



**LIVERPOOL  
CITY REGION**  
COMBINED AUTHORITY

**METRO MAYOR**  
LIVERPOOL CITY REGION

Skills for Growth Action Plan

# Visitor Economy 2018 - 2020



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# Foreword

The visitor economy is vital to the whole of the Liverpool City Region and acts as a major driver of economic growth and prosperity.

It is worth more than £4.2bn a year to our economy and provides 52,000 jobs.

And we now attract millions of visitors every year, thanks to our world-class visitor offer, with stunning heritage and a unique welcome and personality.

That offer is backed up by a highly professional, competitive and innovative eco-system made up of museums, venues, restaurants, hotels, bars, shops, transport operators, and a host of other businesses.

We know that we have the opportunity to grow this part of our economy even more and the key to that is making sure that people within the city region have the skills needed by this booming sector.

This practical action plan is very much focused on what we need to do to address challenging skills and recruitment issues and enable us to further build on what we are doing to create a truly globally competitive visitor economy here in the Liverpool City Region.



**Steve Rotheram**

Liverpool City Region Metro Mayor



**Councillor Ian Maher**

LCRCA Portfolio Lead for Education,  
Employment, Skills and Apprenticeships

# Our Skills for Growth Action Plan

In 2013, a Skills for Growth Agreement was reached between providers and employers in the Visitor Economy sector to support the growth and development of the sector over time. This was in anticipation of a £1.2 billion expansion in value, creating an additional 12,000 jobs by 2023. The City Region's Visitor Economy comprises, for economic impact purposes, Accommodation and Food and Drink, as well as a proportion of Retail and Transport. Additionally, the Visitor Economy has indirect impacts on the City Region's economy and employment through businesses in construction, digital, etc. servicing the sector.

The Agreement was essentially a strategy to address a number of key recruitment and skills issues confronting the sector, but also to build on the great assets of Liverpool City Region as a visitor attraction in terms of both the quality of the place and visitor experiences, as well as its people.

In 2018, it was felt that the agreement need to be refreshed to take account of changing circumstances – such as BREXIT, which on the one hand has

attracted increasing numbers of visitors to the City Region due to the more favourable exchange rate, but which on the other hand poses a threat to the supply of labour the sector needs.

The refreshed and refocused document is now styled as the Visitor Economy Skills for Growth Action Plan.

The focus is very much on what needs to be done to address challenging recruitment and skills issues in order to create a globally competitive visitor economy in the City Region. In order to make a real difference, and to show that substantial changes are taking place, a conscious decision has been made to focus on a small number of specific skills challenges. These have been identified through an intense process of consultation and discussion involving the Visitor Economy employing community, as well as the organisations principally responsible for bringing through the necessary skills to the required standards, including within this appropriate attitudes and behaviours which are essential to make the visitor experience memorable.



## Contributing to City Region's Strategic Drive

Building our Future – Liverpool City Region's Growth Strategy – is the overall policy driver within which sector-specific strategies and actions are nested. This sets ambitious targets for job and business generation by 2040, including population growth and a doubling of the economy in value terms. This is to be achieved by building on the City Region's core strengths and capacity for innovation.

The City Region strategy for the Visitor Economy is articulated in the Strategy and Destination Management Plan, where the focus is on jobs and growth. This plan incorporates the vision and strategy for the Visitor Economy in the City Region up to 2025. Targets include achieving a significant increase in Visitor Economy jobs by 2025. A number of strategic aims help achieve this – principally helping businesses to improve performance and productivity, presenting the Visitor Economy as an aspirational career choice and addressing key skill gaps in the sector by ensuring training providers focus on key skills gaps and shortages. The employment and skills issues were also reflected in the Visitor Economy Investment Plan for Growth 2016–2025.

Cross-cutting strategic guidance on skills issues in the Liverpool City Region Skills Strategy in 2018, sets out 6 strategic outcomes, including:

- Achieving higher productivity and a lower incidence of skill shortages across key sectors.
- Creating more effective workforces and reducing recruitment difficulties across all sectors.
- Encouraging employers to invest significantly more in the quantity and quality of employee skills.

The strategy notes that employers are increasingly concerned about filling technical roles due to shortages of qualified candidates, and have problems recruiting for lower-level roles due to difficulties finding job ready candidates.

This Skills for Growth Action Plan for the Visitor Economy draws upon and supports the strategic goals of the strategies summarised above.

## Our Economic Contribution

The 2018 Skills Briefing produced by the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority sets out the major contribution made by the Visitor Economy to the City Region as a whole.

### On output:

- The Visitor Economy generated £4.2 billion in GVA in 2016.
- Accounting for nearly 14% of the City Region total.

