



Appendix A

Bristol ESL Plan Strategy and Policy Review

January 2024



Bristol City Council Employment and Skills Plan – National, Regional and Local Policy Context

National

Overall

The [Levelling Up White Paper](#) (2022) includes the following relevant ‘missions’:

- By 2030, **pay, employment and productivity will have risen in every area of the UK**, with each containing a globally competitive city, and the gap between the top performing and other areas closing.
- By 2030, the number of people successfully completing **high-quality skills training will have significantly increased in every area of the UK**. In England, this will lead to 200,000 more people successfully completing high-quality skills training annually, driven by 80,000 more people completing courses in the lowest skilled areas.

Employment

The 2023 Spring Budget and Autumn Statement placed a strong emphasis on employment, particularly tackling long-term unemployment, as a way of unlocking productivity. In particular, the government are focused on getting people with longer term illnesses or disabilities into, and staying in, employment. This builds on their earlier focus on bringing over-50s back into work post-pandemic, including through a ‘returnships’ programme.

In the Autumn Statement (2023) government announced a £2.5 billion ‘Back to Work’ plan and set out ‘Change to Work’ proposals that include:

- Extending the Restart programme for two years
- Expanding the scheme to include those who have been unemployed for 6+ months (previously 9+ months)
- Introducing tougher sanctions for the unemployed, including a requirement that anyone out of work after 18 months take up work experience or other intensive activity.

Other recent government announcements have included:

- Expansion of three programmes which support physical and mental health – Universal Support, NHS Talking Therapies, and Individual Placement and Support for Serious Mental Illness.
- the launch of a new WorkWell Service delivered by DWP and DHSC, which will support almost 60,000 long-term sick or disabled people to start, stay and succeed in work
- Publishing the [Transforming Health: The Health and Disability White Paper](#) (2023), which sets out longer term plans to change how people are assessed for disability support.
- Publishing [a summary of responses](#) to the consultation on the [Working Better](#) plan (introduced at the Spring Budget, which aims to improve occupational health in the workplace). An expert group will now be established to support the development of the voluntary national baseline for Occupational Health provision, and to explore the development of national workplace health and disability standards.
- Removing the limit on apprenticeships that employers (who do not pay the levy) can reserve funding for training and assessments for.

- Expanding the Supported Internship programme to young people who are entitled to Special Educational Needs support who do not have an EHCP.

Skills

- The government's *Skills for Jobs White Paper* (2021) sets out its long-term plan for aligning post-education and skills provision to the current and future jobs market. Its primary focus is on shifting funding and the design of local courses towards meeting the needs of local labour markets (particularly through the introduction of Local Skills Improvement Plans).
 - o A [Local Skills Improvement Plan \(LSIP\)](#) for the West of England region was produced by Business West Chambers of Commerce in 2023.
 - o The LSIP identifies cross-cutting themes across 4 priority sectors (Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering, Construction, Health and Social Care and Creative Industries) which have significant importance to the West of England's growth and economic output, as well as the nation overall.
 - o The priority themes identified by the LSIP are: core, soft and transferable skills; core digital skills; and skills needs aligned to the UK's Net Zero Strategy, Decarbonisation, Sustainability and Climate Change.
- Following a review of post-16 qualifications from Level 3 and below (in 2019), the DfE have moved to end funding for lots of applied general qualifications. **BCC has flagged the risk that this will disproportionately impact underrepresented groups.**
- The government's *Green Jobs Delivery Group* was established in 2023 to identify ways in which the UK could accelerate a shift towards improving green skills delivery. It is expected to produce a *Net Zero and Nature Workforce Action Plan* in 2024.
- The government's [National AI Strategy](#) (2021) has established improving the skills and talent pipeline in artificial intelligence as a key strategic priority.

Labour Party

The Labour Party's commitments on employment and skills include the following:

- Transform the Apprenticeship Levy into a new Growth and Skills Levy enabling firms to spend up to 50 percent of their levy contributions on non-apprenticeship training including modular and skills courses.
- Set up a new expert body, Skills England, to help meet skills needs across all regions.
- Aim to create a world class vocational education system and apprenticeships by 2030, with local government having a greater role in determining training in their area.
- New Deal for Working People - Labour will strengthen the protections afforded to all workers by banning zero-hours contracts, outlawing bogus self-employment; and ending qualifying periods for basic rights, which leave working people waiting up to two years for basic protections. This will include unfair dismissal, sick pay, and parental leave, giving working people under Labour rights at work from day one.
- Implement a Green Prosperity Plan to ramp up annual investment in the green economy to £28bn after 2027.
- Introduce A new National Procurement Plan to ensure social value is mandatory in contract design.
- Introduce new Fair Work Standard to recognise best employers.

Other recent reports

- Local Government Association - [Work Local](#) – sets out a manifesto for empowering local places to deliver a more integrated and place-based approach via a framework for employment and skills devolution.
- Institute for Employment Studies – [Interim Report of the Commission on the Future of Employment Support](#), highlights:
 - The need to digitalise employment support in order to widen access,
 - The need to co-design a more equitable, joined-up and empowering employment support system.
- Joseph Rowntree Foundation – [Inadequate Universal Credit and Barriers to Work](#) – Highlights the importance of supporting people financially while looking for work.
- All Party Parliamentary Group for Youth Employment – [The Impact of Place Based Approaches to Tackling Youth Employment](#) – highlights the need to enable local places to tailor approaches to youth employment based on local demographics, needs etc.
- The [Marmot Review \(2010\)](#) concluded that creating fair employment and good work for all, as well as enabling all children, young people and adults to maximise their capabilities and have control over their lives, would contribute to a reduction in health inequalities. The subsequent [10 Years On Review \(2020\)](#) recommended, amongst other things, that support for in-working training throughout the life-course be increased, along with post-school apprenticeships, to tackle increasing levels of inequality.

