



Rotherham Employment and Skills Strategy 2026-2031



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Foreword

Foreword



I am proud to introduce the Rotherham Employment and Skills Strategy 2026-2031, a bold and forward-looking strategy that places our residents and businesses at the heart of a thriving, inclusive local economy.

This strategy is more than a document; it is a shared commitment to ensuring that every resident in Rotherham has the opportunity to develop the skills they need to succeed and to access good, meaningful work. It reflects our ambition to build a resilient workforce, support lifelong learning, and create a place where businesses can grow and invest with confidence.

We know that the world of work is changing rapidly. From the rise of digital technologies and green industries to the challenges of economic inactivity and health inequalities, Rotherham faces both opportunities and obstacles. This strategy responds to those realities with clarity and purpose. It sets out three missions that will guide our work: enabling more residents to progress into good work, investing in knowledge and skills, and securing a diverse and skilled workforce.

Crucially, this strategy has been shaped by the voices of our community; residents, employers, educators, and voluntary/community sector partners. It builds on the strengths of our borough, including our proud industrial heritage, our growing innovation district, and our vibrant communities. It also recognises the need for targeted, person-centred support to ensure no one is left behind.

Delivering this strategy will require strong partnerships, sustained investment and a shared determination to make a difference. I am confident that, together, we can realise the vision of a Rotherham where everyone has the opportunity to flourish.

Let us now move forward with purpose and unity to turn this vision into reality.

Claire McGeough

Chair of Rotherham Together Partnership, Employment and Skills Board
Head of Employability and Project Search, Rotherham Opportunities College

Introduction

Background and Approach

Rotherham's new Employment and Skills Strategy 2026-2031 sets out an ambitious vision for how employment and skills will help residents to prosper and businesses to succeed. The strategy provides a clear framework for partnership activity to improve employment and skills in Rotherham over the next five years.

The launch of the strategy coincides with a significant national focus on getting more people into good employment and increasing skills within the workforce. Funding and responsibility for the delivery of support are increasingly being devolved to local places which best understand the needs of their residents and employers.

It also aligns with Rotherham's place-based approach to creating an inclusive and thriving economy, which recognises the importance of investing in communities and strengthening place-based assets to create lasting economic and social impact. The new Employment and Skills Strategy has an important role to play in providing Rotherham's residents with an economy that delivers a better standard of living for all, a healthier life and a cohesive society.

Development of the Employment and Skills Strategy

This is a strategy co-designed with residents, employers, education and skills providers and organisations who support residents to move into and remain in employment, particularly the voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations who support those residents in greatest need.

The strategy is based on a shared understanding of Rotherham's current employment and skills strengths and challenges and recognises the progress which has been made through the combined efforts of Rotherham partners and the delivery of a range of successful programmes, such as Supported Internships for young people with Education Health & Care Plans. The evidence which underpins the vision, missions and interventions set out in the strategy is summarised in this document and can be found in full here: <https://rotherhamemploymentandskills.co.uk/>

The strategy was shaped through consultations with key stakeholders, a workshop attended by members of the Employment and Skills Board and Business Growth Board, and inputs provided via a range of other groups and partnerships.

The Strategic Context



Since the publication of Rotherham's Employment and Skills Strategy 2019-2025, the employment and skills landscape has undergone significant change. The pandemic, the rise of hybrid working, the increase in economic inactivity due to ill health and a new government with a focus on accelerating economic growth have all reshaped the context in which Rotherham's employment and skills priorities and challenges must be addressed.

The introduction of **Skills England** bringing together key partners to meet the skills needs for the next decade, the publication of the **Get Britain Working White Paper** to reform employment, health and skills support to tackle economic inactivity and support people into good work, and the development of a **Modern Industrial Strategy** to provide certainty and stability to encourage business investment in the high growth sectors that will drive the UK economy, all highlight the national focus being placed on employment and skills.

There is an increased commitment to supporting those currently not in work to find and maintain employment, especially those who are currently out of work because of ill health – recognising the role of good employment both in driving growth and in supporting improved health and wellbeing. As of September 2024, 44,100 residents are economically inactive in Rotherham, with 16,100 of these being inactive due to long-term sickness. This represents an increase of 5,700 in the economically inactive population, including 3,700 more due to long-term sickness, compared to two years earlier. The national changes to encourage more people back into the labour market will help to address local labour market challenges and barriers to work in Rotherham.

