Health & Social Care

Dorset Local Skills Improvement Plan

South West LSIP Findings | December 2023

INSIGHTFUL

Stage 1
Findings
March 2023

South West
LSIP Findings
Dec 2023

LMI & Key
Sector Data
Dec 2023

Key Sector
Focus Groups
2024 | 2025

Dorset
Skills Survey
Data
2024 | 2025

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Dorset LSIP

Delivered by:
Dorset Chamber

www.dorsetchamber.co.uk/lsip

Contents

Approach & Purpose of Literature Review

In August 2023 38 Local Skills Improvement Plan's (LSIPs) were approved by the Secretary of State for Education across the UK. The LSIPs will help to achieve better alignment of the local skills system with employer's needs.

This literature review endeavours to consolidate the shared discoveries from LSIPs in the South West. The ensuing report presents a summary of the prevalent skill gaps identified across the South West of England. The overarching goals of this review are to enhance the evidential foundation of LSIPs and expedite the second phase of LSIP research.

This literature review amalgamates insights from individual LSIPs in the South West, each drawing upon a wide array of data sources, including surveys, interviews, focus groups, and stakeholder engagement. Consequently, the review synthesizes a wealth of qualitative and quantitative employer engagements from across the South West, forming a robust perspective on cross-county skills needs.

This literature review is one part of the evidence gathering for the sector's skills needs. Further data, employer voice and analyses will be shared to maintain and develop the evidence base. This will include sharing Labour market data, recruitment intelligence, findings from focus groups with employers in key sectors as well as analysis of the delivery of skills training.

Areas of study

LSIPs were included in this literature review that were in the South or South West of England. The LSIPs included in this literature review are:

- Dorset LSIP (Dorset Chamber) https://dorsetchamber.co.uk/lsip/
- Solent LSIP (Hampshire Chamber of Commerce) https://www.hampshirechamber.co.uk/chamber-of-solutions/local-skills-improvement-plan/
- Enterprise M3 LSIP (Hampshire Chamber of Commerce) https://www.hampshirechamber.co.uk/chamber-of-solutions/local-skills-improvement-plan/
- Devon and Somerset LSIP (Devon & Plymouth Chamber, Somerset Chamber of Commerce) https://devonandsomersetlsip.co.uk/
- Swindon and Wiltshire LSIP (Business West) https://www.businesswest.co.uk/grow/LSIP/lsip-swindon-wiltshire
- Gloucestershire LSIP (Business West) https://www.businesswest.co.uk/grow/LSIP/lsip-gloucestershire
- West of England LSIP (Business West) https://www.businesswest.co.uk/grow/LSIP/lsip-west-england
- Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly LSIP (Federation of Small Businesses) https://www.fsb.org.uk/cornwall-and-the-isles-of-scilly-lsip.html
- Sussex LSIP (Sussex Chamber of Commerce) https://www.sussexchamberofcommerce.co.uk/education-skills

Skill Gaps and Needs in the Health and Social Care Sector

Across the LSIP reports on health and social care, it is clear that the sector in the South West is facing significant recruitment difficulties, and this pertains to a number of key roles and skills within the sector.

There are significant recruitment challenges facing key health and social care roles

Within the health and social care sector in the South West, there was a common theme surrounding a number of key roles being difficult to recruit for. The most common of those roles are:

- Care workers (Residential and Nursing)
- Nurses and midwives
- Home carers and domiciliary carers

These roles are by far the most commonly posted job applications within the South West, and the demand far outweighs the supply. Furthermore, a number of key specialised skills needed within these difficult to recruit for roles were outlined as also not meeting the demands needed by employers in the industry.
[1]

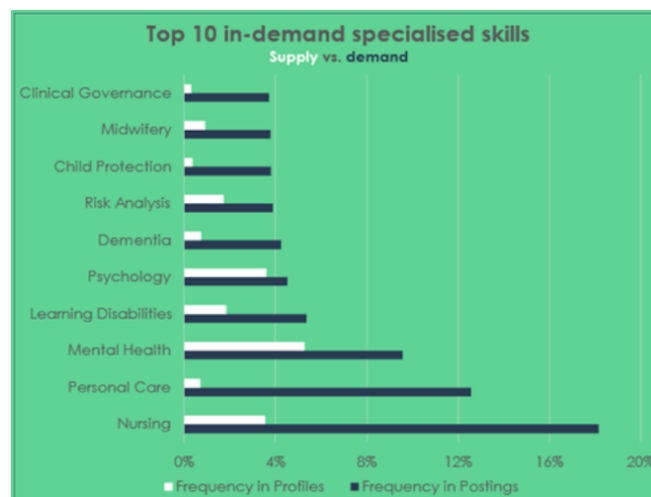Figure 1. Top 10 in-demand specialised skills in the Sussex LSIP area

Employability Skills are in high demand

Along with the need for a greater supply of key roles and specialised skills to meet those roles, the South West LSIPs found a significant demand for employability skills across all sectors.

