

North Somerset

Employment and Skills Strategy



North Somerset

www.innorthsomerset.co.uk



Open

We will provide strong community leadership and work transparently with our residents, businesses and partners to deliver our ambition for North Somerset.

Fair

We aim to reduce inequalities and promote fairness and opportunity for everyone.

Green

We will lead our communities to protect and enhance our environment, tackle the climate emergency and drive sustainable development.

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Introduction

This Employment and Skills Strategy for North Somerset sets out how the council intends to work with partners, employers, residents and workers who commute into North Somerset from elsewhere, to improve peoples' skills and enable them to access good quality employment, and support businesses to access a talented workforce that boosts productivity and aids inclusive economic growth.

This Strategy is underpinned by a recognition of the importance of equality and inclusion. Diverse workplaces are known to be more productive and can provide a competitive edge. A local economy founded on inclusive employment and good quality jobs benefits us all: individuals with better jobs and careers are more economically secure, and enjoy better health and wellbeing; while businesses with good employment practices and diverse workforces are more productive, and benefit from more loyal staff and customers. These impacts are important at the best of times, but with the uncertainty caused by Covid-19 they are even more crucial to the ongoing success of North Somerset.

This Strategy sets out the economic, skills and employment context in the area, identifies key challenges and priorities, and outlines a set of actions designed to address these. To achieve progress against our priorities, the council will work collaboratively with key partners, and we will be guided by a number of key principles:

1. **Co-ordinate** activity across the employment and skills landscape, bringing together providers, organisations and stakeholders that support people to become economically resilient
2. **Target** activities and interventions to those in greatest need, taking an evidence-based approach to ensure high impact delivery

3. **Lead by example** by looking at our own practices to operate as an employer of choice.

Producing a new Strategy during the Covid-19 pandemic requires a different approach, and an additional level of strategy and action. The overall strategic objectives and ambitions will underpin all of our skills and employment activity for the coming years, but our response to the economic and social impacts of Covid-19 also requires new actions and a flexible approach, as the impacts of the pandemic unfold and change over the coming months. Responding to the changing needs of businesses and people as we move through the crisis and into medium and long-term recovery will require this Strategy, and in particular the Action Plan, to be kept under review.

This Strategy fits firmly within the wider context of the council and its partners' approach to economic recovery, including the new Economic Plan, which has people at its heart. It should be considered the council's tactical approach to delivering a people-centred economic resurgence. The priorities and actions within this Strategy address key concerns including youth unemployment, mental health and wellbeing, digital exclusion, and reskilling. This Strategy is also informed by and complements other local and regional strategies, to ensure that efforts and resources can be coordinated as far as possible, and the outcomes achieved support the wider objectives of the council and key partners:



Strategy or Priority	Why is it relevant?
NSC Corporate Plan	<p>The Plan states an overall commitment to an Open, Fair and Green district: employment and skills contributes to all of these objectives</p> <p>More specifically, the priorities and actions in this Strategy will support corporate objectives around</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Thriving and sustainable places ● A council that empowers and cares about people ● Being an open and enabling organisation ● Enabling young people and adults to lead independent and fulfilling lives, including young people with disabilities and young people looked after/ leaving care ● A partnership approach to promote learning, skills and employment opportunities
Economic Plan	<p>Employment and skills will be key components to support the Economic Renewal priorities: Green, Healthy and People. In particular, employment and skills, and this Strategy and Action Plan, are one of the main delivery mechanisms for these priorities.</p>
Climate Emergency	<p>This Strategy will support the creation of green and sustainable businesses and jobs, as well as supporting people to gain the skills to enter good quality employment in the green economy.</p>
Local Plan	<p>The Local Plan has a strong focus on employment growth and job creation through development: this Strategy will support people to access these opportunities, and new businesses created through development to find skilled local employees.</p>
Corporate Parenting	<p>This Strategy will support corporate parenting objectives to secure the best possible outcomes for looked-after children and care leavers, and to support them to prepare for adulthood and independence.</p>
People Strategy	<p>Links into targets on number of care leavers employed by the council, and organisational development objectives.</p>
West of England Joint Local Transport Plan	<p>Good quality, affordable and sustainable transport is critical for employment and business outcomes, and improved skills in the area will support development e.g. in green transport technology.</p>

Strategic objectives and priorities

Overall objective: To ensure North Somerset's residents benefit from economic growth, and businesses can access the talent they need to grow and invest in our region.

To pursue this, we will ensure our strategic objectives reflect the working life of our residents, businesses and their employees, the challenges they may face and the opportunities they can utilise.

Key priorities

People:

1. **Choose your Future:** Empower young people to achieve their potential
2. **Moving Up:** Address under-employment and low pay, and facilitate progression pathways
3. **Get In and Get On:** Into work support for those with barriers to employment and reducing inequalities

Business:

4. **Training and Skills Needs:** Develop the workforce skills for jobs in emerging sectors and fill skills gaps
5. **Recruiting and Retaining:** Creating the conditions which enable businesses to attract and keep the talent they need



Economic and Employment Overview

Economic Opportunities

North Somerset is strategically located at the gateway to the South West, part of the highly successful West of England Local Enterprise Partnership, and has a strong working relationship with the West of England Combined Authority.

The region's opportunities for business investment and innovation together with natural assets and the culture and heritage scene make it a place where people want to live, work and visit.

- Excellent location:
 - Bristol Airport is the fifth largest airport outside of London in the UK, and despite uncertainty caused by Covid-19 remains a key strategic partner, employer and business
 - Bristol Port, the UK's most centrally located deep water port, creating thousands of jobs in the area
 - M5 motorway provides fast links north and south
- The area has a high proportion of good or outstanding schools (94% as of 2019), and an outstanding college providing further and higher education, creating opportunities to upskill the workforce
- The region has a strong track record of economic growth and business diversity, with the number of active businesses expanding by 24% between 2010 and 2019
- North Somerset is home to over 8,000 businesses, from SMEs scaling up to nationally recognised brands across diverse sectors including Yeo Valley, Costain and Smurfit Kappa



Challenges

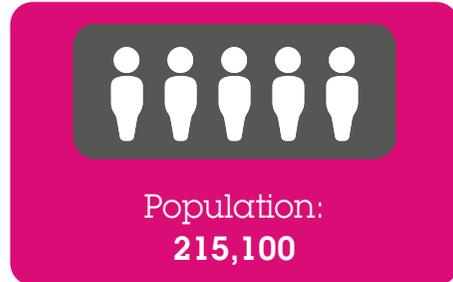
Overall, North Somerset is a prosperous area with average wages higher than England and the wider South West, however there are still some inequality challenges affecting both prosperity, health and wellbeing of our residents:

- North Somerset's population is growing faster than the national and regional average with the number of children and young people to increase by 12%. This increases pressure on schools, housing and other services
- The wages of those living in the region are higher than those working here. This reflects the fact that there are fewer high paid jobs in North Somerset, and more jobs in relatively low paid sectors, including care and tourism
- Out-commuting increases pressure on the motorway creating a large carbon footprint of our workforce
- Average earnings in the North Somerset are the highest in the South West of England, whereas those in Weston-super-Mare, Worle and Pill are amongst the lowest, creating areas of socio-economic deprivation
- The accommodation, leisure and hospitality sector has been the most affected by Covid-19. The sector provides over 8,000 jobs in the area. The economic impact of job losses contributes to some wards being high on the Covid-19 vulnerability index.



