



Levelling up through skilling up

How developing world-class skills can spread opportunity and boost productivity



WorldSkills UK is an independent charity and a partnership between employers, education and governments. Together, we are using international best practice to raise standards in apprenticeships and technical education so more young people and employers succeed.

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Levelling up through skilling up: How developing world-class skills can spread opportunity and boost productivity

In February 2022 the UK Government published an ambitious plan to support a high-wage, high-skill economy by building skills and human capital, particularly in places where they are weakest, in recognition that opportunities are not equally spread throughout the regions and nations of the UK. The Levelling Up the United Kingdom White Paper¹ aims to improve productivity and economic growth, encourage innovation, create good jobs, improve educational attainment and social and health outcomes through cross-governmental action. The White Paper includes 12 core missions for delivery by 2030, with four overarching objectives focussing on improving productivity, pay, jobs and living standards; spreading opportunities and improving public services; restoring a sense of community and pride of place; and empowering local leaders and communities.

¹ Levelling Up the United Kingdom, February 2022, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1052708/Levelling_up_the_UK_white_paper.pdf



WorldSkills UK, as the international arm of the UK skills sector, and with partners in governments, the skills sector and employers across the UK, has a key role in helping to deliver these objectives. Our work aims to positively impact the ambitions of our partners to spread opportunity and boost productivity by improving the quality of technical and vocational skills development in all parts of the UK and growing the number of people engaging with skills and pursuing technical careers. We are committed to inspiring young people to develop world-class skills whatever their background and wherever they live, in common with the Government's drive to level-up all parts of the United Kingdom.

In this paper we demonstrate how our existing programmes of activity are helping to spread opportunity and boost productivity and set out new actions to help level-up the UK economy, drawing on our knowledge of global best practice in skills to promote and develop high-quality technical education and apprenticeships so that young people in all parts of the UK get the best start to their careers and employers and inward investors get access to world-class skills to help them innovate and grow.

Our
inspiring careers
programmes help
young people
to navigate their
future options

We are already helping level-up opportunities for young people in many parts of the UK through our high-profile competition-based skills development programmes, the creation of innovative networks of providers, employers and educators dedicated to implementing world-class skills standards throughout the UK in our Centre of Excellence and Innovation Networks, and through our valuable international partnerships where we engage in knowledge exchange and facilitate the implementation of international best practice here in the UK. Our inspiring careers programmes help young people to navigate their future options, promoting the benefits of technical and vocational routes, raising aspirations and opening up pathways to greater opportunities for all. Furthermore our diagnostic research and insights serve to determine further opportunities to level-up young people's career prospects through high-quality skills development and help us understand any barriers to achieving this, identifying potential solutions and actions to overcome them.



Levelling up objective: **Spread opportunities and improve public services, especially in those places where they are weakest**

Mission six commits
the Government to
800,000
more people
completing courses
in the lowest-skilled
areas of England

By 2030, the UK Government wants the number of people successfully completing high-quality skills training to have significantly increased in every area of the UK. Mission six of the Levelling Up White Paper commits the Government to 200,000 more people completing high-quality skills training and 800,00 more people completing courses in the lowest-skilled areas of England. This mission complements a series of reforms that are already being enacted across the four nations of the UK in response to the needs of the UK economy, local communities and individuals with the potential to have a transformative effect on how people access skills training across their lifetimes.

In England, the publication of the Skills for Jobs White Paper in 2021² and passing of the Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022³ heralded the introduction of new Local Skills Improvement Plans, the Lifetime Skills Guarantee, an expansion of Institutes of Technology, Skills Bootcamps for adults and proposals for a new lifetime loan entitlement. Furthermore the Department for Education has consulted on its higher education policy and reform statement aiming to increase the provision of economically critical higher technical qualifications at levels 4 and 5⁴. The establishment of a Unit for Future Skills will improve intelligence by producing information on local skills demand, future skills needs of business, the skills available in an area and the pathways between training and good jobs.



In Wales, the Tertiary Education and Research Bill⁵ will bring in a new single body for the oversight, strategic direction and leadership of the post-compulsory education and training sector to build a skills and education system that strengthens Wales' economic wellbeing, encourages enterprise, responds to employer need and enables a relevant and growing research base.