### On jobs:

- In 2016, the Visitor Economy generated nearly 52,000 jobs.
- Jobs growth over the previous 6 years was a very healthy 28%.
- The Visitor Economy now accounts for over 8% of all jobs in the City Region.
- It is a very important source of employment for young people; 25% of the Visitor Economy workforce is aged 16–24, more than double the proportion of young people in the City Region's workforce as a whole.

With the major growth in global tourism, coupled with the substantial and effective investment in Liverpool City Region to create a fantastic tourist asset, there is every likelihood that the Visitor Economy of the City Region will continue to grow despite many uncertainties around the employment and broader economic impact of digitalisation and BREXIT.

## We Have Made Good Progress on Skills

When the Visitor Economy skills for Growth Agreement was launched in 2013, very challenging skills issues were identified. On the back of the Agreement, an Implementation Plan was generated, facilitated by the Local Enterprise Partnership, to try to make progress on the skills issues confronting the Visitor Economy. At the same time, the Visitor Economy Skills Strategy Group was set up to help form and drive the skills actions needed. This is made up of training providers, employers and stakeholders from the Local Enterprise Partnership Visitor Economy Board.

Visitor Economy employers and skills providers involved in the consultation process to develop the action plan felt good progress has been made on a number of the issues identified in 2013.

- A major effort had been made to facilitate joint working between employers and providers, and across Liverpool City Region's colleges as a group.
- There had been significant improvements in destination awareness within the visitor economy workforce.

Partly as a direct consequence of the Implementation Plan, as well as the collaborative environment created between employers and providers, a number of important innovations emerged. Two of these are featured below.

### Visitor Economy Week

The visitor economy week was launched in 2016 as a Local Enterprise Partnership collaboration with the Liverpool City Region further education colleges.

The main purpose behind the development of the visitor economy week was to showcase and promote the great diversity of interesting opportunities available in the visitor economy for young people looking for a good career. There was a recognition amongst visitor economy employers and skills providers of the need to combat the negative perceptions of the sector held by some young people, their parents and the teachers.

The delivery of the visitor economy week involves a large number of events and activities held within colleges, the events are supported with partners – including leading employers in the visitor economy. These events give colleges the opportunity to engage with local primary and secondary schools, as well

as getting over key messages about the visitor economy to their own students. At the same time they are able to strengthen links with key employers.

The visitor economy week has run annually since 2016, and the next steps and focus for 2019's event have already been agreed.

The summary reports on each event delivered to date provide striking statistics on the reach of the visitor economy week in terms of the thousands of young people engaged, but also employers from the visitor economy sector and other key organisations such as schools.

### Visitor Economy Passport

The Visitor Economy Passport scheme helps students on Levels 2 and 3 in visitor economy-related courses in further education colleges to maximise their qualification attainment, and to demonstrate to employers their punctuality and good attendance records. It was developed as a collaborative venture involving all 7 further education colleges in the City Region, the Local Enterprise Partnership and People 1st.

The Passport can be awarded to a bronze, silver or gold standard. Irrespective of standard, the emphasis is on:

- Foreign language skills.
- Destination awareness.
- Customer service skills.
- Aptitude and attitude.
- Work opportunities.

The **benefit for the student** is that the Visitor Economy Passport guarantees them quality work experience, a job interview or the opportunity to secure a full-time job.

The **benefit for the employer** is that students now have a clear pathway to become more ready for work for the visitor economy sector, with the Passport evidencing this for each successful student. They should come better equipped to be effective and productive employees, and the experience of working in the sector is likely to facilitate higher retention rates.

The **benefit for the City Region** is that it helps bring through core competencies in customer service, foreign language skills and destination awareness which will help make the workforce for the visitor economy as a whole competitive in a global setting.

In the first year piloting of the Passport, 44 students enrolled.

In the process of consulting with employers and providers, support for the scheme was widespread. However, a number of potential ways of improving the Passport process were identified. These included introducing a more systematic assessment of the impact of the Passport and delivering some process improvements, and then marketing the Passport more aggressively – with some dedicated resource support needed to get this done effectively.

It was clear from the consultations with both employers and skills providers in the Visitor Economy that the Local Enterprise Partnership has played a significant role in taking forward the Skills for Growth Agreement, and translating this into a number of effective actions, including the 2 innovations highlighted above.

Visitor Economy employers have also been active in developing approaches that will help resolve some of the longer term skills issues confronted by the sector. Two examples are briefly described below.

## UK Hospitality Training Academy

Developed by The Know Group, the UK Hospitality Training Academy (UKHTA) is a Community Interest Company which aims to excite and educate young people, but also career changers, about the diverse range of interesting career opportunities in the Visitor Economy.