Current landscape and Covid-19 impacts

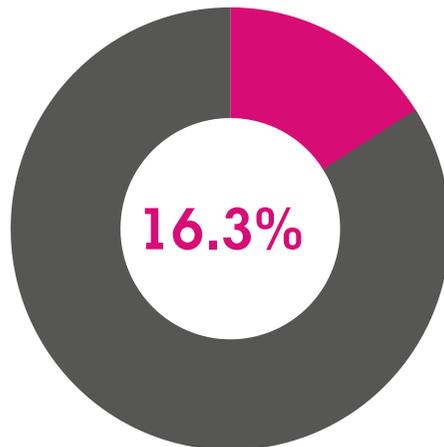
North Somerset in numbers



8,755 Businesses

19,400 people are
economically inactive

Economic Growth change 2012-2017



High proportion of good
or outstanding
schools (**94%** as of 2019)

Weekly earnings by
residence **£579**
Weekly earnings by
workplace **£498**

Overall GVA: £4,129 m
Labour productivity per full time employee: over £50k

The most deprived
small area in North
Somerset ranked **156 out**
of **32,844** areas in England

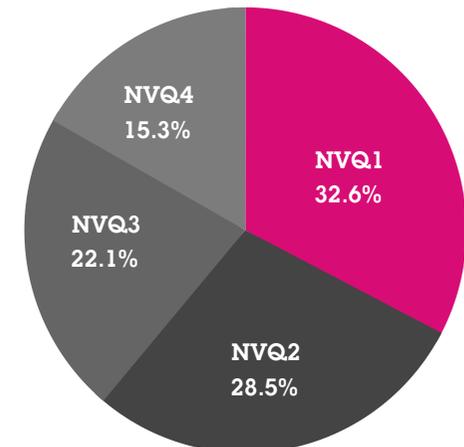
The number of people
aged 85+ to **double from**
7000 to 15000
The number of young
people under 20 to
increase by 12%

Working age population
(16-64): **124,300**

Visitors spend estimated
at **£328 million a year**

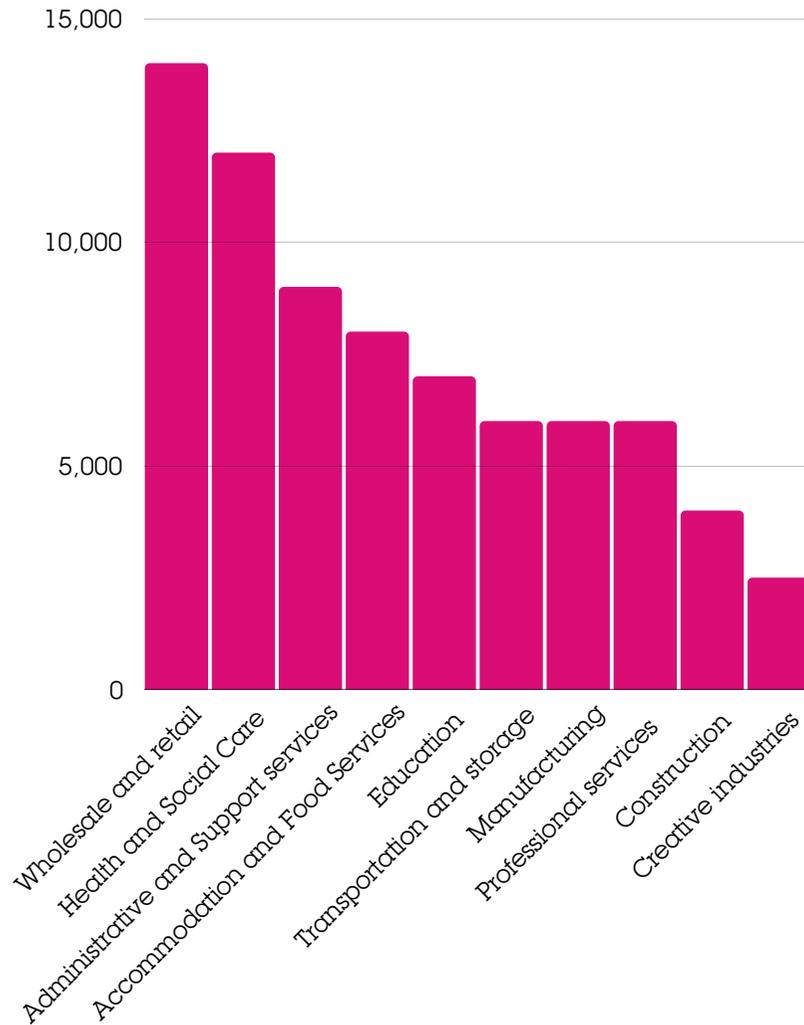
Unemployment,
at **3.3%** is below the
national average
104,400
are in employment

Qualifications

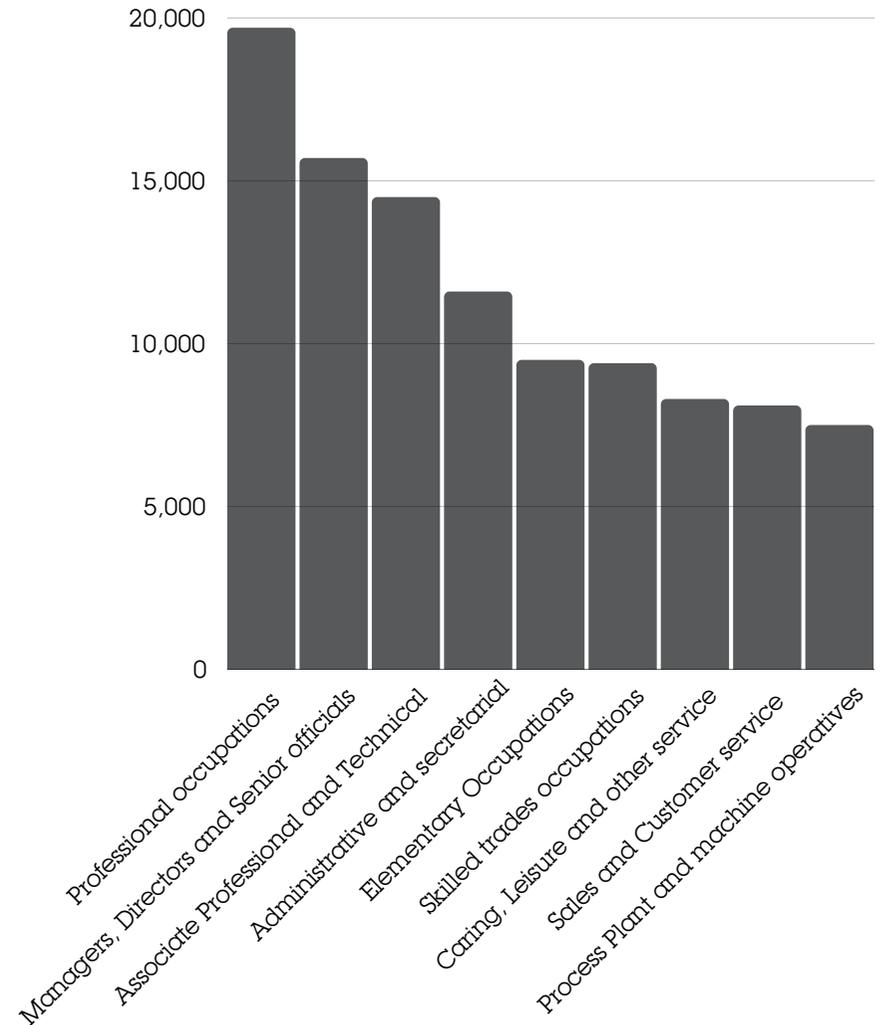


Employment by sector and occupation

By sector 2018



By occupation January 2019 – December 2019



Sectors snapshot

Current and future position of strategic and significant sectors in the area.

