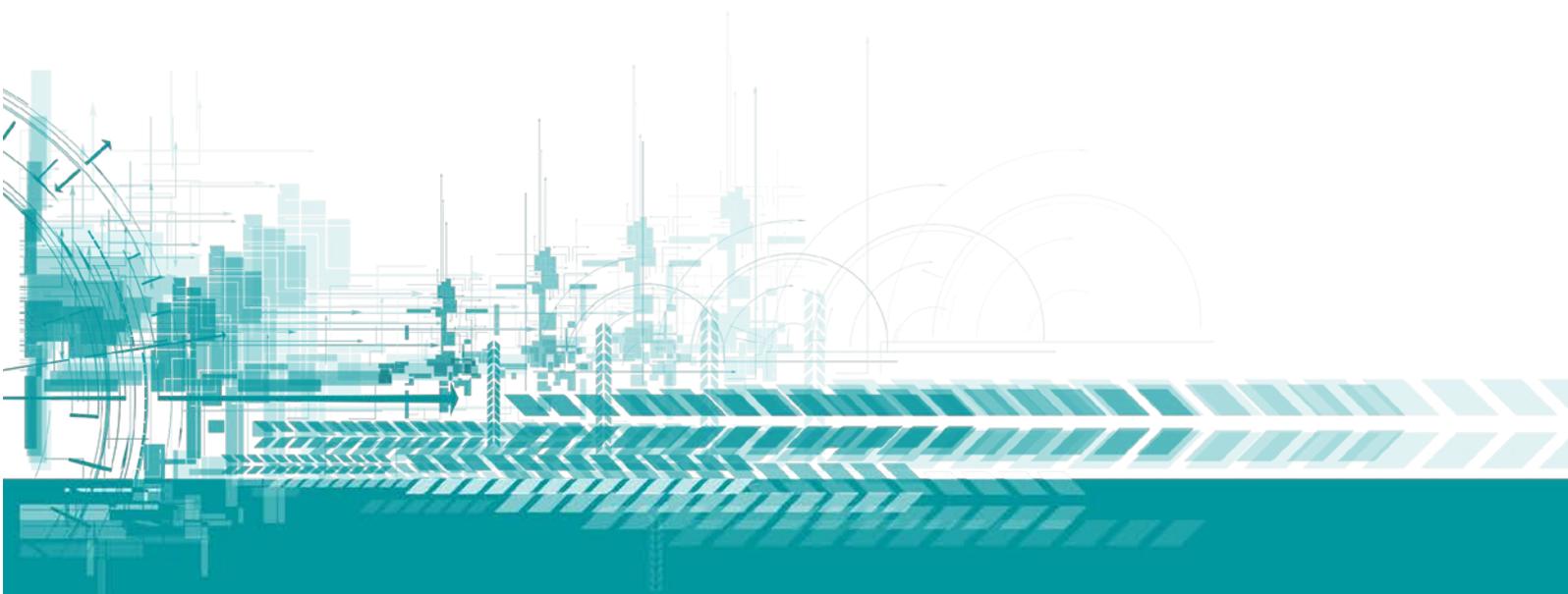


GROWING PEOPLE

SEMLEP Skills Plan

November 2017



SEMLEP

South East Midlands
Local Enterprise Partnership

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GROWING PEOPLE: KEY AMBITIONS

- > To inform through employer sector driven labour market information (LMI)
- > To address discrepancies between the skills and attainment needed by employers and those held by young people
- > To address skills gaps between those held by employees and those required by employers
- > Enable people into employment and those within employment to progress

1. Introduction

The **SEMLEP 'Growing People'** plan is a cohesive strategic plan for lifelong skills development working with businesses, organisations, educators, agencies and local authority partners from the latter years of primary education, through all phases and pathways of education and employment, building a talent pipeline and unlocking the potential of all people including those within and seeking employment.

We currently have four skill related challenges affecting the economies nationally and within the SEMLEP area;

- > Skills gap – a shortage and mismatch of skilled people needed by employers in growth sectors. The gap is widening with an ageing population.
- > Ageing population – The proportion of the working age population is predicted to increase over the next 20 years but this will not keep pace with the net job growth. There will be a significant increase in those over 50 who will require personal skill development and some re-skilling to ensure they are retained in the workforce.



- > Digital – the growth of the digital tech sector and the increasing pace of the introduction of the use of digital technology in other sectors will continuously have an impact on the way we work and job roles. This digital revolution offers opportunity for those with digital, creative and technical skills and will increase demands for resilience, up-skilling and re-skilling.
- > BREXIT – whilst no definitive understanding of the impact on migration patterns is known, the availability of a workforce from the EU is already seeing a reduction. This trend and any subsequent movement restrictions will more than likely result in labour shortages in some sectors and across all skill levels.

Skills and attainment levels have a social impact. Skilled employment leads to prosperity and financial security for individuals, families and communities, while unskilled employment often results in the opposite. Not providing and making people aware of opportunities to gain the skills, knowledge and attitudes needed for the world of work represents a waste of potential and the life chances which parents, carers, teachers and organisations have worked so hard to provide.

The labour market is constantly changing placing demands on people to adapt, be agile and either have skills and/or experience or have the opportunity, and be capable of, obtaining them. Skills development is not the sole responsibility of educators but a combination of employers, individuals, education and training providers working together.

1.1 What trends are predicted for the future?

From reports, both national and local, and consultation with businesses within the South-East Midlands, the trends we expect to see within the future workforce are:

- > The workforce will have an older demographic, with women playing a stronger role
- > As workforces continue to reduce to a minimum with flexible staff to cover shortfalls, fewer employees will have long-term contracts

Those with low skills are at risk with the drive for flexibility and cost reduction

- > Traditional jobs which have occupied the middle skills band are declining due to changes driven by leaner management, technology and globalisation. There are roles emerging but these will have different entry routes and skill requirements and will carry more responsibility for tasks and processes
- > Digital and technological development is likely to continue to increase the flexibility that employers demand from their employees
- > Employees will be expected to be responsible for skills development
- > Self-management, alongside core competencies will be essential
- > Resilience and the ability to embrace change is important
- > Young people will be competing for jobs with those that stay in employment longer

The future responsibility for our stakeholders can be defined as:

Employers

- > Leadership for developing the attainment, pathways, experience and skills needed for business to succeed and grow
- > The capability to manage skills and talent across the business

- > Be forward thinking, working with partners to develop a talent pipeline of young people ready for work

People

- > Take greater personal responsibility for acquiring and updating skills and competencies
- > Be open minded to new technology, ways of learning and change
- > Capture evidence of attainment, experience and skills development

Educators and Training Providers

- > Work more closely with employers to ensure provision and content meets their needs and to keep informed of developments within the labour market and sectors
- > Understand the need and adapt to disruption in terms of technology and funding
- > Ensure provision is accessible and understood by employers and people

The role of SEMLEP is to facilitate two-way dialogue, build capacity, inform stakeholders, produce resources and add value, working with and taking advantage of national initiatives and through working with our partners.



1.2 Digital Technology

The development and application of digital technology is and will continue to have a disruptive impact within businesses and the way people work.

Digital technology businesses are one of the fastest growing sectors in the UK. The economic contribution of a digital worker is twice that of a non-digital worker with digital salaries averaging 44% higher than non-digital ⁽⁴⁰⁾.

The sector is deliberately not shown as a separate group as part of this plan as it is a vital integral element within the SEMLEP growth sectors (fig. 1.1), examples being robotics and mechatronics (Advanced Manufacturing), intelligent mobility (High Performance Technology), automation and process control (Logistics) and media (Creative and Cultural). Fields such as cyber security and data analytics are important to all sectors.

TRANSFORMATIONAL FOR GROWTH



High-Performance
Technology



Advanced
Manufacturing



Logistics &
Supply Chain



Cultural &
Creative

KEY SECTORS WITH GROWTH AND/OR HIGH REPLACEMENT NEED

Health/Social Care



Education



Accommodation/Food



Retail/Wholesale



Business &
Financial Services



Construction



Fig 1.1 - SEMLEP Growth Sectors

Our business surveys show there is a shortage of skills in the digital market with 'Advanced IT' consistently being referred to in all sectors and geographies. This is mirrored in the UK with 50% of digital businesses highlighting a shortage of highly skilled people and 25% stating sourcing people was a 'major challenge' ⁽⁴⁰⁾.

This plan includes initiatives to address the under representation of women within digital technology and exploiting the potential of digital apprenticeships, internships and digital T-Levels, inspiring young people to enter the sectors with need through labour market information, relevant provision with business engagement.

1.3 Growing People

Growing People will be sector and employer driven, evidence and forecast based, with contributions from key stakeholders including businesses, local authorities, schools, universities, further education colleges, agencies, the third sector and training providers.

The SEMLEP Growing People plan will:

- > Make young people aware of the world of work, the importance of work and the benefits to health and wellbeing
- > Inspire young people to seek careers in sectors with growth and/or need and demonstrate the relevance of school curriculum and attainment to work
- > Raise the aspirations of young people and instil a 'can do', enterprising attitude
- > Inform people of the opportunities each sector within SEM presents, the careers available now and in the future, the educational, vocational and training pathways available, the skills and attitudes required by employers
- > Develop levels of basic literacy and numeracy
- > Develop core competencies for life and work
- > Encourage creativity
- > Develop key employability skills sought by employers
- > Promote continuous personal development of people in employment
- > Provide awareness of provision and opportunities for people and organisations
- > Ensure relevant provision capacity exists for skills development, education and training at the right time and in the right geographical locations
- > Facilitate targeted relevant provision to enable people from disadvantaged groups into sustainable employment
- > Provide awareness of provision, employer needs and opportunities for people and organisations to develop skills to progress within, re-engage or start a career
- > To ensure sustainable employment through unlocking the potential of the existing workforce, raising the skill levels of those currently at a low skills level
- > Be demand-driven for skills and employment initiatives that will help address current and future labour market challenges and opportunities

For the SEMLEP stakeholders, Growing People will:

- > Underpin the SEMLEP Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) contributing to 'Growing Places' and 'Growing Businesses'
- > Contribute to, utilise and help facilitate national plans for careers and education within the South-East Midlands
- > Support Local Authority employment, education and skills strategies
 - Providing opportunities for efficiency through working together, i.e. adding value
 - Building relevant, focused sustainable capacity with funding support
 - Facilitate activity and resources to provide inspiration and promote aspirations to raise attainment and employability skills levels
 - Aligning national initiatives with local need
 - Maximising impact through best practice and innovation
- > Embrace what is working, capture and share best practice, avoid duplication



- > Facilitate clear, simple communications and dialogue between stakeholders
- > Ensure ease of access for resource and information for stakeholders
- > Incorporate flexibility in response to feedback and changes within the economy
- > Have success measured against relevant performance indicators and demonstrate impact.

In the past skills development and labour market information for young people (5-19) and adults (+19) has been facilitated through different channels, with differing funding streams, Government departmental responsibility, with no interface across the stages that the individuals and cohorts were at, being either in full time education, NEET or in employment. Although there is some best practice and proactive activity, the emphasis tended to be reactive, with skills development and NEET prevention targeted at the latter phases of education and little focus on early intervention in schools.

The Growing People plan (see fig. 1.2 overleaf) embeds employer engagement and the use of digital labour market information and comprises the phases:

- **Aware (age 9-12)**
Introduce the world of work in the South-East Midlands, nationally and globally, the benefits it offers, the importance of education and introduce the need for the development of skills and competencies
- **Inspire, Aspire and Inform (11-16)**
Showcase career opportunities in sectors including job types, earning potential, local company profiles, pathways for entry and where to study, relevance of competencies to sector and employer needs. Inspire young people and raise aspirations through role models, talks, site visits and mentoring.
- **Develop basic numeracy and literacy (9-14)**
Support school work and activity with employer engagement to highlight relevancy of subjects for future life. Use financial capability to boost numeracy.
- **Develop Competencies (14-19)**
Develop core competencies, sometimes referred to as 'life', 'soft' or 'transferable' skills through embedding their use within curriculum and subjects, work experience, enterprise activities, extra-curricular activities including volunteering
- **Develop Key Employability Skills (+16)**
Develop through vocational and technical education, apprenticeships, traineeships and study programme. For more academic pathways develop through work experience, internships and industrial placements.
- **Continuous Development and Engagement (+19)**
For those in employment, seeking employment or enabling those with barriers to overcome. Includes re-skilling, up-skilling and the development of managerial/leadership skills.

