

# Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs)

## Education and Training Provider Guide

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LOCAL SKILLS  
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**This briefing summarises the key aspects of planning and delivering a successful Local Skills Improvement Plan.**

### What is an LSIP?

A **Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP)** is a three-year, employer-led plan for a specific local area in England. Its primary goal is to align post-16 technical education and training with the current and future skills needs of local employers and the wider economy.

### Key Qualities of LSIPs

- **Employer-led:** Driven by local businesses, typically led by an Employer Representative Body (ERB) like a Chamber of Commerce.
- **Evidence-based:** Relies on robust research and engagement with employers to identify specific skills, capabilities, and expertise needed.
- **Action-oriented:** Outlines clear priorities and changes required in local training provision to address identified gaps.
- **Strategic focus:** Addresses the most pressing skills issues aligned with local economic strategies.
- **Collaborative:** Involves employers, education and training providers (FE colleges, universities, independent training providers), local authorities, and other stakeholders.
- **Dynamic and up-to-date:** Intended to be a "living document" reviewed and updated regularly to remain relevant.

### Benefits of a Successful LSIP:

- A more skilled workforce.
- A stronger local economy.
- Enhanced influence for the leading organisation.
- Improved productivity and quality of jobs.

## Education and training institutions: 5 reasons for supporting your Local Skills Improvement Plan



## SUPERCHARGE YOUR LOCAL SKILLS IMPROVEMENT PLAN



## What education and training providers should ask from their Local Skills Improvement Plan

Education and training providers want to better understand employer skills needs, and rely on robust, timely evidence to plan future education and training provision.

Our own extensive experience, and findings from evaluation and guidance concludes that education and training providers should be asking their LSIPs to provide the following:

### Robust insights into what skills to plan for and provide

Through LSIPs, education and skills provision can better reflect the needs of local businesses.

Education and training providers need the numbers of course participants to stack up and be financially sustainable before planning and launching new courses.

Evidence of employer and economic need is therefore essential to adapting and providing new courses.

### Influence National and Local Government to Improve Provision, Powers, and Funding to Enhance Training and Skills Provision to Meet Local Employer Needs

LSIPs can provide leadership and advocacy on local resources and priorities on behalf of employers and local education and training providers.

### Ensure That Young People and Adults Will Secure Meaningful, Relevant Work After Course Completion

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### What course formats and subjects will be taken up by employers and individuals, and will add value

The economy is dynamic. Skills and workforce requirements change, and employers and education and training providers need to be able to adapt their practices and provision.

Education and training providers can be agile and redesign course provision, but they need to know that there is a solid basis for future changes, that will lead to better outcomes.

### Collaboration with employers and local government that brings results and greater impacts

LSIPs bring together the main players in the local skills system to collaborate on improving skills provision in the long-term.

## When to get involved

**Education and Training Providers should get involved in Local Skills Improvement Plans at the planning stage, and should continue to be involved.** LSIPs are a process, and are better thought of as a way of getting the local employment and skills system to work better together, rather than a stand-alone piece of work.

Essentially LSIPs are evidence-based reviews that take account of employer views, and real skills needs.

**You may well be asked how your local LSIP is integrated into your local council's decision-making processes, strategies and delivery – so be prepared to answer this!**

### Key considerations

What you may find useful at each stage of the LSIP is outlined below.

#### Step 1: Stakeholder Involvement and Governance

##### Advisory Boards and Steering Groups

**Education and Training Providers** should be part of the advisory boards or steering groups for LSIPs. Your major arguments for having a role revolve around:

- Overall local area, economic and skills strategy responsibilities. Ensuring that these feed into the LSIP, and that the LSIP can be used to help further refine and shape these.
- Role in employability and skills programmes funding, management and delivery.
- Role in the community, ensuring community wellbeing
- Role as a large employer in own right, with significant level of workforce training, entry level roles and apprenticeship training

You should also ensure that other major representatives are present – including employer major employers, education institutions, training providers, and third sector organisations.