Retail

NOW

- Around 13,000 residents are employed in Wholesale and Retail Trade
- Women make up the majority of the workforce (60%) nationally
- There were 100,000 roles in retail in 2016 that did not exist in 2011 across the UK
- Amazon opened a new warehouse in Severn Beach creating 1,000 new jobs

FUTURE

- Impact on local High streets of online retail and Covid-19
- Likely impact by Brexit on the future workforce across the UK
- Need to upskill existing workforce to meet future sector requirements to match new jobs emerging post Covid-19

Engineering and High tech

NOW

- 70% of high tech businesses in the West of England region suffer from a lack of skilled workers
- Manufacturing, engineering and IT are a disproportional male workforce
- Median salaries for full-time engineering employees range from £32,987 to £47,394

FUTURE

- There is an anticipated national annual shortfall of up to 59,000 engineering graduates and technicians to fill core engineering roles.
- 203,000 people with Level 3+ engineering skills will be needed every year to meet demand across the UK through to 2024
- Impact of digital and robotics on future skills requirements

Transport and distribution

NOW

- Bristol Port Estate contributes more than £1 billion to UK economy
- The distribution sector in the West of England employs 15,000 directly
- The average age of HGV drivers is 53, much older than the national average workforce
- Disproportionate male workforce

FUTURE

- The road haulage industry will have to recruit a further 1.2 million staff nationally by 2022
- Technological change will impact on skills requirements in the sector
- Bristol Port has won contracts which make it a critical hub for the infrastructure required to develop one of the largest building sites in Europe for the next 10 years

Professional and financial services

NOW

- Around 7,000 North Somerset residents are employed in the sector
- The UK remains one of the world's leading international financial and related professional services hubs
- One in every 14 UK jobs are in financial and related professional services

FUTURE

- The UK is the leading global net exporter raising the demand for future skills
- Technological change will impact on skills requirements in the sector
- Climate change can be an area for expertise and expansion
- Need to increase digital skills to enable businesses adjust to post Covid-19 remote working



Visitor Economy

NOW

- Over 7000 North Somerset residents work in Tourism
- Low paid jobs and zero hour contracts
- In 2016 – 2017 25,000 people in South West joined the hospitality industry via the apprenticeship pathway
- 100% of businesses are affected by Covid-19

FUTURE

- New activity at Bristol Airport to encourage levels of inbound tourism
- National Skills Shortage in chefs and management positions within the sector
- According to the NS survey 75% of businesses suggested that they will have to make their staff permanently redundant due to Covid-19

Construction

NOW

- Around 4000 North Somerset Residents are employed in Construction industries and workforce is ageing
- In 2017/18 planning consent had been granted for a total of 8000 homes
- Launch of the Construction Training centre by Weston college
- CITB Client Based Approach

FUTURE

- Large local infrastructure projects (Housing Infrastructure Fund, Portishead Rail, Hinkley Point C)
- 158 000 jobs will be created across South West by 2022
- Skills Shortages in management positions within the sector
- 5% overall GVA reduction due to Covid-19

Rural and food economy

NOW

- £11.3m The FoodWorks project to be completed in 2020
- 67% of Food and Drink Manufacturing companies are micro-businesses
- Almost 1/3 of the sectors workforce nationally are from European Union
- NS food producers linked to hospitality and tourism have been hit by Covid-19

FUTURE

- The food and drink sector will need 140,000 new recruits across South West by 2024
- Technological innovations in manufacturing will bring changes nationally
- High impact of the new Agricultural Bill
- Need of national programmes to advise farmers leaving the sector and diversifying

Health and Social Care

NOW

- Around 12000 North Somerset residents are employed in the sector
- Alliance homes, Weston college and NCS sector based academies
- Health and Active Living Skills Centre opened by Weston college in 2019
- Low paid jobs and zero hour contracts nationally

FUTURE

- Increasing ageing population will impact on health and social care needs
- High demand in nurses, care workers, dentists and nursing assistants nationally
- Skills Shortages in management positions within the sector
- Need of the national campaign to engage people into care sector post Covid-19



Creative and Digital

NOW

- 1245 North Somerset Residents are employed in the sector
- Weston College as a centre of excellence in creative disciplines
- Contributing £650 million GVA to the local economy annually in South West
- 62% of freelancers estimate their monthly income has decreased by 100% since Covid-19 outbreak

FUTURE

- Demand on digital skills in this industry and across all sectors
- Sector is formed by predominantly SMEs and self-traders that will increase support requirements especially due to the gaps in Covid-19 support system
- IA and FinTech are growing sectors demanding development of skills sets

Low carbon green Economy

NOW

- The UK low carbon and renewable energy (LCRE) economy is worth around £44.5 billion, having grown 6.8% from £41.7 billion in 2016.
- North Somerset has declared a climate emergency in February 2019
- The Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE) runs the Big Lottery funded Bright Green

FUTURE

- Increased demand in skills in low carbon and green economy
- There has been 185% growth in the low carbon sector GVA contribution since 1998.
- Covid-19 created an unusual environmental benefits and affected governmental policies to support green Economy



Covid-19 Impacts

The Covid-19 pandemic has caused significant and immediate impacts on businesses of every size, and a majority of workers have seen their working lives change in some way.

The impacts will evolve over time, and the council's Employment and Skills Strategy and Action Plan will need to adapt in response; this section sets out the initial impacts in late Spring 2020, which form the basis for the council's first set of skills and employment Covid response actions.

These impacts will continue to be monitored and will inform future iterations of the Strategy and Action Plan.



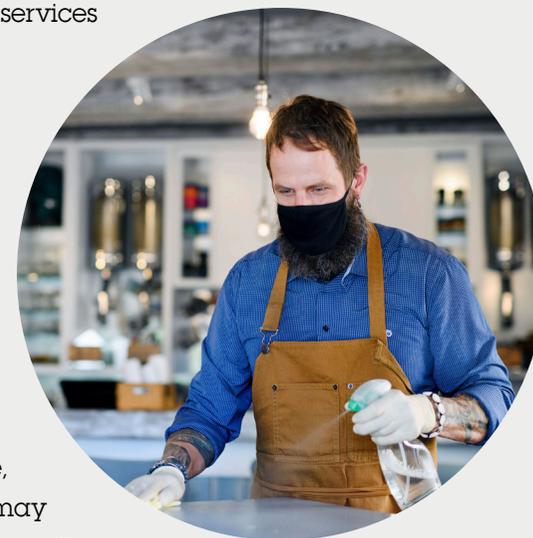
Sector Impacts

Some business sectors have been affected more than others, with those involving non-essential services particularly hit:

- Retail (other than essential food retail)
- Creative economy
- Visitor economy
- Accommodation and food services
- Construction