The launch of the Northern Ireland Skills Strategy⁶ and foundation of the Skills Council for Northern Ireland aims to deliver significant growth in professional and technical qualifications and STEM skills to meet the needs of the Northern Irish economy.

In Scotland, the National Strategy for Economic Transformation⁷ sets out a programme of actions for government, the public sector, businesses and partners to take to ensure that people have the skills they need at every stage of life and meet the demands of an ever-changing economy and society, and that employers invest in the skilled employees they need to grow their businesses.

2 Skills for Jobs: Lifelong Learning for Opportunity and Growth, January 2021 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/957856/Skills_for_jobs_lifelong_learning_for_opportunity_and_growth_web_version_.pdf

3 Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022 <https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2868/publications>

4 Higher education policy statement and reform consultation, February 2022 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1057091/HE_reform_command-paper-web_version.pdf

5 Tertiary Education and Research (Wales) Bill, <https://senedd.wales/media/yhmdm14y/prild14625-e.pdf>

6 Skills Strategy for Northern Ireland, March 2022, <https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/economy/Skills-Strategy-for-Northern-Ireland-Skills-for-a-10x-economy.pdf>

7 Scotland's National Strategy for Economic Transformation, March 2022, <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-national-strategy-economic-transformation/>



WorldSkills UK is working to raise skill levels in priority areas

We have implemented a number of programmes which support the objective to spread opportunities to provide positive outcomes for employers, educators and young people.

Centre of Excellence

Our Centre of Excellence programme was developed from the findings of diagnostic research carried out by Dr Susan James Relly at the SKOPE research centre at the University of Oxford, which recommended finding ways to transfer the knowledge and expertise of training managers involved in international skills competitions more widely within the UK skills system⁸. Founded in partnership with NCFE, the Centre of Excellence programme acts on this recommendation through drawing on our unique insights into global skills systems and utilising NCFE's expertise in curriculum design to mainstream excellence in skills development. Through this partnership we are testing a range of methods and practices to disseminate and transfer world-class expertise to educators and boost standards across technical and vocational education and training.