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[1] Sussex LSIP – Annex Q – Health and Social Care Deep dive – Executive Summary – Page 8

SKILLS & KNOWLEDGE GAPS OVER NEXT 3 YEARS
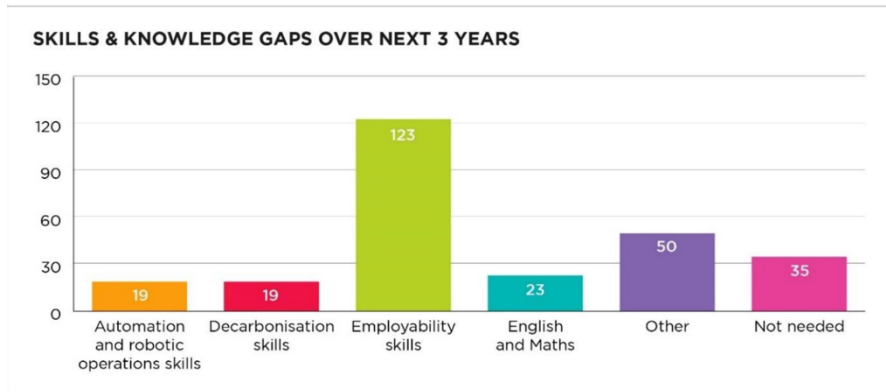
Bar chart of responses to a multiple-choice question about skills and knowledge gaps over the next three years[78]

These employability skills include:

- Communication
- Motivation
- Teamwork
- Leadership
- Organisation

When recruiting, employers placed high importance on these employability skills, however, there is a need for more applicants to have greater levels of these skills.

Digital Skills are needed both in the present and in the future

As the health and social care industry becomes more digitised in its practices, there will be requirements for more people with both generic and specialised digital skills to meet needs. Generic digital skills refer to the use of things such as Microsoft, emails, and virtual meetings, and these generic skills can be areas of focus for employers when recruiting.

Along with those more generic digital skills will be the need for more specialised uses of technology within the health and social care sector. Included in those more advanced digital skills were:

- Assisted living technology use
- Digital bloodwork, tests and detections

- Data analysis and data science

- Remote service provision (AI, virtual reality)

These more advanced technology uses are areas that employers expect to become more of a focus in the coming years.

Challenges Facing the Health and Social Care Sector

There are difficulties in retaining and attracting people into roles

As noted, the health and social care sector in the South West is suffering from significant difficulties in recruitment. There are difficulties in attracting people to work in key roles needed within the healthcare sector, and there are difficulties in retaining members of staff. These difficulties in retaining and attracting talent into the sector are significant reasons for significant skill gaps in key roles and are influencing the quality of care that can be provided.

The health and social care sector suffers from lower pay

Within the health and social care sector, many businesses are finding it difficult to offer competitive pay packages for care roles. When outlining these difficulties, the Hampshire and Sussex LSIP outlined that where many home care and domiciliary care workers will have to travel for work, those travel costs are eating into final take home pay amounts, leading to final take home pay being lower than that of the statutory minimum wage[3]. Other industries are offering better pay and incentives for work, and this is having an impact on being able to attract people into the industry.

Furthermore, where many businesses need to upskill and recruit for staff with strong digital skills, many businesses are finding this difficult due to not being able to offer pay that is competitive with other industries and private businesses.

There are too many barriers to training

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[3] Hampshire and Surrey LSIP – Page 13

Within the health and social care sector, many businesses have experienced a number of different barriers to training. These main barriers are time, funding, and awareness. Businesses require more support to allow staff to go out on training courses to develop skills, and there needs to be more support for businesses on how to access the skills and apprenticeships systems.

