow productivity with a shift towards 'clean growth' and environmental preservation. Dorset's sustainable aquaculture is a high potential opportunity¹³ likely to create apprenticeships, jobs and growth and there is year on year rise in green job vacancies with an overall 73% increase this year on 2018¹⁴.

Engineering, Construction & Defence

Dorset is a significant hub for advanced engineering with major companies such as BAE Systems, Draken (previously Cobham), Honeywell, Holt Engineering, Curtis-Wright, Magellan Aerospace and many more supported by the Dorset Engineering & Manufacturing Cluster. The sector employs 29,000 people and contributes £1.7 billion (10%) to the economy. Construction and defence are also growing in employment, innovation and concentration of projects of strategic importance for Dorset including the Defence BattleLab at Dorset Innovation Park.

The huge leap of technology adoption throughout the pandemic has further intensified employers' need for higher-level digital skills, while there has been no corresponding increase in the number of people developing these skills in Dorset. There is an intensified STEM skills demand with a third (33%) of employers needing staff to develop advanced or specialist computer skills, which exceeds the proportions that required basic computer literacy/IT skills development⁷.

¹¹ Regional GVA by industry, ONS 2018

¹² DEFRA Statistics

¹³ Invest In Great, [Aquaculture in Dorset](#), DIT

¹⁴ Growing [green careers](#) in Dorset



Population
776,800



Annual Economy
£18.6 bn GVA



32,930
Active Business Enterprises

Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole **15th**
most populated district in England - an emerging city region

£4.90 less produced per hour worked adding up to **£3 billion** productivity gap per year

Top UK start-up hotspot

Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole ranked **16th** out of **347** UK areas.



High employment rate
77%
vs 75% in England

Among the top business survival rates **61%**
3-year survival
vs 53% nationally

Entrepreneurial Culture
58,200 self-employed
(11% vs 9% in UK)

38% start-up growth in Dorset Council, placing it **10th in the UK** by the rate of start-up growth in a year

Sector Highlights:

Largest employment sector



Health & Care
49,000 employed

Highest growth projected
7,000 more to be employed by 2027



Significant innovation hub for
Advanced Engineering & Defence



Agriculture employment
1.4x more employed in Dorset - Aquaculture high potential opportunity



Market leaders location of choice
Financial Services
Employment 1.4x more concentrated in Dorset



Potential to be a world leader in
Creative & Digital
with 13,300 jobs in Dorset



Popular retail, tourism & hospitality destination
1 million visitors in a single weekend in 2021, employing a quarter (24%) of Dorset's workforce

New growth areas:

- Health and care innovations
- Agri-tech / Aquaculture
- Creative tech
- Digital
- Cyber security
- Fin-tech
- Construction
- Defence

Sources: ONS Population Estimates 2020, ONS, ONS Population Projections, 2020, Regional gross value added, 2019, ONS Inter Departmental Business Register, 2021, ONS Jobs density (2020), ONS Business demography, 2015-2020, Centre for entrepreneurs, Business Start-up Index, 2020, Business Register & Employment Survey, 2020, ONS Annual Population Survey, 2021

Skills strengths and needs | key challenges

Attracting and retaining the optimal skills mix is critical for Dorset's industries to recover and thrive, yet recent years have been challenging. Dorset has experienced tighter labour market, prevalent skills shortages, lower productivity, decline in earnings and pay gaps, an ageing workforce and pockets of deprivation, all dynamically influenced by the global pandemic.

PRODUCTIVITY



A smart, productive workforce boosts economic growth, wages and living standards. Dorset performed well in keeping its people in employment throughout an unseen economic disturbance, but the longstanding low productivity remains a key challenge.



A turbulent labour market of record-breaking highs and lows

Arriving amid a labour market of historic employment highs, the COVID19 pandemic created seismic waves of change in the second quarter of 2020: vacancies fell by half, claimants almost tripled and furlough accounted for a third of the eligible employments in Dorset¹⁵.

The thousands displaced across affected industries led to an increase in unemployment – more pronounced in Dorset than nationally – the trends of subdued employer hiring spilling into the first quarter of 2021. Yet, these movements were far from the devastation initially predicted and levels of employment remained favourable in Dorset compared to national rates (Annex, Employment rate).

What followed over the last three quarters of 2021 was in stark contrast to the previous summer (when the press was flooded by employers reporting drowning under a sea of job applications). Despite roller-coaster fluctuations in recruitment, the aggregate labour demand in 2021 reached the highest on record and the narrative completely transformed into a job seekers market (Annex, Online Vacancies).

The mounting evidence over recent months points out to a local economy headed back to pre-existing tightness, employer competing for talent and prevailing hard-to-fill vacancies and skills shortages.



Higher employment – lower productivity conundrum

Historically, the high levels of employment in Dorset have not translated into matching growth in productivity – a phenomenon, known as the 'productivity conundrum'.

Labour productivity is lagging behind the UK with a widening gap costing our economy an estimated £3 billion in lost output in 2019 (Annex, Nominal GVA per hour worked).

The key explanation remains in the recovery from the financial crisis, when businesses substituted cheap labour for capital investment, particularly in labour intensive and lower wage sectors, leading to a period of surprisingly high employment in Dorset, but slow output growth. And history might be repeating this time around with business investment remaining under pressure¹⁶.

However, recent national trends¹⁷ reveal some curious pandemic effects on increased aggregate productivity linked to innovation.

While output **per worker** declined in 2020 (9.5%↓) with large numbers of furloughed workers, **workers' average output per hour increased** (0.4%↑) and in 2021 this remained higher than pre-pandemic levels. This is explained by furlough prevalence in lower productivity sectors and a leap in technological innovation for businesses adapting to remote operating models.

¹⁶ [Business investment in the UK, July to September 2021, ONS December 2021](#)

¹⁷ [UK labour productivity rose during pandemic, official figures show](#), Financial times, 2021



Tackling the productivity puzzle

▪ Investment in innovation

Latest productivity trends show that increased investment in innovation and digital technologies would not only build resilience but could boost productivity to a great extent. There could also be greater gains to productivity from working from home in the future, which may allow companies to shift some investment away from buildings towards staff training and skills¹⁸.

Our earlier research of the barriers to productivity growth¹⁹ explored a few key avenues to identify possible solutions.

One hypothesis is that the industrial makeup of the area explains productivity levels. And while productivity differs across sectors, the evidence suggests that sector structure explains little of the 'productivity conundrum'. Productivity is not lower in Dorset simply because professional and technical services are slightly less prevalent or there is too much hospitality (Annex, Employment by Sector).

▪ Focused skills support

Another prevalent narrative is poor firm level performance, where only a small proportion of businesses have increased productive growth while there is a 'long tail' of low productivity firms. A recent Economy 2030 Inquiry report²⁰ confirmed the gap between the most and least productive firms is vast (with workers in the 90th percentile of the firm productivity distribution circa 16 times more productive than the 10th percentile). But this is consistent across productive economies, thus not explaining much of the variance.

These findings challenge our previous¹⁹ assertions and argue that supporting the firms with lowest productivity will have a negligible aggregate effect on the region and a better avenue for addressing that problem would be to ensure the availability of an optimal skills mix for the top performing organisations and supporting their growth further.

This is an area of inquiry Dorset LEP and the Skills Advisory Panel and Board are keen to research further.

¹⁸ Bank of England Monetary policy report, Nov 2021
¹⁹ Dorset People and Skills Strategy Evidence Base, 2020
²⁰ Economy 2030 Inquiry - Business time: How ready are UK firms for the decisive decade?, Nov 21



Ensuring Dorset's workforce and future talent pipeline has the right skills mix that can be optimally utilised in high-quality, well-paid jobs in high local demand is an important lever to solving the productivity puzzle.

▪ Investment in management and learning

Low employer investment in staff and management development and training is recognised as one of the contributors to the 'productivity puzzle' and the continued decline in that area in Dorset is a cause of concern (Annex, Employer provided training).

Also higher productivity tends to correlate with higher skills (Figure 52), but rather than churning graduates in specialisms lacking clear labour market pathways and outcomes it is important to seek development solutions that are informed by the labour market and support businesses in utilising their existing skills and encourage targeted investment.

Supporting best business and management practice, stimulating investment in innovation, developing and attracting the right skills mix to support growth and map aspiration with opportunity are all essential activities to driving productivity forward in Dorset.

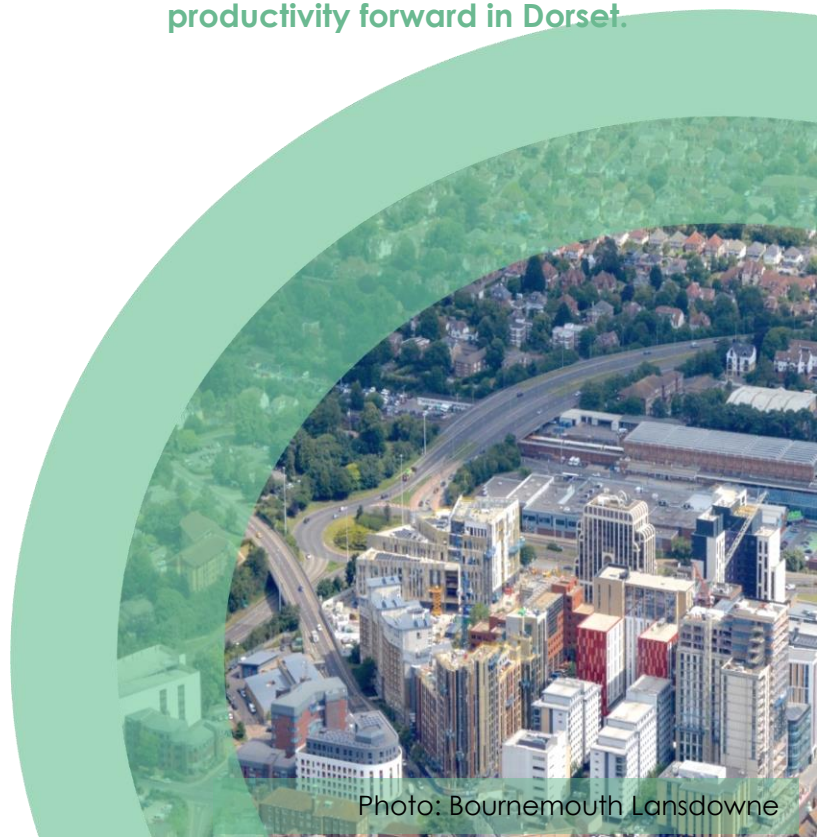


Photo: Bournemouth Lansdowne



DISADVANTAGE & INEQUALITY

Dorset takes a holistic approach to the issues of subdued productivity.

Housing affordability, infrastructure, lower wages, pay gaps and areas of deprivation in Dorset create barriers to productive growth, talent development, attraction and retention and cause the experience of living here to vary widely.



Housing and infrastructure

Dorset is a highly desirable location, as testified by the sheer volume of tourists it attracts. Yet, employers accessing talent with the skills they require, struggle to attract to the area and housing affordability is among the primary barriers.

Dorset is an expensive area to live and among the least affordable for house prices. In 2021 house prices increased further in an accelerated rate of 11% - impacted by the effects of COVID-19 on the house market seen nationally (10% increase on average)²¹. The average house price is 10 times the annual salary of those who live here (compared to 8 in England)²², reaching 12 in Christchurch, West and Mid Dorset²³ making it particularly challenging for young people, those earning less or suffering disadvantage.

Dorset has also higher than average travel times to key services, and has areas of inadequate commuting infrastructure, lack of superfast internet and gigabit availability which all add up to the issue²³.



Earnings and pay gaps

Average earnings in Dorset are slightly lower than the national reference (Figure 8) and the difference has widened over the past year, although upward movements are noted more recently (Figure 8).

There are also pay gaps.

²¹ Land registry, UK House Price Index, 2021

²² House price to earnings ratio, ONS, 2021

²³ Constituency data: house prices, broadband, 2021

- **by gender**

Although women's wages have been growing at a higher rate recently, women still earn over a fifth less than men and the gender pay gap is more pronounced in Dorset than nationally (Figure 39).

- **by geography**

The average earnings also vary widely by area, e.g. weekly earnings in Christchurch are £203 higher than in Bournemouth West²⁴.

Whilst the proportions of people earning below the Living Wage have declined in line with national trends, these are still high in Dorset representing a fifth of male and a quarter of female employee jobs in Dorset Council. Lower wages are most pervasive in South Dorset, where 31% of all employee jobs and half of the part time jobs are earning below that threshold (Figure 37).

The higher proportion of low earners is noteworthy, given housing affordability issues. The indices of deprivation also show 31 neighbourhoods in Dorset fall among the top 20% nationally for income deprivation²⁵.



Inequalities and disadvantage

Living in Dorset is a varied experience depending on where in the county you live. There are pockets of significant multiple deprivation, 15 neighbourhoods in Dorset, concentrated in Weymouth and Portland, Bournemouth and Poole²⁶ fall amongst the 10% most deprived in England (Figure 11).

With inflation at its highest in 30 years, soaring energy prices and cost of living, the aftermath of the pandemic is hitting disproportionately and forcing into poverty those struggling with disadvantage and low wages. Issues of deprivation within families have long-term effects on children who often suffer worse health, fall behind their peers developmentally, and do less well.

To emphasise the barriers to participation, aspiration and achievement, there are areas of postcode lottery that rate particularly poorly in terms of social mobility, South Dorset being defined as the worst performing area nationally – a social mobility 'cold spot' ranked at the bottom of the 533 constituencies in England²⁷.

²⁴ Annual survey of hours and earnings ONS 2021

²⁵ Exploring local income deprivation, ONS, 2021

²⁶ English Indices of deprivation, 2019

²⁷ [Social Mobility Index by Constituency, 2018](#)

Learning inequality and insufficient social mobility impede critical talent within our communities and the wider Dorset economy.

The local areas of disadvantage create challenges to education, participation, attainment and the future talent pipeline and these challenges have worsened with the impact of COVID-19.