The Modern Industrial Strategy outlines eight growth sectors which have been identified as key drivers for boosting the UK economy and providing good employment, including advanced manufacturing and clean energy, where Rotherham has both existing and emerging strengths including the borough's strategic position at the heart of the **Advanced Manufacturing Innovation District (AMID)** and the **South Yorkshire Investment Zone**.

At a sub-regional level, **South Yorkshire's Plan for Good Growth** outlines the importance of ensuring that the region has a strong pipeline of talent to take up secure, high paid jobs and encourage greater investment. **South Yorkshire's Skills Strategy** provides the framework within which Rotherham's Employment and Skills Strategy will be delivered and prioritises moving those far from the labour market into or ready for work, raising attainment of core knowledge and skills, and increasing the supply of a high-skilled workforce. The Rotherham Employment and Skills Strategy will inform, and be informed by, the local **Get Britain Working Plan for South Yorkshire**.

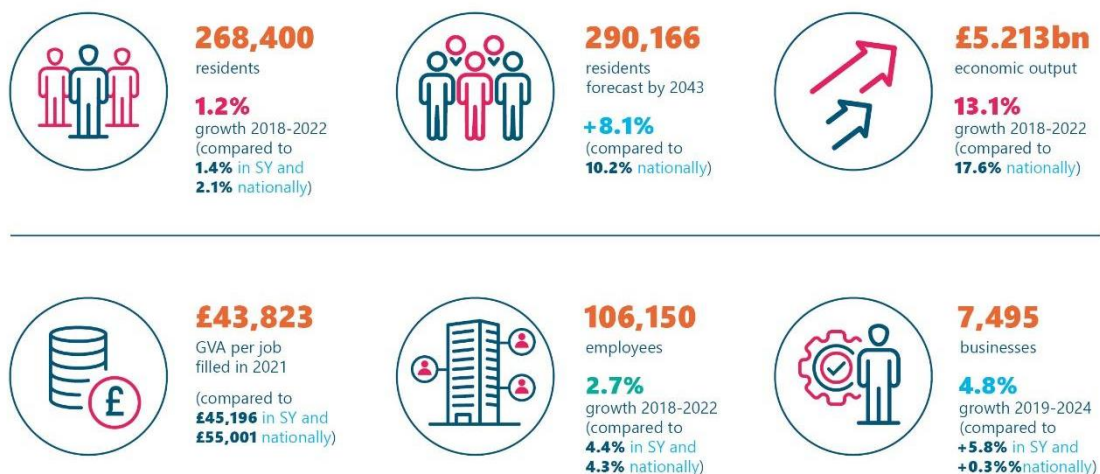
Local Landscape and Drivers of Change

Socio-Economic Context

Like many industrial towns, Rotherham has undergone significant economic changes over the past 50 years. The decline of traditional industries such as steel, coal, and manufacturing led to a loss of employment opportunities and economic output, and contributed to a rise in long-term economic inactivity, lower incomes and poorer health outcomes.

However, Rotherham's economy has since recovered, diversified, and grown. Rotherham is strategically located in South Yorkshire and plays a leading role in the growth of the region as a key player in the Don Valley Growth Corridor. The town has successfully attracted significant investment and is now home to global players like Rolls-Royce, McLaren and the UK Atomic Energy Authority. Key assets driving this growth include the Advanced Manufacturing Innovation District (AMID) located within the borough.

Rotherham Employment and Skills Context



Today, Rotherham is home to 268,400 residents (19.2% of the South Yorkshire regional population). Population growth has been slow, with only 1.2% growth between 2018-2022 relative to 5.9% nationally over the same period. The working age population is slightly under-represented at 61.2% of the total population, compared to 62.9% nationally. Attracting and retaining working age residents will provide a talent pool to fuel economic growth. Significant population growth is forecast in Rotherham, with 290,166 residents projected by 2043, an increase of 8.1% from the current position.

There are 106,150 employees in employment in Rotherham, with 74.1% being Rotherham residents. Employment has grown 2.7% over the past five years. This growth in employment opportunities is positive but lags behind the national rate of growth over the same period (4.3%), and the employment rate – at 69.5% – is considerably below the Government's long-term target of 80%. Large employment sectors in Rotherham include health, manufacturing, retail, business administration and support services, education, and construction.

¹ Estimated using origin-destination data from the Census 2021.