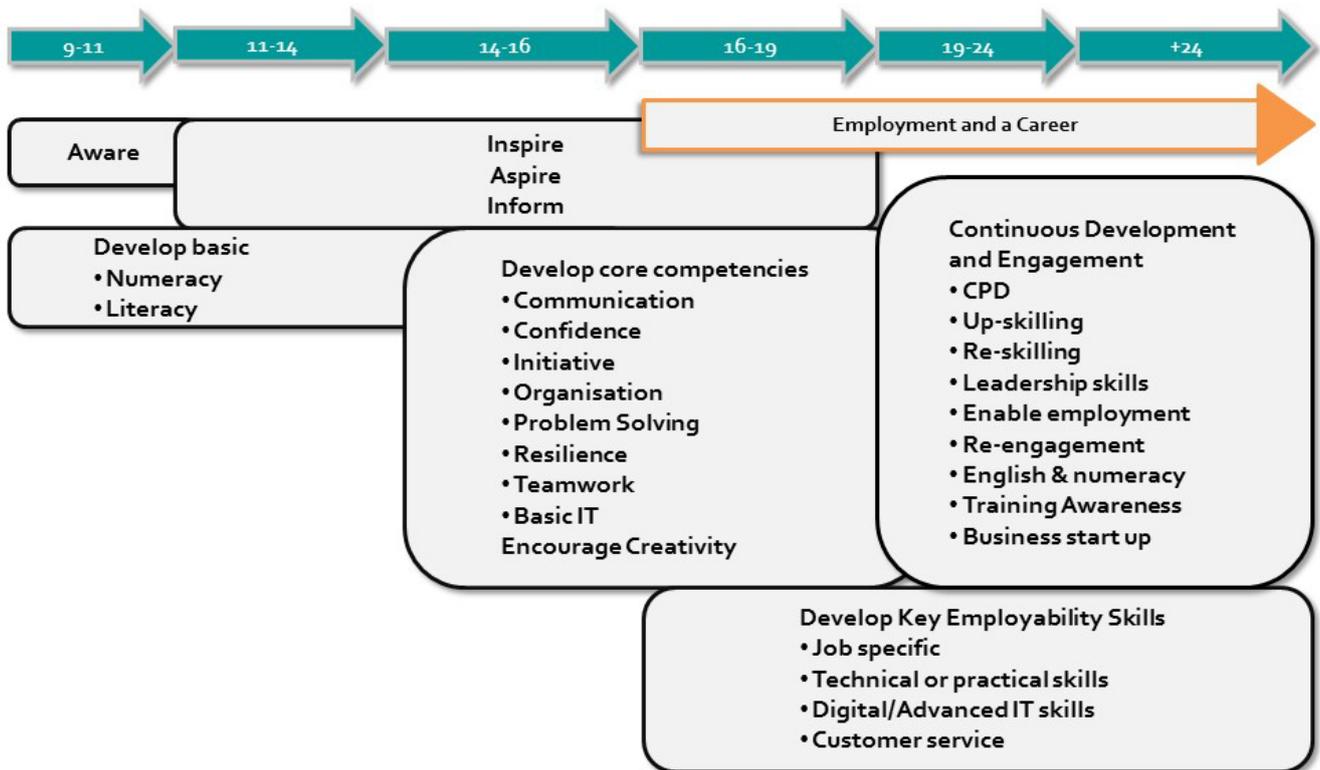
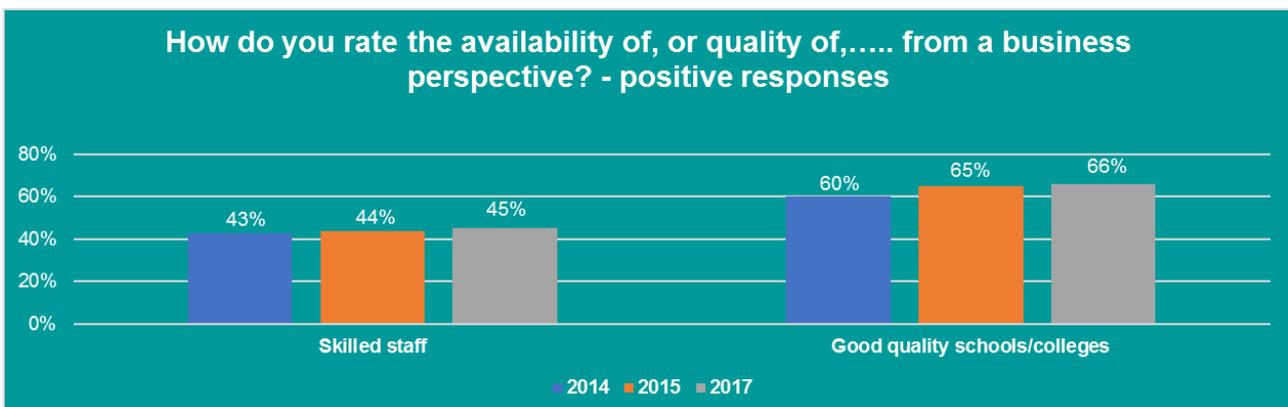


Fig 1.2 - SEMLEP Lifelong Skills Development

The lifelong learning and development progression element of the skills plan has been developed to be flexible, progressive and accessible from any point and will be supported by labour market information at all stages.

The South-East Midlands is rated highly and the rating is improving in terms of a skilled workforce and 'good quality' education options ⁽⁴²⁾.

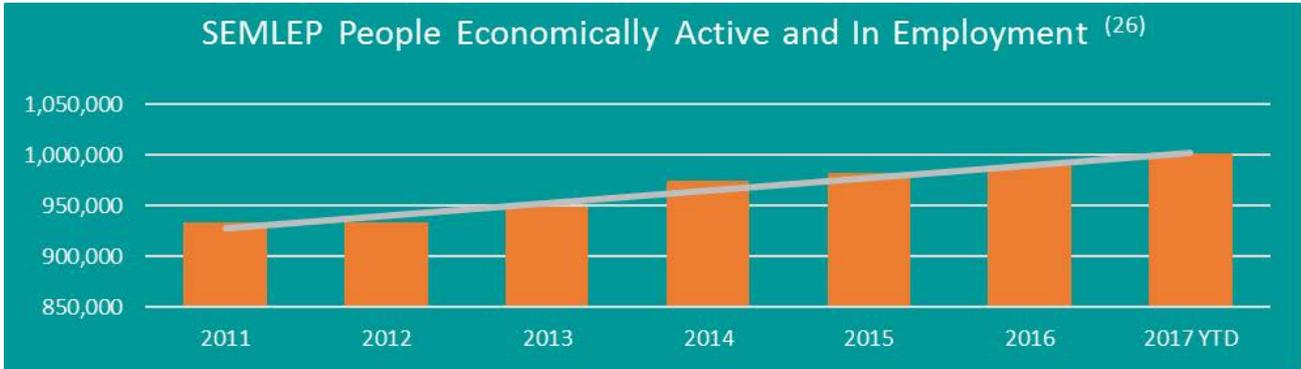


To ensure the South-East Midlands continues to be a centre of opportunity for individuals and businesses, Growing People will facilitate alignment of provision, facilities and capacity to sector and employer needs.

2. Informing through employer sector driven labour market information

2.1 Current Status and Challenges

2.1.1 SEM Employment and Skills Overview Dashboard



South East Midlands people in employment by sector 2015 ⁽²⁾

Employment and High GVA Growth		Employment and GVA Growth		Employment Growth	
High Performance Technology	67,000	Retail and Wholesale	163,000	Administrative and Support Services	90,000
Advanced Manufacturing	87,000	Health and Social Care	96,000	Other Service Activities	23,000
Cultural and Creative	69,000	Education	79,000		
Logistics	63,000	Business and Finance	68,000		
		Construction	39,000		



Highest proportion of occupations by skill level vs local authority working age population ⁽⁴⁾

Professional, Skilled Trades
Aylesbury Vale, Bedford, Central Bedfordshire, Kettering, South Northamptonshire
Skilled
Aylesbury Vale, Corby, Kettering, Luton, Milton Keynes, Northampton, Wellingborough
Lower Skilled
Luton, Corby

Jobs per resident population aged 16-64 ⁽⁵⁾

SEMLEP	England	Range within SEM	
		From	To
0.82	0.84	Milton Keynes (1.09) Northampton (0.99) Cherwell (0.89) Daventry (0.87)	Luton (0.71) South Northamptonshire (0.71) Central Bedfordshire (0.64) East Northamptonshire (0.62)

2.1.2 SEM Labour Market Information (LMI)

- > The labour market information about careers is fragmented with many types of information services to help people make choices of jobs, careers, qualifications or educational institutions. These services tend not to engage with 'trusted' sources such as parents, teachers, agencies or career guidance professionals and does not reflect the needs of the local labour market.
- > Young people find making career choices hard with many options and a lack of ways to make comparisons, prompting disengagement or fixation on one option too early. They find it challenging to answer fundamental questions about what are the opportunities and possible careers available and what pathways can be taken to get there.
- > The ability of careers guidance professionals to provide quality advice for people depends on knowledge of and access to quality resources and information
- > Some sectors and job roles suffer from low applicant rates because of knowledge of their existence or preconceived ideas about job and career opportunities either through misunderstanding and/or misrepresentation through media, peers or parents/carers.
- > Whilst information and data has been collated on skills and competency needs for sectors at a top level, further detail is required by stakeholders to inform provision and content.
- > 79% of the people working within, reside in the SEMLEP area. Only 5% commute to London. Understanding local employers' needs is directly relevant to labour market information for people living and working in the South-East Midlands (6).

2.2 Future Opportunities

Quality, evidenced and focused Labour Market Information (LMI) will:

- > Allow individuals to make more informed decisions about career options and pathways, will raise levels of engagement and inform choice, increase inspiration and desire to know more, understand what different jobs or educational pathways will be like. This will be coupled with employer encounters as sources of inspiration
- > Reduce the 'cognitive burden' of choices with more personalised information with a set of options to choose between and not ruling out whole other areas of potential
- > Provide earnings potential and employment rates based on pathways and occupations
- > Drive awareness of all pathway options
- > Focus on the moments of choice for individuals (8)
- > Inform stakeholders of opportunities within sectors and skills/attainment needed
- > Guide SEMLEP, local authorities, educational establishments and training providers to plan for and create capacity, in the right locations, with the right types of provision ensuring the development of skills and attainment to meet employer's needs



- > Demonstrate the qualification levels, skills pool and talent pipeline in SEM
- > Provide data for comparison and measurement of impact of skills initiatives and activities

2.3 SEMLEP's Role

Three actions will contribute in delivering employer and sector driven labour market information.

1. The generation, collation and interpretation of LMI including skills needs and attainment pathways, vacancies and trends by sector and geography
2. Relevant communication content and channels of LMI for use by individuals, employers, training providers, funders, local authorities and agencies
3. Regular updates with a timetabling of updating, feedback and review of LMI

2.3.1 The generation, collation and interpretation of LMI including skills needs and attainment pathways, vacancies and trends by sector and geography

The LMI will include descriptive data and labour market intelligence from consultation, analysis and research. To ensure the LMI content is current and relevant to the growth sectors and local areas, engagement of stakeholders is essential and SEMLEP will:

- > Engage with businesses via SEMLEP sector working groups, sector bodies and organisations, local authority employer groups and business network organisations
- > Facilitate and host SEMLEP Skills Forums for training providers and the voluntary sector
- > Facilitate and host Further Education South-East Midlands (FuSE) operational working groups for Further Education and Sixth Form Colleges
- > Facilitate and host South-East Midlands Universities (SEMU) working groups
- > Facilitate and host Careers and Enterprise Programme networks for schools
- > Ensure dialogue is two-way to ensure information is verified and formats and resources fit for purpose, accurate and relevant (fig. 2.1).

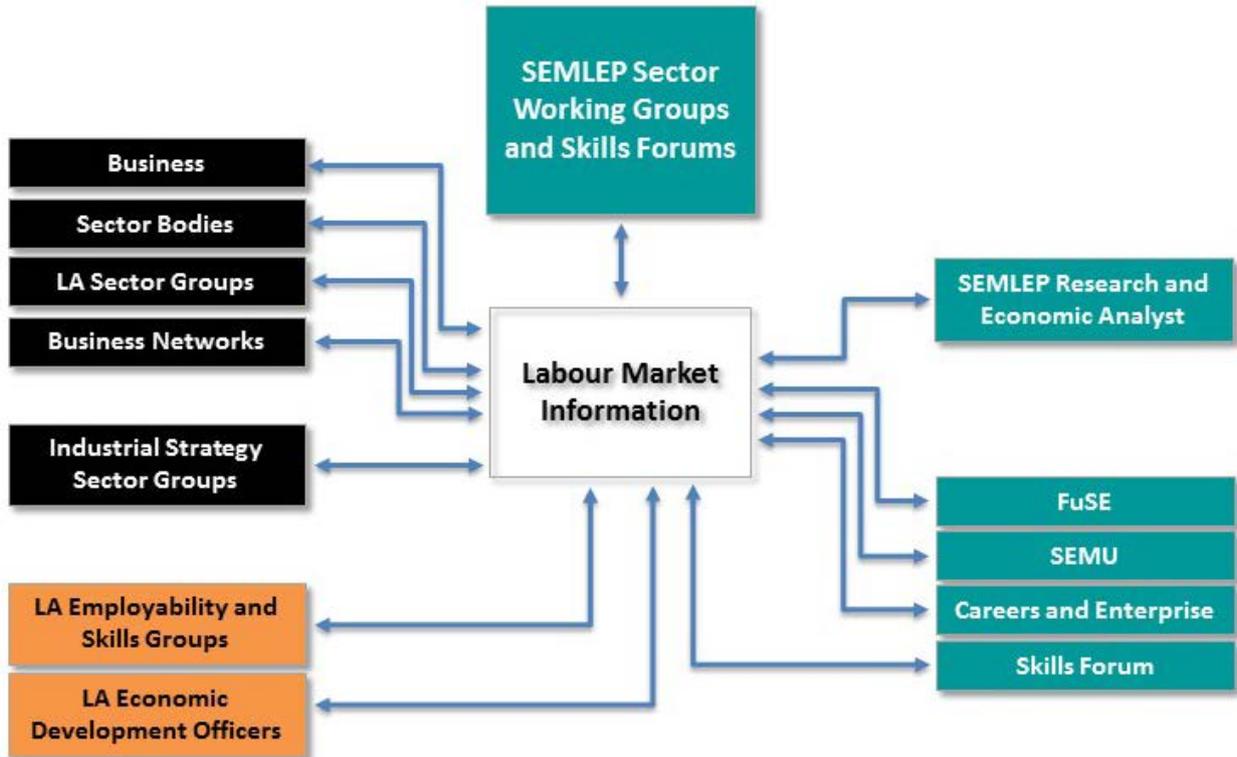


Fig. 2.1 – Stakeholder informing LMI through two-way dialogue

In addition, SEMLEP will commission and collate research and data from sources such as:

- > Research reports including business surveys, trust reports, business networks
- > Statistical sources such as Datacube, Nomis, School Performance Tables, Insight, etc.
- > National bodies, sector representatives and government departments
- > SEMLEP CRM system and activity through growth hubs

To further improve understanding and two-way dialogue between business, education and training providers it is proposed that each growth sector be represented by Sector Skills Forums at an operational level to understand detailed needs in terms of skills and attainment (fig. 2.2). Should an equivalent group already exist, then SEMLEP will contribute to the existing group.