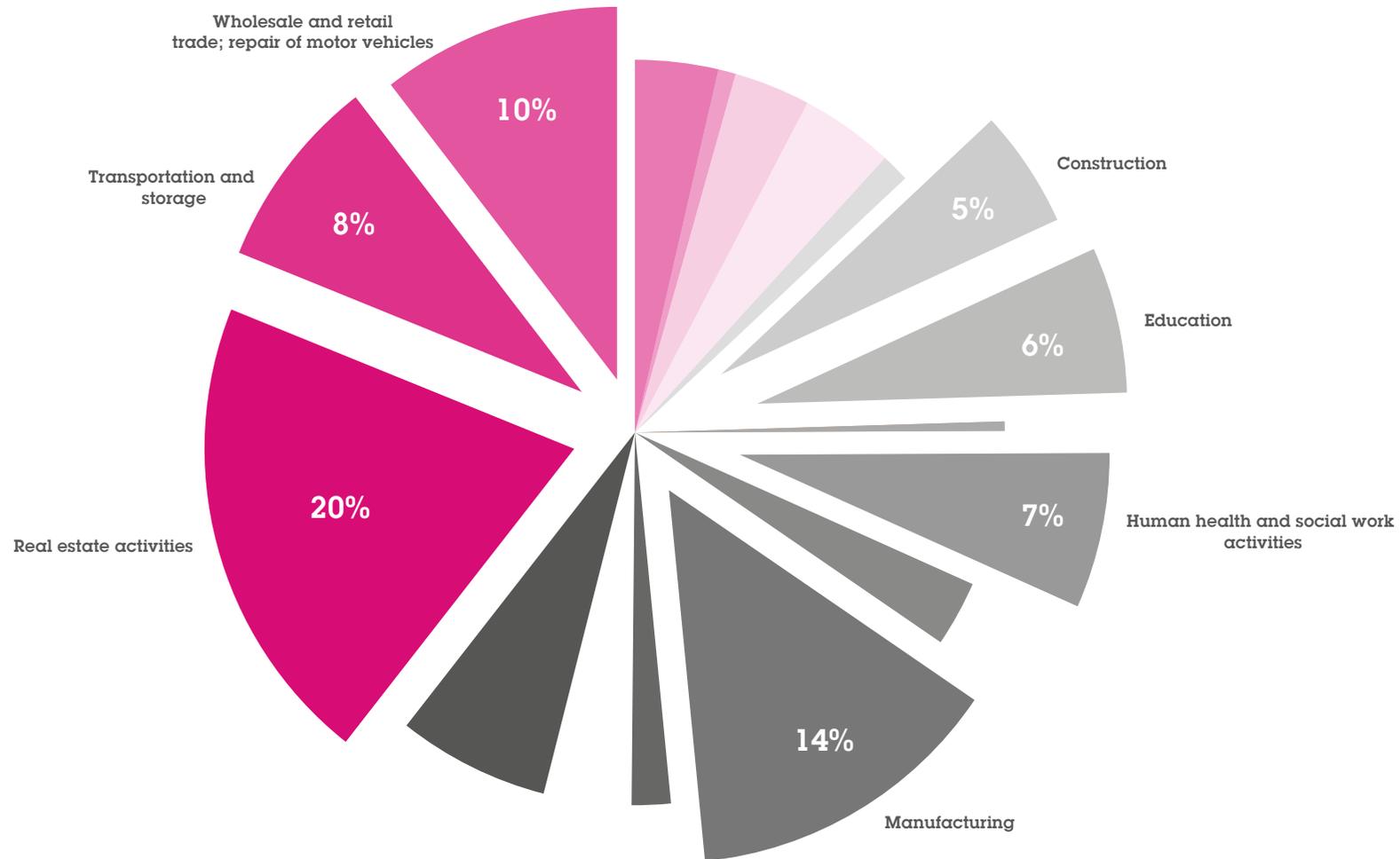
These sectors alone make up approximately 20% of employment for North Somerset residents.

For some of these businesses the disruption is likely to be relatively short-term, for others re-opening may not happen for a considerable period. Some, such as cafes and restaurants, may need to adopt completely new practices to adhere to social distancing, which may make them unviable. The most significant sectoral shrinkages are forecast in the chart below. Many sectors set to shrink employ significant numbers of North Somerset residents; a coordinated and sizeable response will be needed to minimise the negative impact on household incomes and careers.



OBR Estimate Overall GVA Reduction Of 37% Over 12 Months

Obr Estimated Gva Impact



Furlough and reduced hours

32% of businesses nationally have reduced hours for their staff. In businesses still trading, the following sectors have over 32% of staff furloughed:

Sector	% furloughed nationally	% of North Somerset residents working in sector
Accommodation and food services	77%	11%
Arts, entertainment and recreation	70%	3.4% (creative)
Construction	60%	5.4%
Manufacturing	42%	8%
Admin and support services	32%	12%
Transport and storage	32%	8%

Locally, we can see that a higher proportion of Weston-super-Mare residents have been furloughed than the district overall:

	Total number of employments furloughed	Total number of employee jobs	% of furloughed employments against total jobs	Total number of population aged 16-64	% of working age pop (16-64)
North Somerset	31,500	99,300	32%	124,300	25.3%
Weston-super-Mare	17,000	51,700	33%	58,200	29.5%

As described above, significant numbers of residents work in the sectors most affected by furlough. An immediate impact has been felt on working hours and income levels (furloughed staff receive 80% of their normal wages). It is also highly likely that some furloughed staff will be made redundant later in 2020 as businesses struggle to restart and become financially sustainable with the new ways of working required e.g. social distancing in restaurants. There may therefore be waves of redundancies throughout the rest of 2020 in some sectors.

Vacancy levels

In May 2020, vacancy levels in North Somerset had reduced by over 50% since mid-March, and over 40% down on the same time last year. The income level with the greatest fall in vacancies is jobs paying £15-25,000, i.e. lower paid jobs. At national level, the online job advert estimates show a decline of around 60% in total vacancies from early March to early May followed by a 10% increase and stabilisation of vacancies in July. The following sectors nationally have experienced the steepest drops in vacancy levels:

- Sales
- HR and recruitment
- Hospitality and catering
- Administration
- Consultancies
- PR
- Charity and voluntary sector
- Graduate
- Trade and construction
- Energy.



Unemployment & UC Claimant Numbers

At 9 July, there were over 6,100 claimants of unemployment benefits in North Somerset, with significant increases across age groups and both sexes from March 2020, showing the immediate and severe impact on unemployment levels:

Group	Claimants March 2020	Claimants April 2020	Claimants May 2020	% change March-May
Aged 16-17	10	15	25	150%
Aged 18-24	490	900	1185	142%
Aged 25-49	1425	2845	3425	140%
Aged 50+	650	1305	1610	148%
Female (all ages)	1075	2075	2470	130%
Male (all ages)	1500	2990	3770	151%
Total	2575	5065	6240	142%
ONS data May 2020				

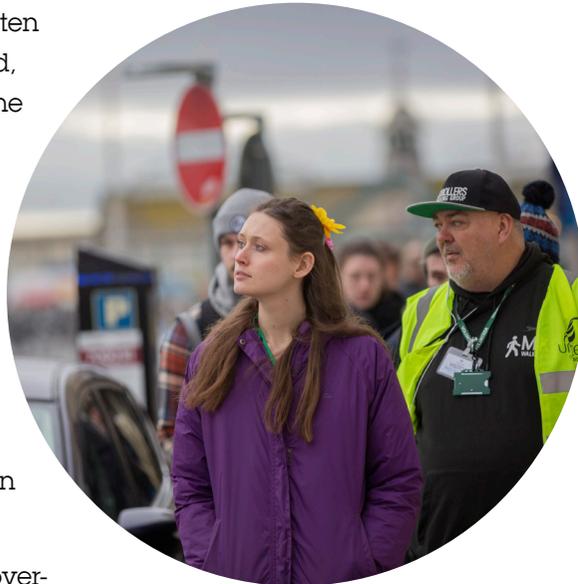
There has also been an increase in Universal Credit claims, demonstrating how many residents need additional income, even if they have been able to keep working:

- UC claims rose from 671 across the BS postcode area in mid-March to a peak of over 9,700 in late March
- In March there were 5104 unemployed and 3362 individuals in work receiving UC
- Data from April shows a rise to 7218 unemployed and 4899 individuals in work receiving UC, increases of 41% and 46% respectively

Inequality

Evidence suggests the impact on the economy and jobs is affecting cohorts differently:

- Women are more likely to have experienced changes to their work such as reduced hours, furlough, or additional caring responsibilities to balance with paid work
- Men are more likely to have moved onto Universal Credit
- Under 25s are amongst the most likely to have been furloughed, lost hours or lost work completely, and those leaving full-time education are entering a severely restricted labour market
- Over 50s were already often disadvantaged pre-Covid, and have experienced the second highest increase in UC claims. Some may face challenges changing careers
- People in lower paid and atypical work (e.g. temporary contracts) have been more affected by those on permanent contracts
- Some BAME groups are over-represented in lower paid / atypical work



Post Covid potential changes

Although too early to state with certainty, it seems likely that the pandemic will result in some long-term or permanent changes to the local economy and labour market:

- For sectors and roles where home-working is possible, increasing numbers of people and businesses may adopt flexible working permanently
- Online retailers and other services such as online food deliveries have seen a big upsurge: this may become the norm, reducing jobs in high street retail and cafes/restaurants, and increasing in roles such as delivery drivers
- Many businesses will need to cut costs if they are to survive, making redundancies likely to continue over a long period, not just in the short term
- There may be large-scale investment in infrastructure from government to stimulate the economy, providing employment in construction and related sectors
- Uncertainty will remain for some time, requiring businesses and individuals to be flexible and resilient.



