

NORTH EAST

LMI SUMMARY



ABOUT

This document provides a summary of key findings for the North East LEP area, based on findings from three major UKCES research products: Working Futures, the Employer Skills Survey (ESS) and the Employer Perspectives Survey (EPS).

Throughout the document, findings for the LEP area are compared with England or the UK as a whole. For ESS and EPS differences are only reported when they are statistically significant; when figures are described as 'similar' or 'no different', this means that there is no statistically significant difference. Whilst the percentages may differ slightly between the figure for the LEP area and England/the UK, when we say 'similar' it means that we cannot be confident that the difference is due to anything more than chance. In the case of Working Futures statistical significance is a more complex issue, since the analysis is forward-looking. The published guidelines relating to the interpretation of this dataset have been followed.



Working Futures

Working Futures uses robust sources of national data on demographics, education, employment and the economy to make projections of the UK labour market. Whilst not a crystal-ball, Working Futures moves beyond anecdotal guesses to provide rigorous, evidence-based projections through the application of proven models.



Employer Skills Survey

The Employer Skills Survey is the UK's definitive source of intelligence on employer investment. Exploring the skills challenges that employers face, the levels and nature of training investment, recruitment of young people and the relationship between skills challenges and business strategy, the ESS gives us a reliable, timely and valuable insight into the skills issues employers face.



Employer Perspectives Survey

The Employer Perspectives Survey provides insights into the thoughts and behaviour of UK Employers as they make decisions about how to engage with training providers, schools, colleges and individuals in the wider skills system, to get the skills they need.

WORKING FUTURES

2012 - 2022

Jobs and the economy

- The overall picture for the UK economy over the next decade (2012-2022) is one of gradual upturn, but with no quick return to long term trends as observed following previous recessions.
- Overall, the number of jobs in the North East LEP area is projected to rise by around 36,000 over the next decade (2012-2022), an average annual rate of growth of 0.4 per cent. This is somewhat lower than the UK average rate (0.6 per cent).

Sectors

- The LEP area is “over-represented”, relative to the UK, in manufacturing and engineering. Activities which are predominantly in the public sector, including public administration and defence, as well as health and social care, are also over-represented in the LEP area. The North East LEP area is “under-represented” in wholesale and retail trades, professional and support services, and in finance and insurance.
- Private sector services as a whole are expected to contribute around 94 per cent of net job growth in the LEP area between 2012 and 2022, higher than the UK average of 85 per cent.
- The leading sources of employment growth in the North East area (in absolute terms) are forecast to be health and social work services (+13,000), information technology (+9,000), professional services (+6,000), construction (+5,000), and finance and insurance (+5,000).
- Public administration is projected to see a net decline in its level of employment between 2012 and 2022 in the LEP area (loss of 7,000 jobs, equivalent to a fall of 11 per cent); this decline is in line with the overall UK picture.
- Manufacturing is projected to see a continued decline in jobs (with a loss of 4,000 jobs – the equivalent of a fall of 5 per cent - over the decade in the LEP area). However, this decline is somewhat lower than for the UK as a whole (where the projected decline is 9 per cent over the decade).
- Nevertheless, it is notable that the sectors which are expected to show declines in jobs are also those which currently have a strong representation in the North East area. As noted above, manufacturing and public administration are two of the main sectors where the LEP area is “over-represented” relative to the UK as a whole, but also those where declines are expected over the next decade.

Occupations

- The North East LEP area has a slightly lower representation of employment in higher skilled occupations, compared with the UK as a whole. In the LEP area, 38 per cent of employment is in the three high skilled occupational groups: managers, professionals and associate professionals. This compares with a UK average of 43 per cent. However, this difference is partly the result of a much higher figure in London (57 per cent).
- The proportion of employment in the three lowest-skilled occupations is slightly higher than the UK average. In the LEP area, 28 per cent of employment is in sales or customer service, plant/process operatives and elementary roles, compared with a UK average of 25 per cent.
- The proportion employed in middle-ranking occupations is similar to the UK average: jobs in administrative, skilled trades and caring/leisure roles account for 33 per cent of employment in the LEP area, compared with 32 per cent in the UK.
- As with the wider UK picture, we expect to see job growth concentrated in higher level roles, as well as in lower level roles relating to care. The projections for the LEP area are for:
 - 51,000 additional high level jobs (for managers, professionals and associate professionals), with more than half of these in professional roles. Higher skilled jobs are expected to grow at a slightly lower rate than in the UK as a whole (15 per cent compared with 17 per cent over the course of the decade).

- 20,000 fewer jobs in middle ranking administrative, secretarial and skilled trades occupations. Nevertheless, these areas of decline are expected to remain significant sources of employment by the end of the decade. For example, there are still expected to be around 95,000 administrative jobs in 2022 in the LEP area, despite the loss of around 11,000 jobs in the previous decade.
- Around 14,000 additional jobs in caring or leisure roles.
- Women are expected to take around three-quarters of the additional high level jobs created in the LEP area over the decade, as well as most of the additional jobs in caring roles. However, female workers will be hit by the losses noted above in sales, administrative and elementary jobs.