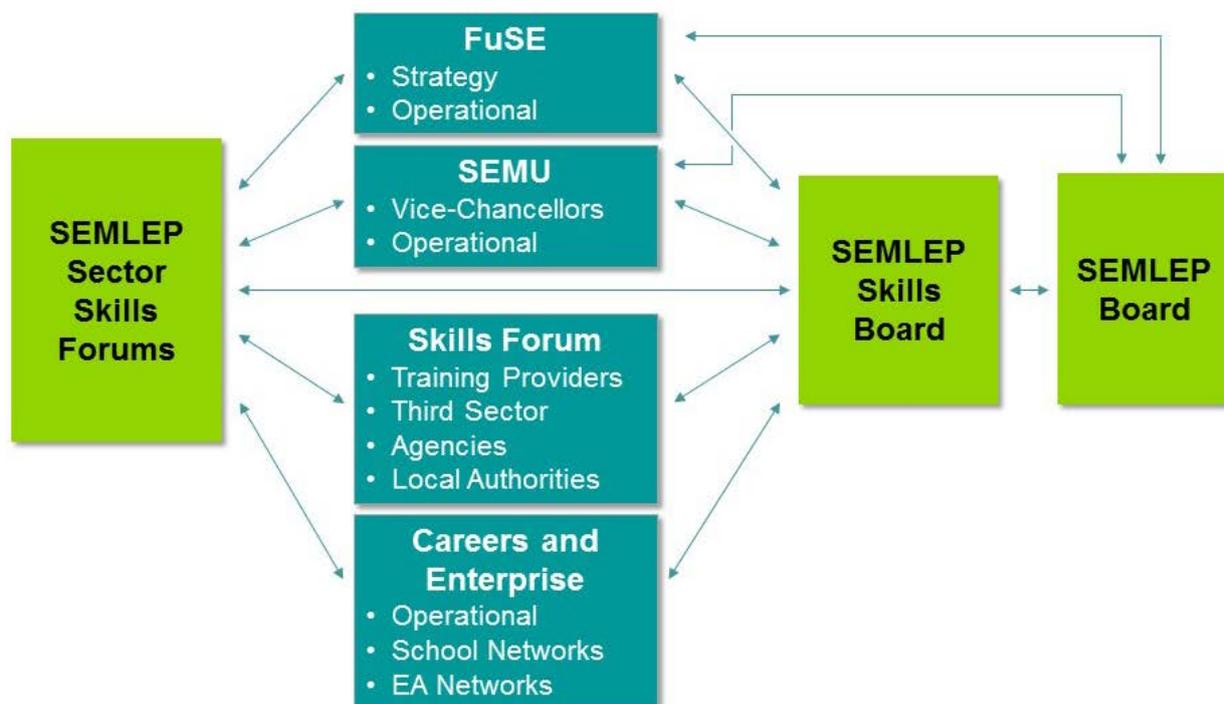


Fig. 2.2 – Developing understanding between sectors and educators and trainers through sector skills forums and representation in sector working groups.

2.3.2 Relevant communication, content and channels of LMI

The LMI will be made available to all stakeholders digitally with depth of content defined by the end user age groups across the phases outlined in fig.1.2:

- > Ages 9-12 - infographic based overview of local economy for young people and parents
- > Ages 12-18 - sector based and including definitions, trends and opportunity, job types, earning potential, local company profiles, pathways and where to study, skills and competencies needs of employers
- > Ages +18 – As above but aimed for use by agencies and training providers with relevant pathways for entry and where to study or acquire training
- > The raw data including the evidence base will be available for use by partners (fig. 2.3)

Education Phase	Primary	Secondary	Further Education and Sixth Form	Higher Education and Adult
Age Range	9-11	11-16	16-18	18+
For use by schools, colleges, training providers, local authorities, agencies End users - Individuals - Parents and carers	LMI introduction infographic based outlining the local economy and sector focus	Sector themed LMI digital, sector based including definitions, opportunity, job types, earning potential, local company profiles, pathways for entry and where to study, relevance of competencies to sector and employer needs	Sector themed LMI aimed at HE, agencies and training providers, sector based including definitions of sectors, where opportunities will be, job types, earning potential, local company profiles, pathways for entry and where to study	
Available to partners	Detailed LMI information with evidence base			

Fig. 2.3 – LMI types and target cohorts

For individuals and organisations to engage with the information the LMI must:

- > Use appropriate language and imagery for target age group and cohort to use materials
- > Avoid assumptions of the knowledge of the user
- > Be of a quality, evidence based, employer and sector driven and have relevant content
- > Use sources that can be renewed over time

To make the LMI accessible, flexible and sustainable the LMI will:

- > Use digital formats with minimised download sizes
- > Be accessible via relevant media such as apps, social media and websites
- > Include presentation versions of the LMI for use by partners
- > Include an option for SEMLEP partners to add their branding to LMI
- > Introduce a Skills Newsletter for partners. Schools will continue to be informed by the Careers and Enterprise Programme monthly newsletter.

2.3.3 Regular updates and timetabling of updating, feedback and review of LMI

The LMI will be updated annually where data is available and made available on a central portal to all partners with lists of content, type, purpose and notes of updates circulated.

Sector and employer themed content will be reviewed and agreed with SEMLEP Sector Groups.



2.4 Summary of Activity

- > Introduce governance of plan through a new Skills Board
- > Refresh terms of reference for Skills Forums and introduce FuSE working group
- > Introduce Sector Skills Forums
- > Continue to grow the Careers and Enterprise Company programme networks
- > Create a specification for format and content for LMI resources
- > Produce digital LMI at 3 levels
- > Produce business engagement data for schools/colleges including maps and lists of businesses surrounding the establishment
- > Introduce portal to access LMI raw data for partners
- > Introduce a SEMLEP Skills Newsletter
- > Create and introduce an app to access LMI information
- > Create and publish timetable for launch of LMI by sector and updating of information

3. To address discrepancies between the skills and attainment needed by employers and those held by young people

3.1 Current Status and Challenges

3.1.1. SEM Employer Skills Needs and Vacancies Overview Dashboard

SEMLEP analysis skills required by employers ⁽¹¹⁾ ⁽⁴²⁾	
Key employability skills	Those specific to a job, technical and practical skills, digital/advanced IT and customer service
Core competencies	Communication, confidence, initiative, planning and organisational, problem solving, resilience, teamwork and basic IT (spreadsheets, word processing)
Basic skills	Literacy, numeracy and English
Main skill requirements for recruiting in growth sectors ⁽¹¹⁾ ⁽⁴²⁾	
Job specific, technical and practical skills, digital/advanced IT, sales and marketing, core competencies, managerial	
Main skills needed for recruiting within local authority area ⁽¹¹⁾	
Technical and practical, job specific	All
Communication	Aylesbury Vale, Central Bedfordshire, Kettering, Luton
Digital/Advanced IT	Bedford, Northampton
Customer service	Cherwell, South Northamptonshire
English for speakers of other languages	Bedford
Sectors reporting the most difficulty in filling vacancies ⁽⁴²⁾	Occupations currently with most difficulty in filling vacancies ⁽⁴²⁾
Retail and Wholesale Construction Accommodation and Food Business and Financial Manufacturing, High Performance Technology	Skilled Professional, Skilled Trades Technical
Employers view on school leavers preparation for work when recruited for first time jobs ⁽¹²⁾	Percentage of employers' main reasons why skills difficult to obtain when recruiting ⁽⁴²⁾
16-year-old - 38% poorly/very poorly prepared 17/18 - 31% poorly/very poorly prepared	39% low quantity, 33% low quality applicants, lack of work ready education leavers, school 12%, FE 11%, HE 8%



Locally:

- > 23% of businesses have had at least one that was difficult to fill (42) (18% in 2015)
- > Employers state the key factors in filling these vacancies is not having applicants with the required skills (53%), a small number of applicants (25%) or applicants lacking the required attitude, motivation or personality (24%) (42)

There is a need to ensure careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) for young people is relevant to the opportunities and needs within the labour market.

3.1.2 Qualifications and attainment levels

Currently there are number of pathways to gain vocational and academic attainment ⁽¹³⁾, the most common types of attainment alongside the academic pathways being Traineeships, Apprenticeships, Study Programme, and vocational qualifications. Employers ⁽⁹⁾ state that all qualifications are valued (45%), academic/vocational (27%), academic only (19%).

Overall the SEM state funded secondary schools' performance matches that for the average for England at Key Stage 4 (up to 16, traditionally GCSE, level 2) and Key Stage 5 (16-19).

Averages for state funded schools performance by local authority area Key Stage 4 ⁽¹⁴⁾		
	Higher	Lower
Pupils awarded grade C+ English & Maths GCSE	Aylesbury Vale, Central Bedfordshire, South Northamptonshire	Bedford, Corby, Daventry, East Northamptonshire, Kettering, Luton, Milton Keynes, Wellingborough
Entering sciences at KS4	Aylesbury Vale, Central Bedfordshire, Cherwell, East Northamptonshire, Milton Keynes, Wellingborough	Corby, Daventry, Kettering, Luton, South Northamptonshire
Staying in education or employment for at least 2 terms after KS4	Aylesbury Vale, Central Bedfordshire, Cherwell, Daventry, South Northamptonshire	Bedford, East Northamptonshire, Kettering, Luton, Northampton

Averages for state funded schools and college performance by local authority area Key Stage 5 ⁽¹⁴⁾		
	Higher	Lower
Academic	Aylesbury Vale, Central Bedfordshire, South Northamptonshire	Cherwell, Kettering, Northampton
Technical * (specialist knowledge for specific careers)	Corby, Daventry, Central Bedfordshire	Kettering, Milton Keynes, Northampton
Applied (broader area)	Corby, Wellingborough	Daventry, Milton Keynes, Northampton, South Northamptonshire

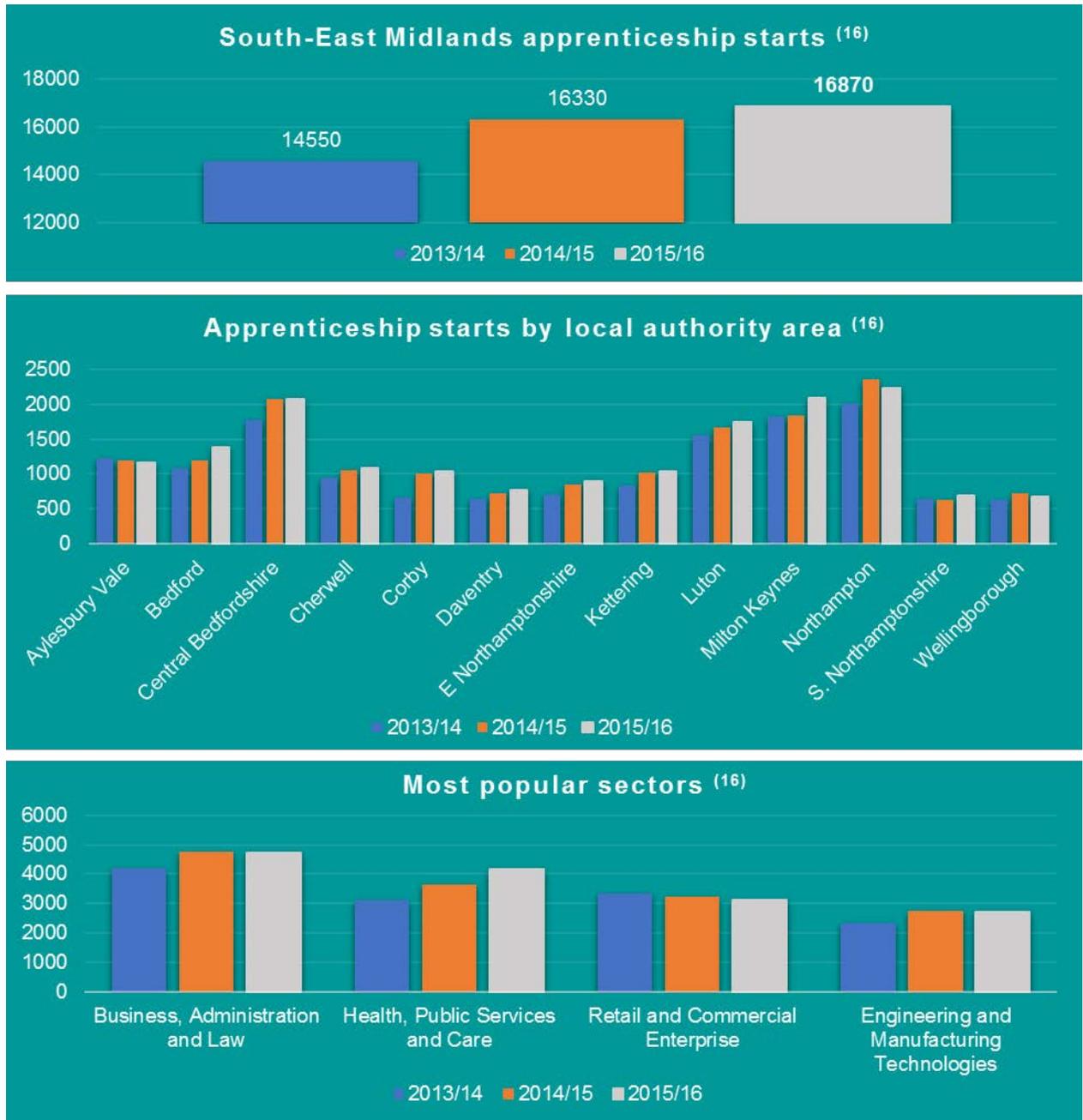
* Samples from Cherwell, East Northamptonshire, South Northamptonshire, Wellingborough too small to report