The period following school closures in March 2020 was deemed “the most disruptive in children’s education since the Second World War”²⁸. The on-and-off closures continued until February 2021 and school life was disrupted for the rest of the year. Evidence is now starting to emerge on the extent of the academic, mental and physical health impacts. And the impacts on disadvantaged children are a particular cause of concern²⁹.

Attainment gap

The gap in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and their peers in Dorset is established even before they enter the educational system with a 4 months gap already gained in early years. The gap subsequently widens as school life progresses, reaching 20+ months at secondary level (Dorset Council and Poole areas)³⁰.

At 16 years of age (GCSE and equivalent) one in ten disadvantaged pupils enters a transient state with no sustainable employment or education destination – odds that are three times higher than for their non-disadvantaged peers (Annex, Key Stage 4).

As young people leave mandatory education, outcomes continue to be considerably worse for those experiencing disadvantage. One year after finishing 16-18 studies in Dorset, those from disadvantaged backgrounds were over twice as likely to enter an un-sustained destination and this gap has widened from the previous year (Annex, Key Stage 5).

Access to learning

Rural areas have a particular problem with access to learning. Two-thirds of secondary school students in Dorset have within 10% of the longest journeys to school in England³¹.

Digital access

While schools remained opened for the rest of the year, digital access to virtual learning environments and resources remains critical for learning as schools maintained many remote activities. In this new environment those who are not engaging effectively with the digital content are being left behind³², their access to education disrupted by digital exclusion and deprivation.

This is particularly relevant for those living in areas without superfast broadband in rural parts of the county or with limited access to digital devices. Disadvantaged learners, who are generally less likely to have sufficient hardware and bandwidth to ensure effective engagement³³ are therefore more likely to suffer the long-term effects of lost learning.

Low apprenticeship participation.

The evidence is strong that apprenticeships are one of the most effective tools in improving social mobility (16% higher wages for disadvantaged apprenticeship achievers vs 10% for others). Despite their many benefits, apprenticeships have declined nationally, particularly amongst disadvantaged learners, who benefit the most³⁴.

This pre-existing trend of decline in apprenticeship participation in Dorset mirrors national rates and has accelerated over the past two years. Apprenticeship starts dropped by a fifth on pre-pandemic levels (Figure 44) and achievements fell by a quarter (Figure 14) highlighting the challenges with vocational qualification assessments experienced throughout the pandemic.

Tackling inequality, raising aspiration and achieving inclusive growth makes business sense and is at the forefront of our collaborative growth thinking.

Empowering all people in Dorset to reach their productive potential will unlock, attract and retain the talent pipeline to secure Dorset’s future.

28 Institute for government, Schools & Coronavirus, 2021

29 House of Commons, Coronavirus and schools, Jan 22

30 Education in England: Annual Report 2020, Education Policy Institute, Geographical Analysis Pack

31 DEFRA statistics

32 Exploring the UK’s digital divide – ONS, 2019

33 Digital Inclusion in Dorset – Citizens online, 2019

34 ‘Apprenticeships and social mobility’ – Social Mobility Commission, June 2020

THE PLACE: KEY CHALLENGES

DEMOGRAPHIC 'TIME-BOMB'

Dorset's "One Health" approach to ageing is focused on exploring the innovative ideas of reskilling, flexible working, mentoring, and capturing the cultural and economic value of volunteering and unpaid work to rethink employment opportunities for older people and normalise life-long learning.

Ageing innovation will have a transformational impact on talent retention and productivity.



Ageing workforce

Dorset's demographic profile creates a unique workforce and socioeconomic challenge both for now and for the future.

Dorset has the highest dependency ratio³⁵ and the lowest proportion of under 50's anywhere in the UK. The proportion of those aged 16-64 (working age) is 58% of all residents and in some parts of the county already as low as 50%, which compares to 62% national average (Figure 9).

By 2045, almost 40% of the people in Dorset will be over 65 and for every person working there will be a dependent person (young person or a person of pensionable age).

The simple conclusion is that there will be less labour resource – in proportional terms - available within the Dorset LEP than elsewhere in England.



Replacement demand

With our population continuing to age, a key influence on the scale and shape of future labour demand will relate to replacing people leaving the workforce through retirement, the need to 'backfill' those roles (replacement demand) and the risk of losing valuable skills in the process (Annex, Population by age group).

Linked to this demographic challenge, Dorset has a projected replacement demand 5 times the expected new jobs³⁶, and with

161,460 people aged between 50 and 64, over a third (36%) of the current workforce may need to be replaced over the next 15 years and lead to a considerable loss of expertise.

The scale of our ageing population not only means fewer workers, but also greater demand for public services and suitable housing, raising questions on the sustainability of our current employment and care provision models³⁷.



Employer experience

The Dorset 2020 Employer Skills Survey found that 17% of employers had recruitment concerns related to ageing workforce.

Sectors with particular concern included agriculture and manufacturing, where the predominantly older workforce alongside a fast-changing technological landscape, generated a crucial need to update the skills of the existing workforce to enable innovation³⁸.

Most of the employers citing an ageing workforce as a concern were worried about recruiting suitable replacements and losing valuable skills. Very few however were looking into flexible working, alternative or automated tasks or raising awareness amongst employees on the benefits and opportunities of working during later life - both for the business and the individual.

Dorset is bold in challenging the stereotypes around ageing, approaching the demographic crisis as an economic and social opportunity and discovering 'a way to age' fit for the future.

Our ambition is to enable people of all ages in Dorset to live well and enjoy balanced, healthy and fulfilled lives.

35 LEP Outlook 2019, BEIS, 2020

36 The Working Futures 2020-27 study projects 26,000 new jobs created in Dorset, while the number of existing jobs

becoming available through replacement expected to be over 132,000.

37 Future of an ageing population-Government Office for Science, 2016

38 Dorset 2020 Employer Skills Survey

Skills strengths

Quality of education

Dorset's wide range of educational providers offering a broad portfolio of learning opportunities across the lifespan is a significant strength for the skills provision in the region. The county is home to universities with global reputations, three strong further education colleges and a wide range of independent training providers.

The Ofsted 'good' or 'outstanding' grades of the larger proportion of schools and colleges is a testament to that as are the Teaching Excellence Framework awards of Dorset's universities. Both primary and secondary performance in Dorset is largely in line with the national average, although attainment varies by geography and circumstances.

Qualified workforce

Over the past decade, Dorset has broadly mirrored the strong national pattern of increased proportions of higher-level qualifications and shrinking pool of people with no formal qualifications (Figure 12).

This trend is largely associated with the expansion of higher education and reflects a significant structural change over a relatively short period. The biggest increase since 2010 is in Level 4+ qualifications which grew by 30, while the proportion of working age people with no formal qualifications fell to 5% with 6% national reference.

Apprenticeships destinations

The evidence that apprenticeships play an essential role in providing successful career pathways is particularly strong. In Dorset, 91% of completed apprenticeships ended in a sustained employment destination which is 2 percentage points higher than the rate seen nationally, and such positive differential exists across apprenticeship levels (Figure 21). Apprenticeships achievements directly respond to local employer needs – with manufacturing and engineering, as well as health, public services and care being most prevalent and making up half of all achievements over the past academic year.

Also, despite the overall declines in apprenticeships, there was an increase in the number of achievements in 2020/21 – picking up 6% in England and 10% in Dorset on the previous year (Figure 47).

The shift towards higher levels continued as well. Higher Apprenticeship starts doubled over the past two years and accounted for a third (34%) of all starts in 2020/21 from just 5% in 2016/17 (Figure 46).

A range of Post-16 provision

For young people aged 16-18, a variety of academic and vocational routes exist, including sixth form, vocational qualifications and apprenticeships and T Levels are being rolled out from 2022. The three further education colleges (Bournemouth and Poole College, Weymouth College and Kingston Maurward College) are the principal institutions of the 16-18 vocational provision, while the three universities (Bournemouth University, Arts University Bournemouth and AECC University College) offer a broad portfolio of higher education opportunities. This is in addition to the well-established adult education provision from BCP Council and over 200 independent training providers, delivering significant parts of adult learning, apprenticeships and specialised training curricula and offer a wealth of experience, innovation and flexibility to the skills delivery.

Post-16 destinations

Dorset learners' destinations are in line with the national trends with the great majority successfully transitioning into education, employment or apprenticeships.

A year after completing year 11 (GCSE and equivalent), 95% of learners in Dorset are in sustained education, apprenticeship or employment, which is marginally higher than the national average (94%, Figure 17).

This trend continues in 16-18 studies with proportion of positive destinations in Dorset in line with the England average, and a larger proportion of learners in employment (31%) than nationally (25%), (Figure 18).

Naturally, higher rates of early job market entry are positive, but might also indicate entry into lower skilled - lower paid employment pathways, lack of aspiration in areas of the county and further difficulty for employers trying to fill new highly skilled roles.



Picture: Arts University Bournemouth

Further education

Further education institutions play an important role in improving life outcomes and tackling disadvantage, offering the most common destination for disadvantaged students (Annex A, Key Stage 4 Destinations). In terms of destinations, they were also more favourable in Dorset than in England across most levels of study, demonstrating they act as a steppingstone to further opportunities and provide effective pathways to enter employment or further studies (Figure 19).

HE Institutions

With close to 6,800 graduates qualifying in a range of specialisms each year from Dorset's three universities, they play a key role in attracting and retaining high skilled global talent in Dorset. The high demand for places has continued to blossom in a testimony to the quality of provision, but also as a possible response to the surge in youth unemployment seen over the pandemic. The applications to enrolments ratio broadly equate to 5:1. Data provided by all three institutions shows a surge in applications with Bournemouth University's numbers rising by a quarter on the previous year. The proportion of originating from Dorset enrolments also increased to 21% of all enrolled at BU in 2019/20 (Annex, HE Qualifiers).

Their contribution to the skills mix of the local economy is significant, with higher than average numbers qualifying in creative arts and design, business, communications, as well as subjects allied to medicine and computer science, reflecting the specialist strengths of our local institutions as well as the needs of the local economy (Figure 15).

Graduate outcomes

Local universities are strong performers with 89% of Bournemouth University graduates, 85% of Arts University Bournemouth and 80% of AECC University College were in either employment or/and further study 12 months after leaving the institutions, with higher-than-average proportions of graduates from BU in full-time employment (63% vs 56% nationally) AUB graduates in part-time employment (24% vs 11% nationally) and AECC graduates engaged in travelling or caring activities (10% vs 5% in England) (Figure 22).

Skills strengths

3 Universities

3 Further Education Colleges

Cross-county Adult Skills & Learning

200+ Independent training providers

T Levels becoming available

High demand for university placements

- 5:1 application to enrolment ratio with surge of applications throughout the pandemic

Higher representation of HE qualifiers in:

- creative arts and design,
- subjects allied to medicine
- computer science
- business and management
- communications and media

Low proportion of workforce with no formal qualifications:

- 5.0% of workforce vs 6.2% in England
- 19% - of workforce qualified to Level 3 (A Level equivalent) vs 17% in England

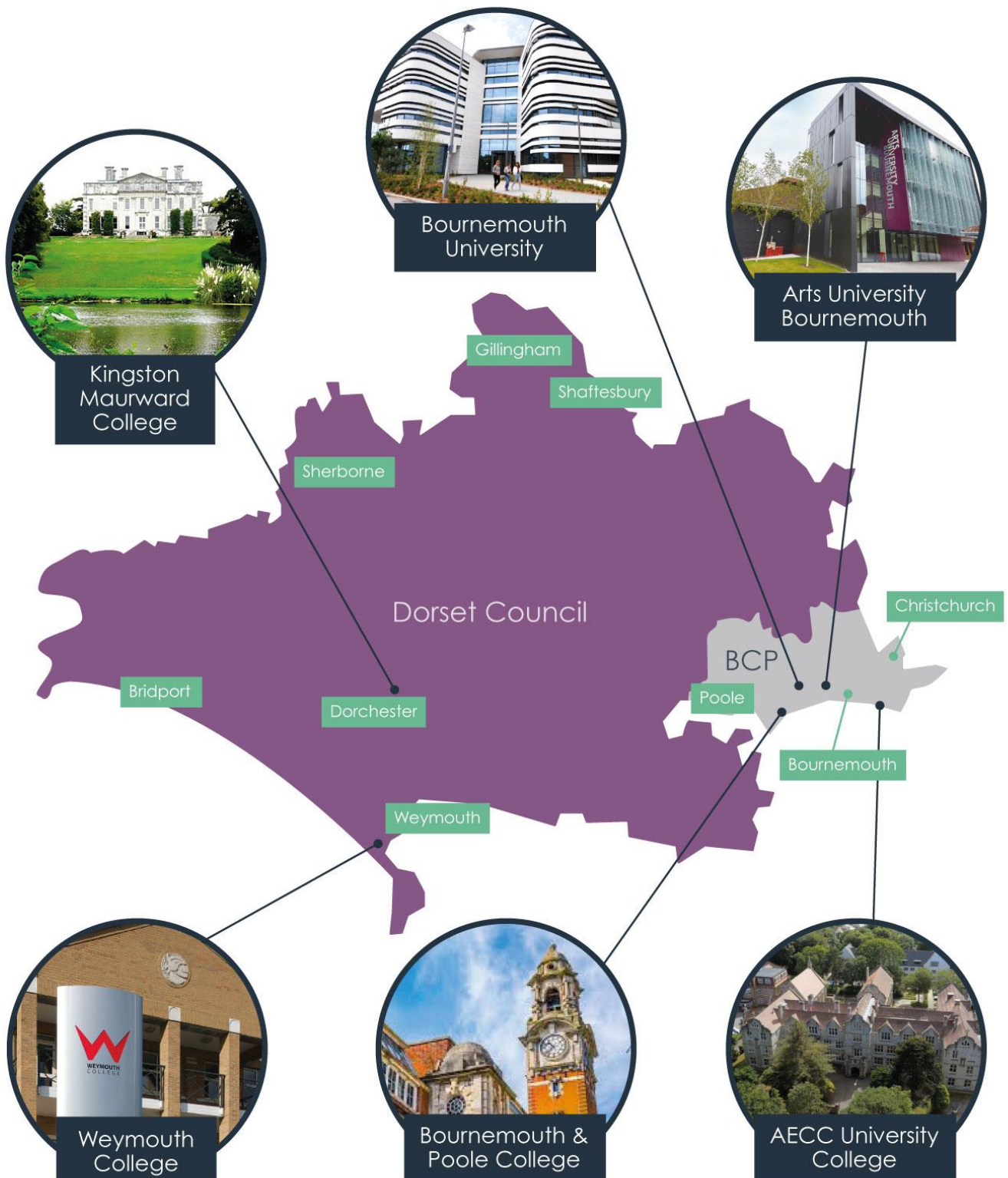
Apprenticeships prevalence of technical subjects and higher apprenticeships:

- Achievements in engineering and ICT 45% vs 24% in England
- 1820 Higher Apprenticeships started in 2020/21 – double the numbers from 2018/19

Positive destinations

- 95% in sustained positive destination after key stage 4 (vs 94% in England)
- 92% of apprenticeship completers in sustained employment destination
- 31% in employment after 16-18 studies in Dorset (vs 25% in England)
- 88% of graduates from Dorset's universities in work or further study 1 year after graduation

Skills strengths: Dorset's key training providers



- 3 Colleges
- 3 Universities
- Dorset Careers Hub - 75 schools across Dorset

- 200+ independent training providers
- Skills & Learning - Dorset-wide Adult Community Education



Bournemouth and Poole College - the largest provider of further education and apprenticeships in Dorset catering for around 11,000 students.