Qualifications

- As a result of supply and demand factors, the qualification profile of employment is expected to shift markedly in the LEP area:
 - The proportion of jobs held by people qualified at a higher level (level 4 and above) is projected to increase from 36 per cent to 47 per cent between 2012 and 2022.
 - Workers with low qualifications (below level 2) are expected to decline from 18 per cent to 11 per cent of the total workforce over this period.

Replacement Demands

- We estimate that replacement demands (i.e. job openings created by people leaving the labour force temporarily or permanently) will contribute more than nine times as many job openings as net job growth over the next decade: 336,000 openings compared with 36,000.
- Replacement demands mean that there will be a need to recruit suitably skilled people across all broad occupational groups, including those projected to decline:
 - For some occupational groups (mostly higher skilled ones), we expect to see strong net growth in the number of jobs, supplemented by large replacement demands. For example, net growth of 28,000 jobs in professional roles is projected to be supplemented by 65,000 job openings arising from replacement demands.
 - For those occupational areas in which we expect to see a net decline in the number of jobs, replacement demands mean that we can still expect a strong supply of job openings. For example, in administrative roles, it is projected that a net loss of around 4,000 jobs will be more than offset by 34,000 job openings resulting from replacement demands.

EMPLOYER SKILLS SURVEY

2013

Skill shortages

- In the North East LEP area, 13 per cent of employers reported vacancies at the time of the survey (March to July 2013). This is slightly lower than the figure for England as a whole (15 per cent).
- While in most cases demand for skills is met through successful recruitment, around a fifth of vacancies in the LEP area (20 per cent) are reported to be hard-to-fill. This is considerably lower than the England average of 28 per cent.
- When asked (without prompting) about the main reasons for hard-to-fill vacancies in their establishment, a shortage of suitably skilled workers is seen as the main reason in the North East area. This is also the case in England as a whole.
- Overall, 'skill-shortage' vacancies represent 14 per cent of all vacancies in the LEP area, much lower than the England-wide figure of 22 per cent.

Skill gaps

- Most employers say that they have a proficient workforce with no skill gaps. However, the proportion reporting skills gaps is slightly higher in the LEP area than in England as a whole: 18 per cent compared with 15 per cent. This represents four per cent of the total workforce in the North East LEP area, slightly lower than the figure for whole of England (five per cent).
- In most cases, proficiency problems are due at least in part to employees being new in their roles and/or still in training for their roles. These factors account at least in part for 74 per cent of all skills gaps in the LEP area, similar to England as a whole (75 per cent).
- In the North East area and in England more widely, the main impact of proficiency problems is an increased workload for other staff.
- Job roles where (internal) skills gaps are most prominent tend to be ones in which there are relatively few (external) skill shortages. The occupations where skills gaps are most acute are sales and customer services staff and elementary staff, which are two of the occupations with the lowest density of skill shortages. This pattern applies to the North East LEP area and to England as a whole.
- In general, employers tend to be challenged either in terms of having inadequate skills among some of their existing workforce or struggling to find new recruits with the skills that the vacant positions require. It is very rare for employers to be challenged from both directions; just one per cent of all employers experience both skill-shortage vacancies and skills gaps; this proportion is the same in the LEP area as in England as a whole.
- Just over half of employers in the LEP area (54 per cent) report skills under-use (i.e. they have staff who are over-skilled and over-qualified for the jobs that they are currently doing); this is somewhat higher than the England-wide figure of 48 per cent.

Training and Workforce Development

- Most employers fund or arrange training for their staff: in the LEP area, around two-thirds had done so over the previous 12 months (65 per cent); this is on a par with the England-wide figure (66 per cent).
- Just under half of employers in the North East LEP area (48 per cent) provide off-the-job training, while 17 per cent offer only on-the-job training. These proportions are the same as in England as a whole.
- The number of staff receiving training is slightly lower in the LEP area than in England generally. In the North East LEP area, 58 per cent of staff received training in the previous 12 months, compared with the England-wide figure of 62 per cent.
- However, the number of days training was higher in the LEP area than in the UK as a whole. Each person trained received an average of 7.5 days training over the previous 12 months in the LEP area, compared with 6.7 days on average in England.

- Most employers could be described as being in ‘training equilibrium’, having been able to provide all the training that they wanted over the previous 12 months. However, over two-fifths of all employers in the LEP area (43 per cent, including non-trainers that had not delivered any) wanted to provide more training than they had been able to do. The proportion in England as a whole was similar (42 per cent).

Recruitment of Young People

- More than one in four employers in the LEP area (27 per cent) recruited at least one education leaver in the two to three years preceding the survey, the same as the England-wide figure. Specifically:
 - Nine per cent had recruited a 16 year-old school leaver (similar to the England average of eight per cent);
 - 12 per cent had recruited a 17-18 year old school leaver (similar to the England figure of 11 per cent);
 - 10 per cent had recruited a 17-18 year old college leaver (slightly lower than the England-wide figure of 12 per cent);
 - 12 per cent had recruited someone from a university or HEI (again, slightly lower than the England figure – 14 per cent).