Meet the colleges working with our

Centre of Excellence

worldskillsuk
excellence at work

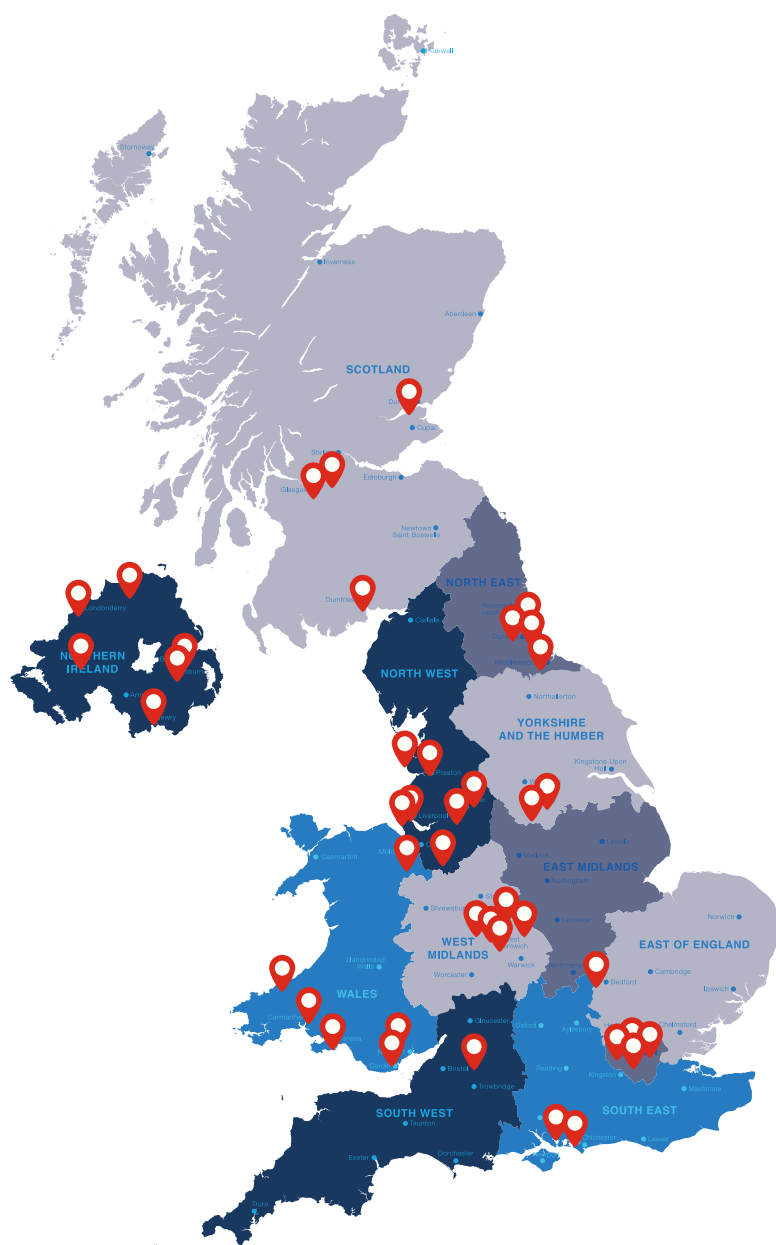
In partnership with NCFE

96%

rate the quality of the CPD delivered by the Centre of Excellence as excellent or very good

The institutions involved are spread regionally and across the four UK nations as can be seen on the map on page 8. Our focus on equity, diversity and inclusion means that young people in the most disadvantaged areas can benefit from the Centre of Excellence programme. Being a member of the Centre of Excellence has significant benefits for both educators and students. 74% of educators have found the CPD delivered by the Centre of Excellence to be extremely or very relevant, with 96% rating the quality as excellent or very good. This translates to an impact on their personal motivation to improve their teaching, with 74% agreeing that it has a substantial or major impact. This supports the aim of the Centre of Excellence programme to transform the teaching of vocational skills from competence to excellence, making a difference to the lives and future prospects of young people, whatever their background.

⁸ Good people in a flawed system: The challenges of mainstreaming excellence in technical education, 2019 https://www.worldskillsuk.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/skope_pages.pdf



The learners themselves recognise the positive benefits of the Centre of Excellence programme, with 65% reporting a major or substantial impact on their mindset and approach to study, and 65% agreeing that the programme has a major or substantial impact on their ability to perform better in their studies. These students, benefitting from the development of better technical and essential employability skills, positively affect their own future career paths while also creating a resource of skilled human capital that domestic and international employers can draw from, attracting investment into their localities, boosting productivity and opportunity.

Table 1 shows that of the 31 organisations in the Centre of Excellence in England, Scotland and Wales, 20 are located

65%
of young people agree
that the programme
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substantial impact
on their ability to
perform better in
their studies

in priority one areas according to the UK Government's levelling up fund index of priority places⁹, with a further five located in priority two areas. Through our programmes to embed excellence and inspire young people, we are actively supporting government priorities and regional strengths, putting levelling up into practice and bringing opportunities out to young people wherever they live. In the next phase of the Centre of Excellence we will grow the number of member organisations and focus even further on aligning the support we provide through the programme to sectoral and regional skills priorities and enable more young people to access world-leading teaching in economically valuable skills.

⁹ The index is based on a range of measures with indicator one being the need for economic recovery and growth, incorporating the percentage of people within the area aged 16-64 without NVQs or other formal qualifications. The index excludes Northern Ireland as the fund is distributed differently there, however all six colleges in Northern Ireland are members of the Centre of Excellence through a consortium.

Table 1

Centre of Excellence Organisation	Region/Nation	Levelling Up Fund Priority Area
City of Glasgow College	Scotland	1
Dumfries & Galloway College	Scotland	1
New College Lanarkshire	Scotland	1
Cardiff & Vale College	Wales	1
Coleg Cambria	Wales	1
Coleg Gwent	Wales	1
Gower College Swansea	Wales	1
East Durham College	North East	1
Middlesbrough College	North East	1
New College Durham	North East	1
Sunderland College	North East	1
DN Colleges Group	Yorkshire & Humberside	1
Rotherham & North Notts Group	Yorkshire & Humberside	1
Blackpool & The Fylde College	North West	1
City of Liverpool College	North West	1
Oldham College	North West	1
Preston College	North West	1
Trafford College Group	North West	1
Wirral Met College	North West	2
Dudley College of Technology	West Midlands	1
Solihull College & University Centre	West Midlands	3
North Warwickshire & South Leicestershire College	East Midlands	2
Weston College	South West	2
Wiltshire College	South West	3
Suffolk College	East of England	3
Chichester College Group	South East	3
Havant & South Downs College	South East	2
Barking & Dagenham College	London	1
Firebrand Training	London	1-3
JTL Training	London	1-3
Waltham Forest College	London	2
Northern Ireland Consortium (All 6 FE Colleges in NI)	Northern Ireland	N/A