- ✓ Collaborates with over 2,000 businesses to deliver an ambitious apprenticeships programme.
- ✓ Has a focus on *engineering and construction, business, digital, healthcare and education courses* in line with Dorset's identified growth and established sectors.
- ✓ Is also established HE provider – c.600 students studying towards degree level qualifications.
- ✓ Evolving collaborations with local businesses, employers, and employer representative organisations through *active employer working groups* across key areas such as Construction, Engineering and Digital.
- ✓ University partnerships allow the college give access to specialist facilities.
- ✓ In 2021/22 over a quarter (26%) of the 16-19 learners were eligible for free school meals and 16% came from the 20% most deprived communities nationally.

Weymouth College, based on the West Dorset coast with many of its 3,000 students travelling from the surrounding rural areas.

- ✓ Specialises in Level 3 and industry-relevant vocational courses and apprenticeships.
- ✓ Grown its apprenticeship programme from 10% of the provision in 2017/18 to 17% in 2020/21.
- ✓ 94% of apprentices were in employment or further study after completing their programme, 85% employed by the same employer.
- ✓ Has focus on *health and social care, construction, automotive, engineering, as well as creative and visual arts*.
- ✓ The College also includes *the Dorset Centre for the Creative Arts* and the *Dorset Training Academy* working directly with businesses to support growth needs.
- ✓ Located in one of the most deprived areas in Dorset, it provides employment pathways to students from a variety of backgrounds.
- ✓ In 2020/21, over a quarter (28%) of the 16-19 learners came from the 20% most deprived communities nationally.

Kingston Maurward College – A specialist college with a focus on rural economic development, life sciences and environmental sustainability.

- ✓ 750 acres of gardens and practical teaching facilities in the heart of Dorset. *A college within a country estate.*
- ✓ Is one of the few independent institutions nationally specialising in *agricultural development, sustainable land management and rural business*.
- ✓ Focused on work-related training and study, up to and including degree-level, in its specialist areas above and allied industries, including outdoor adventure provision and preparation for the armed forces
- ✓ New investments since the last update on the estate include:
 - £3.5M university and rural business centre
 - £2M flagship decarbonisation ground source heat project
 - New estate shop, cafes and tourism focus.

Skills & Learning - Adult Community Education

– Dorset and BCP Council's joint adult education provider.

- ✓ Since 2013, Skills & Learning have worked with over 33,500 learners.
- ✓ Supporting adults across the county to gain confidence, skills and qualifications.
- ✓ Almost half of their 3,110 learners were from areas of deprivation and over a half of them were unemployed
- ✓ 72% positive destination rate for 20/21
- ✓ Provision from 30 centres across Dorset and 20+ subject areas.
- ✓ A significant apprenticeship provider - achieved [Dorset Apprentice of the Year](#)



Photo: Bournemouth and Poole College

AECC University College – a specialist institution offering world-renowned courses in health sciences,

- ✓ Innovative organisation, leaders in health service education
- ✓ Place based onsite clinical training in one of Europe's largest placement clinics offering patient care from treatment to rehabilitation.
- ✓ Delivering work-ready health professionals in chiropractic, psychology, sport, exercise and health-science and medical-imaging including ultrasound and radiology.

Arts University Bournemouth – a leading specialist arts, design, media and performance institution with more than 3,400 students.

- ✓ Well known for preparing graduates for direct career entry in the creative industries.
- ✓ Has an embedded culture of collaboration and entrepreneurialism actively engaging with local employers, community and economy.
- ✓ Investments in the latest technology, equipment and facilities has attracted funding to support research and innovation projects with Dorset industry and develop an Innovation Studio to support local start-ups.

Bournemouth University – a large generalist university with over 18,000 students.

- ✓ Uses its expertise as a catalyst for growth, advancing the region and bringing £1million per day into the local economy.
- ✓ Among the largest employers locally, BU boosts skills and talent, while also creating quality high skilled jobs.
- ✓ One of the largest providers of placements in the region.
- ✓ Wide range of specialist subjects that align with the local demand - from business and sustainability to medical science and computing.
- ✓ Key partnership with University Hospitals Dorset NHS Foundation Trust supports workforce development and critical research. Over 470 BU students are on placement and 200 alumni are currently employed across the local hospitals³⁹
- ✓ Over a fifth of BU enrolments in 2021/22 originated from Dorset, but the university attracts learners from over 120 countries, bringing global talent and diversity to Dorset.

Charity, not-for-profit and commercial independent training and employer providers

- ✓ 200+ providers in Dorset
- ✓ Accounting for significant proportions of learning for those aged 25+ (30%)
- ✓ Delivering circa 40% of all the apprenticeships starts.
- ✓ Key education and skills providers for businesses



³⁹ Source: BU Alumni Association - data provided by graduates upon registration

Skills needs - talent attraction & retention



Employer Engagement

The current policy agenda firmly puts employers and labour market demand at the centre of the skills system and strategy. Shaping future skills solutions through effective collaborations between businesses, local partners and educational providers will help shape our new identity as we rethink our recovery.

- **Removing barriers for employers**

With high quality educational institutions on their doorstep, businesses across Dorset can access the skills they need directly. The evidence suggests however that they are less likely to invest in staff training (Figure 24) and few of them are making the most of this opportunity. Only a quarter of employers engage with colleges and private providers in meeting their skills needs and even fewer (14% and less) with universities and school. Local employers report issues with accessibility of training, lack of funding and insufficient relevance of courses, highlighting the need for improved collaboration, removal of barriers and responsive provision

- **Reinvigorating apprenticeships**

Apprenticeships are a key instrument to grow skills for the local economy, address gaps and boost social mobility. They offer direct entry into sustained employment, competitive earnings and jobs relevant to studies⁴⁰.

The benefits to employers are also equally compelling.

70% of businesses say apprenticeships and work-based learning are vital to their organisations' response to disruption⁴¹.

In Dorset, apprenticeships achievements directly match the sectoral demand– with engineering, health, public services and care most prevalent (Figure 14). They also address widely reported local skills shortages in digital and technical subjects, which make up almost half of all achievements (45%) compared to a quarter in England.

Yet, there are concerns both for reduced starts in the pipeline and the achievement rates of apprenticeships currently underway (Annex, Apprenticeship achievements):

- **Achievement rates**

Whilst seeing an increase this year, apprenticeship achievement rates are modest and represent around 57% of starts in Dorset (and 49% nationally).

- **Declining starts**

Starts have seen a drop both nationally and in Dorset and more pronounced decline is noted in subject areas such as tourism, manufacturing and retail.

- **Barriers for employers**

In our 2020 Dorset Employer Survey, only 8% of employers were employing an apprentice.

Building business confidence and employer understanding of apprenticeships are essential to reinvigorating participation and boosting aspirations through apprenticeships.



Addressing hard-to-fill vacancies, skills gaps, labour shortages

Skills gaps, labour shortages and talent mismatches are universal. They are costly, affect business performance and confidence when companies are pursuing innovation⁴² - and more prevalent in Dorset, providing some explanation for the productivity conundrum. These workforce challenges exacerbated over the past year, setting Dorset's businesses back in their capacity to navigate a complex set of post-Brexit, supply chain and COVID-19 disruptions.

38 Post-16 pathways at level 3 and below, DfE 2020

41 Open University. Build the Future, January 2021

42 Open University. Business Barometer 2021

- **Higher prevalence of labour and skills shortages**

Over the second half of 2021, labour shortage reports accelerated dramatically as switching the entire economy on created a unique spike in labour demand with an unseen peak in vacancies. As the employment indicators were holding up well and the number of job candidates fell, businesses were trying to fill their increased demand from a small and shrinking talent pool in Dorset.⁴³

There are also structural pre-existing issues. Dorset scores high on a range of indicators pointing towards an overall unmet demand for labour.⁴⁴ The county ranks among the top 3 LEP areas for the proportions of hard-to-fill and skills shortage vacancies reported by employers. Half of all Dorset vacancies were hard-to-fill (with a national average of 36%). Moreover, one-third, compared to one-quarter on average were specifically caused by skills shortages (Figure 29).

Among the jobs that were hard to fill, local employers mentioned health and social care (nurses, carers, physiotherapists), engineering (systems, technical), construction (plumbing, electrical, carpentry), professional, finance and legal (business, account managers, accountancy, tax, financial management, planning, legal, fundraising), hospitality (chefs, waiting and front of house staff)⁴⁵.

- **Skills utilisation issues within current workforce**

Skills utilisation issues within the existing workforce are also pervasive in Dorset. A third of employers say their staff is under-utilised which is marked in hotels & restaurants (63%) and education (53%) suggesting skills misalignment varies by sector (Figure 28).

- **Skills gaps**

Skills gaps are also common across existing workforce in Dorset⁴⁵. Over half of employers (56%) report at least one type of skills gap and 1 in 3 were affected by multiple gaps. The skills issues most commonly experienced were in digital and analytical skills, sales and marketing, leadership and management, as well as technical and job specific skills. Large proportions (44%) of employers needed their workforce to learn and adapt to new equipment at work and a third felt staff's advanced or specialist computer skills needed developing (Figure 27).

The significance of these skills gaps was highlighted by two thirds of businesses reporting impact on productivity, and over a half on business profitability and growth⁴⁵.

- **Supporting transitioning from the EU**

Britain's exit from the EU has partly caused much of the recent labour shortage controversies and significant angst among employers over future labour supply. The Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole area has a higher proportion of its workforce represented by non-UK labour (1.8%), which has fallen (from 2.5%) after the Brexit vote⁴⁶. National figures illustrate significant decline (16.5%) of EU nationals in employment⁴⁷ throughout the pandemic. Nationally, some industries employ larger proportions of EU workers, such as hotels and restaurants (13% of workforce), manufacturing (10%) and administration (10%), transport (8%) and construction (7%) and 5% of the healthcare workforce is made up of EU migrants⁴⁸. These are all critical sectors in Dorset, some exhibiting skills shortages already with potential for further implications post Brexit and post COVID-19.

- **Graduate retention**

Graduate retention and Dorset's ability to provide the quality employment opportunities to incentivise more graduates to stay in the area remain key areas of work, however the latest available data points out some recent decline in that domain. 1 year after graduating from an HE institution in Dorset, less than a third of graduates have chosen to live in the South West, which marks a 5-percentage points decline on the previous year. Provider analysis of the 2018/19 Graduate Outcomes survey from Bournemouth University indicates some net loss of talent with around a fifth of BU's students originating from Dorset on average and 17% of its employed graduates remaining within Dorset. This also marks a decline when compared to earlier measures (Annex, Graduate retention).

43 Dorset LEP - Dorset Labour Market Insights Q2 2021

44 LEP Outlook 2019, BEIS, 2020

45 Dorset Employers Skills Survey 2020

46 National Insurance registration data

47 Employment by country of birth and nationality, ONS

48 Migration Observatory analysis of Labour Force Survey

Skills needs to meet the demand



Meeting employer demand

Despite the economic uncertainties and disruptions caused by the pandemic and EU transition, Dorset's historic job vacancy figures show overall labour demand holding up well and bouncing back relatively quickly after spells of economic uncertainty. Demand fluctuated considerably in 2021, but ultimately reached its highest aggregate levels on record and there was a peak in employer reports of major labour shortages amidst this accelerated demand.

Projections for future employment growth across industries are mainly concentrated in professional roles and further notable increase is expected in healthcare, green economy, business and STEM.

Demand by industry

Long term industry demand trends indicate vacancy growth across all sectors over the past decade, albeit with some variations over the years and noted volatility in the tourism and hospitality sector (Figure 54).

As recruitment activity recovered remarkably in 2021, labour demand picked up across all industries in Dorset, with sectors most hit from the first wave of the pandemic seeing the biggest rebound. The greatest growth on previous year was in tourism and hospitality, ICT, construction, arts and entertainment – all with 90%+ more vacancies in 2021 (Figure 55).

In this section we look at the demand within the largest employment sectors in Dorset (Figure 30), which are also the sectors with largest recruitment demand (Figure 54), although the two do not necessarily match over recent years.

Health and residential care. The largest employment sector, Healthcare was also the one that stood out in its strong and persistent year on year growth in demand - a national trend, exasperated by pandemic pressures and added ageing demographic in Dorset. There were 16,880 jobs advertised in Healthcare in Dorset throughout 2021, marking a 23% increase on the previous year (Figure 54) and NHS was by far the largest recruiter with 7,590 vacancies. The top jobs in demand in the sector were various nursing (3,730) and care roles (3,000) but also an array of medical and other professionals⁴⁹.