Average National Vocational Qualification levels, those in employment, 16-64 (%) ⁽¹⁵⁾				
	South East Midlands	England	Higher	Lower
NVQ4+	39.0	43.2	Aylesbury Vale, Bedford, Cherwell	Corby, Daventry, Wellingborough
NVQ3	17.6	17.4	Daventry, East Northamptonshire, South Northamptonshire	Bedford, Corby, Northampton
Trade Apprenticeships	3.8	3.3	Corby, Kettering, Northampton	Cherwell, Luton, Milton Keynes
NVQ2	16.2	14.9	Central Bedfordshire, Kettering, Wellingborough	Aylesbury Vale, Bedford, Corby, Luton
NVQ1	12.2	10.0	Bedford, Corby, Daventry	East Northamptonshire, Kettering
Other qualifications	6.5	6.7	Corby, Daventry, Wellingborough	Central Bedfordshire, Milton Keynes, Northampton, South Northamptonshire
No qualifications	4.7	4.5	Luton, Milton Keynes, Wellingborough	Aylesbury Vale, Central Bedfordshire, Daventry, Kettering



3.1.3 Apprenticeships

The number of apprenticeship starts has increased to 16,870 in 2015/16.



From the SEMLEP Business Survey 2017 ⁽⁴²⁾, 13% of businesses currently have apprentices compared with 9% in 2015 and 36% would consider taking on an apprentice.

Currently businesses within Creative and Cultural (11%), High Performance Technology (11%) and Logistics (7%), are below the SEM average. Advanced Manufacturing is above the average at 22%. Businesses within the sectors above state they would consider taking on an apprentice (46%, 13%, 29% and 41% respectively).

3.1.4 Further Education (FE) and Higher Education (HE)

SEM has a high progression rate for young people post 16 into sixth forms. There are lower than national average progression rates into further and higher education for both post 16 and 18.

Destinations Key Stage 4 (+16) ⁽¹⁴⁾				
	South East Midlands	England	Higher	Lower
Apprenticeships	5%	6%	Central Bedfordshire, Northamptonshire	Aylesbury Vale, Bedford, Luton
Further Education	35%	38%	Cherwell, Northamptonshire	Aylesbury Vale, Luton, Milton Keynes
Sixth Form	55%	52%	Aylesbury Vale, Bedford, Luton, Milton Keynes	Northamptonshire
Employment	3%	3%	Milton Keynes, Northamptonshire	Aylesbury Vale, Bedford, Luton

Destinations Key Stage 5 (+18) ⁽¹⁴⁾				
	South East Midlands	England	Higher	Lower
Apprenticeships	6%	7%	Bedford, Central Bedfordshire, Luton, Northamptonshire	Aylesbury Vale, Cherwell, Milton Keynes
Further Education	13%	14%	Bedford, Northamptonshire	Cherwell, Luton, Milton Keynes
Higher Education	46%	48%	Central Bedfordshire, Luton, Milton Keynes	Bedford, Northamptonshire
Employment	24%	23%	Aylesbury Vale, Bedford, Cherwell, Milton Keynes, Northamptonshire	Central Bedfordshire, Luton

Participation numbers of 16-18-year olds has reduced by 1,150 in line with the population trend. For over 19 the reduction is 13,530 in contrast to the increase in population ⁽¹⁶⁾.

As part of the Area Based Review, SEMLEP commissioned a report ⁽¹⁷⁾ to map the supply and demand for college courses and apprenticeships against 200 technical occupations in response to employer needs. The sectors with the highest 'skill-shortage' vacancies were manufacturing, logistics, wholesale and retail, construction, information and communications, accommodation and food. Specific shortages by occupation and sector are shown in fig. 3.1

Manufacturing	Transport & storage	Wholesale and retail trade	Construction	Information and communications	Accommodation and Food
Engineering and planning/process/production technicians	Skilled drivers	Mechanical technicians and maintenance	Electricians and electronic trades/technicians	IT engineers and technicians	Chefs
Metals, tools and instruments manufacturing	Manufacturing operatives	Manufacturing operatives	Plumbers and pipe fitters	Metals, tools and instruments manufacturing	Catering and bar managers
Electricians and electronic trades/technicians	Engineering and planning/process/production technicians	Accountancy and finance technicians	Carpenters, joiners and craft woodworkers	Manufacturing operatives	Public services associate professionals
Manufacturing operatives	Accountancy and finance technicians	IT engineers and technicians	Bricklayers and masons	Accountancy and finance technicians	Electricians and electronic trades/technicians

Fig. 3.1 – Shortages in technical occupations by sector

Comparing top occupations for job vacancies against the number of completions for FE courses and apprenticeships shows shortages of provision for all sectors ranging from over 3000 in construction to 750 for accommodation and food.

Higher education within SEM includes a broad breadth of opportunities comprising Buckinghamshire New University, The University of Buckingham, University of Northampton, University of Bedfordshire, Cranfield University and The Open University.

SEM University Enrolments 2015/16 ⁽¹⁸⁾		
	Full-time	Part-time
Undergraduates	24,665	5,755
Postgraduates	5,845	6,080
Open University Undergraduates	-	94,900
Open University Postgraduates	250	6,345

Nationally:

- > Businesses currently need and will increase the demand for people with higher-level skills including graduates. The CBI report (9), 29% of businesses have increased their graduate recruitment with only 9% decreasing their intake. This is a positive recruitment trend with the number of larger firms increasing intake at 23%, SME 13%.
- > Sectors increasing intake were Professional Services (31%), Engineering, Science and Hi-Tech (15%), Manufacturing (14%), Retail and Hospitality (13%) and Transport and Distribution (13%).
- > To study the right and relevant subjects at HE, young people need the right guidance at school or college. Businesses within sectors that stressed the importance of the degree subject were Manufacturing (86%), Engineering, Science and Hi-Tech (83%), Retail and Hospitality (56%), Transport and Distribution (56%) and Professional Services (24%).
- > Businesses report (9) the key factors considered when recruiting graduates are attitudes and aptitudes (87%), relevant work experience/industrial placement (67%), degree subject (65%), degree result (55%) and university they attend (13%).
- > Most graduates achieve the work-readiness for businesses. Areas that businesses report that graduates require further support are foreign language skills, business and customer awareness, relevant work experience, self-management, resilience and international cultural awareness.

3.2 Future Opportunities

Projections such as those from UKCES Working Futures ⁽¹⁹⁾ indicate that 85% of the net requirement for job recruitment for the period leading up to 2024 will come from replacement demand, i.e. jobs to replace existing employees through an ageing workforce retiring, movement between jobs, migration, etc.

Their model projects that there will be substantial jobs expansion demand (c.60,000 jobs net, which is a c.7% increase in employment) in the SEMLEP area over the period to 2024, particularly in higher qualified jobs such as managers, business, science, engineering professionals), as well as caring occupations. Demand for administrative/secretarial jobs is projected to decrease over this period.

When replacement demand is combined with the expansion forecasts, the net job requirements are predicted as those shown in fig. 3.3.

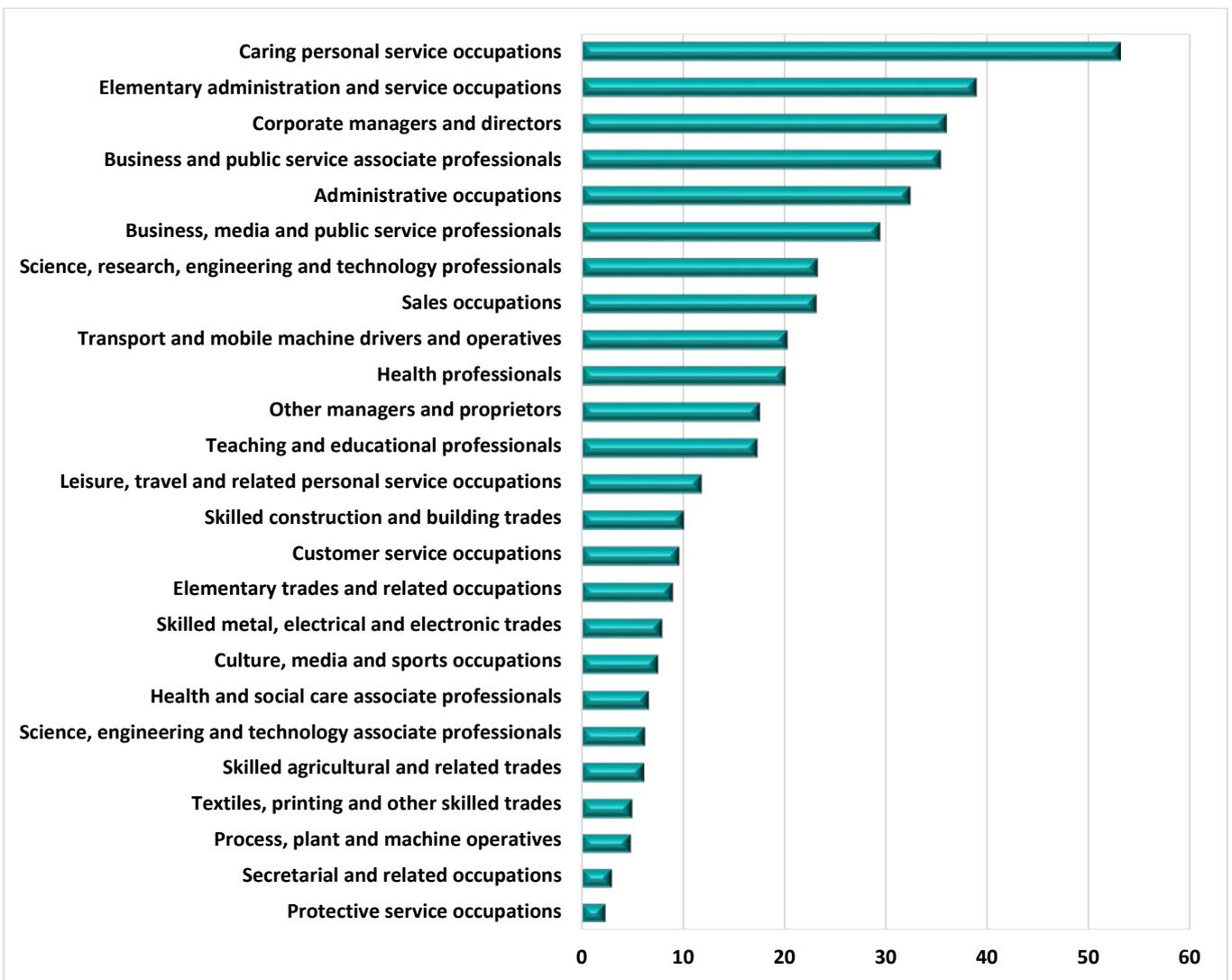


Fig. 3.3 – Projected Net Job Requirements in SEMLEP 2014-2024, '000s, Working Futures.
(NB: these projections have been undertaken across the former SEMLEP boundaries, i.e. excluding East Northants and Wellingborough)

Working Futures ⁽¹⁹⁾ prediction is that the majority (73%) of the future net increase of jobs up to 2024 within the SEMLEP area will require attainment/training/skills acquisition at Levels 2, 3 and 6. Over 65% of the jobs will require a Level 4 qualification or over. The only predicted reduction in demand is for jobs requiring no qualifications.

The CBI ⁽⁹⁾ survey of businesses indicated more job openings for people with higher and intermediate skills levels. Demand for those with low skills is expected to stand still or decline.



There is a growing body of evidence ⁽²⁰⁾ which demonstrates that employer engagement with schools and colleges produces positive outcomes for young people. The CBI ⁽⁹⁾ state that 75% of businesses report that they are willing to play a greater role in supporting careers provision in schools and colleges, most commonly by working with individual schools or colleges by developing general awareness of work up to the age of 14 and awareness of working life from age 14 through engagement with business, better careers advice and placing an emphasis on helping young people with their self-management and personal behavior with more opportunities for work experience .