46
member institutions



Innovation Network

The WorldSkills UK Innovation Network, as seen on the map opposite, takes our workforce development strategy out to education providers right across the UK. We gather and share insights with over 40 member colleges and independent training providers who benefit from our guidance on embedding competition-based training and standards improvement practices to enhance teaching and learning across the curriculum. This includes competition outcomes and performance benchmarking so that colleges can understand how their performance compares to others and where there is scope to improve.

We have forged strong links with employers as our competitions programme is rooted

in the needs of industry. We take the lessons about how employers train their employees and apprentices to meet the latest industry standards out to Innovation Network members. Members of the Innovation Network also benefit from international best practice obtained from the WorldSkills global partners, meaning students right across the UK benefit from the latest intelligence on new techniques and cutting-edge technologies.

Table 2 shows that of the 46 member institutions in the Innovation Network, 21 are located in priority one areas of the UK Government's levelling up fund index of priority places and a further 16 are located in priority two areas, again showing how WorldSkills UK is bringing the latest in international best practice right out to the areas that need it most.

Table 2

Innovation Network Member	Region/Nation	Levelling Up Priority Area
Ayrshire College	Scotland	1
City of Glasgow College	Scotland	1
Dundee and Angus College	Scotland	1
Fife College	Scotland	2
Forth Valley College	Scotland	1
Glasgow Clyde College	Scotland	1
ACT Training	Wales	1/2
Bridgend College	Wales	1
Coleg Cambria	Wales	1
Coleg Sir Gar & Coleg Ceredigion	Wales	1
Gower College Swansea	Wales	1
New College Durham	North East	1
The Learning Curve Group	North East	1
The Sheffield College	Yorkshire & Humberside	2
TEC Partnership: The Grimsby Institute	Yorkshire & Humberside	1
Carlisle College (Newcastle Group North)	North West	2
Cheshire College South & West	North West	2
Hopwood Hall College	North West	1
Macclesfield College	North West	3
Oldham College	North West	1
Reaseheath College	North West	3
Wigan & Leigh College	North West	1
Coventry College	West Midlands	2
Shrewsbury Colleges Group	West Midlands	2
South Staffordshire College	West Midlands	2
Loughborough College	East Midlands	3
SMB Group	East Midlands	2
Vision West Nottinghamshire College	East Midlands	1
Bath College	South West	2
Bedford College	East of England	2
Cambridge Regional College	East of England	3
East Coast College	East of England	1/2
Eastleigh College	South East	3
East Sussex College	South East	1

Table 2 (continued)

EKC Group	South East	1
South Thames Colleges Group	South East	2/3
Weston College	South West	2
New City College	London	2/3
Newham College of Further Education	London	1
Ealing, Hammersmith and West London College	London	2/3
London South East Colleges Group (LSEC)	London	2/3
Croydon College	London	2
Harrow College & Uxbridge College	London	3
North West Regional College	Northern Ireland	N/A
South West College	Northern Ireland	N/A
Southern Regional College	Northern Ireland	N/A



Competition-based skills development programmes

Our competition-based skills development programmes enable young people to benchmark their skills against their peers and against national and international standards, improving their technical skills, and developing the mindset to become successful employees by increasing their resilience and self-confidence as well as understanding what it takes to achieve excellence.

In 2022 over 45% of the WorldSkills UK competitions skills portfolio aligns with the priority STEM and digital sectors. There are registrations from young people in every region of England, and all four nations, at 380 different institutions. Wales and the

North West of England have performed especially strongly with 28% of total registrations coming from the North West and 20% coming from Wales. The percentage of registrations from young people living in deprived areas has increased each year since 2019, with 28% of registrations now coming from those living in the most deprived areas according to the indices of multiple deprivation.

Analysis of our national finals from 2019 and 2021 (the last two years in which finals took place) shows very strong



£7-
£14k
estimated earning
benefits per
student for a
WorldSkills UK
competition
medal winner

performances in achieving excellence¹⁰ in STEM skills in the East Midlands, West Midlands, Scotland and Wales. This means we are both contributing to UK growth by developing excellence in the skills pipeline for priority sectors, but also remaining inclusive and accessible to young people interested in developing other beneficial skills.