There are many aspects to UKHTA's training offer, but its traineeships have attracted a lot of attention. These are delivered over a 4–6 week period and involve:

- 2 weeks of government statutory training, including English, maths and CV writing.
- 2 two-week training slots in a work experience setting within the hospitality sector.
- Working with a dedicated mentor throughout the period.
- A key assessment feedback report at the end of each week of the traineeship.
- A guaranteed interview for a real vacancy at the end of the traineeship programme.

The key features are intensive, varied and mentored experiences in workplace settings.

## Liverpool Hospitality Association

Formed by merging Liverpool's Hoteliers and Restaurants Associations, the Liverpool Hospitality Association has been developing a range of actions to help attract and retain talent within their sector.

To date, development has focused on:

- Asking members to sign up to providing work experience opportunities for pupils in secondary schools to showcase the diverse nature of career opportunities within the sector.
- Challenging all members to recruit 2 apprentices each year to address the long-term skill requirements of the sector by offering good training and progression opportunities for young people, existing employees and career changers.
- Introducing a hospitality rewards card for all staff working in member companies. This will offer discounts on the range of services that hospitality sector has to offer, and will add to the value of the overall compensation package available to employees.

The Association will continue to consider and introduce new ways to raise the talent pool for their sector. This is a good illustration of how **effective collaboration across businesses** can make a significant contribution to creating and retaining a well skilled and effective workforce for the sector as a whole.



# Accelerating Pace of Change

As it is 5 years since the launch of the Skills for Growth Agreement for the Visitor Economy, the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority decided it was time to review and refresh this and the skills agreements for some other key sectors. To provide a sharper focus, we are now talking in terms of an Action Plan rather than an Agreement.

Preparation of the Action Plan involved a number of stages.

- Relevant reports and strategies were reviewed to ensure that the Action Plan fitted well with other policies and strategies for the City Region, and also drew on relevant statistical and other research evidence.
- One-to-one conversations were held with key players drawn from Visitor Economy employers, skills providers and other stakeholders.
- A series of 3 workshops was held with the Visitor Economy Skills Strategy Group to assess progress made since 2013, review and identify the skills issues that are of greatest current and prospective concern – and identify and prioritise the key areas for skills action going forward.
- A presentation on the broad direction of travel contained in the Action Plan was made to the Liverpool City Region Visitor Economy Board.

Below we set out the analysis of the key skills issues emerging from the process described above, and then move on to consider the priorities for skills action and the different elements that are likely to be involved in the implementation of these priorities.

## Employer Survey Evidence

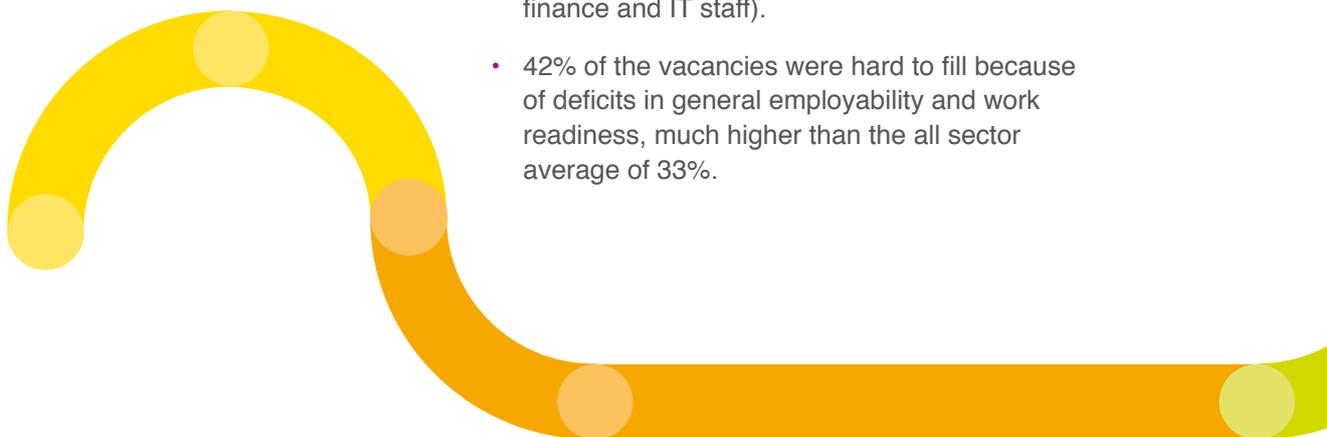
Employers across Liverpool City Region were surveyed during 2017 to gain a better understanding of their skills issues. Some of the key results for Visitor Economy employers are summarised below.

