



Statement of Service and Programme Overview

Cheshire West and Chester Council's Skills and Employment Service is aimed at adults and young people who face a range of barriers to achieving their life goals. These barriers can include low skill levels, physical and mental health conditions, learning difficulties or disabilities and personal or family circumstance. By offering pathways of support and skills development, the service enables these adults to enter employment or progress in work.

The Skills and Employment team is part of the Council's Economic Growth service and delivers employment support, learning and skills provision across the borough.

Supporting the delivery of the Council's plan

The Borough Plan (2024-2028) outlines the Council's priorities for the next few years. The key priority for the Skills and Employment Service is to support our local economy to thrive by delivering good jobs with fair wages for our residents. Skills and Employment delivery supports all the Council's priorities listed below: from the way we embed sustainable practice to the impact we have through our range of services. These elements form part of the Council's emerging strategy to tackle the root causes of poverty, Fairer Futures.

1. Tackle the climate emergency
 2. **Grow our local economy and deliver good jobs with fair wages for our residents**
 3. Support children and young people to get the best start in life and achieve their full potential
 4. To enable more adults to live longer, healthier and happier lives
 5. Make our neighbourhoods even better places to call home
 6. Be an efficient and empowering council
- (Play Your Part To Thrive - Borough Plan 2024-28)

Our Intent Statement

Empowering progress for all; unlocking opportunities for life and work

We intend to support targeted residents and their families to achieve and progress in line with their potential, enabling them to overcome barriers from personal circumstance and experience. We will provide them with wide-ranging opportunities to acquire knowledge, skills and behaviours which contribute to an improved quality of life. In partnership with employers, partners and stakeholders we will deliver an engaging and inspiring curriculum, - focused on progression. This curriculum will meet the knowledge and technological needs of the local economy.



To deliver our intent, the Skills and Employment Service will

- provide high quality, planned curriculum pathways to develop the skills, knowledge and behaviours that lead to sustained employment outcomes
- pilot new approaches in employment support, creating partnerships that produce tangible, long term economic and social benefits for our residents and the borough
- be recognised by the council, our wider partners and stakeholders as leaders and influencers in our field of employment skills, learning and employment support, with specific focus on reducing long term unemployment.

What the Skills and Employment Service offers

- A targeted, ambitious and coherently planned curriculum of adult education including family learning. The curriculum responds to local need, focusing on inclusion, participation, wider skill development and progression for all learners from entry level to Level 2

This will lead to further learning with local providers and/or employment outcomes

- A tailored education and employment support offer for 16–18-year-olds, mirroring the adult provision. This meets the specific needs and aspirations of younger learners, particularly those not engaged in mainstream education or employment
- A 16-24 specialist Supported Internship (SI) programme for young people with SEND in receipt of an Education and Health Care Plan. The SI programme will develop strong employability skills and prepare young people both physically and mentally for the world of work. Through supported work placements young people gain sustained, paid employment
- An holistic curriculum that develops the knowledge, behaviours and transferable skills adults need to succeed in life and work, aligned to the following five outcomes:
 - Learners benefit from programmes that develop their personal resilience, health, wellbeing and confidence
 - Learners on foundation programmes are supported and prepared to progress to further learning
 - Learners on programmes such as functional skills and English for Speakers of Other Languages will have the opportunity to develop essential English, maths and digital skills, supporting their progression in everyday life, further learning and employment
 - Learners will acquire strong employability skills and develop the personal qualities, behaviours and attitudes valued by employers
 - Learners access vocational skills that are clearly aligned to local labour market needs. This will lead to further learning, employment and independence



- Co-location of staff at point of need (for example, at Jobcentre Plus) to provide specialist employment mentoring services. Staff to guide and advocate on behalf of customers navigating the journey towards better, sustainable employment
- All our work is designed to maximise opportunities to engage, support and encourage our service users towards progression, whether this be further learning, employment, in-work progression or more general progressions in life.

How we will deliver these outcomes - implementation

- Understand our communities and geographical employment base; engaging targeted residents and providing them with an individualised programme of quality-assured learning and support, set within the context of our local labour market
- Commission a range of specialist providers that offer a curriculum that responds to local need; ensure accountability for delivering on our intent
- Provide centrally located one-stop centres of adult education and support (Skills and Employment Hubs). Commissioning a range of selected providers to deliver adult learning, support and skills development across the borough with clear links between our direct delivery and complementary sub-contracted provision
- Work closely with our colleagues in SEND and Young People's teams to provide an effective referral route for 16–18-year-olds. Offer information, advice and guidance to young people who would benefit from our support offer: adult education, employment support or supported internships
- Ensure our teaching staff have the necessary qualifications, expertise and both pedagogical and andragogical knowledge to deliver a relevant curriculum designed to engage, challenge, and progress learners
- Deploy specialist tutors across targeted schools and community venues to deliver an aspirational outreach programme of family learning designed to have positive inter-generational impact.
- Provide a service to employers who recruit from our customer base to meet their demand for labour and promote an inclusive economy in Cheshire West and Chester.
- Develop and implement a marketing and recruitment strategy to make the service more accessible and resilient
- Provide clear “skills escalators” for our employment sectors with the highest demand. These skills escalators provide pathways of progression across all local providers to inform and support progression from level 1 to higher education and into key local employers
- Participate in sub-regional and national networks and partnerships to share best practice, maintain leadership in our field and attract funding to widen our impact
- Promote inclusion, participation and self-determination for our targeted residents in everything we do



Impact

- Measure our performance to demonstrate the effectiveness of our approach to funders, leaders and other bodies. We will analyse our data for:
 - enrolments and unique learners including Equity Diversity and Inclusion measures
 - achievement rates
 - progression to further learning or employment (including self-employment)
 - softer progressions (for example, improved communication skills)
 - learner feedback
- Council Performance Management Framework measures for Skills and Employment:
 - Entry to employment target 300 job starts
 - Qualification achievement rate >85%