Current employment and skills landscape

Residents' journey

Schools

- Schools and colleges provide careers advice, for the school leavers.
- Enterprise Coordinators and Enterprise Advisers are working with schools to develop employer engagement plans
- WECA Carrers Hub

GAP: Independent CEIAG linked to the functional economic and market area (West of England), ensuring people moving into post 16 provision are aware of the links between their HE/FE choices and job opportunities

Post 16 provision

There is a wide range of provision starting with Weston college and a number of six form providers offering:

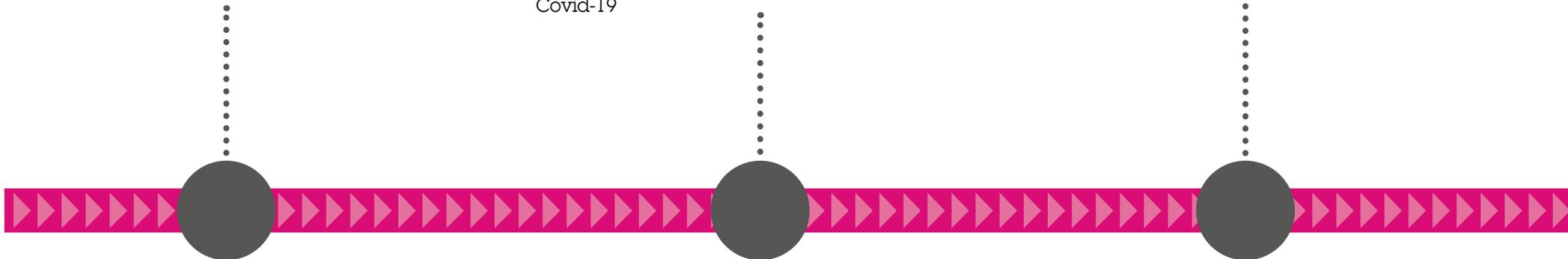
- Apprenticeships
- A-Levels, T-Levels
- Traineeships, Industrial placements

GAP: Effective pathways into Higher and Further education, increase in Apprenticeships numbers Alternative business led provision due to decreased Apprenticeships numbers as a result of Covid-19

Youth Employment Services

Employment support for 16-17 year old who are Not in Education Employment or Training (NEET) delivered by North Somerset Council

GAP: Coordinated CEIAG services providing clear pathways into employment Lack of 1-2-1 support into employment for young people challenged by loss of job opportunities due to Covid-19



Leaving Care Team

The Leaving Care and After Care Team has a lead role in ensuring that young people leaving care, have the same opportunities as their peers and that they receive additional support to achieve these same ambitions.

The service is delivered by North Somerset Council

GAP: Coordinated CEIAG services providing clear pathways into employment
Lack of 1-2-1 support

Out of work support for 19+

North Somerset has a range of learning, skills and wellbeing services, supporting residents in to employment.

Delivered by partners:

- Department for Work and Pensions
- Weston College
- West of England Works/ Team North Somerset & partners
- Workforce for the future/ West of England Combined Authority
- Alliance Community Investment Team
- National Career services

Delivered by North Somerset Council:

- Community Learning
- High Impact Families
- Libraries

Commissioned by North Somerset Council: VANS

GAP: Coordinated approach to engage those harder to reach
Lack of funding for Covid-19 effected UC claimants

In work support

The region has a range of services providing in-work support for those on low income by delivering learning and development opportunities for our residents.

Delivered by partners:

- Serco
- Weston College
- N-gaged

National programmes delivered by NSC:

- Disability Confident
- Employers for carers

GAP: Clear career pathways for those on low income
employment Lack of 1-2-1 support into employment for young people challenged by loss of job opportunities due to Covid-19

Independent living and secured sustainable employment

Businesses' journey

Skills Needs

North Somerset has a number of services supporting start-ups, SMEs and larger employers in identifying skills required for starting or extending the business

Delivered by partners:

- Serco - Skills support for the workforce
- Weston College
- Growth Hub and Invest Bristol and Bath

Delivered by North Somerset Council:

- Economic Development Team - In North Somerset
- Community Learning

Commissioned by North Somerset Council: NSEA

GAP: Consistent employer engagement with schools, colleges and other training providers

Recruiting talent

The region benefits from highly qualified workforce, an expanding student population together with unemployed and under-employed individuals of all skills levels.

A number of local businesses are supporting schools with CEIAG, offering traineeships and work experience for those with barriers to employment to develop a workforce of the future.

GAP: Robust Careers, Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) service and coordinated Employer engagement programmes

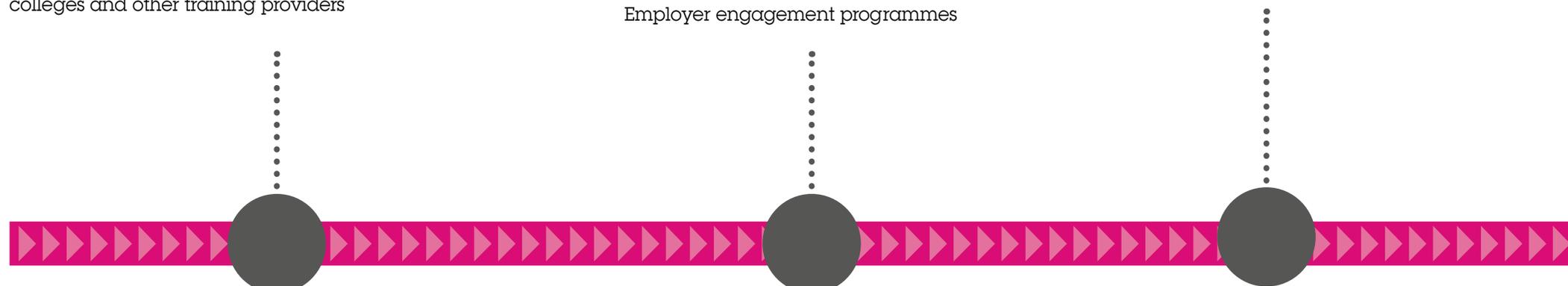
Retaining Talent

The region has a range of services providing inwork support offering learning and development opportunities and supporting business in creating an inclusive and fair organisation and increase productivity and efficiency

Delivered by partners:

- Serco
- Weston College
- N-gaged
- Growth Hub

GAP: Clear career pathways for SMEs, self-employed and those in low-paid jobs



Responding to change in skills needs generated through new technologies, new sectors, new employers

North Somerset Council wants to create an environment which is at the forefront of innovation, adoption of technology and productivity and this will require investment in skills. This will include liaison with employers, innovations specialists at the regional level, sectors groups, Business Ambassadors and government specialists to understand future trends

Tackling the productivity challenge

The Productivity challenge is caused by slow uptake of technology and modern management practices and a lack of diversity of entrepreneurship within the region.