Only 11% of employers in the SEM offer work inspiration ⁽²¹⁾. 42% currently offer work experience ⁽⁴²⁾ broken down as 14-16-year-old 27%, 17-19 25%, 19-24 15%, Traineeships 7% and internships 6%. Main reasons for not offering work experience include lack of opportunities, lack of time, not understanding the value it offers or knowing how to deliver it.

The Department for Business Innovation and Skills and Department for Education, Post-16 Skills Plan July 2016 ⁽²²⁾ aims to reform the skills system, bringing training for young people and adults in line with the needs of employers. The plan aims to ensure that every young person, after core academic subjects to age 16, is presented with three choices: academic (A-Levels), apprenticeships and technical (T-Levels) based around 15 sectors with integral work placement.

DfE have placed some focus on careers within education including:

- > Placing a duty on schools/colleges to provide independent and impartial careers guidance
- > Funding the work of The Careers and Enterprise Company
- > Campaign to recruit mentors to support and inspire young people who are most at risk
- > The Careers Strategy as part of the Industrial Strategy to be published in late 2017

Data from the ESFA ⁽²³⁾ shows the positive impact for adopting apprenticeships within a business or organisation and 94% of employers consider traineeships an effective way of increasing young people's chances of finding paid jobs and apprenticeships.

The report "Skills shortage nation, the importance of employer commitment to apprenticeships" ⁽¹⁰⁾ provides an indication of the thoughts of levy-paying businesses. 59% of respondents who were planning to recruit over the next 12 months would recruit apprentices compared to 44% who needed to recruit graduates.

The reasons given for recruiting apprentices include filling skills gaps, being able to train them to meet the skills in the business, loyalty and a reduction in staff turnover. Opportunities presented by overcoming challenges include needing employees with more experience, a lack of clarity about the benefits of apprentices, considering the business too small, a lack of time or resources to train apprentices and complexity of the system.

Future capacity and facilities from current capital investment, with employer led curriculum, within Further and Higher education, aligned with growth sectors including:

- > Northampton College, Digital Academy, Daventry Campus
- > Central Bedfordshire College Engineering and Construction Skills Centre
- > Bedford College, Advanced Engineering Centre
- > University of Buckingham, Centre for Medicine
- > Moulton College, Food and Drink Innovation Centre
- > University of Bedfordshire, STEM building
- > University of Northampton, Waterside Campus
- > Cranfield University, Aerospace Integration Research Centre, Multi-User Environment for Autonomous Vehicle Innovation and Digital Aviation Research and Technology Centre

There is a proposal for a new university for Milton Keynes, MK:U, to support key sectors, negate the outflow of students from the city and complement the offering from existing SEM establishments.

There is a growing trend for students studying at HE establishments closer to home or through distance learning for both cost and cultural reasons. This trend will continue with the introduction of Higher and Degree level apprenticeships and offers an opportunity for the SEM universities including the Open University nationally.

3.3 SEMLEP's Role

Business engagement with young people and school/college staff is core to the SEMLEP support to schools and FE Colleges. Employers state that they want to support schools and colleges and through the Growing People activity, we will provide a conduit for relevant, efficient, effective employer engagement both for businesses and educators.

This engagement will be at three levels:

- > Enterprise Advisers, volunteers working with the SEMLEP Enterprise Coordinators to help Senior Leadership Teams (SLT) and careers staff in schools develop and shape their careers and enterprise strategies, increase employer engagement and to draw on their own business experience and local business networks
- > Inspirers, working through focused provision to guide and empower young people to make informed career choices and raise aspirations
- > Informing labour market information as previously described in 2.0.

The SEMLEP team of Enterprise Coordinators will:

- > Encourage all secondary schools and FE colleges to join the programme
- > Gain commitment from representatives from the SLT to support the programme through a school/college owned plan for CEIAG
- > Match, train and introduce an Enterprise Adviser(s)



- > Use networks to make school/college staff and Enterprise Advisers aware of the labour market trends, best practice and evidenced CEIAG activity for inclusion into the school/college plan
- > Help drive employer engagement and support activity with alumni for every school

The resources and provision used and delivered in schools and colleges should be appropriate for the age of the individuals and deliver 5 of the 6 stages of Growing People;

Aware; Aspire, Inspire and Inform; Develop basic literacy and numeracy; Develop competencies, encourage creativity; Develop Key Employability Skills.

It is recognised that the stages will overlap and should be accessible at any point as young people develop at different rates and will benefit from experiences and gain knowledge at different points. Additional advice and support should be tailored to the needs of each young person and a school's careers programme should embed equality and diversity considerations throughout. Every student should have opportunities for guidance interviews with a career adviser trained to an appropriate level, timed to meet their individual needs.

Currently businesses predominately engage with schools through careers fairs and whilst these can be of value, they can be seen to be ineffective especially if it is not delivered as an integral part of a CEIAG plan with the young people prepared in advance and any action thereafter.

Most schools conduct mock interviews and CV or personal statement preparation. Schools should ensure that development of skills is evidenced and extra-curricular activity captured. In addition, careers websites are frequently used and offer some useful support

The type of provision SEMLEP will support will be based upon evidence from The Gatsby Benchmarks ⁽²⁴⁾. Deloitte, commissioned by The Careers and Enterprise Company ⁽²⁵⁾ have investigated the relative impact of differing types of activity and coupled with evidence from SEMLEP schools and businesses, a map of preferred provision against age groups will be used to prioritise provision in schools and colleges (see fig. 3.4).

Whilst recognising that some schools are active with CEIAG and should continue with any activity that is shown to have an impact, we recommend that schools focus on 5 activities:

- > Employer Talks – business breakfasts, assemblies, subject groups, role models for focused cohorts, parent evenings
- > Workplace Visits – small cohorts interested in working in a sector visit a business or organisation facility with a tour, introduction to staff with differing functions and activity. It is our intention to recruit businesses to participate in 'Open Door' weeks where schools can book to visit a site

- > Mentoring – either for individuals or small cohorts of young people. This could include those at risk of disengagement, high achievers, STEM clubs, etc. Evidence shows that mentoring can improve attainment, supporting social mobility and improve life chances
- > Enterprise Activities – quality structured activity can help demonstrate relevance of school subjects but also help develop core competencies and employability skills. Enterprise activity also reduces the fear of failure and offers the experience of resilience. Enterprise programmes can put ‘failure’ in the context of being beneficial, a way of gaining knowledge and experience, developing a ‘can do’ attitude.
- > Work Experience – preferably at year 12 or 13, 1 to 2 weeks within a business or organisation and/or small cohorts at year 10 for those who would benefit most.

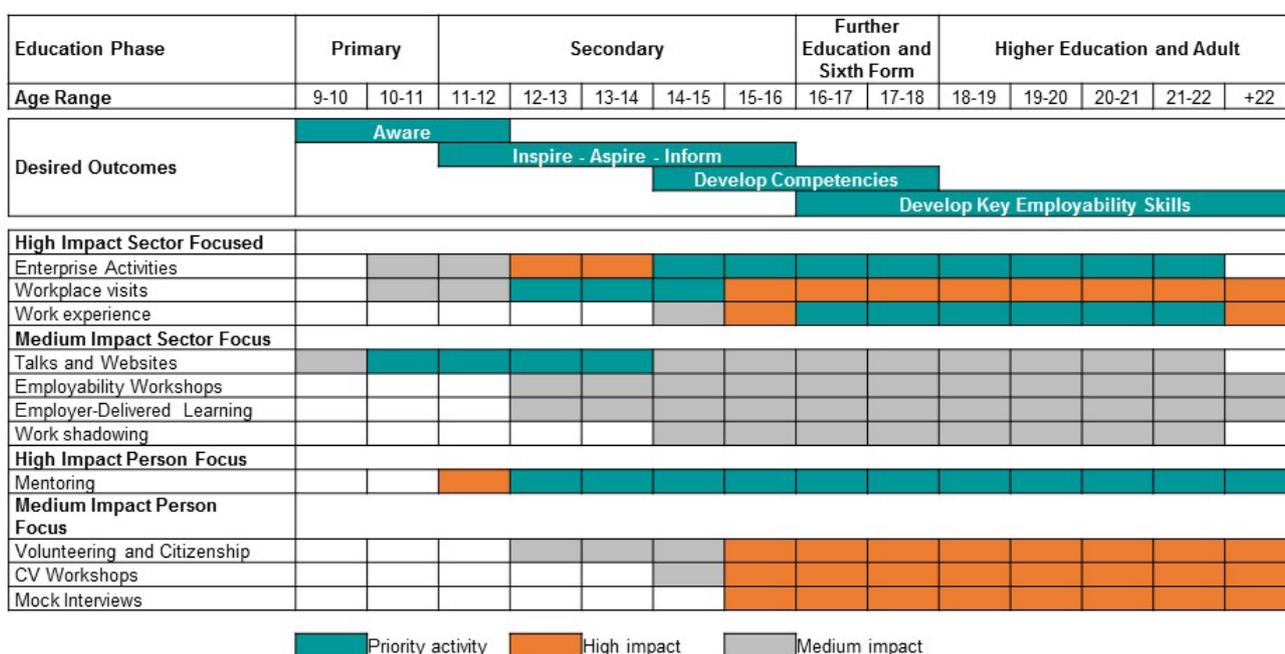
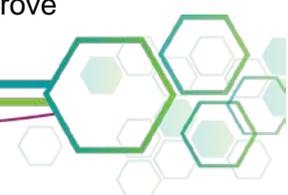


Fig. 3.4 – Focused employer engagement provision

School budgets are limited. By focusing on high impact activity, greater value for money can be assured. Employer talks and workplace visits cost little, if anything and the CEC has funded mentoring activity with 5 organisations within the SEMLEP area and so we will encourage SLT to support financially work experience and enterprise activity. Quality work experience has recently decreased within the South-East Midlands primarily due to the costs of organising and fears around safeguarding around risk assessments, insurance and DBS checks. SEMLEP will promote HSE guidance to reduce the concerns of school staff and SLT, highlight provision to facilitate work experience and encourage businesses to offer work experience for young people aged 16 to19. It will be the choice of the school or college to decide if a third-party checking service is appropriate.

Time is another resource that can limit a school’s participation in planned CEIAG. We will encourage embedding Core Competencies across the school within lessons and subjects, this having the additional benefit of helping explain their relevance and improve attainment.



Teachers report that many providers approach them. We aim to help to provide guidance on what is relevant and effective but not become 'gate keepers'. SEMLEP will place focus on the sectors, collate what provision is available and relevant to the SEM employers needs and create resources to highlight the provision content, outcomes and how they relate to the SEM labour market (fig. 3.5).

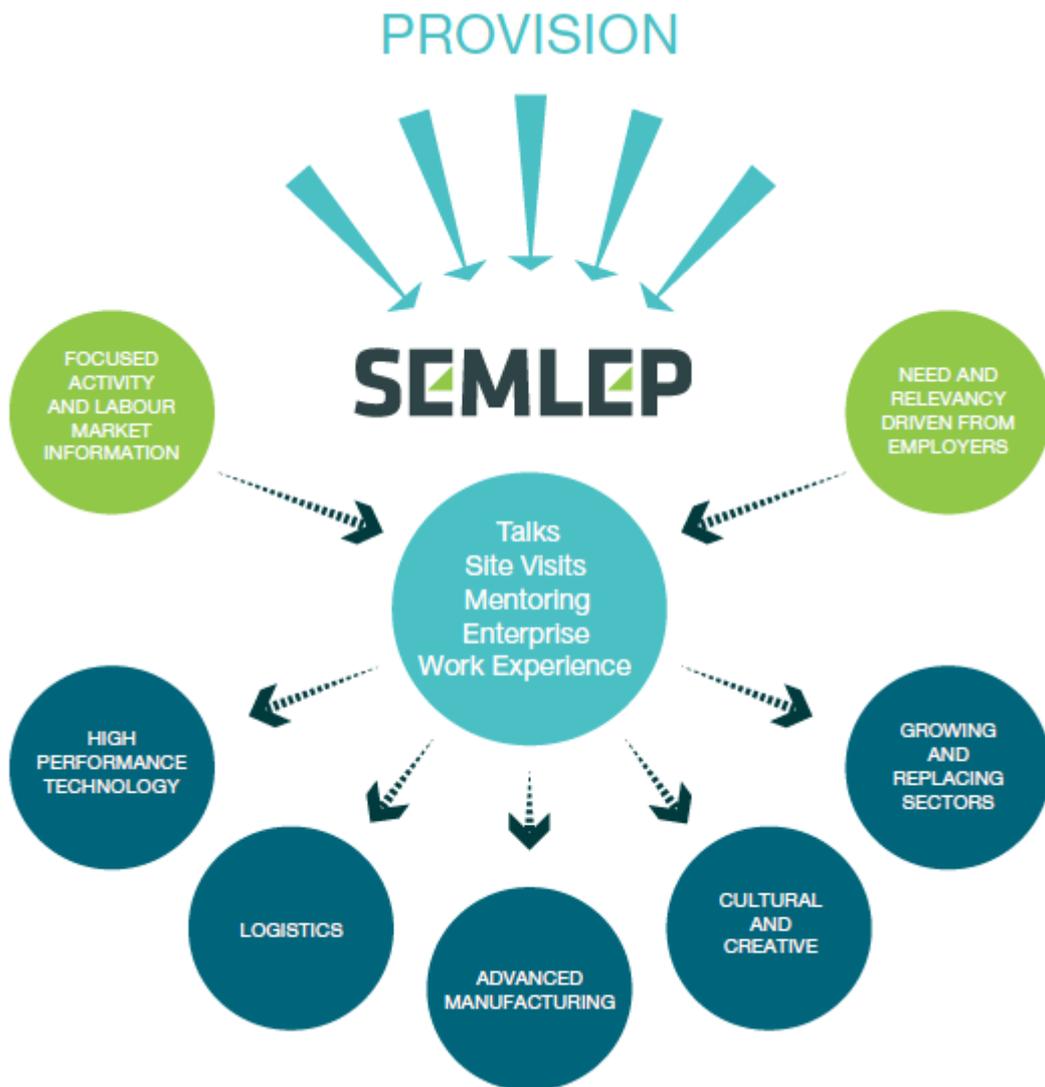


Fig. 3.5 – Focusing on 5 types of employer engagement provision relevant to sectors

The resources will help provide clarity for businesses as to what provision they should engage with in schools.