Frontier Economics assessed our return on investment¹¹ and found that through our national and international competitions programme and associated training, we improve the skills and confidence of young people and stimulate a high performance mindset, affecting not only those taking part in competition programmes themselves (both students and trainers) but also their peers. Reaching a given benchmark in WorldSkills UK competition programmes is a signal to employers of strong human capital in a given vocational skill and individuals may be rewarded with increased lifetime earnings as a result. It was estimated the per student benefits in participation was between £3,500 – £7,000 for national competition programmes, £7,000 for those selected for squad UK, and between £7,000 and £14,000 for medal winners.

Crucially the benefits from participation in the skills competitions programme also spill over to peers as participants share knowledge and inspire their fellow students or colleagues to perform at a higher level.

This results in improved performance of peers (proxied by improved lifetime earnings). Reaching a given benchmark in the WorldSkills UK competitions programme may well have a positive effect on peers' motivation and aspirations, thus positively affecting their academic and technical performance and, consequently, their lifetime earnings.

By embedding WorldSkills UK competitions programmes in all nations and regions of the UK we can therefore achieve better outcomes not only for participants but also their peers both in hard economic outcomes and essential employment skills and personal development.

¹⁰ As measured by attaining a medal or highly commended in WorldSkills UK national competition finals

¹¹ The Economic Value of WorldSkills UK, <https://www.worldskillsuk.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/WSUK-ROI-FINAL-REPORT-V3-STC-1.pdf>



Inspiring careers programmes

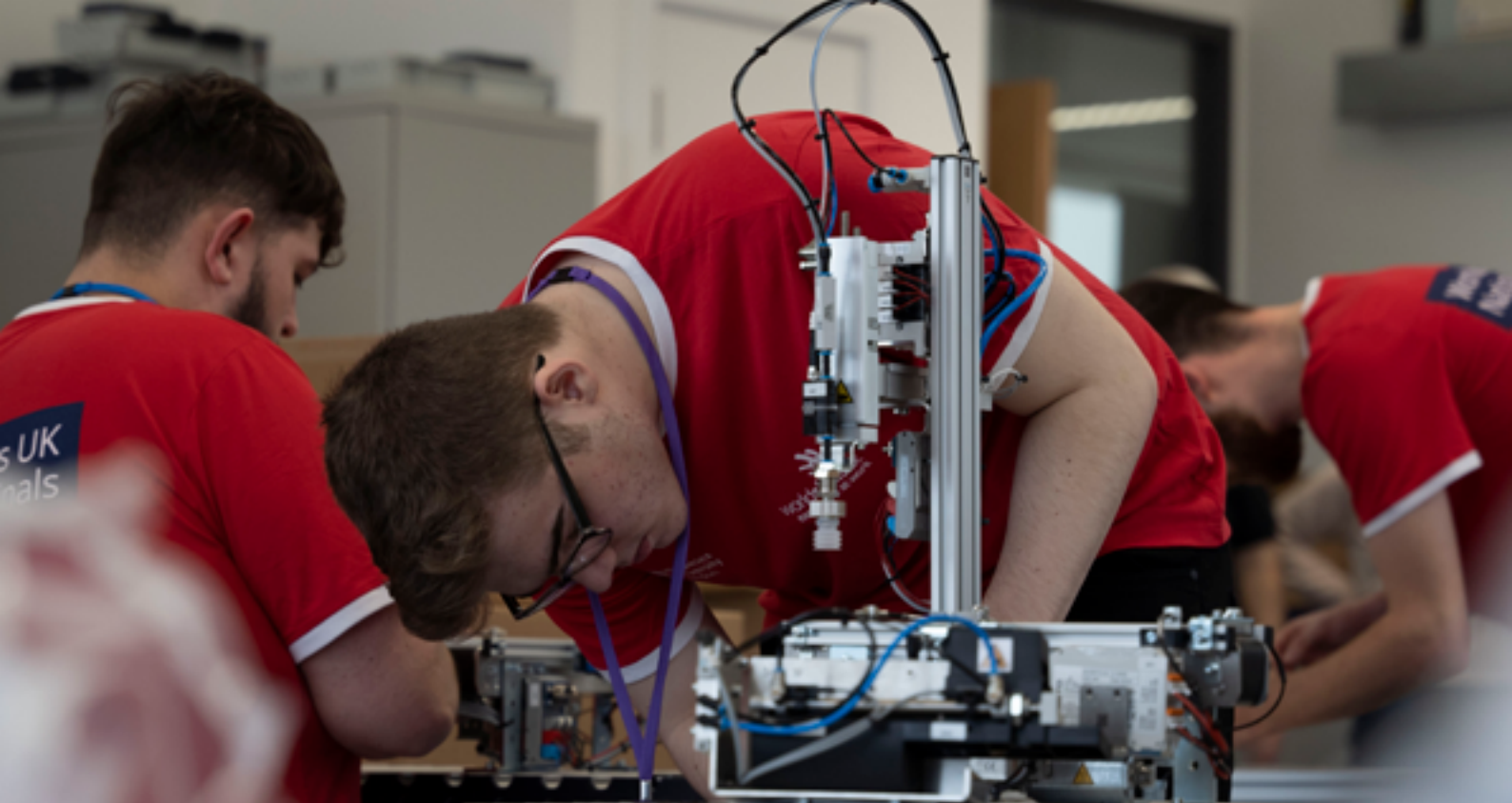
We have a distinct role in promoting technical and vocational options as prestigious, high-quality routes to successful careers. We operate a number of careers advocacy programmes to encourage young people into pathways that offer good career prospects, helping employers to access the high-quality skills they need and opening up opportunities to all. This contributes to the mission to increase the number of people undertaking high-quality skills training.

