

# South Yorkshire's Skills Strategy

We want to build a better – not just a bigger – economy, more directly linked to the wellbeing of our population and planet. A thriving skills system that supports residents to lead resilient and productive lives is vital to achieving this ambition.

Our Skills Strategy sets out **three** mission areas, to respond to skills challenges facing the region:

## 1

### To move those far from the labour market into work or ready for work.

- Almost a quarter of working age adults are inactive. Of those who are inactive, 38% are inactive due to either temporary or long-term sickness.
- Across South Yorkshire the level of NEET 16–17-year-olds is consistently higher than the national average. In 2022, 6.8% of 16–17-year-olds were recorded as NEET, compared to 4.7% in England.
- South Yorkshire's ethnic minority employment rate is 55.7% compared to 60.6% in Greater Manchester, 64.8% in West Yorkshire and 69.3% across the UK.

## 2

### To raise attainment of core knowledge and skills

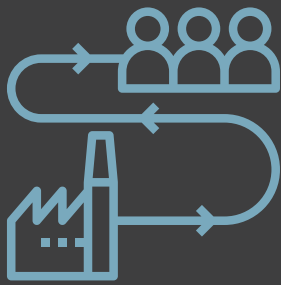
- 16% of our working age residents have no formal qualifications, 43% of the working age population have qualifications at Level 2 and below; only 51% are qualified to Level 3 and above, compared to a national average of 57%.
- Only one third of learners who did not achieve a level 2 English and maths at 16 had done so by 19 years old.
- 13% of jobs in Doncaster are at a high risk (over 70%) of automation, as are 9.3% in Barnsley, 7.6% in Rotherham – all higher than the national average (7%).

## 3

### To increase the supply of a high-skilled workforce

- In the most deprived area in South Yorkshire, 28% of people had a Level 3 or above qualification, this compares to 79% of people in the least deprived area.
- 51% of the working age population in South Yorkshire are qualified to Level 3 and above compared to 57% of adults in England.
- Only 30% of working age adults are educated to Level 4 or above. This lower than Greater Manchester, Liverpool City Region, and West Yorkshire.
- If 10% of the population in South Yorkshire with Level 3 earned wages equivalent to those at Level 4 or above in South Yorkshire, total earnings could increase by an average of £200m.

# 1



To move those far from the labour market into work or ready for work.

We will prioritise:

- Closer working relationships between local authorities, service providers, voluntary and community groups
- Engaging those far from the labour market with a simple service that is focused on progression
- Developing a coordinated employment support offer that navigates the complex service environment on behalf of the user
- Developing a targeted and co-ordinated offer for young people through the Youth Taskforce

We know we are making a difference when:

*We see a reduction in our inactivity rate and corresponding increase in long-term employment and full-time further education.*

*This includes a reduction in inactivity in communities and groups that have historically seen a larger proportion of the population long-term inactive. For example, ethnic minorities, care leavers and young people with SEND.*

*A reduction in young people (16-25) who are NEET and corresponding increase in long-term employment or full-time further education.*

# 2



To raise attainment of core knowledge and skills

We will prioritise:

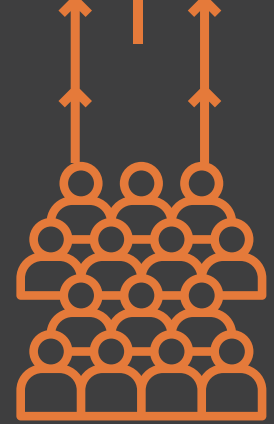
- Improving learner outcomes, with a specific focus on in-work progression
- Reducing low attainment and targeting spend in areas of need
- Working with employers to engage in greater education and training in the workplace
- Increasing the engagement with legal entitlements, digital and full qualifications

We know we are making a difference when:

*We see an increase in the proportion of the population with up to and including Level 2.*

*This includes an increase in groups that have been historically less likely to access these qualifications and skills (learners with SEND, ethnic minorities, care leavers, learners from disadvantaged backgrounds).*