Retail, Tourism and Hospitality were subjected to major shifts over the past two years, but also record spikes in demand, thus forecasts at this time are still inherently uncertain. Kitchen staff, chefs and customer service are the most sought-after occupations and there is higher proportion of elementary occupations in demand⁴⁹.

Education. Among the largest employment sector in Dorset, the demand in Education has seen a significant long-term growth and with the 4,520 vacancies in 2021, recorded a 17% on year increase. The demand is predominantly for teaching assistants, and teaching and educational professionals - an area of skills shortage nationally.

Engineering and Manufacturing vacancies (4,720 jobs in 2021) grew by 40% in 2021, and the sector remains a critical focus for Dorset. Its future growth is dependent on the availability of skills in areas, such as engineers, technicians, programme and software developers, production managers, quality professionals, welding trades.⁴⁹

Professional, science, technology & ICT jobs largely maintained their level of demand (5,150 jobs) with ICT seeing the second highest increase on the year (Figure 55). The largest proportion (36%) of jobs were in professional occupations, such as Solicitors, , Programmers, Veterinarians, Business Analysts and Accountants, a further 18% in associate professional such as Legal, IT and Marketing associates and 9% were administrative roles⁴⁹.

Finance (2,435 jobs) demand remained relatively stable over the past two year with over a third of the jobs in professional occupations related to programming and sales (programmers and software developers, business analysts and data researchers, finance and insurance sales, project managers)⁴⁹.

⁴⁹ Key Industry Dashboards, Dorset LEP

Demand by occupation

A major trend for the future is a shift of demand in high skilled occupations – mostly professional, but also some associate professional and management jobs are set to grow (Table 4). These are already occupations representing the largest proportions in employment in Dorset (almost half - 49% in 2021, c.175,400 from 40% in 2010, c. 132,200). Professional jobs saw the largest increase in the proportions employed since 2015 (27%[▲]) whilst elementary occupations declined by a quarter (Figure 36).

Caring occupations soared in demand and labour shortages are already pronounced. and expected to deepen further across the health, social and residential care system within a post-Brexit climate (Annex, Online Vacancies). The most in demand occupation in Dorset across all sectors is now care work (6% of all jobs), followed by nursing (5%).

In contrast, declines are projected for most other mid-and-low-skilled roles such as administrative & secretarial, skilled trade occupations and process, plant and machine operatives in part to reflect greater automation and machine learning applied to augment some of these roles and create new higher skilled roles in their place.

STEM skills are also in considerable demand in Dorset with 11,880 (15%) jobs in 2021. Within STEM, the highest demand was for programmers and software developers/ engineers with 2,345(2.9%) jobs

Demand is also expected to grow across readiness and protective, green, remote, logistics and automated economies.⁵⁰

Demand by skills

Analysis of the top skills in demand in Dorset shows clear themes for now and in the future.

General skills - soft skills such as communication, organisation and planning skills as well as personal productivity, problem solving and personal attributes are essential addition to the core competencies required.

Digital and Technical Skills – these are essential for our growing 'tech' sectors and include MS Office, software development and engineering, programming languages and productivity tools for managing enterprises and customers.

Demand summary

Sector wide: STEM occupations

- 15% of all jobs in Dorset in 2021
- predicted to grow in demand across all sectors
- software developers/ engineers, web developers, computer specialists

Health, social and residential care

- Carers and Nurses: most sought after occupation (6% and 5% of all vacancies).
- wide range of occupations and e-health an emerging growth area;
- demand ahead of supply, shortages in Dorset
- predicted expansion in professional and care occupations including carers, healthcare assistants, physicians, healthcare managers.

Education

- teaching assistant and professionals, all levels from school to further and higher education

Manufacturing and Engineering

- systems, technical engineers, programme and software developers, analysts and quality professionals, growth areas in cyber security, green tech and defence

Professional, science, technical and IT

- lawyers, solicitors, veterinarians, programmers, project managers

Finance

- programmers and software developers, business analysts and data researchers, finance and insurance sales, project managers
- fin-tech an emerging growth area

Construction

- plumbing, electrical work, carpentry
- green construction, retrofitting demand growth

Retail, wholesale, vehicle repair

- customer service and sales roles back in demand
- automotive service/ mechanics/ electric vehicles

Tourism and hospitality

- chefs, food preparation, waiting and cleaning

Agriculture

- Farm workers, manufacturing and technicians.
- Agri-tech and aquaculture – growth areas

Skills needs for future growth



Up-skilling and higher qualifications achievement

Occupational projections and shifts suggest employment demand will continue to change in favour of higher skills and agile life-long learning solutions will be crucial to support that transition. Requirements for higher qualifications are on the rise and projections indicate these trends would accelerate. Digitalisation and automation remain key drivers of workforce transformation behind further increases in higher skills demand. While mid-level skills (typically non-HE qualified) would still be required, often through the replacement route, the new jobs created in the county would mainly be higher skilled roles with some activities at the lower end of the skills spectrum (Annex, Employment by Occupation).

- **Higher qualifications falling behind**

Highly qualified workforce correlates with higher productivity in the economy (Figure 52).

While higher qualifications have increased over the past decade, the proportion of Dorset workforce qualified to Level 4 and above has fallen behind over recent years, forming a 4% gap from the national average (Annex, Qualification levels).

The growth in qualification levels has been uneven with great variation noted across the county and West Dorset having stalled at 2010 levels in terms of proportion of workforce qualified to higher level (Figure 42).

Furthermore, a fifth of the working age people in Dorset do not have a Level 2 (GCSE equivalent) qualification, which is regarded a benchmark for employability (Figure 12).

- **Decline in adult learning participation**

The significant and continued decline in adult education over recent years (Annex A, FE Education & Training Achievements) is a warning sign for further widening of that qualification achievement gap.

These trends need reversing to ensure the people of Dorset are ready for work in the future.

- **Deepening of higher skills shortages with projected qualification demand**

Forecasting models show continued shift to high-level qualifications with 55% of those employed in Dorset expected to be qualified at graduate level by 2027, whilst the proportion of those with no formal qualifications shrinking further. This growing demand is clearly reflected in the net jobs projected to become available in Dorset over the coming years⁵¹, over 88% of which, equivalent to circa 144,000 jobs will require graduate level (Level 5+). These projections make it clear that Dorset needs to develop and attract a more highly skilled pipeline.

Qualification needs

Lower workforce qualifications:

-4 percentage point gap Level 4+ qualified (39% Dorset vs 43% in England)

20% do not have a Level 2 'benchmark for employability' qualification

+88% projected demand for Level 5 + qualifications by 2027

-19%↓ apprenticeship starts in 2020/21 compared to pre-pandemic 2018/19

+10% in apprenticeships achieved in 2020/21 but still below pre-pandemic 2018/19

-8,000 (28%↓) Adult FE learners in 2020/21 compared to 2014/15

⁵¹ Net demand is the sum of projected expansion/decline in jobs and replacement demand according to the Working Futures 2017-27 study

Re-skilling & Life-long learning



The latest economic and social disruptions joined a long list of pre-existing trends impacting the world of work, including longer working lives, shorter job cycles, emerging jobs, remote and gig work, diminishing expertise shelf life.

All these call for creative and immersive lifelong re- and up-skilling, experience and knowledge building solutions to counteract the time-lag between emerging skills needs and educational response.

- **Disruption in education, experience and employer engagement**

The prolonged period of the rapidly developing pandemic had a huge toll on the world of education, skills and employment in Dorset, deepening the pre-existing challenges of learning accessibility, attainment and achievement gaps, employer engagement and relevance of provision. The strain on educational providers and detrimental effects on young people's development and skills are starting to emerge and will continue to do so over the years to come with effects reverberating across the system.

While there was some good news of accelerated local employer demand, meaning those training at any level could see the scale of working opportunities elevated, their exposure and experience with the world of work has most likely diminished.

All work placements in schools, colleges and universities declined, warning of skills gaps epidemic in professional and workplace skills looming on the horizon. The Dorset Careers Hub showed remarkable resilience in stirring towards virtual events, but Gatsby Benchmarks performance across schools deteriorated, with some turnover in Enterprise Advisors experienced due to pandemic displacement. Careers teams across colleges and universities also reported 'a very different landscape' with many long-standing employer relationships either halted or changed. Falls in active engagement with schools were also reported by university liaison teams, meaning challenges are expected with the cohort pipeline and further focus on reskilling and career change may be anticipated.

- **Steep decline in adult education participation**

Concurrently, adult further education participation showed marked decline (by 28%) across most subject areas in Dorset with circa 8,000 fewer adult FE learners in 2020/21 compared to 2014/15 (Figure 43). The decline in FE participation provides implications and policy questions at local level– partly to address the 'replacement demand' issue, as well as aiming to move more of the workforce into more (existing or new) productive jobs and firms. It could be argued that these local economic development aspirations are constrained by changes in national adult educational policy and associated funding which is still emerging at the time of writing.

- **Sector based disruptions**

The sudden labour market shifts caused by the pandemic are a stark illustration of the importance of reskilling and lifelong learning to support matching available workforce with emerging job opportunities, and to avoid prolonged cycles of unemployment (Figure 53 & 54).

- **Automation and AI**

The World Economic Forum projected that by 2025, the time spent on current tasks at work by humans and machines will be equal ([WEF, 2020](#)). Adoption of big data and cloud technology, combined with breakthroughs in robotics, machine learning, and AI are set to enhance productivity, resulting in up to 45% of jobs in certain industries potentially automated by 2030 ([Statista, 2020](#)), giving rise to entirely new jobs. There are likely to be job losses where algorithms can be used to undertake routine tasks, but a matching increase in jobs where human skills are used to foster innovation and raise productivity are also likely ([WEF, 2020](#)).

Automation trends are especially important for Dorset as our key and growth areas include financial services, advanced manufacturing & engineering, the agriculture & aquaculture sectors, which will all face significant operational transformation.



The skills that were in short supply before the crisis, have become increasingly sought after. Technology, race to Net Zero, unique human skills and new values and ways of working will play a major part in the future of work.

- **Digital skills and emerging economies**

Digital skills are now a necessity, as organisations made a huge leap in technology adoption while there has been no corresponding increase in the number of people with these skills. Digital and STEM skills will become even more critical for the recovery, within areas such as cybersecurity, biotech, advanced logistics, internet of things, infrastructure, advanced manufacturing and pharmaceuticals, big data, green and remote economy, ed-tech, cloud technology, e-commerce, artificial intelligence, robotics and virtual reality, to create chains both efficient and resilient.⁵²

- **Net Zero and green skills**

The targets laid down by government in light of the climate emergency and need for ecological recovery are demanding, but Dorset is well placed to lead on this. Both Local Authorities have declared a climate emergency, and this means investment and activity will accelerate in this area. These range from technical trades such as photovoltaic installation and electrical vehicle servicing and maintenance, improvements to green energy capture such as Hydrogen, alongside environmental activities such as regenerative agriculture and sustainable food production. Dorset has both green and blue economies, and the latter marine sector has been identified as a high potential opportunity by the Department for Internal Trade, which encourages investment and growth. All tertiary providers are contributing to this skills development, and colleges and universities are keen to work collaboratively in partnership with employers here.

- **Adaptability and transferable skills**

Adaptability and ability to learn, together with transferrable skills, are priorities for many organisations who want their workforces to be ready for whatever the future holds.

- **Unique human skills**

People will create the jobs of the future, not simply train for them and it is the unique human skills which AI and machines cannot replicate that will be highly desired.

Skills currently beyond the reach of smart machines include; emotional intelligence, critical thinking, abstract & systems thinking, teamwork, conflict resolution, creativity, problem solving, collaboration, customer service orientation and active learning.

- **New values and ways of working**

The pre-existing workplace trends have also been influenced by the pandemic. Cross-generational differences in work attitudes are still emerging. Over half of millennials - the generation born between 1980 and 2000, which is currently comprising more than 50% of the UK workforce (and over a third of Dorset's) are much more concerned by the social dimension of business, and value work-life balance and flexibility more than their older colleagues.⁵³ These trends have accelerated recently with value systems changing and the 'Great British Resignation' on the horizon⁵⁴.

Home and flexible working saw a steep rise with the onset of the pandemic and a hybrid working future is firmly here to stay. However, some issues exist as reported by IES research warning of health and wellbeing decline including musculoskeletal problems, sleep loss, long/irregular hours, decline in protective health behaviours, mental health issues and rising e-presenteeism.

As the pandemic eventually diminishes, the agility and creativity of policy makers and businesses, evident during the crisis, will need to continue in order to re-imagine work and find effective responses to the workforce challenges.⁵⁵

⁵² After the storm-Burning Glass Tech, 2021

⁵³ The Institute of Leadership and Management - Workforce 2020: Managing Millennials, 2017

⁵⁴ Bloomberg – UK Firms brace for a GB Resignation

⁵⁵ The future of work after COVID-19 - McKinsey Global Institute, 2021

Our Vision: Skilled, Productive & Resilient

Skills strategy

Strategic ambitions



Increasing productivity

It is vital that we tackle the productivity issue by fully understanding the implications around skills utilisation, talent retention, future automation, the application of creative digital skills & creative thinking, fresh careers training and new further and higher education courses that attract and keep talented people in Dorset.

We will develop a smarter and more productive workforce, producing more with fewer resources. We want to replace skills/expertise with an emphasis on quality to address the vacancy requirement over the next 15 years.



Living well

Our focus is on developing pioneering solutions to healthcare, social care and wellbeing in the region in order to address our future demographic crunch head on.

We want to ensure that innovative approaches to ageing are wholly understood, including rethinking employment opportunities for older people such as reskilling, flexible working, mentoring, capturing the cultural and economic value of volunteering and unpaid work. We believe that innovation here could affect productivity outcomes and talent retention.



