

Surrey Local Skills Improvement Plan: Priority 1

Stakeholder Workshop

16 April 2026



Surrey LSIP Ambition

Core Ambition:

Position Surrey as a leading, high-growth economy, enabled by a dynamic, employer-led skills system that supports innovation, productivity and opportunity

Key outcomes desired

- Key sectors and employers have access to the workforce and skills they need to grow.
- All residents are able to develop the confidence and skills they need to access employment opportunities.

To achieve those outcomes, we will:

- Take an employer-led and inclusive approach.
- Be ambitious and innovative by challenging ourselves to develop new provision and ways of working.
- Co-design and co-deliver skills programmes by making best use of Surrey's collective capacity.
- Prioritise high growth opportunities-keeping options open to other growth sectors.
- Build a local pipeline and pathways into key occupations.
- Focus on economically inactive residents and those with no or low skills to increase pipeline of employees.

TIMELINE

- 9th March: Feedback from Surrey FE
- 12th March: Stakeholder forum held at Royal Holloway
- 13th March: Draft of “Draft Plan” sent to stakeholders for validation
- 19th March: All final comments received
- 24th March: Submitted to Skills England
- **1st April-10th May -Where we pull actions and activities together-ideas on best way to do this**
- 15th May: Full LSIP Submission
- 16th July: Publish approved LSIP

Priorities

- **PRIORITY ONE-Increase pipeline of technical skills feeding into key manufacturing and engineering sectors**
- PRIORITY TWO-Increase pipeline of construction skills including for green transition (with knock on to other sectors)
- PRIORITY THREE- Improve recruitment, retention and development within the Social Care sector
- PRIORITY FOUR- Support workplaces and workers to build the foundations and infrastructure needed to confidently adopt existing and emerging digital tools, enabling safe, ethical and effective use of technology across all sectors
- PRIORITY FIVE- Improve work ready employability skills and generic digital skills
- PRIORITY SIX- Increase employer engagement, awareness and commitment to skills development

Tailored action plan

To secure the best return on our 'investment', the LSIP action plan will be built around three areas of focus:

Targeted

Cross-cutting

Ambitious

PRIORITY ONE-

Increase pipeline of technical skills feeding into key manufacturing and engineering sectors

An assessment of Surrey's defence-relevant capability and capacity, highlighting occupational strengths and weaknesses has determined a skills gap shortage across key occupations in defence and adjacent sectors, such as:

- advanced manufacturing,
- space
- digital and cyber technologies,
- specialist engineering,
- construction

Surrey has a high concentration of highly productive and specialised businesses in these sectors, serving regional, national and international markets.

We have identified defence occupations as key to Surreys growth, and sustained economic growth particularly in the defence sector depends on a strong, local pipeline of technical skills used across all of the above sectors.

The Challenge

Across identified key occupations common challenges/barriers are being faced. Analysis shows these to be:

Weak early-career entry

- Workforce dominated by ages 25–44
- Very limited 16–24 entry (5–12%)

Replacement demand risk

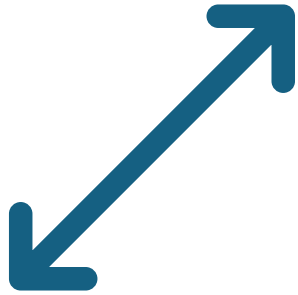
- Senior and supervisory roles face recruitment challenges and require experienced mid-career workers
- Declining workforce trends in some technical and digital occupations since 2022 single replacement demand.

Narrow and unequal pipelines

- Engineering and technical roles remain male-dominated
- Employers report difficulty attracting women

Bottom line: demand is strong, but the pipeline is too narrow, and too fragile.

What can we do?



How can we strengthen earlier entry,
so more young people (16–24) access
clear routes into these occupations?



**How can we build stronger progression
and succession,** reducing future
reliance on a shrinking mid-career
workforce?



How can we widen participation,
making these roles and pathways more
inclusive and attractive to a broader
range of people?

What needs to be done?

- Improve numbers entering sector
 - Increase volumes through awareness raising
 - Improve diversity in terms of gender and wider inclusion
- Ensure routes through sector are clearer
 - Promote clearer pathways
 - Establish targeted leadership work
- Support providers to enhance provision
 - Drive teaching capacity and capability
- Ensure the right networks and engagement mechanisms are in place to support the above
 - To be considered and established through the LSIP

How can we deliver the priority?

Feel free to think outside the box

We are looking for a long list of potential activities

- Who needs to be involved?
- Specific ideas
- Resources needed
- What have you seen in other scenarios?
- Any obstacles you can see?



INPUT FROM ROOM

Other priorities to cover

- **PRIORITY FOUR-Support workplaces and workers to build the foundations and infrastructure needed to confidently adopt existing and emerging digital tools –enabling safe, ethical and effective use of technology across all sectors**
- What is needed?
 - Deeper understanding of what businesses are struggling with
 - Clarification of free support nationally and locally available
 - Identification of where the skills gaps are
 - Understanding how “safe” employer are

Other priorities to cover

- **PRIORITY FIVE- Improve Work Ready Employability skills plus digital generic skills**
 - What is needed?
 - Better prepared young people for the workforce
 - Better digital skills understanding for new recruits
 - Employers contributing to work placements
 - Do employers understand needs of new generations
 - How early should we be introducing work ready skills

Other priorities to cover

- **PRIORITY SIX-Increase employer engagement and awareness and commitment to skills development**
 - What is needed?
 - How best to get employers involved
 - How best to share information with employers (and providers)
Policies/research/scanning the horizon
 - How could we use untapped talent pools to meet some of employment needs
 - What training would help employers to be more engaged