# 3



To increase the supply of a high-skilled workforce

We will prioritise:

- Encouraging our employers to invest in upskilling or reskilling employees
- Enhancing our offer at Level 3, ensuring it is aligned to regional need and making provision more accessible to residents
- Meeting acute needs to fill skills shortages whilst also investing in provision that develops high growth sectors
- Developing our technical education offer flagship programme

We know we are making a difference when:

*We see an increase in the proportion of the population with Level 3 and above qualification, particularly in areas relevant to South Yorkshire's economy.*

*This includes an increase in groups that have been historically less likely to attain these qualifications and skills (for example, learners with SEND, ethnic minorities, care leavers, learners from communities with higher levels of deprivation).*

*An increase in the proportion of higher-level occupations within South Yorkshire and an increase in median earnings.*

# South Yorkshire's Skills Strategy

## Flagship Programmes



### Young Person's Offer

Since the pandemic, we have seen a significant increase in persistent absenteeism and increasing numbers of young people reporting struggles with poor mental health. As part of this Skills Strategy, we will establish a Taskforce which will design and develop an offer for young people in South Yorkshire.

The Taskforce will build on ongoing work in delivering programmes such as the UKSPF in South Yorkshire to design the core elements of a youth skills programme, including defining a core target group. It will draw on insights from the Pathways to Work Commission and the Raising Participation Age Group. This programme will support young people to take the next step in developing the skills needed for work and life.



### Community Skills Hubs

Hubs will seek to bring together skills, health and employment support, building on the lessons from our Working Win programme and integrating disparate government funding streams.

In practice, this will require close partnership working with Job Centre Plus, health services, providers, and community groups.

These hubs may differ in form: we will work with the grain of existing services, based on existing community assets, to deliver a higher quality coordinated service. These Community Skills Hubs will also form part of our campaign to bring employment support into a single devolved pot to deliver the next generation of programmes targeted at reducing economic inactivity



### Skills Bank

Effective skills systems are partnerships between the public and the private sector. That is why we created Skills Bank, a public/private co-investment fund to address under-provision of workplace training in South Yorkshire. Since launch in 2016 we have supported nearly 5,000 learners on courses from leadership to coding, with businesses co-investing in training alongside the MCA.

We know there is more we can do to improve this programme which is why over the next four years we will expand and simplify Skills Bank, with an aim to double annual provision by 2025.

# South Yorkshire's Skills Strategy

## Flagship Programmes



### Skills Platform

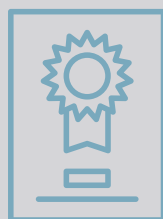
Too often, the barrier to skills is lack of information and guidance. There is more we can do, both for individuals and businesses, which is why we will develop a single portal for skills and employment opportunities in South Yorkshire. This will build on our Careers Hubs and Apprenticeship Hub and be a site with a single point of guidance both for residents and employers.



### Technical Offer

We want to make South Yorkshire a leader in the provision of and engagement with the technical skills our economy needs, offering opportunity to all residents with or without school qualifications to progress to Level 3 and above.

This will include: campaigning and raising awareness of technical routes on offer; identifying and increasing the number of technical and apprenticeship placements available; increasing apprenticeship starts and completions regionwide, while also increasing the proportion of apprenticeships available locally to those aged between 19 and 25; and, developing a pledge for the number of apprentices anchor institutions will take on. At every stage, we will work to improve access to and availability of technical education opportunities for those historically underrepresented and underserved by education and skills training. We will also explore developing cross-organisational training schemes, such as apprenticeships and supported internships, with our MCA partners.



### Good Business Campaign

Employers and contractors play a crucial role in ensuring South Yorkshire residents have the skills they need to be productive and resilient. We are committed to delivering our Good Business Campaign. This includes a skills element of encouraging businesses to invest in employees and engage in careers advice; championing and awarding best practice; commitments to delivering the three Missions in this Strategy; and, ensuring employers are supporting employees to remain and prosper in work.



### Mayoral Awards

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