Removing inequality

Switching on this driver for change will unlock talent across Dorset. We need to build on excellent careers guidance in schools and adult education, particularly in our more deprived areas. We want to deliver new replacement skills and expertise and explore technology to make learning and jobs accessible across the region. The focus is firmly on inclusive prosperity and unlocking talent in Dorset to ensure all communities play an active role in the recovery to ensure inequality is reduced.

Dorset's STRATEGIC SKILLS AMBITIONS directly stem from the KEY CHALLENGES identified locally.

Our future PRIORITIES have been designed to meet Dorset's SKILLS NEEDS firmly grounding our interventions in the skills needed by our local people and economy, ensuring we invest our energy in tackling our key local challenges.



Unrivalled Opportunity

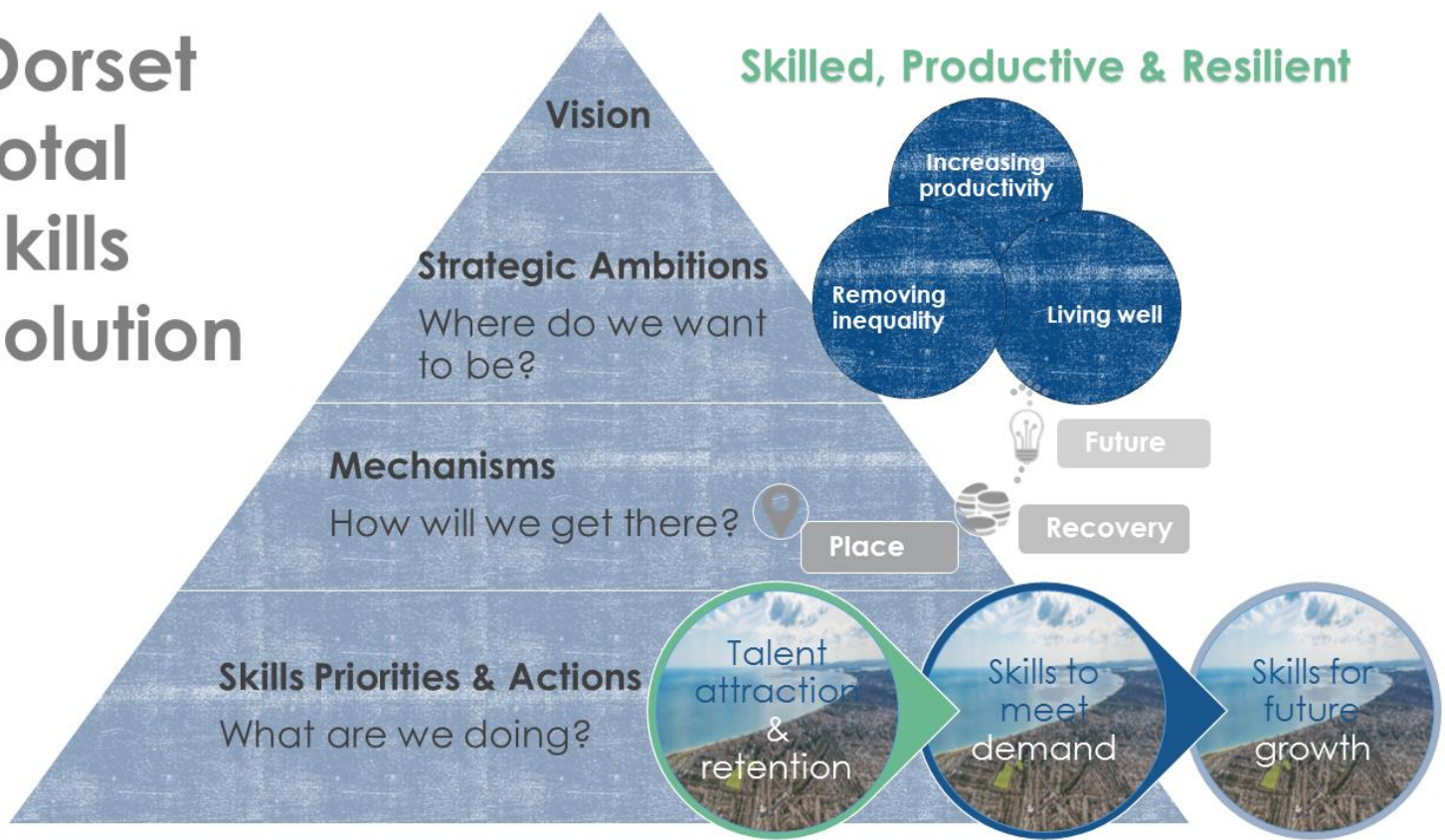
It is clear that the challenges we face are not unique but tackling them as a dynamic system provides an unrivalled opportunity to make a sizable impact.

Key lines of enquiry include how addressing ageing and inequality impact on productivity; how increasing productivity attracts prosperity among the most disadvantaged and how skills influence productivity, ageing workforce and deprivation.

Our strategic skills ambitions are the drivers for change, focusing on 'where' we want to be and 'why', while our skills priorities and activities allow us to 'switch on' those drivers.

Dorset total skills solution

Skilled, Productive & Resilient



- **Our strategic ambitions** are setting out the destination – ‘**Where we want to be**’ – they are aspirational drivers for change and potent enablers operating in a dynamic system.
- **Our mechanisms** shape the guiding principles that will navigate our way, directing our activity planning and execution – ‘**How will we get there**’
- **Our skills priorities** outline a framework for the key areas of activity in reaching our destination – ‘**What are we doing**’

Mechanisms

Emerging from the challenging times that we live in, these mechanisms are designed to focus our energy and resources in ways that make the biggest impact. We will ensure that everything we do is addressing Dorset's:

Place based regeneration

Focusing on areas hardest hit, with low aspiration and difficult to reach, we will dive deep into issues, plan for regeneration and raise ambition of young people.

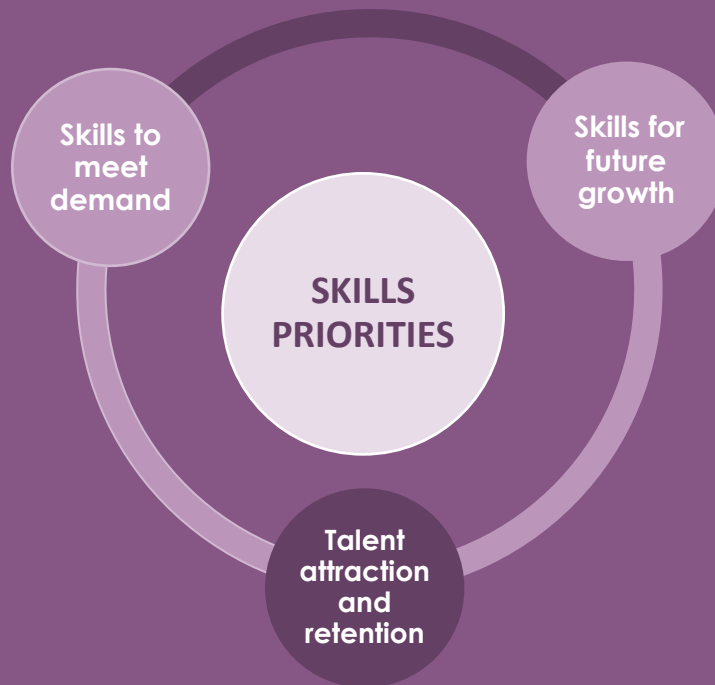
Recovery

Action-driven recovery for post-Covid generated skills and employment issues across Dorset with focus on targeted interventions to support sectors and groups hardest hit and provide skills retraining, upskilling, reskilling, career support.

Future growth

Future focused interventions, backed by research evidence, ensuring we develop the skills, employment attributes and experiences required for future growth and successful life and business outcomes.

Skills priorities



Talent attraction and retention

Developing a new demand-led skills programme in close collaboration with employers, offering innovative pathways to high quality jobs and curating bespoke training, recruitment, Continuing Professional Development and progression solutions that will increase productivity and sustain growth by:

- **Unlocking, attracting and retaining talent**

Removing barriers to collaboration within our educational and business communities while creating an inclusive infrastructure and showcasing the region as the natural place to excel.

- **Workforce excellence**

Addressing skills gaps and shortages by providing the ability to recruit, develop and progress workforce capability and productivity that meets demand. While considering the immediate needs, we want to focus on unlocking expansion and investment in new services and capacity – closing the existing productivity gap.

- **Leadership and management**

Supporting our growing sectors by providing their leaders with the ability to introduce and embed best practice, technology advancement and innovation that drives productivity and competitiveness and ensures all communities in Dorset can play an active part in the economy and all people are inspired, regardless of age, into meaningful careers.

Skills to meet demand

Creating skills innovation and inclusion by working with business leaders, education, skills support and Research, Development & Innovation (RD&I) institutions to support the concept of a Dorset '**total skills solution**' through:

- **Inspiring younger generations into meaningful careers**

Ensuring an inclusion programme targeting Dorset's most deprived communities in the first instance.

- **Retraining or retaining older people into meaningful careers**

Unlocking older talent to support valued economic activity later in life.

- **Replacement labour demand in skills sets**

Addressing critical replacement labour demand in priority skills sets such as (IT/professional/healthcare/social care).

- **Innovative resourcing**

Working with Government, national and regional organisations, local authorities, anchor institutions and funding bodies to secure skills budget 'economies of scale', align activity with Government initiatives and develop innovative funding opportunities.

Skills for future growth

Working with emerging businesses, their supply chains, academia and skills providers to prepare a comprehensive future skills programme through:

- **Growth Cluster Collaboration**

Creating the mechanism by which emerging sectors and institutions can share common expertise, capacity and innovation, thus supporting the development of hubs of knowledge and expertise that can benefit the wider business community and inform skills strategy development.

- **Business Education Links**

Extending investment and scope in the local academic centres of innovation & research expertise and developing a new level of collaborative partnership that embeds the needs of future industry at all academic levels. Creating placement and project opportunities that deliver solutions and a future 'talent pool'.

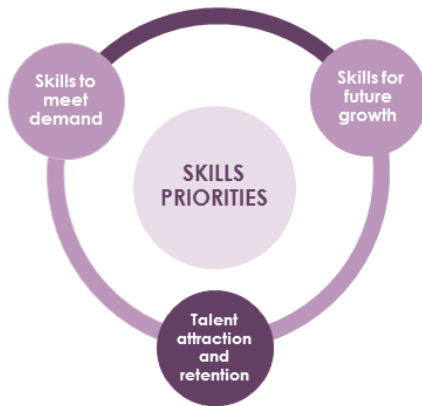
- **Supply chain development**

Building skills development programmes, collaboration networks and infrastructure that enables and supports the local supply chain capacity and capability to develop as natural partners in new growth clusters. Understanding how skills can accelerate the cross-fertilisation of priority clusters leading to a network of supported supply chains and an economy of scale for Dorset.

- **Growth accelerator capability**

Building the specialist skills to support leadership, expansion, finance, collaboration and research & development that will support new business growth.

Skills action plan



Our skills PRIORITIES provide the framework for our action plan, mapping 'what we are doing' in order to achieve our strategic AMBITIONS and get 'where we want to be'.

These are the key areas of activity under Dorset's skills action plan: the projects, investments and collaborations we are committed to in order to remove inequalities, increase productivity and ensure that Dorset's people of all ages are living well.

Talent attraction and retention

Programme of activities under this theme include strategic investment to upgrade facilities and capabilities within educational providers, delivering targeted careers interventions based on local intelligence, growing skills required to boost key established and growth sectors and nourishing powerful employer networks.

For full list of initiatives, visit '[Dorset Skills Activities 2020-2022](#)'.



These activities are developing innovative recruitment, attraction, employability and retention solutions for Dorset's key skills needs, enhancing employer engagement and industry collaborations, as well as improving facilities, curricula and (virtual and physical) access to study in Dorset.

These activities are supporting Dorset's growing sectors by strengthening leadership and resilience within local business with targeted support for SMEs. They help to introduce and embed best practice, technology advancement and innovation that drives productivity and competitiveness.

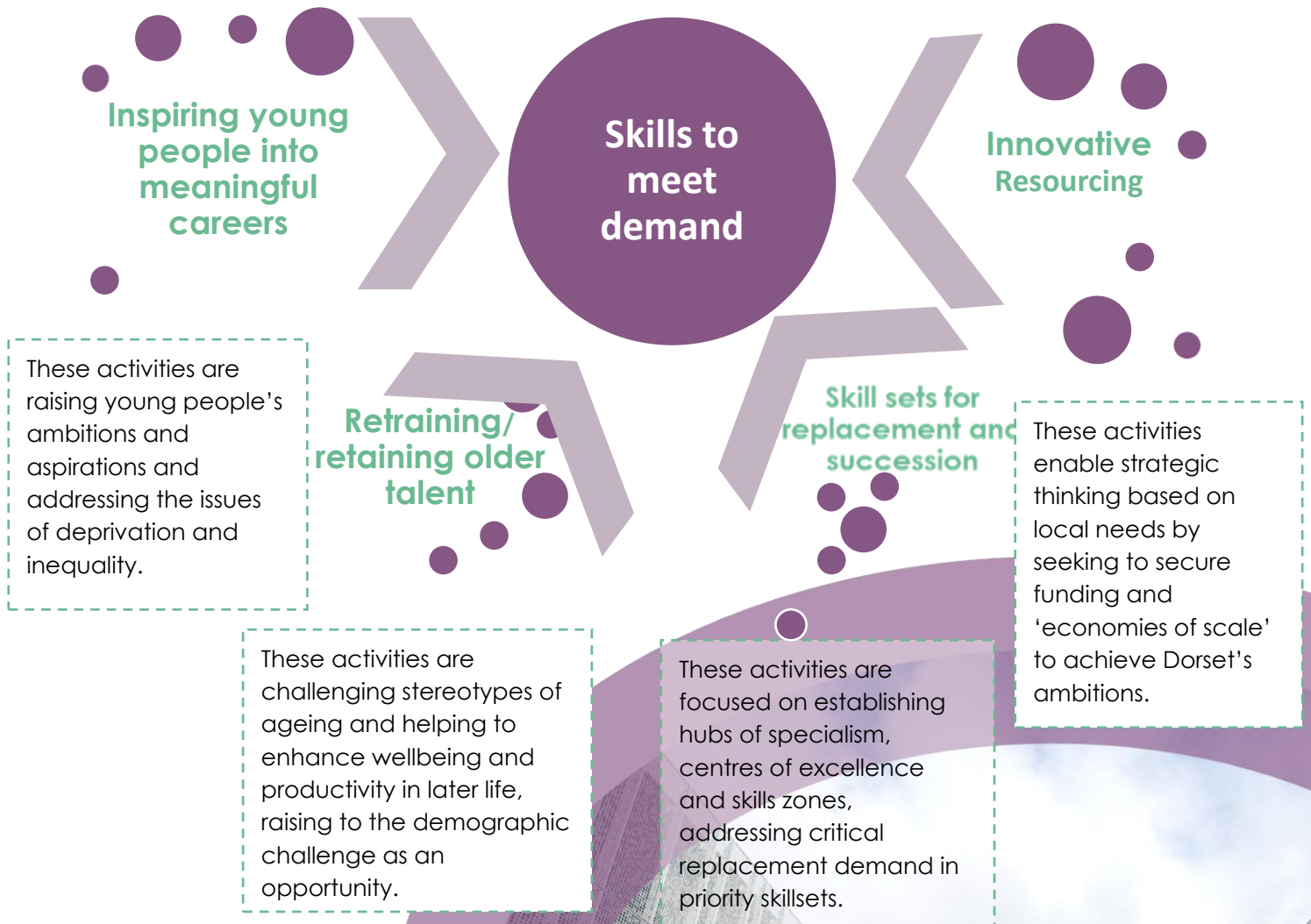
These activities are focused on supporting the recovery through developing the optimal skills mix, reskilling and maximising the utilisation of existing skills and capabilities while unlocking expansion and investment for future growth.