We will encourage and highlight the benefits of extra-curricular and activities outside of school such as National Citizenship Service, volunteering, Scouts, Guides, STEM clubs, part-time working, etc. in developing skills and competencies.

All pathways to employment and a career should be highlighted to young people and parents/carers. The new LMI outlined in 2.3 will show pathways to the careers within sectors. With the new opportunities and the drive to increase numbers, apprenticeships will require additional focus to help inform and guide both young people, parents/ carers and teachers.

Three actions will contribute in addressing discrepancies between employer skills and attainment needs and those held by young people

1. Build capacity and resource for the delivery of activity that promotes awareness, inspires and raises aspirations towards careers in relevant SEM sectors together with demonstrating attainment pathways options for ages 9 to 16
2. Build capacity for the development of employer need driven competencies and encourage creativity for young people aged 14 to 19
3. Align and build capacity for the development of key employability skills for young people aged 16 to 24 within further and higher education, sixth forms and other education establishments

3.3.1 Build capacity and resource for the delivery of activity that promotes awareness, inspires and raises aspirations towards careers in relevant SEM sectors together with demonstrating attainment pathways options for ages 9 to 16

Addressing 3 elements of the Growing People Plan.

Aware - Ages 9 to 11, years 5 and 6

- > Create and distribute LMI Introduction resources to schools/colleges
- > Offer SEMLEP presentation for middle schools and transition activity in secondary schools to:
 - Build awareness of the SEM labour market and key sectors
 - Demonstrate the benefits of employment
 - Show the relevance of education to work and life
 - Introduce the importance of skills and core competencies
- > Highlight provision with employer engagement driven with evidence of success with preferred provision of talks, introductory enterprise activities and workplace visits
- > Highlight STEM based sector and opportunities, with additional focus for girls (39)

Aspire, Inspire and Inform - Ages 11-16, years 7 to 11

Enterprise Coordinators to encourage all secondary schools and FE colleges to join the programme, follow processes to map, plan and support CEIAG provision and match with an Enterprise Adviser(s).

Through 3 or more employer engagements:

- > Create and distribute Sector Themed LMI resources to schools/colleges
- > Create and distribute LMI resources to providers to:
 - Demonstrate the opportunities within key sectors
 - Explain the importance of skills and attitudes alongside qualifications
 - Make the link between qualifications, preparation for work, earnings and wellbeing
- > Highlight provision aligned with growth sectors, with employer engagement and evidence of success. Preferred provision of employer talks, enterprise activities, workplace visits and mentoring



- > Embed core competency development and CEIAG within faculties and subject delivery
- > Employer talks should:
 - Provide inspiration to young people emphasising the need for a 'can do' attitude
 - Feature relevant role models
- > Mentoring should be used for selected cohorts including those at risk of disengagement
- > Promote all pathways to work including apprenticeships through:
 - Produce and distribute LMI showing pathways including apprenticeships
 - ECs to promote the role of Apprenticeship Champions in each school
 - ECs to offer an introduction to apprenticeships for use in school assemblies
- > Expand and promote the Apprentice Ambassadors
- > Work experience at year 10 and 11 only to be encouraged if of quality, i.e. of benefit to the individual, developing core competencies and employability skills

Develop basic numeracy and literacy - Ages 9-14, years 5 to 9

- > In consultation with schools encourage coordinated employer engagement in English and mathematics to help demonstrate relevance of how they will be used in work and life
- > Promote financial capability for life through highlighting provision with employer engagement and best practice from other schools

3.1.2 Build capacity for the development of employer need driven competencies and encourage creativity for young people aged 14 to 19

Enterprise Coordinators to encourage all secondary schools and FE colleges to join the programme, map, plan and support CEIAG provision and match with an Enterprise Adviser(s).

Activity should include:

- > Create and distribute Sector Themed LMI resources to schools/colleges
- > Create and distribute LMI resources to providers to:
 - Demonstrate the opportunities within key sectors
 - Explain the importance of skills and attitudes alongside qualifications
 - Make the link between qualifications, preparation for work and earnings and wellbeing
- > Align provision with growth sectors, employer engagement and evidence of success. Preferred provision of enterprise activities/competitions, mentoring and work experience
- > Focus on developing core competencies through prioritising enterprise activity and work experience at year 12 and 13 plus extracurricular activities and those outside school
- > Mentoring should be used for selected cohorts

- > Embed use of core competencies within curriculum and highlight relevancy of subjects with employer support
- > Promote all pathways to work including apprenticeships through Apprenticeship Champions, Apprenticeship Ambassadors and delivery of presentations
- > CV and interview/personal statement workshops for every young person
- > Ensure capacity and relevancy of apprenticeships (see 3.3.3)
- > Inform both school staff and employers about new T-Levels when information released

3.3.3 Align and build capacity for the development of key employability skills for young people aged 16 to 24 within further and higher education, sixth forms and other education establishments

- > Create and distribute Sector Themed LMI resources to schools, colleges, universities and training providers
- > Create and distribute LMI resources to providers to:
 - Demonstrate the opportunities within key sectors
 - Explain the importance of skills and attitudes alongside qualifications
 - Make the link between qualifications, preparation for work and earnings and wellbeing
- > Highlight provision aligned with development of core competencies and employability skill development needed within growth sectors, with employer engagement and evidence of success. Preferred provision of structured enterprise activities with competitions and quality work experience, placements, internships and through apprenticeships
- > Focus on developing core competencies together with key employability skills
- > Embed careers activity within faculties/subjects with employer support
- > Promote volunteering opportunities to help develop and evidence core competencies
- > Promote apprenticeships to young people, parents/carers and employers as a way of addressing employer needs through Apprenticeship Champions, Apprenticeship Ambassadors and promotion of local higher and degree level apprenticeships
- > CV and interview/personal statement workshops for every young person
- > Encourage and highlight benefits of entrepreneurship to young people and sign post support for business start up
- > Work with employers to exploit the potential of apprenticeships as part of their training and development strategies at all levels for both levy and non-levy payers through promotion of benefits and case studies and providing clarity of process and sign posting
- > Develop a clear understanding of requirements from employers through Sector Skills Groups for skills and attainment types/levels to ensure capacity and relevancy of apprenticeships, new technical qualifications and higher education attainment through feedback into FuSE and SEMU. This will also support actions from Area Based Review.
- > Support Bedford and Tresham College merger where required
- > Support new and future educational facilities as they come online through employer engagement and promotion to schools and young people



- > Investigate the opportunity of introducing an Institute of Technology (IoT) aimed at delivering higher level technical STEM provision (Levels 3 to 5) and up-skilling and re-skilling. Expected calls from government to be after June 2017.
- > Investigate and drive collaboration for alternative methods of skills/attainment delivery for Digital and advanced IT skills based on best practice and innovation such as École 42 with partners

These actions are to be delivered through the SEMLEP Careers and Enterprise Company Programme, partly funded by the Careers and Enterprise Company for state funded schools including Special Educational Needs, Alternative Provision and Virtual Schools. Independent schools will be supported directly through SEMLEP.

3.4 Summary of Activity

- > Encourage employer engagement within education through;
 - Three levels of engagement, Enterprise Advisers, Inspirers and informing LMI
 - Development of school/college owned plans for CEIAG
 - Focusing on 5 types of provision to reflect SEM labour market and employer/sector needs to provide efficient, effective conduits for businesses with high impact for both attainment and skills
- > Facilitate CPD events and resources for teachers themed on embedding employer engagement and core competencies within curriculum and subjects
- > Facilitate or attend regular existing teacher and Enterprise Adviser network meetings to share best practice and encourage discussion re CEIAG
- > Ensure young people develop the necessary skills, attitudes and knowledge for work and adult life through best practice, evidence based activity and information that:
 - Builds awareness
 - Raises aspirations, inspires and informs
 - Develops basic literacy and numeracy
 - Develops core competencies, encourages creativity
 - Develops key employability skills

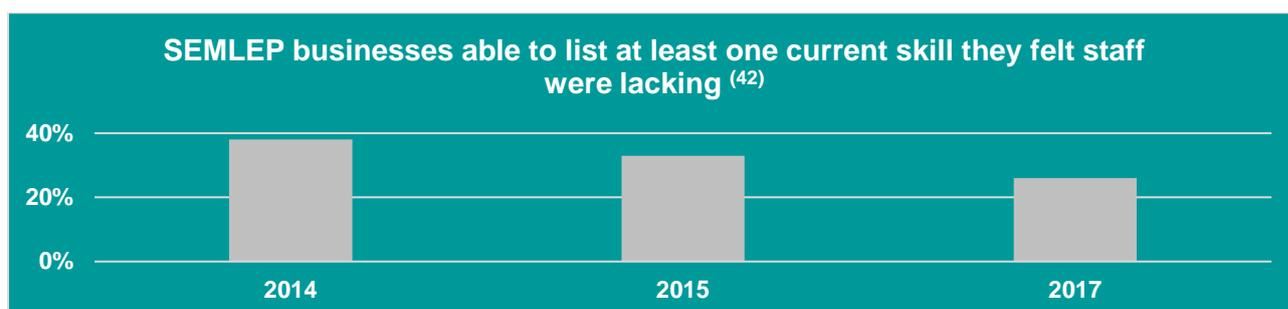
- > Ensure young people, parents and carers are aware of all opportunities within sectors and pathways to a careers and employment:
 - Promotion of apprenticeships at all levels
 - Distribution and access to quality labour market information
 - Promote all post 16 provision and Universities within the SEMLEP area
- > Highlight National Careers Service digital support and Careers Inspiration
- > Develop best practice for CV creation and skills evidence collation
- > Demonstrate the benefits of extra-curricular and activities outside of school such as National Citizenship Service, volunteering, Scouts, Guides, part-time working, etc.
- > Work with employers to include apprenticeships as part of their training and development strategies at all levels through promotion of benefits and providing clarity of process and sign posting
- > Develop a clear understanding of employer attainment and skills needs through Sector Skills Forums
- > Ensure future capacity and relevant apprenticeships, technical qualifications and higher education attainment through employer feedback into FuSE and SEMU and encouraging employers to work more closely with FE and HE establishments within SEM
- > Support actions from Area Based Review
- > Highlight opportunities within and support new and future educational facilities as they come online through employer engagement and promotion to schools and young people
- > Investigate and encourage opportunities provided by Institute of Technologies and other forms of innovative educational establishment with focus on the development of STEM, advanced IT and digital skills



4. Addressing discrepancies between the skills needs of employers and those held by employees

4.1 Current Status and Challenges

The SEM Employers Perspectives Survey 2016 ⁽²¹⁾ shows a positive trend within SEM for people development with both higher than national average responses for both external and internal training and offering vocational qualifications to employees.



SEMLEP Employer Survey - Existing Workforce and Skills ^{(11) (42)}	
Sectors reporting high levels of skills gaps in existing workforce	Logistics, Manufacturing, Education, Health and Social Care, Construction
Skills needed by employers	Job Specific, Technical and Practical, Managerial, Digital/Advanced IT, Sales and Marketing, Customer Service
Core competencies needed by employers	Communication, Basic IT, Foreign Languages, Team Working, Planning and Organisation, Problem Solving, Initiative
Reasons for lack of staff development	Lack of appropriate courses, lack of investment in staff training and development, lack of a skills development plan, cannot release staff, courses inconvenient and inflexible, staff not seeking upskilling

There is uncertainty as to the impact of BREXIT on skills availability within the labour market especially within Health, Logistics, Agriculture, Manufacturing and Construction sectors. 14% of SEMLEP businesses cite a concern for skills availability post BREXIT ⁽⁴²⁾, 33% for businesses with 10-49 employees, 37% for over 50 employees.

4.2 Future Opportunities

- > From consultation with levy paying businesses, the majority have stated that they will use the levy for up-skilling existing employees, leadership and managerial skills preferred
- > Higher and Degree level apprenticeships will provide opportunities for the up-skilling and re-skilling of employees
- > There currently exists a wealth of provision for employers to access to up-skill and re-skill including ESF funded provision for 'Skills Support for the Workforce' (see 5.0)
- > Employer supported curriculum/course content in FE and HE to inform relevant provision
- > Flexible provision delivery to minimise impact on productivity and time

- > Up-skilling of those on low skill/income and part-time jobs into full-time employment
- > Support of SMEs to use training and apprenticeships, especially micro businesses
- > 68% of SEM businesses are not taking any action to increase skill levels in their workforce, yet 34% of this proportion report they had skills gaps (42)

4.3 SEMLEP's Role

To determine what skills development, attainment provision and the associated capacity is required to support employers and employees through:

- > The collation of what provision currently exists
- > Understanding what works and constitutes best practice within SEM, nationally and internationally
- > An understanding of what employers require to inform provision, content and capacity for further and higher education, training providers and the voluntary sector, including reference to apprenticeships and T-Levels
- > Periodic business surveys and collation of information from national sector bodies

Both for existing and future provision there is a need to provide clarity of what is available and where to access for both employers and individuals.