Current North Somerset programmes include:

- Universal Business Support
- Creative Scale up Programme
- Growth Hub support
- North Somerset Libraries

GAP: North Somerset is currently not able to access WECA's investment fund

Successful business expansion

Action Plan

1. Choose your Future: empower young people to achieve their potential

Why do we want it?

The population of North Somerset is growing faster than the rest of England or the South West, with a 16.3% increase from 2012 to 2017. Within this growth are demographic trends which cause economic challenges:

- Under 25s are one of the most affected cohorts by Covid-19, due to the reduction in job opportunities in entry-level roles in sectors including retail, hospitality and leisure
- Other entry points into employment may reduce due to Covid-19 and recession, e.g. work experience, internships and volunteering
- The number of school-age children and young people aged under 20 is expected to increase by 12% by 2041, putting pressure on schools
- Many young people do not return to North Somerset after Higher Education, so there is a shortage of young people in the working age population, causing an imbalance
- A higher proportion of young people than usual may seek to enter Higher Education to avoid entering the labour market during recession, reducing new entrants at the entry-level end of the labour market
- 96% of young people at the end of Key Stage 4 move on to sustained education or employment, however only 5% move on

to Apprenticeships.¹ The number of apprenticeship vacancies has been hit hard by Covid-19, and may struggle to recover through the recession, despite national interventions

- Young people need information about and skills for emerging roles and sectors, such as tech and digital, to be able to respond to the changing labour market.

What is happening already?

- Comprehensive post 16 provision including A-Levels, T-Levels and Apprenticeships delivered by Weston college and a range of higher education courses by University Centre Weston
- North Somerset Council Post-16 Team provide one-to-one support for NEET 16 and 17-year-olds, via a drop-in service, phone and online
- Big Bang Fair @Weston is a regional science and engineering fair for students and families. It allows a variety of employers to showcase a series of hands-on activities, interactive workshops and exciting demonstrations suitable for all ages. It aims to inspire younger generations to learn about STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) and showcases the breadth of career opportunities across the sector.
- Achieving Aspirations project to support care leavers into employment has successfully engaged 57 individuals into progression opportunities



¹ [Evidence\Destinations of KS4 and 16 to 18 students 2018 - key stage 4 local authority and parliamentary constituency tables\(1\).ods](#)

- North Somerset Community Learning's Family Learning provision works with parents and schools to develop essential parenting skills to enable young people to achieve their full potential. The service has engaged 64 parents in the academic year 2018/2019
- Funding secured to purchase laptops for care leavers from Quartet Community Foundation to support them complete their college courses or apprenticeship modules when colleges moved to on-line provision following by Covid-19 lock down. Since the expansion of the educational bursary went live at the end of March, we have been able to support 20 Care Leavers with the purchase of IT equipment.

What's next?

Priorities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Retain and nurture talent ● Empower disadvantaged young people into education, employment and volunteering ● Expand HE/FE provision across North Somerset

Core Actions	Measures	Baseline June 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Employer engagement to generate opportunities for young people at school to learn about and experience work, and to promote and create more apprenticeships ● Develop North Somerset Council's own practice as an employer to offer more employment-related opportunities to young people, including work experience, industrial placements, apprenticeships and a graduate programme ● Work within the council and with partners to provide employability support and volunteering opportunities for young people, and improve young peoples' digital inclusion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reduction in NEET rate 19-24 ● Increase in young people starting apprenticeships 16-19 ● Grade 5 or better in English & Maths GCSEs at end of Key Stage 4 ● Destination data for school leavers at the end of Key Stage 4 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 5.9% NEET aged 19-24 ● 5.2% 16-17 are in apprenticeships ● 2.5% 16-24 entered apprenticeships in 2019/2020 with only 25% achievement rate ● 42% pupils achieved Grade 5 or better in English & Maths GCSEs at end of Key Stage 4 in 2019

2. Moving Up: Address under-employment and provide progression pathways

Why do we want it?

Overall, North Somerset is a prosperous area. Average earnings are close to the national average, and well above the regional average.

However, there are still challenges to be addressed in order to overcome under-employment and provide progression pathways:

- People get stuck in low-paid jobs for a number of personal and structural reasons, facing multiple barriers to in-work progression
- The benefits to employers of investing in training and skills development for their staff are not universally known, meaning employer investment in learning and progression and their associated gains as a business, can be limited
- The region has a growing trend in certain sectors of a 'gig economy' model, with a prevalence of features such as zero hours contracts, for example in hospitality, tourism and visitor sectors, which can lead to economic insecurity due to fluctuating income and low rates of pay
- These sectors have been among the most affected by Covid-19, raising the number of redundancies in the region,² and compounding the negative impact on many workers already experiencing insecurity and in-work poverty
- The number of Universal Credit claimants increased dramatically due to Covid-19. In April 2020, Weston-super-Mare Jobcentre Plus had

nearly 9,000 on UC, and Clevedon had 2,884, a total of 11,791. The total in May rose to 12,119. This means a large number of people will require additional employment support³

- People seeking progression, additional hours or better paid work are likely to need information, advice and guidance to negotiate a changing labour market. The impacts of Covid-19 will reduce career opportunities in some sectors such as hospitality and tourism, and open up new ones elsewhere. People may need help to identify suitable pathways, for example workers who have been in the same sector or role for many years may be unaware of the best way to progress, particularly in a new sector
- Entry to new and growth sectors such as technology or social care may require new skills, and in many cases improved and updated basic skills such as digital literacy. Employers, education and training providers, employment support organisations and the council all have a role to play in identifying where these new opportunities lie, and what provision will be needed to upskill or retrain people to secure new careers

What is happening already?

- **Skills Support for the Workforce** – SERCO & Weston College: programme designed to upskill employees of small-to-medium enterprises (SMEs) based in North Somerset with the skills required to grow the business.
- **Thrive West Programme** is a new support programme that will be offered to North Somerset businesses to help improve mental health and wellbeing for employees, and address some of the problems arising from the Covid-19 pandemic.

² <U:\ED\Covid-19\briefing-coronavirus-impact-on-employment-local-areas.pdf>
³ <http://dwp-stats.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=f90fb305d8da4eb3970812b3199cf489>

- **Weston College** adult learning offer including distance learning, retraining and unemployment support
- **CITB Client Based Approach:** North Somerset Council was accredited by CiTB in November 2019 to enable us to support local people into employment. By creating a partnership between us and developers we can:
 - Create more local jobs for our residents
 - Create more training opportunities
 - Provide career pathways within the construction industry
 - Increase the number of projects to benefit our communities

What's next?

Priorities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Tackle low pay and precarious employment ● Provide support for workers to overcome barriers to career progression ● Support residents affected by Covid-19 to explore and enter new careers through advice and training

Core Actions	Measures	Baseline June 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Promote Good Work to key employment sectors locally, to improve employment opportunities and increase business productivity and quality <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Encourage and support employers to provide, and workers to access, progression opportunities, including local training provision ● Encourage and support employers to recruit and promote a diverse workforce, considering age, disability, gender and ethnicity ● Improve North Somerset Council's own practices on Good Work, diversity and progression 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Average earnings of residents in work increases ● Number of Universal Credit Claimants decreases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● FT average £522 per week ● 12,119 UC claimants at 16 June 2020

3. Get In and Get On: Into work support for those with barriers to employment and reduce inequalities

Why do we want it?