Skills action plan

Skills to meet demand

Programme of activities include research and delivery of innovative widening participation and outreach initiatives, engaging key local stakeholders in joint action against inequalities and disadvantage, as well as delivery of tailored and inspirational careers programmes and immersion events across local geographies and across the lifespan.

For full list of initiatives, visit '[Dorset Skills Activities 2020-2022](#)'.



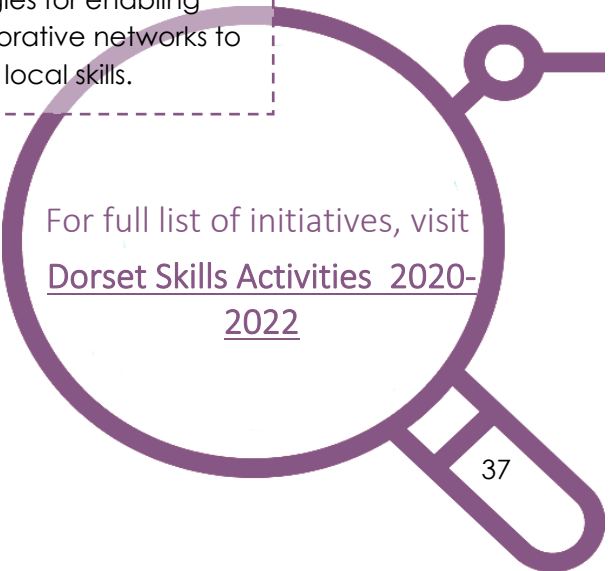
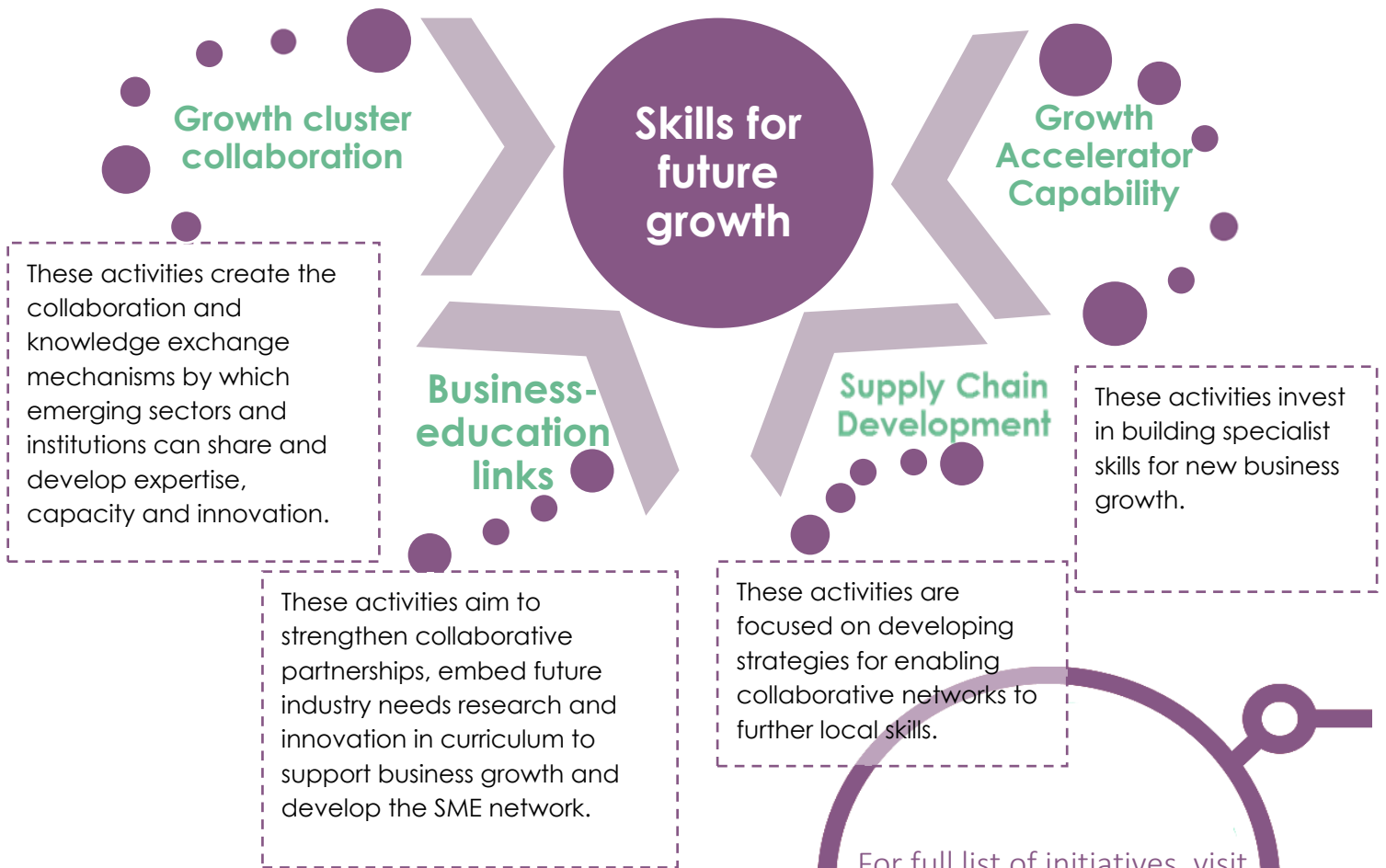


Skills action plan

Skills for future growth

In line with the “Skills for Jobs: Lifelong Learning for Opportunity and Growth” white paper, the work under this theme involves strengthening the links between employers and education providers to develop flexible alternative pathways to successful careers. The focus is on partnership working across employers, strategic bodies and academia to build accelerator support networks, supply chains, training programmes and talent attraction initiatives that are bespoke, enhance business growth and meet Dorset’s future skills needs.

Photo: Kingston Maurward College



For full list of initiatives, visit [Dorset Skills Activities 2020-2022](#)

Assessment of progress

Established in the summer of 2019, Dorset's Skills Advisory Panel and Board (SAPB) brought together local employers, educators, and policy and decision makers in a partnership to support a highly skilled workforce and inclusive economic growth in Dorset.

The key common goal is to ensure skills provision and aspiration in the county meet business demand and opportunity.

Local Leadership

- Representation

With members representing a range of professional areas and considerable decision-making power within key organisations across the local skills system, the Skills Board is a natural incubator of leadership ideas in Dorset, well suited to discuss a 'total skills solution' for the county and influence skills provision, curriculum and future projects.

- Dorset Local Skills Report

The launch of the first Local Skills Report in 2021 was a significant milestone and generated wide interest across the county. Follow up workshops, joint events with colleges, universities and local training provider networks, as well as a series of thought pieces involving local leaders and concentrating on key themes from the report have meant this is now a widely utilised and authoritative source of local skills and labour market insight.

- Growing intelligence

The partnership also owns the growing local skills and labour market research intelligence which has continued to emerge through the past year to allow close monitoring of key challenges and skills needs locally and reviewing progress on key initiatives and the overall direction of travel.

- Facing local challenges with honesty and integrity

The SAPB has demonstrated unwavering commitment to addressing the identified local challenges, working together on the set of joint strategic ambitions and interventions to enhance the local skills mix, unlock local talent and realise growth potential across the county, while also diving deeper into areas requiring further inquiry. One such area of priority focus is the employer experience of the local skills system.

This follows up on the findings from the Dorset Employer Skills Survey, commissioned by the Skills Board at the start of 2020 that highlighted the workforce needs and skills challenges experienced by local employers.

Findings also identified a weakness within the local skills system, pointing out barriers to training and apprenticeship investment experienced by employers and the need for proactive collaboration and productive partnerships between employers and educators to solve Dorset's pronounced skills gaps and shortages.

*"We would like to see improvements in the accessibility of skills and training locally...I don't know what is out there, there seems to be a disconnect between training providers and small businesses."
Employer, Dorset 2020 Employer Skills Survey*

- **Putting employers and business at the heart of everything we do**

- ✓ Through greater employer membership, the SAPB ensured representation of key sectors and even wider reach on essential areas of work was sought via members' networks and communication channels. Over 2021 the SAPB sought regular updates from its industry members and business representation organisations such as the Dorset Chamber of Commerce and the Federation of Small Businesses.
- ✓ The employers' skills survey and follow up communications were used to engage almost 250 Dorset employers from a range of sectors in the skills agenda and to inform local skills providers of the needs and challenges they experienced.
- ✓ The introduction of a range of online dashboards and quarterly reports with easy-to-follow video summaries and newsletters allowed the SAPB to keep a range of stakeholders updated with local labour market and skills developments.
- ✓ The Dorset's Careers Hub, overseen by the SAPB, has continued to actively develop the committed networks of Dorset's Cornerstone Employers and Enterprise Advisers representing key sectors and groups of private and public sector employers with interest in skills and talent pipeline in the county.

- ✓ Over the course of 2021, the Skills Board directly engaged the Dorset Chamber of Commerce by appointing a representative member to actively contribute to the SAPB agenda. The Chamber also remains Dorset LEP's key partner in delivering business support through Dorset Gateway and supporting the business environment through representation on the Dorset LEP Board.
- ✓ The appointment of a Head of Enterprise, Skills and Industry in 2020 has resulted in ever closer integration of the business and skills agendas in Dorset LEP. Over the past year a range of successful initiatives were implemented, including Skills Bootcamps, Mid-life MOT and Skills Brokerage Service.
- ✓ SAPB made strides to improve the business awareness of skills and careers provision and local support available through [targeted publications](#), [education maps](#) and specialised advice via Dorset Gateway.

- **Providing strategic direction**

- ✓ The SAPB is the key driver behind the agreement at the two local authorities of a Dorset-wide skills commission to explore the skills needs over the next 20 - 30 years as Dorset faces decades of industrial, economic and environmental change.
- ✓ In 2021 ahead of this iteration of the Local Skills Report, SAPB reviewed the skills strategy and plans and agreed that these still reflect Dorset's skills needs, and align with the Government's ambitions, Dorset's Investment Prospectus, local authorities economic and FE/HE strategic plans. This update of the Local Skills Report is also culmination of productive engagement and significant efforts to align and review progress on strategies and activity plans across stakeholders.



The Dorset Local Skills Report 2022 marks a significant milestone of a joint intervention for Dorset, owned by the Dorset Skills Advisory Panel and Board and giving direction to the local skills agenda, while also testifying to the SAP Board's established local leadership role.

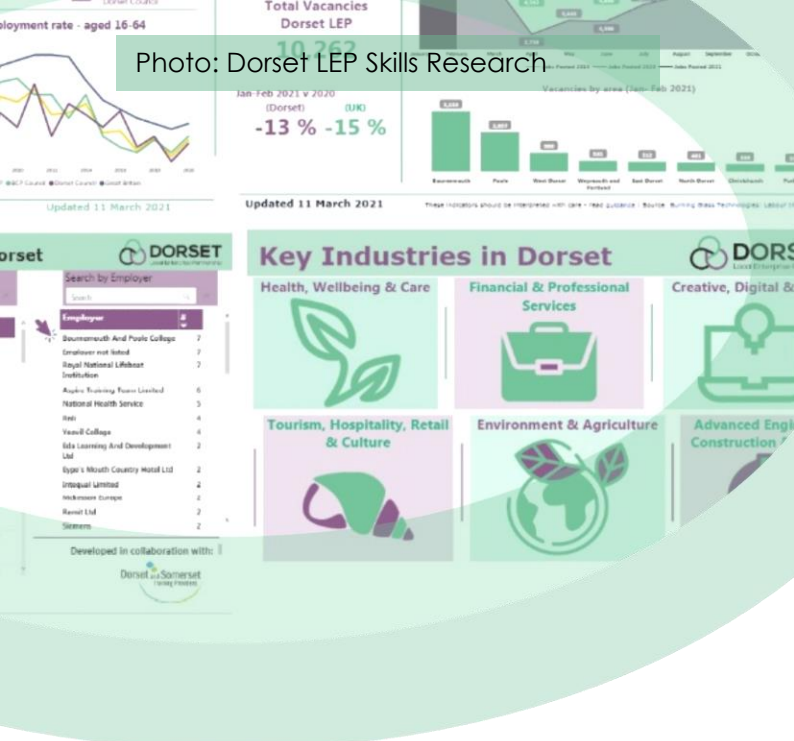


Photo: Dorset LEP Skills Research

“We use the Dorset LEP LMI website regularly and find it invaluable. Fresh information on the top recruiting employers, industries and occupations in Dorset is very valuable to us. Additionally, seeing the skills in demand and where the gaps are helps us to create targeted training to meet the labour market need.”