### Employer Size and Workforce Characteristics

- Unsurprisingly the great majority of employers are SMEs. What is important to note is that 36% fall into the micro-business category with less than 10 employees. It is well established that there is a significant negative relationship between the size of an employer and the extent to which they invest in the skills of their workforces.
- 34% of employees in the Visitor Economy sector are aged 50 or over, compared to 49% for all sectors. The Visitor Economy is therefore heavily dependent on younger employees – an age group declining in demographic terms.

### Filling Vacancies

- 45% of employers reported hard to fill vacancies over the previous year – compared to only 27% across all sectors.
- 50% of these vacancies were hard to fill because of insufficient numbers of applicants with the required skills, 32% due to the low number of applicants, and 24% as a consequence of the poor attitude, motivation and/or personality of the applicants.
- 38% of the vacancies were hard to fill due to specific technical skills (principally chefs, finance and IT staff).
- 42% of the vacancies were hard to fill because of deficits in general employability and work readiness, much higher than the all sector average of 33%.



### Skills of Existing Workforce

- 21% of Visitor Economy employers reported some skills deficits within their existing workforces.
- For 42% of these employers, the problem was lack of specialist skills or knowledge.
- For 40%, basic communications skills were the issue.

### Employer Skills Investment

- Only around a third of Visitor Economy employers had a training budget, with half of these employers investing less than £1,000 per year.
- Although 81% trained at least one employee in the previous year, only 50% of the employers used external training provision for this purpose – compared to nearly 80% across all sectors.
- Around 1 in 5 employed apprentices, and 14% plan to upskill existing employees through apprenticeships in the coming year.
- Less than 1 in 5 offered work placements in the previous year, compared to an all sector average of 24%.

### Overview of Wavehill Employer Survey Results

There are a number of clear messages from the survey analysis, but it is best to focus on the 2 main findings. Compared to other sectors:

- Many more Visitor Economy employers are reporting recruitment difficulties.
- Fewer Visitor Economy employers make use of external training provision for their workforces.

### Consultations with Employers, Providers and Other Stakeholders

The consultation process, involving both one-to-one discussions and workshops, brought to the surface a range of employment and skills issues, with a wide measure of agreement across employers and skills providers on the things that need to be tackled. The discussion below summarises the key issues under 3 main headings.

### Finding and Retaining People with Required Employment and Skills Qualities

The most frequently reported concerns around finding and keeping people with the skills and other qualities required for working effectively in the Visitor Economy sector. These concerns are detailed below.

**1. Recruitment Difficulties.** Most employers reported problems with recruitment, and a number of colleges were finding increasing difficulty enrolling students in courses relevant to the Visitor Economy. A range of specific problems were identified.

- More young people are now staying in school for the maximum period. Previously a significant proportion of these would have moved into work or gone to college at 16 or 17.
- There was a perception that young people were increasingly viewing the Visitor Economy as a less than desirable place to work, and as a sector which failed to offer good careers. Parents and teachers in particular were believed to be passing on negative messages about the sector to their pupils and children.
- At the same time, there was little confidence in the quality of careers education, information, advice and guidance offered to young people. It was characterised as failing to keep up to speed with the modern labour market, as well as reinforcing gender stereotypes about the world of work.
- There was an appreciation, however, that in some parts of the Visitor Economy the work was demanding – long hours of work and often unattractive shift patterns, neither of which are compensated by above average earnings.
- All of the above generated a high level of concern about future labour supply for the Visitor Economy sector, particularly when seen in the context of the likely impact of BREXIT on migration to the City Region. Whatever holds back the Visitor Economy also frustrates Liverpool City Region's growth ambitions.

**2. Retention Problems.** Significant difficulties in relation to recruitment are compounded by retention problems.

- The challenging working conditions in some parts of the visitor economy are also responsible for high turnover rates.
- High turnover is also driven, however, by the competition for employees by businesses in a sector hungry for labour. This competition is particularly intense for experienced and well-qualified labour.
- One negative consequence of the difficulties in retaining employees is a tendency in some businesses to promote staff to keep them. If this is not accompanied by the necessary up-skilling, it impacts on the effectiveness of the business, and potentially on staff relations where supervisors and managers are not seen to be up to the job.

**3. Persistent Specific Skill Shortages.** Particularly in the hospitality sector, there were reports of persistent and serious skill shortages in specific occupational areas.

- There were complaints of persistent and serious shortages of chefs, particularly with experience and management capacity. It is important to note that exactly the same issues were raised when the 2013 Skills for Growth Agreement was designed.
- Serious and persistent shortages in relation to good quality front of house staff were also reported in the hospitality sector. The roles involved are demanding, and include a requirement to understand the work of the chefs and the kitchens to interact effectively with customers.
- More generically, there are difficulties in recruiting and retaining supervisors and middle managers across the sector. Although the growth in the sector has been welcome, it has led to robust competition for young managers, resulting in high turnover and premature promotions to try to retain these staff.