We have embraced the digital delivery of careers advocacy and created online resources to ensure that all young people, their teachers and carers can access high-quality careers information to raise awareness and interest in technical and vocational pathways regardless of where they live. For instance, we have broadcast four series of 'Spotlight' talks each taking a deep dive into a different theme, using employers, providers and role models to present inspiring content. These events were available as live broadcasts online, but the resources are also freely accessible to all at any time on our online platform. The most recent 'Spotlight' examined green skills and careers, and was accessed by participants in every region and nation of the UK with over 760 organisations registering to participate.



By raising the profile and prestige of technical and apprenticeship pathways and signalling that through following these routes young people can embark on successful and rewarding careers, we are having a tangible impact on the careers support young people receive and broadening their own horizons as to what is possible for them to achieve.





Levelling up objective: **Boost productivity, pay, jobs and living standards by growing the private sector, especially in those places where they are lagging**

By 2030, missions one and two of the Levelling Up White Paper state that the UK Government wants to ensure that pay, employment and productivity has risen in every area of the UK, with the gap closing between top-performing and other areas; and that domestic public investment in research and development outside the Greater South East will increase by at least 40 per cent. Additional government funding will seek to leverage at least twice as much private sector investment over the long term to stimulate innovation and productivity growth.

In the White Paper the Government has identified five areas in which to make progress in raising productivity and living standards: Small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) finance; institutional investment; mobile investment and trade policy;

To be internationally competitive for investment, we have to develop world-class skills in all parts of the UK.

adoption and diffusion; and manufacturing. The 2021 UK-wide Innovation Strategy¹² committed the Government to increase funding in research and development and set out a number of actions to foster innovation and private sector investment.

We are therefore seeking to align our programmes with these priorities and continue to bring international best practice in developing world-class skills to the UK for the benefit of domestic and international investors.

Driving international competitiveness across the UK through world-class skills development

Skills Taskforce for Global Britain

We recognise that private sector inward investment is vital to grow our economy and create high-quality jobs post-pandemic and that to be internationally competitive for investment, we have to develop world-class skills in all parts of the UK. The independent Skills Taskforce for Global Britain chaired by John Cridland CBE, has explored how high-quality technical skills could play a bigger role in enabling more parts of the UK to attract and retain inward investment.



The taskforce report, *Wanted: Skills for Inward Investors*¹³ found international investors strongly prioritise access to technical skills when deciding where to invest and locate. This is even more the case for investor decisions outside London, where skills are essential to a region's ability to effectively compete for inward investment. Internationally competitive skills are also key to retaining international businesses already in the UK.