Sarah Pateman, DWP Employment Adviser

Local Knowledge

- Skills and labour market research

The Dorset Skills Advisory Panel and Board has built significant analytical strengths and capabilities over the past two years. The partnership has overseen the development and publishing of a rich local insight into the skills landscape, allowing strategic priorities and ambitions to naturally emerge.

Webpage:

dorsetlep.co.uk/skills-research-evidence-base

Key Publications:

[Dorset Skills Research Evidence Base, 2020](#)

[Dorset Employer Skills Survey, 2020](#)

[COVID-19 and the labour market in Dorset](#)

[Dorset look back report](#)

Over 2021 the SAPB oversaw the publishing of detailed quarterly reports, accompanied by interactive data dashboards and short videos:

[Dorset Labour Market & Skills - Quarter 1 | 2021](#)

[Dorset Labour Market & Skills - Quarter 2 | 2021](#)

[Dorset Labour Market & Skills - Quarter 3 | 2021](#)

The SAPB also guided several deep dives into the drivers of labour productivity, shifts in adult learning and apprenticeships, future of work, intergenerational differences at work, EU transition, etc.

- Monitoring current developments

As the coronavirus pandemic caused an unprecedented shock to the educational system, the labour market and the economy, both nationally and locally, our research focus over the past two years has been on the monitoring the dynamic developments and trends and their local effects.

In response to this rapidly evolving picture, we worked with local partners to develop labour market and industry based interactive dashboards including latest local insights. They give a visual representation of opportunities, trends, jobs and skills in demand.

- Signposting to future careers

Developed in collaboration with local partners to help ensuring job seekers are signposted to better employment and skills opportunities, Dorset's comprehensive set of interactive LMI resources highlights successful local career pathways and offers insights on salary, occupation and industry trends, as well as future projections for Dorset's industries. With over 2000 visits in 2021 and widely covered by local news outlets, these tools have evolved into a particularly popular tool to explore careers locally.

Over the course of 2021 Dorset LEP also offered LMI CPD sessions for Careers Leaders, Enterprise Advisers, DWP work coaches and learning providers offering innovative ways to effectively incorporate LMI in the curriculum and employment support.

Most recently LMI CPD training was delivered for the Skills & Learning Adult Community Education team, informing their “Fresh start” course, designed for adults experiencing long-term unemployment with complex or multiple needs and barriers.

Impact on local skills provision

The Skills Advisory Panel and Board has driven significant progress in curriculum and policy response in efforts to improve retention, boost apprenticeships and life-long learning and contribute to Dorset's skills ambitions.

One of the SAPB's key achievement is the strong evidence presented around the healthcare sector current and projected demand. Most of the educational providers - from Bournemouth University and AECC to all three colleges have introduced or increased placements on Health or Care courses. Skills & Learning is also piloting a Sector Based Work Academy Programme (SWAP) in partnership with Our Dorset Workforce (NHS CCG) for a "Health & Care Vocational Scholarship" aimed at helping unskilled labour to move into jobs they could not otherwise access.

The three further education colleges are key stakeholders ensuring learning provision in Dorset meets the needs of local employers and learners and remains responsive to developments in learning and industries.

Bournemouth and Poole College was selected for a skills bootcamp provider, won a competitive collaborative bid to enhance digital skills and 5G adoption in Dorset, and is preparing to offer its first T Levels from 2023.

Throughout 2021 BPC also collaborated with universities and employers to deliver degree apprenticeships, responding to the local specialist skills needs in engineering and nursing associate specialisms and introduced new courses in Healthcare, Construction and a new Certificate in Understanding Climate Change. An Aircraft Maintenance apprenticeship programme was developed with employers from the local aviation sector based at Bournemouth Airport and an Esports BTEC course was created with a local community crossing over multiple growth sectors including digital, sports, enterprise, and creative and offering an exciting local career.

The active contribution of the various employer groups has also resulted in many successful initiatives, such as a professionalism week, guest talks, a day a week work experiences, festivals, employer curriculum input and immersive client briefs.

Kingston Maurward College saw student numbers continue to grow and is becoming a default choice for those wishing to follow environmentally oriented careers, alongside the traditional routes of animal and plant sciences. The College demonstrated its position as a leading provider nationally with a second successful admission to RHS Chelsea 2022, proving that Dorset can genuinely consider itself world class in certain sectors.

There has been investment in land-based activities across the college, especially around key Dorset industries such as the armed forces and outdoor and adventurous activities. These included the award of Silver status within the Armed Forces covenant scheme as well as supporting transition from the services back into employment. Dorset LEP also supported capital investment of a new £40k climbing and bouldering facility, enabling students to gain better skills on site, leading to improved employment and progression outcomes.

Curriculum continues to grow, with new areas in Business Studies and Tourism, meeting the needs of Dorset's wider rural economy and facilitating currently under-recruiting sectors, and this will continue. In 2022 the College will renew its strategic plan with support from partners, employers and local institutions to enable it to best serve the needs of the county.

Weymouth College published its new strategy, clearly outlining commitment to delivering on Dorset's local skills ambitions and priorities. The college continued its successful Back 2 Business support hub initiatives in direct support of the Government's Plan for Jobs and proactively engaging local employers with funded skills development opportunities. Over the past year, Weymouth College also launched a range of free online Level 2 Certificates responding to local employer training needs and created INSIGHTS –virtual interview and podcast series for businesses. The college is currently working to deliver several sector advisory groups in 2022.



Photo: Kingston Maurward College

Recovery & Renewal

COVID-19 transformed lives across Dorset in ways unimaginable, exposing business stability, and affecting the youngest and most vulnerable disproportionately. But it also created significant boost to innovative working, virtual skills and business delivery.

Dorset LEP listened to Dorset's business and education communities, evolved its support offer and compiled a set of recommendations for economic recovery to Government⁵⁶.

The Skills Advisory Panel and Board evaluated Dorset's skills strategy, and added the mechanisms for change to the Dorset Total Skills Solution (see Skills strategy), maintaining strong focus on recovery, place-based regeneration and future growth. These mechanisms of change remain relevant today and are among the key considerations in the development of big ideas for the future of skills in Dorset submitted by the SAPB for [Dorset's Living Better - Investment Prospectus](#).

The SAPB also worked in close partnership with stakeholders from local authorities to support recovery plans and with the Department for Work and Pensions to promote 'Plan for Jobs' various initiatives and support schemes. A regular bi-monthly SAPB subgroup is also coming together to discuss DWP latest statistics, updates, and local coordination activities while individual training providers participated in collaborative bids as part of skills bootcamps, kickstart schemes and youth hubs applications.

The development of the labour market and key industry monitoring dashboards with latest job opportunities and skills requirements has also enabled support of the DWP work coaches in identifying local opportunities.

The Peer Networks programme was launched by Dorset Gateway (Dorset LEP's growth hub) and delivered with local partners including Evolve Members and Dorset Chamber of Commerce has been one of the most successful in the country. So far, in 2021/22, 160 Dorset businesses joined and benefitted from the programme despite the national trends where recruitment has been hampered by challenging conditions exacerbated by staff shortages.

"During this pandemic, my business has been severely hit, with no idea of when we can open again, but the support of the group in these dark times has really helped me."

**Dorset business leader,
Peer Networks Testimonial**

The Back to Business programme was also launched in 2021 by Dorset Gateway, with BCP Council's Bounce Back Challenge funding. The programme used an industry-leading benchmarking tool to evaluate business health in the aftermath of the disruption and identify focus areas to tackle and improve productivity.

Back to Business has thus far helped more than 100 local businesses, with over 60% going on to undertake a business review and so far, 7 businesses have been referred onto further, more-focused funded one-to-one support.

⁵⁶ [Dorset LEP COVID-19 Recovery Action and Recommendations to Government booklet](#)

Photo: Arts University
Bournemouth



Dorset Skills Action Plan | Key Achievements

The Skills Advisory Panel and Board has driven significant progress across the priority areas outlined in Dorset's Skills Strategy.

With its ambitious programme of activities, the SAPB and its partner organisations made strides to bring innovative recruitment, attraction, employability and retention solutions and enhanced industry collaborations across Dorset.

Talent attraction & retention through targeted career interventions and local intelligence

The Dorset Careers Hub funded by Dorset LEP and the Careers and Enterprise Company and delivered in partnership with BCP and Dorset Councils, first launched with a pilot of 40 Dorset schools back in the autumn of 2019 and has since successfully bid to extend its offer to all 76 schools and colleges across Dorset. The Hub links the schools with [Enterprise Advisers](#) and supports them in delivering ambitious careers education programme based on [Gatsby Benchmarks best practice](#) and informed by the [local labour market and skills research](#), thus ensuring young people in Dorset progress into promising careers and reach their potential.

While performance against the Gatsby Benchmarks presented challenges in 2020-21, key achievements include:

- **Virtual Work Experience Insight Days**

In partnership with [Speakers for Schools](#) and local employers, the Hub delivered 850 virtual insight days for young people across Dorset.

- **Virtual Careers and Apprenticeship Show - May 2021**

The show was a major success and attracted staggering attendance - more than 20,000 students, 400 teachers, alongside parents and carers attended, plus over 64 exhibitors hosting online booths visited over 34,000 times for work and study related questions.

The Hub has also been awarded two further projects - JP Morgan Effective Transitions fund and CEC Community of Practice fund.

The Dorset Cornerstone Employers are a flagship group of businesses who transform the lives of young people in Dorset. They work with Dorset's Careers Hub to improve careers education, make sure key skills for their sector are understood by teachers and careers leaders, and inspire students by championing jobs and skills in Dorset. In the last year, they developed a series of sector focused virtual events - Dorset Careers Live - bringing their industries into the homes and classrooms of hundreds of young people locally.

The Dorset Ambassadors programme led by Dorset Gateway is an active community of over 50 local business volunteers from all sectors, who are passionate about living and doing business in Dorset. Over the past year they continued to play a significant role in promoting Dorset as a great place to do business, support young people, lobby government for investment and advocate business opportunities.

Virtual Skills Hub – part of the Boscombe Towns Fund £22 million regeneration plan and involving a partnership of all key local providers, including universities, colleges, adult community education, this project is developing a digital platform using AI to profile individual's skills and careers aspirations and offers relevant local course listings and advertised job vacancies to help people map out their skills and career pathway.

- 76 Schools in the Dorset Careers Hub
- 63 Enterprise Advisers
- 56 Dorset Ambassadors
- 8 Cornerstone Employers

Talent attraction & retention through enhancing local SME's Leadership & Management

Dorset Gateway provided networking and learning opportunities

Over the past year, Dorset Gateway continued to focus on high impact interventions to benefit local businesses, including skills brokerage, bidwriting, scale-up and high-growth SMEs support, crowdfunding, knowledge transfers, peer-networks and signposting to a range of funding sources, innovation and consultancy opportunities. Conferences, workshops and targeted events delivered were attended by over 200 businesses throughout the year promoting key sectors and investment opportunities, including the two High Potential Opportunity propositions around Sustainable Aquaculture and Marine Autonomy.

Aside from successful Back to Business and Peer Networks programmes, Dorset Gateway has also secured funding from NatWest to support and inspire women on setting up their own businesses.

The teams also worked alongside universities to launch a joint **Design Innovation programme with AUB** and **Help to Grow Management programme with BU** - both in support of Dorset-based SMEs.

The university supported 54 businesses to develop 25 new products over the last 18 months and is piloting an Executive Education strand to upskill local businesses, currently piloting the first course in Product Design using VR and Building Environments in VR. **AUB also launched its innovation studio** in September 2021 (funded by £1.6 million Local Growth Fund awarded by Dorset LEP), which is set to expand and boost Dorset's thriving start-up culture and invigorate the digital and creative sectors locally with state-of-the-art facilities, technology, and expertise.

Launched with a pilot programme of seven start-up businesses on six-month programme to develop and test prototype, the incubator offers high-tech digital and manufacturing kit and design support, plus critical business mentoring, flexible learning and robust business planning, which are all elements that distinguish successful enterprises.

In parallel, AUB is launching the Innovation Studio Associates Programme which will support established businesses with access to AUB skills and equipment to develop and test new products and services.

"The Innovation Studio provides a locus for innovation from which we expect to create over 80 business and graduate start-ups, generating more than £13million in GVA to the local economy by March 2025."

Cecilia Buffon, Dorset LEP Chair

- 1,700 businesses signposted by Dorset Gateway
- 160+ Leaders recruited to Peer Networks
- 62,000+ added revenue generated via ShopAppy
- 100+ Businesses supported by Back 2 Business



Photo: AUB Innovation Studio

Create skills to meet the demand by inspiring the next generation into meaningful careers

Our universities play their civic role by working with local communities, unlocking innovation, investing in outreach, meaningful experience, career development and graduate retention.

University Outreach Activities

The challenges with aspiration across the county highlighted earlier, show the critical role of HE outreach activities for levelling up, particularly at key stage 4 and 5 in Dorset, and this is expected to become more pronounced as outlined in [new policy proposals](#).

The **Bournemouth University's school liaison** programme was designed to boost attainment, build knowledge of HE and careers and promote confidence and self-belief. In 2020/21 the programme delivered: 114 outreach activities; 13 HE Careers Fairs; 44 events providing HE experience (campus visits, lectures and workshops), and 49 presentations on HE, student life and finance. Their work reached around 5,000 young people from 51 schools and colleges, 19 of these in Dorset.

BU also partnered with the BBC to deliver a series of events about fake news and artificially generated new stories.