**4. Lack of Work Readiness.** Across the sector, there were considerable concerns around the work readiness of younger job candidates in particular.

- There were complaints about the general lack of employability skills. These included the need for positive attitudes, reliability, resilience and similar attributes. The issues were perceived to be particularly pronounced for young people, including college graduates.
- This issue was also at the centre of the analysis carried out for the 2013 Skills for Growth Agreement. In the current round of consultations, the perception was that the problem had become more acute over time.

### Securing Appropriate Skills Provision

Although collaboration between employers and skills providers had improved over the 5 years since the launch of the 2013 Skills for Growth Agreement, a number of those consulted felt that there were aspects of skills provision that could be improved further.

**1. Meeting Employer Requirements.** There was still scope to develop skills provision catering more specifically for employer skill requirements. This included the desire for:

- Greater access to shorter provision for new recruits, with a significant component taking place in the workplace.
- More access to traditional day-release provision for up-skilling existing employees.
- For some occupations – and chefs are a good example - employers were employing very competent people with good skill sets, but their skills were not accredited. This restricted their formal skills, qualifications and subsequent career development.
- Help for employers to deal with the somewhat cluttered landscape of skills provision. There appears to be a great deal of provision available through both the college and private sectors, making it hard for employers to identify appropriate provision that meets their needs for developing the skills of their workforces.

**2. Need More Work Placements.** Employers have a responsibility to provide more work experience placements to help deliver the kind of skills development and workforces they say they want.

- Students need access to longer work placements to fit in with 2–year college courses.
- More employers need to step up to the plate and offer quality work placements. The Wavehill survey of employers shows that only a fraction of employers in the Visitor Economy provided work placement opportunities.

**3. Funding Challenges.** Concerns were expressed that the funding environment for skills generated challenges for the Visitor Economy sector.

- There is extensive funding for the training of young people, but with the declining numbers in this age group the Visitor Economy sector will need to look increasingly to older workers for its supply of employees.
- Funding appears to be particularly limited for young adults and older workers, but hope was expressed that the devolution of the adult skills budget to Liverpool City Region Combined Authority would help with the funding of more relevant provision of this older age group. There may also be potential – through the relationship developed between Liverpool City Region and central government as part of the devolution deal process – to claim a share of the uncommitted or unspent funding associated with the apprenticeship levy.

## Systems Issues

A small number of critical and challenging issues were identified if step change is to be realised in dealing with skills for the Visitor Economy sector.

- Both colleges and employers find it difficult to engage effectively and easily with schools to promote the Visitor Economy as a career, and to encourage students to sign up for courses offering a pathway into the Visitor Economy.
- Although a number of employers are very active in the process of designing and implementing the Skills for Growth Action Plan for the Visitor Economy, many more employers need to be engaged, and their active engagement maintained over time. Business to business contacts can be exploited to expand the number of employers agreeing to engage, but building and maintaining a network of engaged businesses does require a resource sitting at the City Region level.
- The employers that are most actively engaged tend to be in the hospitality sector – but this is only a subset of that Visitor Economy, albeit a very important one. In expanding the number of employers engaged with the sector's skills effort, the existing sectoral imbalance needs to be addressed.
- There was a consensus around the need for a management resource to drive the implementation of the Action Plan. Although employers and colleges – and other stakeholders – can come together in meetings from time to time, a management resource is required to push agreed actions forward on a day-to-day basis. Tying back to the need to build sustainable network of employers, a key factor in sustaining employment commitment is where they are able to see the fruits of their endeavours. This reinforces the need for a City Region resource to build and maintain momentum in relation to the implementation of the Skills for Growth Action Plan for the Visitor Economy.



# Prioritising the Employment and Skills Issues

A wide range of employment and skills issues were identified in the action planning process, but disappointingly the consensus appeared to be that these issues had been around for a long time. Referring back to the 2013 Skills for Growth Agreement, however, it was felt that good progress had been made on:

- Boosting destination awareness within the workforce.
- Reshaping and redesigning some of the educational curriculum.

Additionally, collaboration across colleges – and between colleges and employers – has been greatly improved with Local Enterprise Partnership facilitation.

The prioritisation discussion built upon a key learning point – which is that too many issues and priority action areas were set out in the 2013 Agreement relative to the resource available to confront the issues and do something serious about them.

As a result, only 4 priority issues were suggested for inclusion in the Skills for Growth Action Plan. These can be summarised as follows:

- To bring forward more potential recruits for the sector, there needs to be a growth in the numbers entering relevant education and skills provision. The numbers are currently flat.
- To convert more young people in education and skills provision into effective potential recruits, employers need to offer a significant change in the volume and nature of work placements, including traineeships, to ensure many more entrants are work-ready and well aware of what it is like to work in the sector. These would then also offer a secure route into apprenticeships in the Visitor Economy by giving confidence to the young person that there is a good career opportunity, but also to the employer that they are taking on a young apprentice who will repay the investment in their skilling.