Polling data revealed that 61% would choose to expand abroad, and 46% would move their entire operations to outside the UK, if they couldn't access the skills they needed. Despite this, the report finds that skills are not sufficiently embedded within inward investment policy or delivery, despite good practice existing in Northern Ireland and Scotland where responsibility has been devolved. This lack of an

¹² UK Innovation Strategy, July 2021, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1009577/uk-innovation-strategy.pdf

¹³ Wanted: Skills for Inward Investors, April 2022, <https://www.worldskillsuk.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Wanted-Skills-For-Inward-Investors-WSUK.pdf>

We are aligning
our skills
development
programmes
with the needs
of internationally
mobile industries
reliant upon
world-class skills.

integrated approach risks handing a further competitive edge to countries such as France, Ireland, and Singapore, where skills are an integral part of the offer to investors.

As a result of the findings, we are adapting how we work to help make the UK's skills base more competitive for inward investment. For example, we are aligning our skills development programmes with the needs of internationally mobile industries reliant upon world-class skills.

We have signed a memorandum of understanding with the High Value Manufacturing Catapult to contribute to the skills pipeline for manufacturers throughout the UK by sharing our expertise in world-class skills development and collaborating around emerging skills for the sector. The manufacturing sector delivers 10% of UK Gross Value Added, 45% of UK exports and 20% of inward investment to the UK. Furthermore, it accounts for 69% of all investment in research and development.

We will continue to promote excellence in skills through UK engagement in the WorldSkills global network and our international benchmarking activities to help attract foreign direct investment to the UK.

International partnerships

The UK has been a member of WorldSkills, the global hub of skills excellence, for over 65 years. Through exchanging knowledge and skills with our international partners we can help drive innovation and excellence in the delivery of vocational education and training to boost inclusive economic growth here in the UK.



WorldSkills UK has signed partnership agreements with nine other WorldSkills members, committing both sides to best practice exchange, skills development training camps, workforce development and peer exchange, research to influence policy and practice, and to raise the prestige and profile of technical and vocational education through the partnership. Building on these partnership agreements, we are brokering discrete projects between organisations in the UK and in partner countries to identify the needs of industry in specific skill areas both now and in the future to ensure curriculum design and the volume of delivery reflects these needs.

Table 3

WorldSkills Member	Organisation	UK Partner Organisation	Skill Area
France	COFOM France	WorldSkills UK	Green skills
Japan	Japan Vocational Ability Development Association	WorldSkills UK	Advanced manufacturing
Korea	GIFTS/HRDK (Human Resources Development Service of Korea)	WorldSkills UK New College Lanarkshire North Warwickshire and South Leicestershire College	Advanced Manufacturing Electrical vehicle maintenance
Finland	WorldSkills Finland	WorldSkills UK	Emerging technologies
Netherlands	WorldSkills Netherlands	WorldSkills UK Centre of Excellence members	Green Skills
Chinese Taipei	Workforce Development Agency Taiwan	WorldSkills UK Weston College	Offshore wind power
Kenya	Technical and Vocational Education and Training Authority	WorldSkills UK New College Lanarkshire East Midlands IoT / Loughborough College	Advanced manufacturing Renewable energy technician
China	In development	WorldSkills UK	Under discussion
India	In development	WorldSkills UK	Under discussion



We know that driving forward the development of high-quality skills to support key sectors will help attract more inward investment in growth areas of the economy, like green tech, digital and advanced manufacturing. It will also support the creation of high-quality jobs for the next generation. We use international benchmarking to mainstream excellence in skills across the UK through improving standards of teaching, training and assessment; attracting the participation of young people from all backgrounds into technical and vocational routes and helping them to develop the skills employers need; and conducting high-quality research to provide a sound evidence base for our programmes.

Taking levelling-up further: Conclusion and actions for WorldSkills UK

We are already working hard alongside our partners to help achieve ambitions to level-up with our broad range of programmes bringing world-class skills standards to the UK and inspiring young people from all backgrounds to participate in technical and vocational pathways. However, we recognise that we can do even more and so are committing to the implementation of five actions to take our contribution to levelling-up further over the next year. We will:

1 Work with more English regional authorities to ensure they have access to world-class skills development

The mayoral combined authorities in England have been given a remit to target skills interventions toward the needs of their local communities and local employers through control of the adult education budget in their areas. Authorities with trailblazer status are also likely to be making the case for more devolution of skills funding.