"I really enjoyed Bournemouth Uni and liked meeting their students. I've never thought about it until now, I don't think my parents went to Uni, but now I'd like to try and give it a go if I'm good enough".

Pupil from St. Michael's Middle School

As part of their Access & Participation work **Arts University Bournemouth** funded upskilling short courses for those Not in Education Employment or Training or experiencing disadvantage. AUB also funds Saturday Art School places to support young people's success in Further/ Higher Education.

The number of local schools supported through the **AEC** Access and Participation programme is increasing year on year and the number of students has tripled reaching 425 thus far in 2021-22.

Graduate Employability and Retention

The **BU's career delivery** was more focused on graduate retention in Dorset and closer collaboration with local councils and businesses. Almost 4,000 students attended the online careers fairs over 2020/21 and the autumn term of 2021/ 22 and many local companies from a range of industries were among the 336 employers represented. Similarly, Dorset speakers featured across all career programmes and events. The digital skills masterclasses brought local digital employers to BU, showcasing local LMI and exposing students to the thriving growth sectors in Dorset. Some events were particularly relevant to local employer needs, i.e. the Nursing and Healthcare recruitment event and seasonal/ part-time jobs fair.

"The online BU careers fair introduced me to a number of local companies that I had not heard of before, and allowed me to get a picture of which companies I had the correct skill-set for, and those for which I would have to consider further personal development if I wanted to pursue them."

Student BU Careers Fair

AUB's innovative careers and skills initiatives engaged 4,565 students in 2020/21 - many organised with local collaborators. The Creative Futures Fest saw 27 industry speakers and 736 students in attendance. Designers and illustrators from AUB joined BU students and local employers at Dorset Spark-collaborative event led by BCP Council and Dorset Growth Hub. BCP Council also brings together local universities and creative tech companies to brainstorm ways of retaining talent locally including a mentoring scheme aimed at promoting graduate retention. In support of start-up talent AUB is also introducing two new awards in enterprise and innovation to be rewarded cash prizes, paid residency at The Old School House Boscombe (TOSH) and the new AUB Innovation Studio.

AEC University College also delivered Future Pathways - virtual careers events with 41 employers in attendance, 5 of them local, employability lectures embedded in the curriculum, as well as support with CV writing and signposting to local graduate opportunities.



Creating skills for future growth by targeted skills investment

Dorset LEP's strategic investment of over £26 million in skills, £19 million of which directly in educational institutions has made a real difference to the providers ability to offer and deliver skills for Dorset's future, while also boosting the creation of new business startups, an estimated 968 new jobs and 1603 apprenticeships for the local economy.

Recent investment in local skill provision includes:

- **£2.7million** for a state-of-the-art [Integrated Rehabilitation Centre](#) at AECC University College with expected completion in March 2022 and bringing up much needed placements capacity amidst intensified service demand resulting from COVID-19 pressures.

"The new facilities will enhance placement opportunities and allow us to grow provision into new areas in allied health, advanced clinical practice and other specialism areas in response to the demands of the local and regional health and care workforce."

Professor Lesley Haig, Vice-Chancellor AECC University College

- **£3.5 million** towards [University Centre and Rural Business Hub](#) also expected at Kingston Maurward College by March 2022 to enhance higher education opportunities for young people in rural Dorset and enable growth in small businesses.

"It has long been recognised that progression to higher education is less good from the rural part of the county. This ambitious intervention, driven by the college, aims to help improve social mobility and opportunities for knowledge transfer... It is extremely exciting and a game-changer for both the college, Dorchester and the rural county."

Luke Rake, CE of Kingston Maurward College

- **£1.5 million** to deliver [vital equipment and facility upgrades](#) at local colleges to enable skills provision during the disruption with IT equipment, infrastructure, online teaching and digital access.
- **£350,000** towards [pioneering innovation](#) for the creative industries that were considerably shaken by the pandemic. That in addition to the £1.5 million investment in the AUB's new Innovation Studio resulted in [a unique collaborative creative facility at the Arts University Bournemouth \(AUB\)](#)

"Dorset is one the fastest growing creative and digital hubs in brexit and a destination of choice for digital entrepreneurs... This funding will support local businesses to get back on their feet, while also helping to harness local creative talent and translate this into high quality jobs.

Luke Hall MP, Minister for Regional Growth and Local Government

- **£1.4 million towards [Institute for Medical Imaging and Visualisation](#) at Bournemouth University to contribute to new medical product and intellectual property developments and house the research for the next wave of 3D medical imaging, meeting the needs of industry, the healthcare sector and of technical education.**

"Medical imaging has become a central component of modern healthcare. Our ambition is to develop a portfolio of world-class research, education and professional development programmes based around this fantastic new facility at BU. We will be collaborating with partners across the University, with the NHS, and with industry, to further knowledge and practice in this rapidly evolving field."

Dr Jamie Franklin,
Clinical academic & Consultant Radiologist
at Royal Bournemouth Hospital

Case studies

An online gallery of case studies illustrates how key local stakeholders from business, local authorities and education in Dorset work collaboratively to solve skills challenges and shape innovative solutions:
dorsetlep.co.uk/dorset-local-skills-report-case-studies

3-SIDED CUBE & Bournemouth and Poole College



IoT Solutions & Arts University Bournemouth



Enterprise Adviser Network & Dorset Careers Hub



University Hospitals Dorset & Bournemouth University



IoT Solutions & Arts University Bournemouth



Skills & Learning outreach



Featured case study

Creating a Career Ready Workforce Bournemouth and Poole College with support from Dorset LEP and CEC

Identified need: Create a highly skilled and adaptive workforce for local business sectors

Key Priority area:

- 🎯 Talent attraction and retention - Unlocking, attracting and retaining talent
- 🎯 Skills to meet demand - Inspiring young people into great careers

The Project

Creating the first-ever Career Ready Digital and Enterprise Innovation hubs across the two Bournemouth and Poole College campuses to support an ambitious careers programme, facilitate entry into strategic local sectors and offer dynamic student-focused physical space for essential guidance, employability and enterprise support. The two new hubs will increase the employability skills of around 4000 students and apprentices per year, equipping them with critical skills for their futures after course completion.

The Rationale

To support the college in its ambition to provide all-round employability support, achieve all [eight Gatsby Benchmarks for good career guidance](#), support the development of a highly skilled and adaptive workforce and ensure learners can progress into strategically important local sectors as skilled, work-ready and productive employees from the onset. This is reducing the amount of training and mentoring time and is a widely recognised employer need.

How was it completed

Almost £106,000 of Local Growth Fund was allocated to the College by Dorset LEP to create these dynamic student-focused physical spaces at North Road Poole and Lansdowne sites. Works included refurbishment to create flexible break out areas, confidential advice and guidance booths and a space for joint working, as well as purchase of IT equipment, and a 3D printer installation. The project was completed in early 2021, but due to on-site teaching restrictions it was officially launched in the autumn term.

The hubs provide a central focus at each site to promote the development of employability and enterprise skills to ensure students are work ready, adaptive and have the information they need to inform their choices. Helping to relieve the pressure that is often felt as a student prepares to leave education and start their career journey, these hubs are an impactful, on-site drop-in facility to help give guidance at a crucial time of life.

Impact

The Career Ready Hubs are an illustration of how relatively small investment can create a significant impact when targeted and driven by enthusiasm and determination.

Now fully operational, they offer a wide range of support, allowing students to book tailored guidance sessions either in-person or remotely, meet employers and guest speakers, participate in workshops and other activities on their career journey.

This development helped Bournemouth and Poole College to [meet 100% achievement in all eight Gatsby benchmarks](#) – a significant milestone and a national benchmark to demonstrate the careers services provided are of a high standard, reflecting strong commitment to helping students make informed decisions about their futures and improving life outcomes.

This is also in recognition of the important contribution of the college to social mobility, and in particular for those young people without significant social capital or home support to draw upon. This comes at a time when good career information has never been more important. Changes in technology, the technical education system and in the labour market mean that the jobs available and the skills and qualifications needed to reach them are changing all the time. The COVID-19 pandemic has added further disruption, with a disproportionate impact on young people as they enter the labour market. Many skilled jobs require specific education and training, and young people need more support to make better-informed decisions about their future.

"It is of absolute importance to the College that we provide our students with the very best guidance when it comes to them taking on the next chapter in their lives. Whether it's continuing with an apprenticeship with us or leaving the college to find their dream job, we want to ensure they are best equipped to tackle that change.

We are so grateful to Dorset LEP for being able to make these Career Ready Hubs a reality, and we know that this will totally shape the lives of our alumni here at Bournemouth & Poole College."

Pippa Allner, Personal Development Manager at Bournemouth & Poole College



Photo: Bournemouth and Poole College

Looking forward

Our Vision for the Future: Skilled, Productive & Resilient

Dorset's vision is for a highly skilled workforce that meets the needs of the local economy and priority business sectors.

We want our people to become better skilled, more resilient and productive so that our future economic growth is driven by greater worker productivity not just relying on workforce growth.

By 2030, our ambition is that:



Dorset's labour market is recognised as smarter, with more agile workforce, producing more with fewer resources.



New businesses see Dorset as a leader in delivering growth opportunities – driven by the availability of new and emerging skills within an enabling infrastructure.



Dorset is a region of opportunity, achieving a net inflow of talent – built on an increased 'opportunity for a great career' combined with an increased 'opportunity to live' in a high quality, dynamic and inclusive region.



Dorset is achieving stronger replacement labour force levels – with increases in availability of skill sets demanded by the new growth clusters alongside increases in volume to support broader business growth.



Dorset is embracing the demographic crunch – and identifying innovative and inclusive approaches that address the challenges and benefit the entire region, unlocking the talent within an older workforce and tapping into a rich expertise.



Dorset is at the forefront of training and skills development for the jobs of the future and the unique highly desirable human skills which artificial intelligence (AI) and machines cannot replicate.



There are well-defined pathways into work for school and college leavers, supported by excellent, current and evidenced careers advice.

Our Local Skills Report gives detailed evidence to support actions on our journey to achieve our 2030 ambitions. The Dorset Investment Prospectus outlines the skills priorities for economic recovery and rebuilding linked to Covid-19 together with the future look to enable business, inspire thinking and be naturally creative.

Our immediate skills priorities for 2021/22 are:

- 🎯 **Recovery** – pan-Dorset, focused on economic recovery, upskilling and retraining
- 🎯 **Place based regeneration** – scale and Dorset wide focus
- 🎯 **Future growth** – talent and attraction including innovation and enterprise

We are developing a talent and skills pipeline for identified clusters with a focus on transferable skills and innovation across sectors. Our talent programme is identifying clear employment access routes and building on the innovation ecosystem framework with universities, colleges and specialist centres across Dorset, with a focus on:

- Business engagement with novel thinking and solutions;
- Communicating existing learning and employment opportunities;
- Aligned to future business support for research, development and innovation.

Working with partners, we are achieving a future skills pipeline for identified needs through the development of new courses, such as those in clinical trials, marine aquaculture, aviation and health and community. We have increased our offer of stimulus/investment packages for local growth/scale up companies and inward investors in both the cluster and its supply chain and are aligning a new 'investor academy' alongside to support business access to finance, further driving the acceleration of the £1bn Smart Place Investment Plan and aligning the digital strategies across Dorset.

The Skills Advisory Panel and Board continues to work with local partners to support our future work and help to overcome the challenges we face. Our partners champion the work of the SAPB to others and continue to utilise our rich evidence base, growing it through data contributions, case studies and analysis. Our partners are driving developments relative to the activities and priorities in this report and continue to deliver strategies based on the values, priorities and ambitions outlined in this report.

We are creating a lifelong learning skills ecosystem for Dorset where employers, educational providers, communities and policy makers work together in a joint effort to deliver evidence based interventions. This will address both the supply and demand for people and skills, whilst tackling the significant issues of social disadvantage and business productivity, increasing job satisfaction, stimulating investment and innovation. This involves liaison and networking with the full spectrum of businesses, ranging from freelance and micro businesses to large employers and will in turn narrow Dorset's productivity gap, increase economic growth and improve living standards for people in Dorset.

The Dorset Local Skills Report details the rationale behind our vision, our priorities and the headline actions to achieve our ambitions. It sits alongside the Local Industrial Strategy and Investment Prospectus to reflect a holistic view of not only the skills needs which are required to propel Dorset into economic growth, but also the infrastructure to ensure our region can access the education and training it requires to build, retain and attract a skilled workforce both now and in the future.

Review of updates

This publication is the Dorset Local Skills Report. To remain the single go-to resource for local skills insights and initiatives in Dorset, this report incorporates and supersedes previous versions of the report, the latest published in 2021.

Parts of the report have remained unchanged after the Skills Advisory Panel and Board's consideration of the current evidence has deemed them valid and relevant. Where changes from the previous version of the report are made, these are outlined below.

Section	Description of changes
Foreword	Complete rewrite
Skills Advisory Panels – Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National context - updated centrally by the Department for Education - Dorset SAPB – updates on changes to membership and terms of reference
Skills Strengths and Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Headings added to clearly break down the local context, key challenges and needs sections - Latest evidence, statistics, research, and pandemic developments added - Skills strengths highlighted across key HE/ FE providers - Key trends remain largely unchanged, except productivity challenges
Skills Strategy	- Unchanged
Skills Action Pan	- Unchanged
Assessment of Progress	- Updated with latest SAPB delivery highlights, largely rewritten
Case Studies	- Links to case study online library included and one new case study featured
Annex of Key indicators (separate document)	- Complete rewrite
Plan of Skills activities (separate document)	- Unchanged

Champion Dorset skills

We encourage local partners to support the work of Dorset's Skills Advisory Panel and Board by:

- Utilising the evidence base and growing it through data contributions, case studies and analysis
- Informing us of developments relevant to the activities and priorities outlined in this report
- Tailoring delivery strategies based on the priorities and ambitions outlined in this report

Are you or your organisation contributing to the delivery of Dorset's skills priorities?

Would you like to share your case studies and feedback?

Send your insight to

DorsetLEP@bournemouth.ac.uk



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