Although the unemployment rate in North Somerset (5% of working age population claiming unemployment benefits⁴) is lower than across Great Britain the number of unemployed and economically inactive remains high due to areas of concentrated deprivation⁵

- North Somerset has areas at the extremes of wealth and deprivation, including some particularly deprived wards in Weston-super-Mare, Worle and Pill. This leads to high demand for health and social care services, as well as other impacts of economic insecurity such as debt
- According to the Covid-19 vulnerability index developed by the Red Cross, several areas within North Somerset score highly (Weston Town Centre, Pill, Banwell and Congresbury⁶), indicating high levels of health, economic and social vulnerability amongst residents
- Prior to Covid-19, North Somerset had higher than national levels of residents with mental health issues, often in areas with higher levels of deprivation. The number is likely to grow due to self-isolation, increased social exclusion and loneliness as a result of Covid-19⁷
- All of these factors make it more challenging for affected residents to find and sustain good quality employment, and inequalities stemming

from, for example, disability or age, can compound the issue

- People with skills and potential are therefore excluded from the labour market and the positive benefits that good quality work can offer, and employers are missing out on local talent
- There will be significant need for careers information, advice and guidance for both the newly unemployed and those who have been out of work for an extended period. To be effective this IAG will need to include accurate, detailed and timely labour market information to identify where there are vacancies, now and in the future
- Some people may need new or updated skills to enter work; this could be basic skills, digital skills or more tailored sector-specific skills if they are entering a new sector post-Covid. Again, up-to-date and tailored careers information, advice and guidance will be needed to identify skills needs and signpost people towards suitable provision, and ensure that people are given skills in demand from employers.



4 <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157351/report.aspx?town=north%20somerset>

5 <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157351/report.aspx>

6 <https://ocsi.uk/2020/04/01/covid-19-vulnerability-index-and-data-download/>

7 <https://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/mental-health-of-adults-and-older-people-chapter.pdf>

What is happening already?

- **CITB Client Based Approach:** North Somerset Council was accredited by CiTB in November 2019 to enable us to support our residents into employment. By creating a partnership between us and developers we can:
 - Create more local jobs for our residents
 - Provide support for schools and colleges
 - Create more training opportunities
 - Increase the number of projects to benefit our communities
- North Somerset Council has a **Disability Confident Leader status**. This enables us to draw from the widest possible pool of talent, and secure, retain and develop disabled staff who are skilled, loyal and hard-working. We also act as a champion within our local and business communities
- **Team North Somerset (TNS)** is a unique and pioneering partnership of several high-profile organisations in North Somerset, including Weston College, North Somerset Council and Alliance Living Care. The aim of TNS is to support the most vulnerable and disadvantaged people in our communities to secure sustainable employment



- **The West of England Works** project is a partnership which aims to help unemployed and economically inactive people in the West of England find employment. Led by Weston College, the partnership includes a range of voluntary and community organisations based in Bristol, North Somerset, South Gloucestershire, and Bath and North East Somerset. It supports young people and adults to gain employment through a community-based support programme
- West of England Combined Authority (WECA) commissioned a report looking at **careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG)** in all its forms in the West of England region. The aim of this study is to understand the relevant careers provision in the region, what works well and where there are gaps in support, and to develop a coordinated CEIAG approach in the West of England
- During the Covid-19 outbreak the **North Somerset Economy Team** has created a designated portal listing job opportunities, employability and wellbeing support for residents affected by the pandemic.⁸
- North Somerset Council has **Employers for Carers** membership that provides carers with extra support in their employment.



Priorities

- Support residents from locations with higher levels of deprivation
- Support people with barriers to employment
- Work within the council and with employers and other partners to break down barriers to inclusion and equality

Core Actions	Measures	Baseline June 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Working with partners, target areas of high deprivation to address economic inequalities: dedicated employer engagement, delivery of support and training via local services such as libraries, mapping of existing provision to identify gaps, improved digital inclusion, providing volunteering opportunities ● Maximise the benefits and outcomes for disadvantaged groups through the council's own services and mechanisms, including procurement, commissioning, libraries, HR, and embedding the CITB client-based approach in Planning ● Encourage and support employers to recruit and promote a diverse workforce, considering age, disability, gender and ethnicity ● Working with partners, target those most affected by Covid-19, or with specific barriers such as mental health challenges, with dedicated support, links to volunteer programmes, improved access to learning and training, and provision for those furthest from work ● Provide convenient careers information, advice and guidance in accessible community spaces, with personalised referrals and sign-posting to suitable services locally or online 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reduced unemployment rate ● Proportion of working age residents from disadvantaged groups employed increases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 16.1% residents are economically inactive ● Employment rate of non-white residents 61% (vs white residents 81%) ● Economic inactivity of people with disability 31% (non-disabled 12%)

4. Training and Skills Needs: Develop the workforce skills for jobs in emerging sectors and fill skills gaps

Why do we want it?

North Somerset businesses need to be ready to adapt to a changing world and ensure they have the skills they need to be sustainable:

- Businesses affected by Covid-19 will require robust and comprehensive recovery plans to bounce back; mapping the impact on their skills needs will be essential but challenging. There are likely to be skills development needs amongst both employees and business leaders/ managers
- Prior to Covid-19, skills gaps were already recognised in many sectors, including those linked to Industry 4.0 including 'green economy', such as renewable energy, energy and resource efficiency, renovation of buildings, construction, environmental services and manufacturing
- Inequalities can reduce the pool of talent available to employers; widening participation in training and employment can lead to improved performance and productivity in organisations
- Covid-19 has highlighted the need to support businesses with developing digital skills to adjust to remote working. Digital skills more broadly will be crucial to the survival and expansion of many North Somerset businesses
- North Somerset's declaration of the climate emergency creates skills needs across sectors, as businesses, workers and entrepreneurs need to rapidly adapt to changes because of environmental policies
- Alternative business models such as employee-ownership, community-led and social-purpose businesses and social enterprises could be explored,

and the benefits of standards such as Living Wage and B-Corp certification promoted, to support a more diverse and sustainable local economy

- Business owners, leaders and managers can benefit from upskilling and training to strengthen their organisations and their skills in managing and developing their staff.

What are we doing already?

- **The Economy Team Business support offer:** North Somerset Council offers a wide range of advice, support and services to the business community including planning, environmental health, licensing, business support, skills and training, signposting to grants and funding opportunities, health and safety, procurement, premises, sustainable travel business rates and trading standards.
- **North Somerset Enterprise Agency** is a not-for-profit private organisation with social objectives. The Agency's aim is to stimulate, encourage and support local enterprise, helping to create a healthy local economy providing impartial and confidential support to North Somerset businesses who are just starting out or who need help and support to grow
- In response to Covid-19 North Somerset Council is developing a **Comprehensive Business Support Offer** focusing on digital innovation, adaptation support, sustainability advice, inclusive practice and health and wellbeing support. The programme will support businesses from a start-up phase and help to adapt to the new green and sustainable working
- In response to Covid-19 **Voluntary Action North Somerset** in partnership with Weston College and North Somerset Community Learning created a coordinated programme supporting people into volunteering and reducing the barriers towards future employment.

