

Thames Valley Berkshire Skills Priority Key Messages 2018

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Key Messages

Future-proofing the Berkshire economy

Berkshire has one of the most successful labour markets in the UK. With a knowledge-based economy, high employment levels, low unemployment, a highly qualified workforce and a wide range of opportunities for job market entrants and those looking to move up the ladder, Berkshire has much to offer employers and individuals alike. Boasting 22 Ofsted-rated 'outstanding' secondary schools, higher than average exam performance and an anchor higher education institution in the University of Reading, the pipeline of next generation talent is strong.

However, below the surface, we face significant challenges in meeting the economy's need for talent, skills and labour, now, and in the future. Skills shortages are acute, particularly in STEAM roles; there is more that can be done to close the gap between the worlds of education and employment; and there is a growing recognition of the need for individuals to be in 'good work'.

As we develop Berkshire's Local Industrial Strategy to 2030, we need to futureproof the supply of skills to mitigate the risks to the economy associated with an ageing population, and to capitalise on the opportunities presented by technological change and Brexit.

Our 2018 Skills Priority Statement identifies key areas in which we believe investment should be prioritised in order to grow the economy, raise productivity and improve the wellbeing of residents. It draws on a wide range of published and new evidence, including the views of around 1,300 Berkshire employers, and is set in the context of a rapidly evolving national skills system.

The 2018 Skills Priority Statement Evidence Base provides a wealth of evidence and intelligence which we hope will inform the strategic and operational decisions of a wide range of stakeholders, to help us secure long-term economic success and wellbeing for all.

With **Apprenticeship reforms** taking effect, **T-levels** in development and a new national **re-training scheme** on the horizon, it is critical that we maximise the opportunities provided by national policy changes for the benefit of the local economy.

Key findings

- Berkshire has a large STEAM workforce and acute skills shortages, particularly in the fields of digital tech and engineering
- There is a disconnect between employers, education providers and young people
- There is a need to retain and attract the brightest and best talent
- Apprenticeship take up is low and some young people struggle to find employment in their chosen field
- Ongoing skills shortages in 'low profile' sectors could be exacerbated by Brexit
- There is a potential undersupply of publicly funded training for engineers, electricians and IT technicians in Berkshire
- Major changes are underway to the skills system
- Entrepreneurialism and managerial skills are critical to the local economy
- Whilst unemployment is low, in-work poverty and insecure work is affecting some Berkshire residents
- There remains a group of young people who struggle to find or stay in education, employment or training

Priority job families

Tier	Job family	High number of jobs	Strong job growth predicted	Employers finding it hard to fill vacancies	High value to the economy of Berkshire	Valuable to the wellbeing of Berkshire residents
Tier 1	Digital tech	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Engineering & science		✓	✓	✓	
Tier 2	Construction			✓	✓	
	Health & social care	✓	✓	✓		✓
	Education			✓		✓
Tier 3	Transport & distribution		✓	✓		
	Hospitality	✓		✓		✓
	Business & finance	✓	✓		✓	
	Sales & customer service	✓	✓		✓	
	Creative					✓

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Key messages

Key Messages for...

Career leads

- Engage with local and national initiatives designed to improve the supply of people with STEAM skills
- Encourage more firms to offer work experience / work inspiration
- Promote the wealth of opportunities available in the Berkshire economy to young people
- Help young people make informed decisions, particularly in relation to Apprenticeships (including degree Apprenticeships)
- Promote opportunities in 'low profile' sectors / occupations such as hospitality, logistics and social care to young people and career changers

Further Education and Higher Education

- Continue to improve the supply of STEAM skills into the local economy
- Support a local Institute of Technology
- Promote local and national initiatives designed to improve the supply of people with tech skills
- Provide a first-class service to employers who wish to engage (whether in terms of work inspiration or course development)
- Develop T-level provision that meets the needs of the local economy
- Embed tech, entrepreneurial and managerial skills development within higher level provision
- Provide high quality employability provision

Business organisations and employers

- Shine a spotlight on local good practice in the areas of employer / education collaboration, training and development, and recruitment and retention practices (including diversity and flexible working)
- Support and promote projects and schemes that develop entrepreneurial skills
- Promote the use of the Apprenticeship Levy to address skills gaps
- Engage with education providers at all levels
- Provide more experience of the world of work to young people
- Diversify recruitment practices to address skills gaps

Thames Valley Berkshire LEP and Local Authorities

- Use the Skills Priority Statement to inform the people element of Berkshire's Local Industrial Strategy
- Implement Berkshire's STEAM Strategy
- Seek solutions to ensure the availability of affordable housing for key workers
- Understand how the Adult Education Budget could be most effectively used locally
- Scope what is required locally from the National Retraining Scheme
- Promote the Prince's Trust development grant scheme for 16-30 year-olds and explore the potential of developing a similar industry-funded scheme for those over the age of 30 to assist unemployed and part-time workers with support for one-off initial financial outlays required to enter careers in roles experiencing skills shortages
- Understand the potential benefits of devolving the Apprenticeship Levy to local areas
- Explore the potential benefit of a 'living wage' or extension of London wage weightings for skills shortage occupations
- Monitor progress towards improving the availability and accessibility of learning provision for high needs learners
- Seek to provide a service that offers intensive long-term support to those who are NEET

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