

Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs)

Local Authority Guide

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LOCAL SKILLS
IMPROVEMENT
PARTNERSHIP

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.

Local and combined authorities: 5 reasons to invest in your Local skills Improvement Plan



SUPERCHARGE YOUR LOCAL SKILLS IMPROVEMENT PLAN



What local and combined authorities should ask from their Local Skills Improvement Plan

Local and combined authorities want to ensure that local employers can secure the workforce skills they need, improving productivity, rates of pay and the quality of jobs; and that the local skills system can respond to significant opportunities, such as large employers investing and locating in the region.

Our own extensive experience, and findings from evaluation and guidance concludes that local and combined authorities should be asking their LSIPs to provide the following:

Local authorities want to ensure that their local employers can access the workforce and skills that they need to thrive

An effective local skills system can help to ensure that employers and employees work together with education and skills providers to get the skills they need to succeed and progress.

Local authorities want a skills system that can provide opportunities for all residents

Many local and combined authorities are concerned with inequalities in qualifications and skills attainment, access to employment and remuneration.

Many local and combined authorities provide skills funding and employability support, and want to see local skills provision integrated with this.

Local authorities want to ensure that their local skills system is robust and able to deliver the skills requirements of the future

They want to ensure that the local skills system is able to deliver the skills needed for future jobs, and can adapt as the economy changes.

Local authorities want to be able to configure their skills, training and employability activities and budgets to integrate with skills provision and employer workforce needs

Many local and combined authorities provide skills funding and employability support, and want to see local skills provision integrated with this.

Local authorities want their local skills system to be part of the local offer to attract inward investors and employer expansions

An inward investor or expanding local company that may create many hundreds or thousands of jobs will need a supportive local skills system and local education and training provision. LSIPs can provide the planning and coordination for this.

Local authorities want to integrate all parts of skills provision, including schools

It is commonly accepted the careers education, subject choice, and work experience are vital to improving skills attainment and employment outcomes. Working with employers and education and skills providers is vital.

When to get involved

Local Authorities 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

Local Authorities 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.

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.

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?
- What actions do we currently do that are still justified in terms of rationale and objectives, in the light of current evidence?
- 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?
- Are there positive messages for the locality or region that may help to improve perceptions or help with marketing – e.g. for FDI or investment?
- 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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EDGE ANALYSIS AND
STRATEGIC REPORTS,
ENSURING EXCEPTIONAL,
COST-EFFECTIVE RESULTS
READY TO HAND TO A
MINISTER OR MAYOR**

POLICY



- 31 years of professional, applied experience in local and regional skills and labour market policy and analysis
- Senior roles at Futureskills Scotland, London Development Agency, Centre for Cities, The East of England Development Agency, Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough LEP
- BA Economics and Geography, MA European Political Economy, Ph.D. Regional Economic Development



- 24 years of experience as an economist, business policy expert, and economic development specialist
- Founded PolicyDepartment after a decade at the British Chambers of Commerce working as Director of Economics, Policy and Research, building strong UK business connections
- BSc Economics, MSc Economics



- 22 years of experience as a labour market economist specialising in skills strategies
- Applied experience as an economist at the East of England Development Agency and East of England Skills and Competitiveness Partnership
- BA Economics and Public Policy

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