Regional/Local - For ease, the main cross-cutting strategic priorities for employment and skills – both locally and across the region – are captured in table format.

Theme	Regional or Local strategic link
Joined-up leadership	WECA Employment and Skills Plan West of England Local Skills Improvement Plan Bristol One City Plan (see Appendix A) BCC Corporate Strategy (see Appendix A) Bristol Inclusive Growth Strategy (in development)
Responsive to local need/opportunities	WECA Employment and Skills Plan West of England Local Skills Improvement Plan Bristol One City Plan (see Appendix A) Bristol Inclusive Growth Strategy (in development)
Investment and productivity	WECA Employment and Skills Plan Western Gateway – strategic plan West of England Local Skills Improvement Plan Bristol Inclusive Growth Strategy (in development)
Simpler access to support	WECA Employment and Skills Plan Bristol One City Plan (see Appendix A)
Addressing employer needs and skills shortages	WECA Employment and Skills Plan West of England Local Skills Improvement Plan Bristol One City Plan (see Appendix A)
Equity/Inequality	Bristol One City Plan (see Appendix A) BCC Corporate Strategy (see Appendix A) Bristol Equality and Inclusion Policy and Strategic Framework Bristol Economic Recovery Plan Bristol Inclusive Growth Strategy (in development) Bristol’s Belonging Strategy Bristol Social Value Policy
Young people	Bristol One City Plan (see Appendix A) Bristol Economic Recovery Plan BCC Corporate Strategy (see Appendix A) Bristol Belonging Strategy Bristol Apprenticeship Strategy
Unemployment and inactive	Bristol One City Plan (see Appendix A) BCC Corporate Strategy (see Appendix A) Bristol Economic Recovery Plan
Green Jobs & Skills	WECA Employment and Skills Plan WECA Regional Strategy (in development) Bristol One City Plan (see Appendix A) Bristol Climate Emergency Strategy Bristol Food Equality Strategy Bristol Parks and Green Spaces Strategy (in development)
Digital Skills / Inclusion	WECA Employment and Skills Plan Bristol One City Plan (see Appendix A) BCC Corporate Strategy (see Appendix A)
‘socially important shortage occupations’ (e.g. social care)	WECA Regional Strategy (in development) Bristol One City Plan (see Appendix A)

Appendix A – Relevant One City Plan targets (up to 2027) and BCC Corporate Strategy themes

One City Plan

- By 2050 everyone in Bristol will contribute to a sustainable, inclusive and growing economy from which all will benefit • Tackle persistent worklessness and economic exclusion • Economic growth through boosting productivity • Improved integration between neighbourhoods and employers.
- 2023-24 - There is an ongoing upward trend in employment opportunities for young people, care leavers, older people and adults with learning difficulties and disabilities through local coordination and support for appropriate paid work experience and trainee / apprenticeship programmes.
- 2024-25 - Gender, race, ethnicity and disability pay gaps are decreasing due to improved skills pathways and mentoring with routes to access senior employment opportunities (part-time and flexible).
- 2024-25 - Following work in 2023, Bristol's skills provision reflects our economy's required skills (eg. jobs which address the climate and ecological emergencies) and builds career opportunities for those traditionally underserved and/or living in our most deprived communities.
- 2025-26 - In line with the Bristol Women in Business Charter's aspiration to become a city with a gender balanced workforce, organisations have put policies and structures in place to ensure an equitable opportunity is delivered for all women.
- 2026-27 - Specialist employment and training support is available for 16-24 year olds facing more complex barriers e.g. care-experienced; young people with SEND; young parents; and those aged 55+ who need/want to work.
- 2026-27 - There has been a 10% reduction in long-term unemployment and income deprivation in south Bristol following growth of employment & enterprise opportunities particularly in the cultural, digital and low carbon sector within those communities.

BCC Corporate Strategy 2022-27 – Priority Themes

- CYP3 – Equity in Education – ‘provides children and young people with the academic, social, and emotional development they need’.
- CYP4 – Intergenerational equality – ‘tackling the root causes of structural inequality, breaking cycles of disadvantage, poverty and trauma...’
- ES1 – Regeneration – ‘Enable the growth, development and regeneration of the city in an inclusive, sustainable, healthy and resilient way’.
- ES2 – Access to Employment – ‘developing skills and routes into employment that tackle structural inequality / ‘plan for how the economy will change’ / ‘support people to access good jobs whatever their formal level of qualification’.
- ES3 – Good Growth – ‘Work towards making Bristol a Real Living Wage city with access to decent jobs for all’.
- ES4 – Childcare – ‘Help parents and carers access and stay in employment and/or education...’
- ES5 – Digital Inclusion – ‘Work with partners to tackle digital poverty’.

- ENV1 – Carbon Neutral – ‘Bring everyone with us in our just transition to a low-carbon future’.
- HCW1 – Transforming Care – ‘Work together to attract and retain a suitable health and care workforce’.
- HCW3 – Poverty – ‘Tackle the root causes of poverty...’
- HC3 – Homelessness – ‘Help prevent homelessness by...developing skills and employment opportunities.’
- HC4 – Disability – ‘Create improved approaches...to enable and support Disabled people throughout their lives’.
- EDO3 – Employer of Choice – ‘Make sure we have an inclusive, high-performing, and motivated workforce that is representative of the city we serve.’