The Visitor Economy generated  
**£4.2 billion**  
in GVA in 2016

- The most pressing specific recruitment and retention issue relates to chefs and front of house staff. Getting this right is critical to the success of the City Region's high quality food and beverage offer so that the City Region can compete more effectively with other non-metropolitan cities and City Regions across the country. Fierce competition for the quality and experienced people in these key occupational areas is leading to high turnover and premature promotion – both damaging to the industry, and indeed to many of the individuals involved in terms of their sustainable career development.
- Fundamentally, there needs to be a greater investment by more employers in their existing workforces, as the Wavehill Employer Skills Survey shows clearly. This would need to involve greater investment in management and leadership skills, both to increase effectiveness in these crucial roles and to increase appreciation of the value of skills investment at key levels within businesses.

### Actions Required to Address the Priority Issues

For each of the priority skills issues, a number of broad action areas have been identified. These are summarised below. At the stage of preparing a more detailed implementation plan, additional actions will no doubt be identified and each of the actions will need to be specified in more detail.

In relation to learner pathways and the accreditation proposal, the Local Enterprise Partnership Visitor Economy team have developed a preliminary schematic presentation of what the system might look like for new entrants and existing employees.

Jobs growth over  
the previous 6 years  
was a very healthy  
**28%**



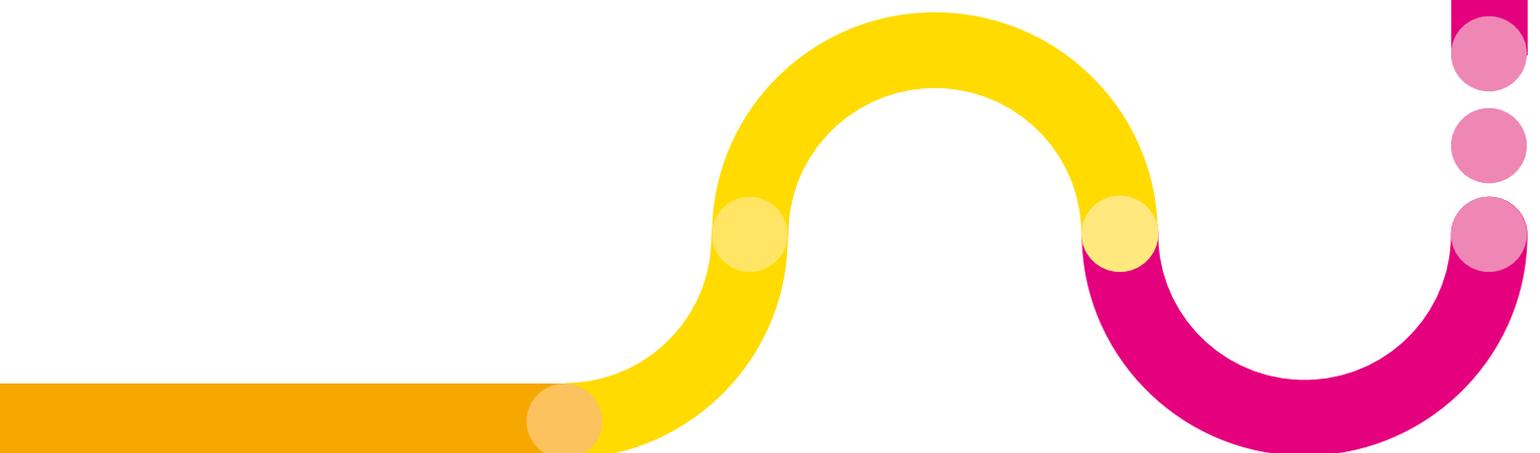
### (a) Actions to bring more people into relevant education/skills provision

- Review and build on the lessons from delivering the Visitor Economy Week to promote the positive face of the sector.
- Increase the number and diversity of high-profile businesses engaging with schools, in a way that is co-ordinated well with existing careers provision, to provide compelling messages about career opportunities – as opposed to simply job vacancies.
- Use credible grassroots community organisations, engage under-represented groups (particularly people with special educational needs, people from BAME communities and people with disabilities) and encourage them to take up opportunities in the sector.
- Share and promote success stories of under-represented individuals (particularly people with special educational needs, from BAME communities, and or people with disabilities).
- Assess the potential opportunities for recruiting adults wishing to change career, as well as higher education graduates interested in the visitor economy as a place to build a career.
- Develop a pitch around dispelling myths about working in hotels and restaurants in particular, accentuating the positives. Customise the approach to maximise potential impacts on each of 3 key groups – young people, their parents and their teachers.
- Map and market different learning pathways into Visitor Economy opportunities. This will create pathways into the sector that will appeal to different groups of the population, and so help create a more diverse workforce.