We can help those authorities by sharing our diagnostic research and insights to help them understand their future skills needs and provide a valuable contribution to the development of their regional economic strategies. We can also help by offering engagement for their skills providers (colleges, independent training providers and universities) in our Centre of Excellence programme and other complementary programmes to make sure they have access to world-class occupational standards and international best practice to develop the high-quality skills pipeline employers and international investors are looking for.

We will also continue to build on our relationships with the devolved governments of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland on opportunities to benchmark skills against world-class standards and showcase the UK's skills excellence.

2 Focus our programmes on priority sectors that will help create high-quality jobs in more parts of the UK through inward investment

We are committed to making sure more of our skills development and careers advocacy programmes are focused on sectors that are internationally mobile, such as digital, clean tech, advanced manufacturing and life sciences, to help attract international firms to the UK. This means having an even greater focus on STEM and digital skills at higher technical levels (four and five), which the *Wanted: Skills for inward investors* report highlighted as an area that needs to increase to help attract investment. We will also continue to use diagnostic research to understand employer and investor demand for skills in key sectors.

Specifically we will:

- launch new programmes on renewable energy and advanced manufacturing in 2023
- work closely with our further and higher education partners and Institutes of Technology to boost the quality and attractiveness of higher technical education provision in key sectors
- develop and share insights and diagnostic research on advanced manufacturing to complement our recent insights on skills to tackle climate change and digital skills
- work with the High Value Manufacturing Catapult to make sure our skills development and CPD programmes are using their insights on emerging skills needs to help future-proof the skills pipeline

3 Bring our inspiring national competition programmes to young people in more parts of the UK

The finals of our national competition programme are high-profile and exciting annual events for our brilliant young people to demonstrate their skills excellence and raise the prestige of technical education and apprenticeship pathways.

In contrast with previous years, we have committed to deliver our 2022 finals in six college locations across the UK: Belfast Metropolitan, Edinburgh, Cardiff & Vale, Blackpool & The Fylde, Middlesbrough and Barking & Dagenham. This means a broader range of young people will be able to attend these exciting events in person and be inspired by seeing their peers demonstrate the highest levels of technical and mindset skills across 62 different skill areas.

We know from our previous experiential career events held in tandem with the national finals that young people benefit from taking part in the inspiring activities, learn more about the opportunities within their area, and appreciate the chance to network with local employers and education and training providers.

To provide even greater accessibility and inclusivity we will also broadcast these events online and allow on-demand access to our resources. We are actively evolving our offer to demonstrate levelling-up in action and believe the benefits of doing so will help us achieve our commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion.

4 Make our skills development programmes more accessible and inclusive

We recognise the level of commitment that is required to participate in our UK-wide skills competition programmes. We have therefore launched our competitor support fund which will award a small grant to young people who require additional funding to support their dedication in participating in our competition-based programmes. The fund will help to contribute towards costs of travel, equipment and clothing, care responsibilities and staff cover costs for small and medium-sized employers.

In our efforts to ensure equity for young people from all backgrounds embarking on their journey within our skills competition-based programmes we particularly encourage applications from participants from underrepresented groups; ethnic minority individuals, females in underrepresented sectors and those who disclose as having special educational needs and disabilities.

5 Improve access to our online skills development tools

We will make sure all educators, training providers and learners can access our international best practice in technical education via our online Skills Development Hub, regardless of their location.

Our easy-to-use and open access modules support educators to offer technical and mindset training to learners, using world-class occupational standards and insights on high-performance built up over decades of participation in international WorldSkills competition and benchmarking events, so that more young people can strive for excellence. Modules also offer advice on how to embed competition practices into the curriculum, giving learners the opportunity to benefit from pressure testing to hone their skills. Educators who complete our CPD programmes are also eligible for digital credentials to recognise their development.



Partnering opportunities

If you work in a college, training provider, regional authority or you are an employer and would like to find out more about our work across the UK, get involved in our existing programmes or the new activities we are committing to please get in touch with Emma Roberts, Head of External Affairs eroberts@worldskillsuk.org. We are committed to increasing access to all our programmes to help level-up the UK economy.

WorldSkills UK is registered at
332 Third Floor
25 Wilton Road
London SW1V 1LW

T: 0800 612 0742
E: getintouch@worldskillsuk.org
W: worldskillsuk.org



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