

LSIP Priority Spotlight – “Co-ordinate networks and collaboration”

In developing the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP), **Surrey Chambers of Commerce** has been working closely with local employers and providers to drive a meaningful change in the skills system. This article focuses on one of the key priorities cited in the LSIP report – which was commissioned “*to make technical education and skills provision more aligned with the skills needs of the local employers.*”

CO-ORDINATE NETWORKS AND COLLABORATION

Networks and collaboration were highlighted as key to assisting a step change in the match between employers needs and local provision. This was observed particularly in sectoral focus groups for Electrical Contractors, Construction, Creative and Aerospace & Space. The LSIP exercise in our region has already ‘galvanised’ employers and providers to engage in all sorts of ways – For example: by developing a more “networked” approach between themselves to deliver collective solutions where relevant and; sectoral networks building closer relationships with the FE sector as a group to help them to better understand the sector needs and thus respond to those needs.

A potential barrier to this, is the complexity of the local partnership landscape, as there are many different groups and boards that exist across the LSIP area. It is important to try and rationalise and make sense of what already exists, to reduce duplication and bring clarity to the purpose of what different groups are trying to achieve and how they are connected to others.

WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE?

Enhanced network approach and collaboration between education and training providers at multiple levels across the LSIP area

- Extend collaboration between providers to meet identified needs in the priority sectors.
- The Local Skills Improvement Fund (LSIF) is a great opportunity to invest in key activities and projects as a result of the LSIP and in a collaborative way.
- Consider models of shared delivery of certain courses to make them financially viable.

Utilise and support growth of employer networks and clusters.

The LSIP process has highlighted:

- The local business groups and networks that exist have played a vital role in being a conduit for providers into key local sectors.
- These groups can help providers to better understand the needs of specific sectors and be a point of contact between industry and the education sector. Many produce sector specific reports and analysis, which are really helpful for providers.
- Education and training providers can identify the key employer networks they can work with and begin to develop strategic relationships. By having one lead provider in some situations, they can then share intel and insights with the wider network.

CASE STUDY: Space South Central is the largest regional space cluster in the UK. As a partnership between industry and academia the cluster aims to accelerate space business growth, foster an environment of innovation, grow the reputation of the region and contribute to national prosperity. The cluster also seeks to demonstrate best practices in inclusion, education, training, recruitment and retention to make space careers as attractive and rewarding as possible.

If you want to find out ways to get involved in our skills activities or you want to connect with your local FE college, contact the LSIP team: lsip@surrey-chambers.co.uk