### (b) Actions to prepare people more effectively for careers in Visitor Economy

- Review and evolve Visitor Economy Passport – and then plan and resource a more aggressive rollout.
- Create a more comprehensive and high profile approach to accrediting the skills of current employees to generate greater aspirations and confidence on the part of employees, employers and customers – and to make the sector more attractive to potential recruits. To help drive this, the Visitor Economy Skills Strategy Group supports strongly the proposal by City & Guilds to pilot its global certification framework in Liverpool's hospitality sector.
- Evaluate different learning pathways to assess those that have the better outcomes in terms of bringing people into the sector, and which demonstrate good retention characteristics. Be prepared to rebalance skills provision based on this analysis.
- Develop and test new skills development pathways, with longer work placement components and shorter learning journeys.
- Wherever possible, link all of the above developments into apprenticeship opportunities. More generally, develop some innovative approaches to encouraging more employers to take on more apprentices, and more potential entrants and existing employees to seek out apprenticeship opportunities.

In relation to the learner pathways and the accreditation proposals, the Local Enterprise Partnership Visitor Economy team have developed a schematic presentation of what the system might look like for new entrants and existing employees.





**(c) Actions to achieve greater recruitment, retention and progression of chefs and front of house staff**

- Generate detailed case studies from around the UK of innovative approaches to redesigning the working week and working hours for chefs, and key front of house staff, to improve recruitment and retention. However, these case studies need to be rigorous, and show the costs as well as the benefits of these new ways of working.
- Facilitate a process where employers and providers – but also chefs and front of house staff – are engaged in co-designing innovative approaches to accrediting the existing skills of these key groups of employees, but also creating new skills in ways which are cost and time effective for the employer.
- Exploit the potential to attract older people and potential career changers into chef training opportunities more specifically, building on the significant growth in media exposure to baking and cooking in recent years.

**(d) Actions to promote more investment in workforce skills by employers.**

- Identify businesses required to pay the Apprentice Levy, but not drawing down free college provision they are entitled to if the training is between Level 2 and Level 5.
- Co-produce more shared apprenticeship and traineeship provision with employers, identifying appropriate funding support to make it more time – and cost-effective for employers to engage – including small businesses.
- Given the cluttered marketplace for skills provision, it is challenging for employers to source appropriate skill services. This is a potentially major barrier to skills investment for micro to small businesses as they do not have HR departments to handle this. Consider the comparative advantage of delivering a skills brokerage service, or establishing a Visitor Economy skills hub where providers can register their skills offers and employers their skills needs.

# Managing the Planning and Effective Implementation of Actions

Having agreed on the broad action areas required to deal with the priority skills issues, the next step will be to create a more detailed Implementation Plan setting out:

- A more detailed description of each action.
- What is required for each action to be delivered effectively - including how much resource is required to make it happen, and where can this resource be found. The potential contributions of the devolved Adult Education Budget and the Apprenticeship Levy underspend were noted earlier. Seed corn funding for specific new initiatives and pilots would also be valuable.
- Who needs to be involved in designing and specifying the detailed delivery – ideally a small group of employers and providers, building on the members of the Skills Strategy Group but hopefully extending the membership of the group to bring in more employers?

- The proposed timescale for each of the actions, ensuring that there is not an overload or bottleneck within the Implementation Plan.
- The KPIs against which to test effective delivery of the Implementation Plan.

The Annex sets out a planning template which lists the key action areas against the priority skills issues they address.

The energy and expertise required to develop this Skills for Growth Action Plan was provided by the Visitor Economy Skills Strategy Group, supplemented from time to time by specific expert contributions. It makes sense for the same group to take ownership of the process of designing the more detailed Implementation Plan – and indeed in overseeing, in a governance sense, the effectiveness of the subsequent delivery of the Action Plan. It was recognised that there would be value in providing resource to facilitate the development of the Skills for Growth Action Plan. The same logic now needs to be applied to supporting the process to develop the Implementation Plan.

**25%**  
of the Visitor Economy  
workforce is aged  
**16-24**

Throughout the consultation process, there was a consensus around the proposition that the effective implementation of the skills for growth Action Plan required a dedicated project management resource sitting at the level of the City Region. Clearly the project management process could be resourced and staffed in a number of different ways – but the resource does need to be secured.

Providing resource support for the design of the Implementation Plan and for its subsequent effective delivery should be seen as an investment in skills capacity building. This resource support should lead over the medium to long term to good returns for the Visitor Economy skills base, and the City Region's economy, through both better decisions being made about skills investment and greater levels of investment in workforce skills coming from employers.