##### Early meetings

#### Step 2: Planning the Delivery and Research Phase

##### Review the previous LSIP and existing other skills strategies

Help the ERB establish clear objectives for the LSIP. Ensuring that LSIP partners and stakeholders are briefed about existing research, strategies and action plans that they will have to integrate with and complement.

##### Focused objectives

Help ensure that the LSIP has clear goals and aspirations that realistically reflect resources and staffing available.

## **Standards and content of research needed to change and plan for new skills needs and courses**

As an education and training provider, you will require reliable, robust information, particularly with respect to course demand, in order to make the business case for new course provision, or to apply for external public funding for new courses.

It is imperative that you clearly state the evidence needed, and the detail required for your own business and planning processes.

### **Capability assessment**

Help to identify internal capacities, partner contributions, and elements that will require external consultants. Skills needed include project management, stakeholder management, statistics and analysis, survey design, interpretation, strategy design, policy analysis, and delivery knowledge.

## **Step 3: Hire the Right Consultants**

### **Advise on consultants**

Advise on suitable consultants, where required, and perhaps offer mentorship or advice to ERB officers who are unfamiliar with working with skills, employment, or economic consultants.

### **Quality assurance**

Help to review and feedback on LSIP drafts and outputs.

### **Ongoing support**

Help to identify the importance of continuous consultancy beyond the initial report, and what may also be required, including in-depth labour market reports, horizon scans, regular employer engagement, employer guides, and policy briefings.

## **Step 4: Undertaking the Research**

### **Focused objectives for buy-in**

Ensure clear, focused objectives for the LSIP to gain greater stakeholder buy-in and traction.

### **Utilise existing research**

Build checklists of what you have learnt, where it is relevant or how it applies to your locality, and whether these findings are still current, or need updated. Appraise key gaps that need addressed as part of your LSIP.

### **Robust surveys and consultations**

Help advise about statistical validity and robustness where required.

## Step 5: How to Get Great Survey and Consultation Response Rates

Help with contacts, influence and employer engagement to help improve survey and consultation responses. Use your existing connections with businesses and employers.

Combine LSIP briefings and focus groups with regular events and meetings.

## Step 6: Analysis and Interpretation – What Does the Data and Consultation Evidence Mean?

### Start with key questions

After gathering data, ask yourself, your staff, and stakeholders:

- What does the data tell us about our locality?
- How reliable is the data (caveats, risks)?
- How does it complement/conflict with existing knowledge?
- Can we explain why the data appears this way (causal factors)?
- Does it reveal insights about specific segments or the general population?
- Do local employers and providers corroborate the data?
- Are issues consistent and widely reported, or isolated?
- Are there myths or stereotypes that don't match the evidence?
- Is the evidence sufficient to build a case for new course provision, or do we need additional information?
- What should we do differently as a result?

### Admit what you don't know and make plans to address this where it is critical

There will be some issues that are raised, and have become priorities, but your information or evidence might still be sketchy. You can't plan for everything, but the best approach is to be transparent and also start to plan how you might address this in follow up studies or the next LSIP.

### Use the insight and collateral further

How else might you use the insights in the report, and build on the community that you have developed? For example:

- Can you further explain the implications for different sectors, such as the further education sector? Perhaps follow-up workshops or focus groups might help?
- Does the evidence and analysis help make the case for further advocacy, campaigning or lobbying for changes to national policies or resource allocations?
- Are there examples of employer good practice that could be used to develop collateral or guidance for other employers?
- Could the findings be developed into social media content to widen the audience and broadcast the key messages?

**We hope you found this quick guide useful. We are happy to provide informal advice and guidance over summer - please see the back page for contact details!**



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## ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION

## STRATEGIES & ACTION PLANS

## POLICY



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- BA Economics and Geography, MA European Political Economy, Ph.D. Regional Economic Development



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