Priorities

- Identify the skills requirements and future skills shortage for the emerging sectors adopting Industry 4.0 principles
- Increase awareness of jobs related to Industry 4.0 and green economy with young people and in schools
- Embrace new and emerging technology to upskill future workforce in emerging sectors
- Monitor likely impacts of Covid-19 and Brexit, and associated central government policy, on skills supply and demand, and respond to challenges locally

Core Actions	Measures	Baseline June 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Work with partners locally and regionally to understand and forecast employers' skills needs, with a focus on essential and growth sectors such as care, green and digital. Work together to develop joint approaches to address gaps and develop a talent pipeline ● Support employers to understand and plan for their future skills needs, and changes to their operating environment, e.g. due to the climate emergency ● Ensure young people in school and beyond have access to good quality CELAG to understand the emerging labour market and careers available to them ● Ensure support and advice is available for adults to understand the changing labour market, develop confidence and resilience, and access suitable training to enter / progress in key sectors ● Work with partners to promote and engage employers with the local higher education offer, building on the successful Institute of Technology and University Centre Weston 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increase in Industry 4.0 sector-based training opportunities ● Increase in apprenticeships, industrial placements and traineeships in emerging sectors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 970 apprenticeship starts in relevant sectors 19/20

5. Recruiting and Retaining: Creating the conditions which enable businesses to attract and keep the talent they need

Why do we want it?

Employment in North Somerset has grown by 10,000 jobs over the last 14 years, but while the region has a wide range of highly skilled people, some employers are finding it hard to recruit and retain talent. The Covid-19 outbreak puts extra pressure on businesses leading to the following challenges:

- Many sectors have been affected by Covid-19 leading to the reduced number of job opportunities in the area
- Local employer base is largely SMEs, who can find it more difficult than large employers to offer progression and development opportunities
- Employers' ability to create new apprenticeships has been severely limited by Covid-19; while there are forthcoming national initiatives to ensure opportunities for young people, whether these boost numbers sufficiently remains to be seen
- Employers play a key role in developing the workforce and identifying future skills shortages, and there is scope to increase training, apprenticeships, lifelong learning and personal development culture within organisations to build and retain a healthy workforce of the future.



What are we doing already?

- **The Economy Team Business support offer:** North Somerset Council offers a wide range of advice, support and services to the business community including planning, environmental health, licensing, business support, skills and training, signposting to grants and funding opportunities, health and safety, procurement, premises, sustainable travel business rates and trading standards.
- **Sector based Academies:** As part of an initiative to support people to become care workers and give staff confidence in their ability to do an excellent job, North Somerset Council has teamed up with Alliance Living Care, Weston College, Job Centre Plus and Community Learning West to set up the Alliance Care Academy. The Care Academy provides residents with full training to deliver the best possible care. The benefits of becoming a care worker through our Care Academy are:
 - Support with transport
 - Support with childcare
 - Level 1 qualification in Care
 - Food Hygiene and Health and Safety Certificates
 - Job shadowing
 - Guaranteed interview
 - 1-2-1 feedback
 - Professional development



What's next?

Priorities

- Increase employer engagement with schools, colleges and other training providers as an element of wider business support
- Support businesses in reducing skills shortages
- Ensure North Somerset residents are well placed to access opportunities across the West of England and wider South West and South Wales region

Core Actions	Measures	Baseline June 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Raise awareness and understanding of the business benefits of opportunities such as work experience, apprenticeships and school engagement ● Work with partners to expand the range and quality of training opportunities locally, tailored to business needs, which deliver accredited qualifications and support career development ● Promote and encourage SMEs and self-employed individuals to develop their skills ● North Somerset Council to improve its own offer of training opportunities including apprenticeships ● Work with regional partners to maximise the investment and funding available for North Somerset employers and residents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Productivity measures of economic growth of the region (GVA per head and GVA per hour) ● Proportion of employers reporting skill shortages and skills gaps in technical roles ● Proportion of employers reporting hard to fill vacancies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● £22,263 GVA per head 2017 ● GVA per hour for BaNES, NS and SG 105.2

Implementation and governance

To effectively implement the **Employment and Skills Strategy**, an appropriate governance structure needs to be in place: this is in development, and will be discussed with key partners in due course.

Partnership working and shared objectives will be central to successful delivery of the strategy, and our local response to Covid-19, to make best use of resources and ensure we are joined up strategically and operationally.

The governance structure should be kept in review and be responsive to the potential impacts of Covid-19.

Purpose of the governance

- Identifying and acting on opportunities to join up activity and strategic approaches across organisations and existing provision, driven by the Employment and Skills priorities
- Identifying gaps and duplication in provision and funding, and working to address these
- Identifying and acting on opportunities to influence forthcoming funding streams and commissioned provision
- Sharing information, data and other intelligence on resident and business needs, LMI forecasts etc
- Alignment of priorities e.g. key cohorts affected by Covid-19
- Ensuring employment and skills activity informs and is informed by broader economic recovery policy and activities

Implementation of the Employment and Skills Action Plan

To monitor and oversee the delivery of the Action Plan, a tactical Delivery Group needs to be set up. The structure and membership of the group will be discussed with key partners and linked to the North Somerset Council's wider Covid-19 recovery strategic work.

should be focused at senior operational level, so that it is grounded in delivery but has members who can both think strategically and also make decisions about provision and funding. The group needs to be able to work tactically and straddle both strategic and operational levels, with a focus on tangible, deliverable actions.



Appendix 1

The strategic role of employment and skills

Development of the employment and skills priorities can help deliver the following strategic objectives for NSC and partners:

North Somerset Council Corporate Plan 2019-2023

A thriving and sustainable place:

- A great place for people to live, work and visit
- Welcoming, safe and clean neighbourhoods
- To be a carbon neutral council and area by 2030
- A transport network which promotes active, accessible and low carbon travel
- An attractive and vibrant place for business investment and sustainable growth
- A broad range of new homes to meet our growing need, with an emphasis on quality and affordability

A council which empowers and cares about people:

- A commitment to protect the most vulnerable people in our communities
- An approach which enables young people and adults to lead independent and fulfilling lives
- A focus on tackling inequalities and improving outcomes

- Partnerships which enhance skills, learning and employment opportunities
- A collaborative way of working with partners and families to support children to achieve their full potential

As an open and enabling organisation, we will:

- Engage with and empower our communities
- Empower our staff and encourage continuous improvement and innovation
- Manage our resources and invest wisely
- Embrace new and emerging technology
- Make the best use of our data and information
- Provide professional, efficient and effective services Collaborate with partners to deliver the best outcomes

North Somerset Economic Plan 2017-2036:

- To create the conditions for higher value local employment
- To enhance the area's skills profile
- Expand HE/FE provision and facilities
- Retain and nurture talent
- Develop local employability and workforce skills
- Create a range of job opportunities
- Address underemployment and provide progression pathways



North Somerset Cultural Strategy

Foster and Retain Creative Talent by creating pathways for the development of cultural and creative talent and encourage its retention in North Somerset

- North Somerset is seen as a destination of choice for students in faculties related to the arts, cultural, heritage and creative sectors
- Local people have access to pathways through which they can find and develop their own talents
- Institutions offering high quality educational experiences have a presence and deliver programmes in North Somerset
- Local cultural and creative industries employ and retain local creative talent

North Somerset Climate Emergency Strategy

- Adapting to climate change
- Become a net zero carbon council

WoE Employment and Skills Plan

- Integrating our employment, skills and education system to ensure it is aligned with demand and responsive to changing patterns of employment
- Enabling all young people to achieve their potential
- Supporting everyone who is able to work by helping to address their barriers to employment and progression
- Empowering people to progress within employment, including access to better higher paid opportunities

- Ensuring employers are able to recruit and retain the diverse skills and talent they need to thrive from within and beyond the region

WoE Local Industrial Strategy

- Ensuring that growth is inclusive, with a focus on opportunities for employment and progression for all
- Addressing the productivity challenge, including adopting new technology and management practices and supporting businesses to trade.

Weston College Strategic Plan

- Meet the needs of employers, the local economy and regional skills shortages through a curriculum offer that puts employability at its centre
- Develop partnerships, collaborations and models of learning that increase opportunity for different groups of learners within their immediate locality.
- Enable learners to succeed, progress and meet future challenges by providing high quality teaching, learning and assessment.