## Annex: Action Plan Implementation Process

The Skills Priority Actions have been set out to start the process of designing the implementation of the Visitor Economy Skills for Growth Action Plan.

The priority skills issues, and the action areas for addressing these, are a direct read across from the Action Plan.

All parties need to be clear that this is a demanding Action Plan, but if it can be delivered effectively the rewards accruing the Visitor Economy businesses, the current and potential workforce and the City Region's economy are significant.



Effective delivery requires:

- The identification of and a firm commitment by an appropriate lead player, or players, for each priority skills issue.
- The identification of and a firm commitment by other players needed to support the process.
- Setting out a programme of work to flesh out and begin to implement the actions, including resource required to implement the actions.
- Establishing a deliverable timescale for making progress on actions.

Employers need to be at the heart of the process. Given the scale of the task, this means the pool of employers willing to engage actively with the skills agenda needs to be expanded.

Some hard decisions will need to be made at the outset. The toughest decision is around whether all priority skills issues should be taken forward in tandem, or should there be an early focus on only one or two of the priorities because they are more pressing. Additionally, the constraint in moving all four priorities forward from the start is the capacity - to engage effectively and deliver progress - of the existing base of active employers, and their provider and other partners.

### Skills Priority 1: More Recruits into VE Relevant Educations and Skills Provision

Key actions:

- Review and build on the lessons from devliering the Visitor Economy to promote the positive face of the sector.
- Increase number and diversity of high-profile businesses engaging with schools, in a way that is co-ordinated well with existing careers provision, to provide compelling messages about career opportunities - as opposed to simply job vacancies.
- Use credible grassroots organisations to engage under-represented groups (particularly people with special education needs, from BAME communities and/or with disabilities) and encourage them to take up opportunities in sector.
- Share and promote success stories of under-represented individuals (particularly people with special educational needs, from BAME communities, and/or people with disabilities).
- Assess the potential opportunities for recruiting adults wishing to change their career, as well as higher education graduates interested in the visitor economy as a place to build a career.
- Develop pitch around dispelling myths, about working in hotels and restaurants in particular, accentuating positives. Customise approach to maximise potential impacts on each of 3 key groups - young people, their parents and their teachers.
- Map and market different learning pathways into Visitor Economy opportunities. This will create pathways into the sector that will appeal to different group of the population, and so help create a more diverse workforce.



### Skills Priority 2: Prepare People More Effectively for Careers in Visitor Economy

Key actions:

- Review and evolve Visitor Economy Passport – and then plan and resource a more aggressive rollout.
- Create a more comprehensive and high profile approach to accrediting skills of current employees to generate greater aspirations and confidence on the part of employees, employers and customers – and to make the sector more attractive to potential recruits. To help drive this, Visitor Economy Skills Strategy Group supports strongly the proposal by City & Guilds to pilot its global certification framework in Liverpool’s hospitality sector.
- Evaluate different learning pathways to assess those that have the better outcomes in terms of bringing people into the sector, and which demonstrate good retention characteristics. Be prepared to rebalance skills provision based on this analysis.
- Develop and test new skills development pathways, with longer work placement components and a shorter learning journey.
- Wherever possible, link all of the above developments into apprenticeship opportunities. More generally, develop some innovative approaches to encouraging more employers to take on more apprentices, and more potential entrants and existing employees to seek out apprenticeship opportunities.

### Skills Priority 3: Improve Recruitment, Progression and Retention of Chefs and Front of House Staff

Key actions:

- Generate detailed case studies from around the UK of innovative approaches to redesigning the working week and working hours for chefs, and key front of house staff, to improve recruitment and retention. However, these case studies need to be rigorous and show the costs as well as the benefits of these new ways of working.
- Facilitate a process where employers and providers – but also chefs and front of house staff – are engaged in co-designing innovative approaches to accrediting the existing skills of these key groups of employees, but also creating new skills in ways which are cost and time effective for the employer.
- Exploit the potential to attract older people and potential career changers into chef training opportunities more specifically, building on the significant growth in media exposure to baking and cooking in recent years.

### Skills Priority 4: Promote More Investment in Workforce Skills by Employers

Key actions:

- Identify businesses required to pay the Apprentice Levy, but not drawing down free college provision they are entitled to if the training is between Level 2 and Level 5.
- Co-produce more shared apprenticeship and traineeship provision with employers, identifying appropriate funding support to make it more time – and cost-effective for employers to engage – including small businesses.
- Given the cluttered marketplace for skills provision, it is challenging for employers to source appropriate skill services. Consider the comparative advantage of delivering a skills brokerage service, or establishing a Visitor Economy skills hub where providers can register their skills offers and employers their skills needs.