Two actions will contribute in addressing discrepancies between the skills needs of employers and those held by employees

1. Build capacity and ensure sign posting of provision and pathways for continuous personal development, up-skilling, re-skilling and development of leadership skills
2. Encourage and sign post SME engagement with personal and employee skills development and training including apprenticeships

4.3.1 Build capacity and ensure sign posting of provision and pathways for continuous personal development, up-skilling, re-skilling and development of leadership skills

To gain an understanding of the needs of both employers, employees, further and higher education, training providers and the voluntary sector, the following working groups will be facilitated by SEMLEP:

- > Sector Skills Forums – comprising representatives of businesses within sectors with knowledge of skills and attainment needs, challenges faced and what works
- > Skills Forum – comprising representatives from training providers, agencies, voluntary sector organisations and local authorities' community learning
- > FuSE Skills Forum – comprising operational representatives from FE
- > SEMU – comprising representatives from Higher Education

SEMLEP will also facilitate business and provider engagement activities to encourage apprenticeship 'trailblazers' for the development of Higher, Degree and Masters levels.



As the use of the levy matures, SEMLEP will encourage sharing of best practice within the Sector Skills Forums. The construction sector will require some focus with the larger developers paying levy and smaller sub-contractors who do not having less apprenticeships. SEMLEP to investigate support for Local Authority contracts being able to provide some leverage for ensuring opportunities are made available.

SEMLEP will promote national initiatives relating to apprenticeships through the networks and communication channels.

Apprenticeships offer an opportunity to address many of the core competencies and employability skills needs of employees and employers as shown in fig. 4.1.

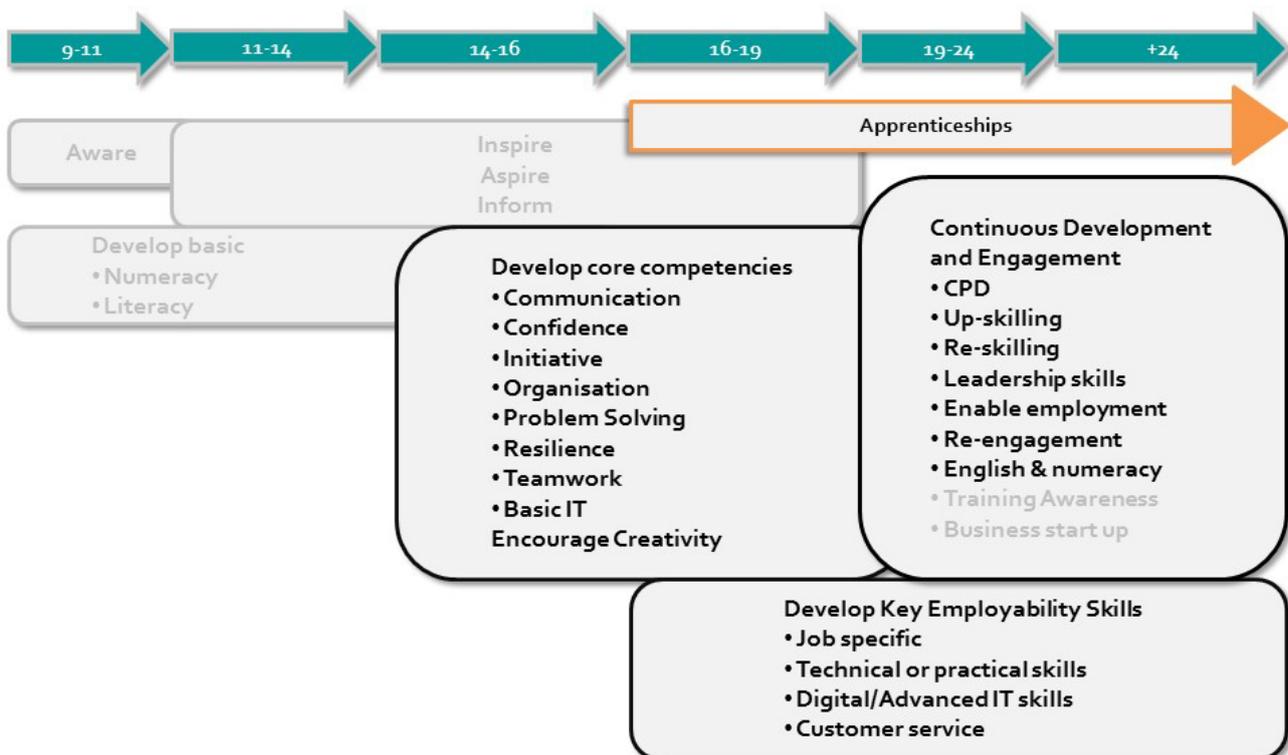


Fig. 4.1 - Contribution of apprenticeships to employer/employee competency and skills needs, black text

There currently exists a wealth of provision for employers to access to up-skill and re-skill employees including leadership and managerial skills including provision within FE and HE, ESF funded provision for 'Skills Support for the Workforce' (see 5.0) and training provider provision. The offering can be difficult to navigate for an employer. SEMLEP will provide clarity of the opportunities available through collating an overview of the provision and provide a single point sign posting to the providers based on type and geography.

4.3.2 Encourage and sign post SME engagement with personal and employee skills development and training including apprenticeships

SMEs face the challenges of both the cost of employee development and the time constraints placed upon them when employees are training. Investment in staff development provides the benefits of:

- > Improved performance of an individual through skill development
- > Retention of staff and thus lower staff recruitment costs and efficient use of time
- > Engaged employees taking pride in who they work for
- > Business growth through use of technology and better working methods
- > Higher confidence levels for the employee
- > Better and wider understanding of the business

SMEs will be encouraged to join the SEMLEP Sector Skills Forums so their needs can be understood better. The SEMLEP growth hubs will survey businesses to ensure workshop content continues to be relevant for skills development needs.

Apprenticeships offer SMEs an opportunity to maximise the time an employee remains at work during their skills development. The government offer funding to support SMEs in employing an apprentice and SEMLEP will make businesses aware of this through the website, social media and the growth hubs.

In 2017 SEMLEP through the Velocity Growth Hub introduced a SME brokerage service with ESF funding until July 2018 to help SMEs develop a workforce through Apprenticeships. The support includes:

- > Independent adviser support from the Association of College Eastern Region (ACER)
- > A choice of training providers from across the area
- > Help with finding new recruits through posting Apprenticeship on national website
- > Offering pathways to higher and degree-level Apprenticeships
- > Helping current staff to be Apprenticeship-ready
- > Raising the business profile via the Apprenticeship Ambassador scheme
- > Basic skills training and the attainment of Maths and English if required.

The SME brokerage service will be promoted through the growth hubs and by SEMLEP, both directly and through its partners. The service will be reviewed for evidence of impact in line with ESFA funding agreements.

The SEMLEP website apprenticeship pages will continue to be updated and will provide information for businesses based on FAQ and sign post to further information and relevant websites www.semlep.com/apprenticeships.

As part of SEMLEP providing clarity of the skills development opportunities, provision aimed at SMEs will be highlighted including part time provision through HE and FE.



4.4 Summary of Activity

- > SEMLEP to facilitate or work within existing working groups to inform for relevant provision and capacity:
 - Sector Skills Forums
 - Skills Forum - training providers, agencies, voluntary sector, local authorities
 - FuSE Skills Forum - Further Education
 - SEMU - Higher Education
 - Partner working groups
- > Facilitate business and provider engagement activities to encourage apprenticeship 'trailblazers'
- > Promotion of apprenticeships to businesses and organisations
- > Provide clarity of provision available for employers and employees to develop skills for higher levels
- > Encourage SMEs to engage with skills development of employees through:
 - Sector Skills Forum
 - Growth hub workshops and promotion
 - Clarity of provision available
- > Engagement of SMEs with apprenticeships through:
 - Growth hub workshops and promotion
 - SME brokerage service
 - SEMLEP website guidance based on FAQ

5. Enabling people into and within employment

5.1 Current Status and Challenges

The employment rates within the SEMLEP are high compared with other areas within the UK. As for every economy, there are people who do not reach their potential and/or the opportunities that are available to them due to barriers, both perceived and physical.

5.1.1 Economic Activity/Inactivity

SEM is above the national average with a positive trend for 16-64-year olds over a 12-month period for economic activity at 1,012,900 people in March 2017.

	South East Midlands	England	High number of people	Lower number of people
Economic activity 16-64 vs population ⁽²⁶⁾	81.3%	78.2%	Central Bedfordshire, Milton Keynes, Northampton, Luton, Aylesbury Vale	Corby, Wellingborough, Daventry, East Northamptonshire, South Northamptonshire, Kettering
Those wanting a job vs inactive population ⁽²⁶⁾	21.1%	23.7%	Central Bedfordshire, Milton Keynes, Northampton, Aylesbury Vale	Corby, Wellingborough, Daventry, East Northamptonshire, South Northamptonshire, Kettering
Full-time employment ⁽²⁾	77.2%	74.7%	Central Bedfordshire, Milton Keynes, Northampton, Luton, Aylesbury Vale	Corby, Wellingborough, Daventry, East Northamptonshire, South Northamptonshire
Part-time employment ⁽²⁾	22.8%	25.1%	Central Bedfordshire, Milton Keynes, Northampton, Luton, Aylesbury Vale, Bedford	Corby, Wellingborough, Daventry, East Northamptonshire, Kettering

5.1.2 Social Deprivation

The Indices of Deprivation ⁽²⁷⁾ are a method of comparing smaller subsections of local authority areas within to other parts of England. The Indices provide a set of relative measures of deprivation for smaller areas (Lower-layer Super Output Areas) based on seven domains of deprivation which are combined to create an Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD).

Areas of Social Deprivation ⁽²⁷⁾	
Within the most 25% socially deprived nationally	Corby, Luton
Largest proportion of LSOAs in the 10% most deprived nationally	Northampton
Largest proportion of LSOAs in the 5% most deprived nationally	Wellingborough, Northampton, Corby, Milton Keynes



5.1.3 Benefit claimants

Analysis of the population receiving state benefits provides a further indication of some of the barriers to work. Looking at the number of benefit claimants as a percentage of the population aged 16-64 is a source of information as to where support may be needed to reduce or remove barriers to work.

Benefit claimants 16-64 vs same age population ⁽²⁹⁾				
Benefit type	South East Midlands	England	High number of people	Lower number of people
ESA and incapacity	4.50%	5.80%	Northampton, Milton Keynes, Luton, Central Bedfordshire, Bedford	South Northamptonshire, Daventry, East Northamptonshire, Kettering
Carers	1.30%	1.70%	Northampton, Milton Keynes, Luton, Central Bedfordshire, Bedford	South Northamptonshire, Daventry, East Northamptonshire
Lone parents	0.90%	1.00%	Northampton, Milton Keynes, Luton, Central Bedfordshire, Bedford	South Northamptonshire, Daventry, East Northamptonshire, Cherwell
Job seekers	0.90%	1.10%	Northampton, Milton Keynes, Luton, Bedford	South Northamptonshire, Daventry, East Northamptonshire, Cherwell, Corby
Disabled	0.50%	0.80%	Milton Keynes, Luton, Central Bedfordshire	Wellingborough, Daventry, Corby, Kettering, East Northamptonshire

5.1.4 Young People (16-24) Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)

SEM is above the national average for those in education and employment at Key Stage 4 (age 16) and Key Stage 5 (age 18).

	South East Midlands	England	High number of people	Lower number of people
Out of work claimant count 16-24 ⁽²⁹⁾	2.1%	2.9%	Northampton, Luton, Milton Keynes, Bedford, Central Bedfordshire, Kettering	South Northamptonshire, Cherwell, East Northamptonshire

Students not in education or employment for at least two terms				
	South East Midlands	Great Britain	High number of people	Lower number of people
After key stage 4 ⁽¹⁴⁾	3%	5%	Luton, Milton Keynes, Northamptonshire, Bedford	Aylesbury Vale, Cherwell, Central Bedfordshire
After key stage 5 ⁽¹⁴⁾	6%	9%	Luton, Milton Keynes, Northamptonshire, Bedford	Aylesbury Vale, Cherwell

- > Characteristics of young people who are more likely to become NEET ⁽³²⁾ include:
 - Those who have not achieved five or more GCSEs grade A-C
 - Those eligible for free school meals
 - Those who have been excluded or suspended from school
 - Those with their own child
 - Those who have a disability

- > Proportion of participation in education and training for 16-17-year olds people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) shows Milton Keynes and Northamptonshire are below the English average in 2016 and decreased over 2015 (31).
- > From BIS research (28) “Understanding progression into higher education for disadvantaged and under-represented groups”, shows:
 - Key points for decision making about education and careers were pre-GCSE, at the point of making GCSE choices and during study at FE college or 6th form.
 - Removal of barriers alone will not facilitate progression and the key influencing factors on decision making are the support of family, peer and education networks, positive attitudes toward education, the provision of relevant and timely information, advice and guidance and an appreciation of the cost and benefits of a chosen pathway.
 - Addressing barriers while simultaneously promoting the benefits for distinct groups of individuals has impact

5.1.5 Ethnic groups

The population of ethnic groups ⁽³³⁾ has remained at the same level for the past 3 years within the SEMLEP area with employment numbers static from 2014 to 2016 at just over 110,000.