High Performance Working practices and Product Market Strategies

- High Performance Working (HPW) is defined by the UK Commission as ‘a general approach to managing organisations that aims to stimulate more effective employee involvement and commitment in order to achieve high levels of performance’ (UKCES 2009).
- The survey identifies a minority of employers – 10 per cent in the LEP area – who are “HPW employers” in the sense that they adopt a number of HPW practices. This is slightly lower than the proportion in England as a whole (12 per cent).
- Product Market Strategies (PMS) are defined within the survey by aggregating responses to a series of questions exploring pricing strategies, approaches to innovation and the nature of the product market (the extent to which the market attracts a “premium” and the extent of customisation of products and services in the market).
- Aggregating these responses classifies around two in five private sector employers in the North East area (42 per cent) as having a high or very high product market strategy, indicating that their competitive success is not dependent on price, they pursue innovation, they compete on quality and/or that they offer customised goods or services. This is slightly lower than the proportion in England as a whole (45 per cent).

EMPLOYER PERSPECTIVES SURVEY 2014

Employer Perspectives on Recruitment

- Just under half of employers in the North East LEP area (44 per cent) recorded at least one vacancy in the 12 months preceding the survey. This was lower than the proportion across England as a whole (50 per cent).
- Relevant work experience was rated by around two-thirds of recruiting employers in the North East area (68 per cent) as being a critical or significant factor looked for in candidates. Around half (52 per cent) said that core Maths and English skills are critical or significant, while 50 per cent rated vocational qualifications as critical or significant, and 45 per cent said this about academic qualifications.
- These priorities broadly reflect the wider picture across England, although recruiting employers in the North East area were less likely to rate core English and Maths skills as critical or significant (52 per cent compared with 58 per cent across England). Over time, the survey as a whole has seen an increasing importance placed on both academic and vocational qualifications by recruiting employers.
- Overall, around one in four employers in the North East area (26 per cent) had taken on someone under the age of 25 in the previous 12 months. On the other hand, just nine per cent of employers had taken on someone aged 50 years or older. These figures are both lower than in England as a whole (31 per cent and 13 per cent respectively).

Employer Perspectives on Work Experience

- Just over a third (35 per cent) of employers in the LEP area had provided individuals with work placements in the previous 12 months, while 18 per cent had conducted 'work inspiration' activities with people in education (such as mock interviews, delivering talks and holding site visits for students). These proportions were similar to the average figures across England.
- EPS 2014 canvassed employers' awareness of Traineeships and found that more than two-thirds of employers in the North East area (71 per cent) had heard of the scheme, similar to the figure for England (68 per cent). However, the survey as a whole indicates that many of these employers had limited knowledge of the scheme.

Employer Perspectives on People Development

- A considerable proportion of employers in the LEP area use external providers to deliver training (38 per cent), although this is lower than in England as a whole (45 per cent). The proportion using internal training provision is the same as the England-wide figure (55 per cent).
- Employers most commonly look to private providers (private sector training firms or third sector providers) when they are looking outside of their own organisation to deliver training: 35 per cent of all employers in the LEP area engaged the services of private providers (lower than the England-wide figure – 41 per cent), while only six per cent used FE Colleges and four per cent HEIs (similar to the figures for the whole of England). The survey as a whole indicates that the gap between use of private and public provision has widened in recent years.
- Around a quarter of establishments in the North East area (26 per cent) offer training that is designed to lead to a vocational qualification (the same as the figure for the whole of England).
- Around one in six employers in the LEP area (17 per cent) had worked with other employers to access, develop or share expertise on skills and training. This is the same as the proportion for England as a whole. In general, the survey found that the nature of these relationships was equally likely to be formal or informal/ad hoc.

- One in four establishments in the North East area (25 per cent) had sought external information, advice or other practical help on skills and training-related issues in the last 12 months. This is broadly in line with the England-wide figure (27 per cent).
- National Occupational Standards (NOS) specify the standard of performance an individual must achieve when carrying out a function in the workplace, together with the knowledge and understanding they need to meet that standard consistently. Broadly speaking, there was a reasonable level of awareness of the standards: 45 per cent of all employers in the LEP area had heard of National Occupational Standards; this is higher than the proportion in England generally (39 per cent).

Employer Perspectives on Apprenticeships

- One in six employers in the LEP area (17 per cent) offer formal Apprenticeships (following a framework and designed to lead to a nationally recognised qualification), similar to the England-wide figure of 15 per cent.
- At the time of the survey, more than a third of all employers in the North East LEP area were expecting to offer formal Apprenticeships in the future (36 per cent, similar to the figure of 35 per cent for England as a whole).





UK Commission for
Employment and Skills (UKCES)

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