Dorset Local Skills Improvement Plan
Draft Employer Skills Priorities
March 31 2023

Based on a survey and interviews with Dorset employers, labour market information and national skills data, analysis of sector specific data, and education and training providers' contributions.

Dorset LSIP

Delivered by:
Dorset Chamber

Sectors/Routes/Pathways

- Agriculture and Agri-tech
- Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering including Aerospace, Defence and Marine
- Construction
- Digital Tech and Creative
- Health and Social Care

New Employer Research: December 22 – March 23

Headlines: Employers said, data shows…

- **Labour shortages:** Employers are struggling to fill job vacancies, causing a lack of attention on skills development

    - Perception of unglamorous roles in Healthcare, Construction and Agriculture is causing inability to attract and recruit to the sector

    - Shrinking labour market in Dorset

- **Work readiness:** Communication skills, motivation, and experience are often considered more important than technical skills. New entrants are often thought to be unready for the workplace

- **Net Zero:** Most employers seem to not know what they need skills in – but are keen to utilise low carbon processes and materials if cost effective

- From the sample a perception that **apprenticeships are hard to find** or have been cut in most sectors. On the job training/apprenticeships are highly valued by employers when they work well

- Engineering and technical sectors compete with larger cities. They find it difficult to **retain and attract talent** into Dorset businesses

- New entrants don't always have right level of **basic IT skills** e.g., Excel, Word and PowerPoint. Older workers need to upskill, particularly those in smaller companies

- Coding! Planning for increased automation is driving higher level IT skill demands alongside a fundamental understanding of a sector's core business in all areas

- Leadership and management skills needed in all sectors

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Agriculture, Agri Tech

Skills asks:

- **Fundamental farming skills:** e.g. monitoring animal welfare, nutrition and administering animal care
- **Modern Technology and Computerised Methods:** operate higher level machinery and computerised equipment and analyse data, alongside foundation IT skills needed to run business
- **Sustainable food production (Net Zero):** understanding and use of more efficient arable management skills and farming methods and techniques to increase yield percentages from farms. Extremely important in the transition to net zero
- **Business Planning skills**
- **Communication & team-work**
- **Chainsaw handling, tractor / telehandler drivers**
- **Foundational English & maths**
- **Leadership & Management**

Challenges:

- **General Labour Shortage:** Not enough people entering farming as there once was and this is causing an overall labour shortage
- **Employer's perception younger people are less interested in farming:** other industries have higher pay for more sociable hours
- **Courses have outdated** syllabuses and are teaching skills that are not currently relevant to what employers need. **Apprenticeships cut**

Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering incl. Aerospace, Defence & Marine

Skills asks:

- **Engineering courses** (Mechanical, electrical and electronic engineers). With foundational & practical knowledge
- **IT, software development & programming skills:** ability to apply these to engineering and manufacturing. Need to write code to modify equipment and use software to organise and monitor automation. Excel, word and emailing continue to be important
- **Operation, maintenance and repair of specific complex machinery:** Production operatives are in current demand, will need to adapt skills to automated machines
- **Design skills** that are applied to this sector. Ability to problem solve designs using materials knowledge
- **Trades**: electricians, carpenters, bricklayers
- **Leadership & Management**
- **Future skills:** 3D printing, AI, AR, machine-learning

Challenges:

- **Lack of local Apprenticeship provision or specific courses. Poor quality courses locally** problems retaining teaching staff & basic equipment. Want more relevant practical skills taught
- **Barriers** to employers taking apprentices
- **Lack of evening provision for upskilling**
- **New entrants need support in transition to be work-ready.** Communication skills and problem-solving
- **Competition with more 'glamorous' industries** like Digital and Tech with higher pay. This is exacerbated by the lack of diversity in the educational pathways teaching these skills
- **Employer engagement important** to support recruitment, work readiness, course content. But challenging if understaffed

Construction

Skills asks:

- **General lack of labour** in particular key trades: carpentry, joinery, bricklaying, roofing, electrical and floorers. There is an ageing workforce so need to increase new entrants & attract those who left sector to return
- **Fundamental Skills:** such as mathematics, working from drawings, use of hand tools and measurements.
- **Future materials, techniques, and modern methods of construction:** such as use of prefabricated structures, new materials and methods such as AR and AI. Offsite construction and digitisation
- **Design skills** including digital focussed design skills
- **Government net zero targets**: Energy assessors, retrofit Project Managers, insulation installers, heat pump installers

Challenges:

- **Perception of a lack of quality college courses and apprenticeships.** More quantity, diversity, and quality of courses/apprenticeships wanted with more complex skills taught
- **Apprenticeship value**: wages are low. Training takes time to become useful. Achievement levels are lower than pre-pandemic levels
- **Lack of resources for upskilling.** This is particularly crucial as formal qualifications are now required to gain a CSCS card or management card
- **Value positive attitudes**, reliability, and work ethic. Concern that younger entrants lack these skills
- **Lack of entrants.** Common misconception is construction is best suited to those who don't excel academically. But it's an innovative and rapidly advancing sector
- **Older workers** less keen to retrain or adopt new ways of working – high numbers due to retire

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Health and Social Care

Skills asks:

- **Healthcare and support workers:** job retention poor, starts at level of demand. Perception of low-status. Challenging work

- **Interpersonal Skills lacking:** Such as communication, emotional intelligence and patient management. Not enough emphasis placed on these skills by the current education services. Patient-centred care

- **Dementia focused care:** Dementia is currently not included in the standard training courses and many employers think it should be

- **Understanding Technology:** Assisted living technology along with improving general IT skills. This will become more commonplace, and it will be important for carers to understand how to best use it

Challenges:

- **Job Difficulty:** Main difference between health and social care & regulated findings (not included). The difficulty and nature of the job, coupled with perception that easier work is available elsewhere

- **Lack of experience opportunities** to develop key skills. There are noted difficulties in the jump between learning and doing, particularly when it comes to patient-centred care

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Regulated Care Provision – Support Staff

Skills asks:

- **A need for managerial skills:** Particularly within pharmacies. Generic management courses do not provide the specific skill sets needed; balance medical services and team

- **Advanced technology and automation** are becoming more prevalent meaning further IT skill sets will be required

- **IT literacy** for accurate record keeping. Time constraints impact ability to train

Challenges:

- **Out of date courses:** Perception that courses for dispensary staff working in pharmacies are outdated. Some of the content is no longer relevant and there is great potential for these courses to be improved. If the industry continues moving towards offering a wider range services then the inclusion of basic clinical skills would be very beneficial

- **Lack of pathways for upskilling:** Currently there are not enough pathways to upskill employees and it is not clear to employers what options are currently available to them

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Digital Tech and Creative

Skills asks:

- **Software Development and Programming Skills:** in high demand in Dorset at all experience levels. Taught to use at least one language: javascript, Git, C#, Java, SQL, React.js adobe, python, HTML

- **Data Analysis:** Abilities in statistical analysis, data management and data visualisation

- **Design Skills:** web design, graphic design, video/photo editing and digital creativity

- **Client Management Skills**

- **Communication and Collaboration**

- **IT:** basic, CRM, project management

- **Leadership & Management**

- Small companies require a **broader skill set** incl CRM, blogging, marketing, business skills

Challenges:

- **Self-Taught Employees,** particularly developers and programmers. This limits progression as technical and non-technical skills development could be lacking or limited

- **Lack of Post-Education avenues and experience** to support work readiness and skill diversity

- **Lack of Work Readiness** for employees coming from education. Lacking in the non-technical aspects of roles, and educational courses have not developed these sufficiently

- **Inequalities in digitally advanced occupations**

- **Employers see the value in building more education: employer engagement.** Employers would be able to highlight their own specific skill needs to help build more specific courses, and develop work experience opportunities

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Net Zero

Skills asks:
- A significant proportion of **businesses know about the 2050 net zero target** but don't have the understanding or knowledge to meet it

- **Larger companies** are more focussed on net-zero and have a much better knowledge base

- Those that do have some understanding want skills and knowledge about new technology, equipment, and products that can help to **reduce carbon emissions but fear investment costs**

Employers want:
- Government support
  - Centralised source of information
- Funding incentives
  - What are they?
- Evidence based guidance
  - Cost benefits
  - Carbon auditing
- A Net Zero roadmap
  - Milestones
- Training and education
  - What to do
  - How to do it
- Collaboration and networking opportunities
  - Supply chains
  - Share practice

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Next Steps

- You are invited to s*ubmit SMART actions and solutions by sector/priority (if relevant) - by April 21. These will be considered as part of a monitored and measured change plan. This plan evolve, as will the LSIP community, from now through to March 2025.* We are seeking LSIP specific SMART responses that include current activity, and planned activity that is already funded, as well as new activity that could be delivered if funding becomes available. This will form a change programme

- For education and technical providers - who differ from employers and learner intermediaries – please include the connection to specific pathways and courses

- *Please provide your input and feedback by April 21 in an email, with any supporting information, to lsip@dorsetchamber.co.uk. You can also use this email address if you have any questions relating to this process. You can use the* **Sector Specific Draft Priorities** *document as the basis for your feedback, or provide the information in an alternative format*

- To access the research please visit: https://dorsetchamber.co.uk/lsip/priorities/

Thank you for your ongoing support for the Dorset Local Skills Improvement Plan.

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