	South East Midlands	England	Black or Black British	Indian	Pakistani/Bangladeshi	Mixed Ethnic Minority	Other ethnic groups
Population growth (2014/16)	1,400	-	1,800	-11,400	9,900	-3,500	4,700
Professional, Skilled Trade	51.8%	50.5%	42.7%	71.3%	50.2%	47.0%	51.6%
Skilled	28.6%	28.1%	36.5%	14.5%	33.2%	8.1%	31.2%
Lower Skilled	19.7%	20.3%	20.8%	14.1%	16.6%	40.2%	15.7%
Employment growth (2014/16)	-100	-	3,900	-10,400	7,500	-5,100	4,000
Men	4,500	-	3,900	-4,500	4,900	-2,100	2,300
Women	-4,600	-	0	-5,900	2,600	-3,000	1,700
Employment rate 16-64 (2016)	64.3%	64.2%	71.9%	69.7%	52.1%	68.7%	65.6%

Participation in Growth Sectors	Black or Black British	Indians	Pakistani/Bangladeshis	Mixed Ethnic Minority	Other ethnic group
High participation	Education, Health and Social Care, Business and Finance, Logistics, Food and Accommodation	Business and Finance, Education, Health and Social Care, Logistics, Food and Accommodation	Education, Health and Social Care, Business and Finance, Logistics, Food and Accommodation	Education, Health and Social Care, Manufacturing	Education, Health and Social Care, Business and Finance, Logistics, Food and Accommodation
Low participation	Manufacturing, High Performance Technology, Construction	Manufacturing, High Performance Technology, Construction	Manufacturing, High Performance Technology, Construction	High Performance Technology, Construction, Logistics	Manufacturing, High Performance Technology, Construction

5.1.6 Female participation and progression within the labour market

The female economically active rate within the population for the SEMLEP area is higher than the national average and is increasing ⁽³⁴⁾.

	South East Midlands	England	Higher Rates	Lower Rates
Economically active 16-64	76.2%	72.9%	South Northamptonshire, Kettering, East Northamptonshire, Corby	Luton, Milton Keynes, Northampton
	South East Midlands	England	Higher Numbers	Lower Numbers
Percentage economically inactive looking after family/home	36.2%	36.6%	Northampton, Milton Keynes, Luton, Central Bedfordshire, Bedford	Kettering, Daventry, Corby, Aylesbury Vale
Lone parents	1.7%	1.9%	Northampton, Milton Keynes, Luton, Central Bedfordshire, Bedford	South Northamptonshire, Daventry, East Northamptonshire, Cherwell
Carer	2.0%	2.3%	Northampton, Milton Keynes, Luton, Central Bedfordshire, Bedford	Daventry, South Northamptonshire, East Northamptonshire

Sector Participation	South East Midlands	England	Occupational Skill Level	South East Midlands	England
Manufacturing	6.3%	4.9%	Professional, Skilled Trade	42.2%	44.7%
Construction	2.2%	1.8%			
Food and Accommodation	16.8%	19.3%	Skilled	28.8%	27.9%
Logistics	6.4%	4.8%			
Business and Finance	16.7%	16.5%	Lower Skilled	29.0%	27.4%
Education, Health and Social Care	42.9%	44.2%			
Other Services	7.1%	6.7%			

5.1.7 Over 50's participation in the labour market

The SEM has a higher employment rates for people aged 50-64, both male and female, is higher than the national average.

	Over 50 employment ⁽³⁵⁾			
	South East Midlands	England	High	Low
Employment rate 50-64	74.6%	70.6%	East Northamptonshire, Daventry, Northampton, Kettering, Cherwell	Luton, Central Bedfordshire, Corby, Wellingborough

5.1.8 Long-term and Work-Limited Disability

The number of economically inactive people aged 16-64 with Equality Act defined core or work-limiting disabilities has reduced from 2014 to 2016 with the percentage of people who are below the English average ⁽³⁶⁾ at 38.2% compared to 43.1% for England.

5.1.9 Drug and alcohol misusers

- > Data ⁽³⁷⁾ indicates an increase in hospital admission within the SEM area due to drug misuse. Hospital admissions per 100,000 population are up in all areas for 2015/16 vs 2014/15 with both Bedford and Luton having higher rates than the English average.
- > The treatment of alcohol dependence shows a reduction ⁽⁴¹⁾. This drop-in numbers (-6% 2014 vs 2013, -5% 2015 vs 2014) contrasts with the English average which increased over the same period (+5% 2014 vs 2013, +2% 2015 vs 2014).

5.1.10 Ex-Offenders

Data shows that young offenders are more likely to reoffend and that the likelihood of reoffence increases in men with number of offenses ⁽³⁸⁾. The number of juvenile first-time entrants to the criminal justice system resident within the SEM as of September 2016 is reducing. The trend is down in all areas, only Milton Keynes increasing in 2016 vs 2015 by 48 (+52%).

5.2 Future opportunities

Currently there is multiple provision to enable people into and within employment including:

- > ESF funded activity
- > Community Learning via local authorities, colleges and voluntary and community groups
- > National programmes and schemes
- > Other providers and third sector organisations, both national and local.

Opportunity lies within establishing what has an impact and constitutes best practice, developing effective current activity alongside an innovative element.

5.2.1 Current and Future ESF Funded Activity

In 2015, SEMLEP published the Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) and European Social Inclusion Fund (ESIF) Strategy setting out local priorities supported by a Social Inclusion Strategy and Rural Plan. The ESIF Strategy included an Implementation Plan for 2014-2020 and included two skill focused programme activities:



- > Delivery of activities to develop high-level and intermediate technical skills (including STEM) to fulfil future needs of key sector SMEs and drive employment and productivity in these priority growth sectors
- > Support projects to train people who do not have basic skills and qualifications needed in the workplace, as well as raise the skill levels of those currently with a low skills level.

The approach was for providers working with employers to better understand their needs and help them navigate the provision to meet those needs. Funding for Priority 5 was drawn from the European Social Fund (ESF) and made available both through an open call process and through 'Opt-In' services with ESFA and DWP.

The activities were to support:

- > Job-seekers and inactive people
- > Young people not in education, employment or training or at risk of becoming a NEET
- > Those socially excluded/at risk of poverty
- > For people who are in employment

At the date of publication, the programme is being delivered. For the first half of the programme £29.7m ESF has been committed, including £10.88m skills, £9m unemployed, £4.93m social inclusion, £4m Community Led Local Development (CLLD) and £1.65m NEETs. Further ESF calls are intended for 2017 to support people with barriers to work.

5.2.2 Community Learning

Community Learning may be offered by local authorities, colleges, and voluntary and community groups, and include activity focused at helping the socially deprived. All the county and unitary councils within the SEMLEP area offer adult community learning which usually comprise:

- > Community based personal learning for basic skills (ESOL, English, maths and Basic IT)
- > Family Learning where mothers, fathers, carers and children learn together
- > Wellbeing courses to support those who have experienced mental health illness.

As of 2016, participation within SEMLEP comprised 11,060 community and personal learning, 3,730 neighbourhood learning in deprived communities, 1,830 family English and maths language and 1,950 wider family learning ⁽¹⁶⁾. Over 50% of the courses are run in Central Bedfordshire, Milton Keynes, Northampton and Luton.

5.2.3 National Support

Government policy and departmental supported national schemes also include activity to remove barriers to work such as:

- > Job Centre Plus (JCP)
- > National Careers Service (NCS)

- > Work and Health Programme – This programme will replace the current Work Programme and Work Choice programmes in late 2017 and will focus on +18 unemployed participant groups including individuals with health conditions and disabilities; early access groups, i.e. homeless, ex-offenders, military service veterans, etc; Long-term unemployed
- > Specialist Employability Support
- > Advanced Learning Loans

5.3 SEMLEP's Role

The actions in section 3.0 introduce a change of emphasis from reactive support to proactive prevention through early intervention. The action to enable people into and within employment is outlined below.

5.3.1 Ensure capacity and resources are available to support vulnerable, hard to reach groups and those with barriers to work into, or progression within, employment

There is need for a full review of all provision supporting those with barriers to work into employment or progression within employment with aim of:

- > Establishing the provision currently being delivered within the SEM
- > Collating evidence of impact and case studies

Information gathered from the review and that from funding partner reviews and other LEPs will be used to establish best practice to address the needs of the local target groups along with the local authority partners. This will inform future specifications and funding.

The Skills Forum will provide an opportunity for SEMLEP to inform organisations of sector/employer needs, gaps in capacity, potential funding streams and policy. The participants will have the opportunity to report on activity and showcase successful provision.

SEMLEP will ensure that future activity is focused on people, cohorts and areas of need and compliment programmes already in place and are working and avoid duplication, i.e. locally driven and focused. Programmes should be based on best practice with evidence of success complemented by pilot innovative projects. This will be assured through consultation.

5.3.2 Ensure clarity of provision to partners

SEMLEP will provide clarity of the provision available from the overview providing a single point for stakeholders to access for sign posting relevant to cohorts, provision type and geography. This will be updated as and when new provision becomes available.



5.3.3 Early intervention

As part of the focus on prevention, SEMLEP will work with schools, colleges, Special Education Needs (SEN) schools, virtual schools and alternative provision to provide inspiration, raise aspirations and highlight opportunity through employer engagement.

Focus will be placed on:

- > Ensuring provision is delivered to those at risk from an early age
- > Inspiring, raising the aspirations and informing those young people in areas of social deprivation and with higher youth NEET
- > Inspiring, raising the aspirations and informing young women of the opportunities within sectors and occupations, especially STEM
- > Ensuring young people and parents from ethnic groups are aware of the opportunities within STEM and skilled trade sectors and occupations

5.4 Summary of Activity

- > SEMLEP to facilitate use of ESF funded provision through to completion dates
- > Conduct a review and map provision supporting vulnerable, hard to reach groups and those with barriers to work into, or progression within, employment
- > Collate evidence of impact and case studies
- > SEMLEP to facilitate Skills Forum for stakeholders to inform and provide opportunity for feedback
- > Ensure future activity complements existing and follows best practice
- > Encourage some innovative projects with a robust impact assessment process
- > Provide clarity of the provision available through a single point for partners
- > Work with schools, colleges, SEN, alternative provision and virtual schools as part of the Careers and Enterprise programme as per actions in section 3.0
- > Focus early intervention on those in social deprivation, young women and young people and parents from ethnic groups

6. What does success look like?

The following is an overview of what success should be measured against.

Success Indicator	Method of Measure
Employment An increase in the number of people within employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of people employed within SEMLEP area
Talent Pipeline <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarity and understanding of opportunities available and skills needed by employers by young people, parents/carers and educators Capacity of appropriate pathways The increase and development of capacity and a range of apprenticeships A reduction of core competencies and employability skills mismatch with requirements of employers Schools with CEIAG plans in place using resources, LMI and provision relevant to SEMLEP labour market Greater employer engagement in schools, colleges and universities Higher skills and attainment levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Businesses with vacancies experiencing difficulty in recruiting staff Percentage of unfilled vacancies due to skills shortages Number of applicants with required skills Skills shortages in recruiting staff School leavers recruited for first time jobs being 'poorly' or 'very poorly' prepared for work Employers working with schools and colleges offering work inspiration and work experience Careers and Enterprise programme network of schools and Enterprise Advisers (EA) Young people (compare with English Avg.) Age 14-16 C+ GCSE/equivalent in English and Maths; Entering sciences at KS4; Pupils staying in education or employment for at least 2 terms after KS4. Age 16-18 Average A Level, Applied and Technical Results Qualification levels as a % of resident population aged 16-64 compared with Great Britain averages Apprenticeships: Apprenticeship starts per year; Engineering and Manufacturing apprenticeship starts; Level 4+ apprenticeship starts
Barriers to Employment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision, clarity of pathways and LMI to support groups with barriers to work including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Young people who are NEET Those with work limiting illnesses Female participation and progression in the labour market Drug and alcohol misusers Individuals with learning and physical disabilities Ex-offenders Lone parents The over 50's Delivery of ESF funded projects Understanding and evidence of best practice to support groups for future programmes and funding streams 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % of people, economically inactive aged 16-64 % of people, unemployed aged +16 Indices of Multiple Deprivation for Employment and Education, Skills and Training Benefit claimants aged 16-64 with focus on; Job Seeker; ESA and incapacity benefits Proportion of 16-17-year-old young people in education and training Student destinations after 16-18 study Percentage of females economically inactive aged 16-64 and percentage of females unemployed aged +16 People in employment aged 50-64
Up-skilling, re-skilling, development of employees <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision available informed by employers in terms of type, content and delivery methods Clarity of support available Increased number of SME running apprenticeships through support for apprenticeship implementation Delivery of ESF funded programme Delivery of growth hub workshops Understanding and evidence of best practice to support stakeholders to inform future programmes and associated funding streams 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitation of Sector Skills Forums, 2 per year per sector Facilitation of Skills Forum, FuSE Skills and SEMU working groups, 4 each per year Delivery of ESF funded programmes for Skills Support for the Workforce, both basic and higher Levels Delivery of growth hub skills workshops in response to business surveys

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