Cross LSIP Employer Suggested Actionable priorities to Support Health and Social Care Sector Skill Needs

Develop improved engagement between employers and providers

One of the main areas for action suggested by employers within the health and social care sector is for improved engagement between employers and providers of training and education. Greater engagement would allow for more work experience opportunities to be provided to learners, and training courses could be better tailored to the specific current and future needs of the businesses in the industry.

Provide employers with support and guidance on using the training and apprenticeship systems

As discussed, one of the main barriers to training facing employers is that they find navigating the skills and apprenticeship provision systems difficult. Businesses require further support and guidance on using these systems in order to have better access to providing training and learning opportunities for staff.

Provide further avenues for work experience through work placements on courses

Where many employers outlined a range of specialised, technical skills and non-technical, employability skills that are lacking in the workforce, they would like learners to be provided with increased work experience opportunities through work placements on courses. This would provide more hands-on learning opportunities, where both technical and employability skills could be developed at a higher level before fully entering the workforce following graduation.

Develop flexible training courses to suit employer needs

Employers within the South West LSIP region also indicated that they would like training courses to become more flexible to suit the needs of employers. Where many employers struggle to access training due to time barriers, short, modular courses for training could provide more accessible avenues for training to upskill staff.

Comparing Dorset Health and Social Care LSIP Findings with other Counties.

Health and social care skill needs comparison.

Within the health and social care sector, the needs outlined by the research conducted throughout the South West LSIPs were also shared by employers in Dorset. A number of key roles are in high demand, particularly different types of care workers and nurses. Across all areas, generic and job-specific IT skills are important. Generic IT skills cover word, excel and emails, while job-specific IT skill examples are related to report documenting, bloodwork, and use of assisted living technology.

Furthermore, interpersonal skills were found to be key across all areas, particularly communication and collaboration. The findings from the Dorset LSIP, however, placed much more significance on the need for people to have abilities in handling difficult conversations with patients and to have strong emotional intelligence and empathy.

Across the Dorset LSIP, there was found to also be a specified need for workers with specific skills in dementia care.

Comparison of challenges facing health and social care businesses

The main commonality found across the Dorset and South West LSIPs is that businesses are facing difficulties in being able to attract and retain people in the

industry, and this is resulting in increased labour shortages impacting key roles. While the South West LSIPs outlined that there were a number of significant barriers to training in the sector, Dorset employers suggested that training courses currently available are unaffordable.

Comparing solutions proposed by employers

Common priority actions found in both Dorset and South West LSIPs was the need for more work experience opportunities for learners and for short, flexible training opportunities to be developed to suit the skill needs of employers. Additionally, employers across all LSIPs felt a need for more awareness and guidance on accessing skill and training provision in the area.

Dorset LSIP further outlined the importance of non-technical skills development in the priority actions, along with a need for tailored leadership and management roles for the healthcare sector. Additionally, health and social care employers in the Dorset area would like increased accessibility of online learning courses.

The South West LSIPs, however, found more importance in having increased engagement between employers and skills providers in the health and social care sector.

Summary of Comparisons

Cross comparison Table of the Dorset and South West LSIPs for the Health and Social Care Sector

Dorset LSIP findings	South West LSIP Findings
Skill Needs • Key roles are in demand (Health care support workers, care assistants, and nurses) • Interpersonal skills (Communication, abilities to handle difficult communications, empathy) • Core digital and IT skills (Word, Excel, Email) • Job-specific digital and IT skills (record management, medical technology, assisted living technology) • English skills • Person-centred care • Dementia care is in high demand • Leadership and management skills	**Skill Needs** • Key roles are in demand (care workers, nurses, midwives, home carers and domiciliary carers) • Employability skills are important (communication, motivation, teamwork, leadership, organisation) • Core digital and IT skills • Job-specific digital and IT skills
Challenges • Difficulties in finding enough people to fill roles and retaining them	**Challenges** • Difficulties in retaining and attracting people into roles

• Affordability of courses • Difficulties in developing non-technical skills on the job	• The health and social care sector suffers from low pay • Too many barriers to training
Employer Solutions • A need to develop non-technical interpersonal skills on courses • A need for accessible online learning • Promote awareness of the availability of training and apprenticeships • A need for work experience opportunities on courses • Tailored leadership and management training • Develop short upskilling and training programmes for specific skill needs • Promote adult education courses	**Employer Solutions** • Develop improved engagement between employers and providers. • Provide employers with guidance and support on using training and apprenticeship systems • Provide further avenues for work placements on courses • Develop flexible training courses to suit employer needs.