Employment opportunities in Rotherham are forecast to grow by 3% by 2033 (+3,645 jobs). Aligning skills with those sectors and occupations projected to grow will help to align need and opportunity.

There are 7,495 businesses in Rotherham and this number has grown by 4.8% since 2019. Business base density is low at 286 businesses per 10,000 residents, relative to 422 in England. Growing and diversifying the business base and securing investment will support growth and employment opportunities in the borough.

Drivers of Change

The labour market in Rotherham is evolving, with new sectors emerging, and drivers and disruptors at play, changing the shape of skill requirements and new ways of working. These drivers include:

- **Technological change including AI and automation.** Technological change is transforming job roles and skill requirements. The demand for digital skills is increasing across all sectors and occupations and contributing to job displacement in those areas most exposed to the effects of automation. Digital exclusion is an increased risk to those lacking digital skills and access to digital tools.
- **Changing work practices.** Remote work, flexible work hours and hybrid working; growth in the 'gig economy' providing flexibility but more precarious conditions; reskilling and upskilling to meet changing market demands; and longer working lives require new, equitable and inclusive working practices to support access to talent.
- **Net Zero agenda.** The Net Zero agenda is driving the demand for green skills and new ways of working. Whilst new opportunities and markets are being created, there is a need to support a just transition in those industries that are more carbon intensive to mitigate the potential loss of jobs as the economy becomes greener.
- **Demographic change.** This includes an ageing population with many residents/workers moving into retirement, contributing to a tightening labour pool. In Rotherham, 20% of the population is aged 65 and over, a figure expected to rise to 23% in 2043. Additionally, 13% of the working age population is already economically inactive due to retirement, the highest proportion among comparator areas. Encouraging people to remain in work for longer requires inclusive and accessible work practices and improved support for people facing barriers.
- **Pandemic recovery.** Continued support for those affected by physical and mental health conditions, and young people whose education was disrupted.
- **Global instability and political change.** Changes in migration impact on the availability of talent, and changes to trade policy influence investment decisions, supply chain development, and the provision of employment opportunities.
- **Social Value** refers to the positive impact that a business has on its community. Rotherham's Social Value Policy states that suppliers must seek to raise living standards, support young people to find employment, strengthen the VCSE sector, showcase environmental sustainability and provide equal opportunities to people from disadvantaged communities.

Major capital investments

Demand for employment and skills in Rotherham will be shaped by the investments being made in Rotherham's economy, place and communities. Major investments within the strategically important Don Valley Corridor will drive employment and skills needs in future years, including:

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- Continued development of **AMID**. This will build on the success of the **Advanced Manufacturing Park (AMP)** which is already home to leading global manufacturers including Boeing, McLaren, and Rolls-Royce, as well as further development of the **Templeborough corridor** which is a focus for industrial economic growth in Rotherham. AMID harnesses the world-leading research expertise within South Yorkshire's Universities and research organisations to attract inward investment, accelerate innovation and create high-value employment and training opportunities. It is a key part of **South Yorkshire's Investment Zone** which is expected to deliver 8,000 new jobs and attract £1.2bn in private investment by the end of the decade.
 - Further regeneration of **Rotherham town centre**, building on the success of the Forge Island leisure scheme and continuing the diversification away from retail. Strengthening the cultural and creative offer, including building on the opportunities created through Rotherham's role as the **Children's Capital of Culture 2025 (CCoC)** which is expected to bring approximately £14m of investment into the borough, will create new employment opportunities. Further town centre residential investment will also create jobs in the construction sector.
 - Major housing development at **Bassingthorpe**, as well as the development of business space and a new local centre and community services, will create significant opportunities within the construction sector, as well as jobs in the businesses that occupy the new commercial space.
 - The **Rotherham Gateway** scheme will provide space for new jobs and businesses, create a new living quarter offering high quality canal-side living, and will transform Rotherham's rail connectivity as well as strengthening the local tram / train network. The plans include the development of a new Innovation Campus alongside the mainline station, providing space for increased employment in high-quality jobs and giving Rotherham a new offer for inward investors and expanding local businesses.

Strategic Framework

The strategic framework sets out the shared, long-term vision for employment and skills in Rotherham and the missions through which this will be achieved. It provides clarity for all partners around Rotherham's employment and skills priorities, ensuring resources and capacity are allocated where they can have the greatest impact.

Our Vision

The Rotherham Employment and Skills Strategy vision for 2026-2031 is:

Rotherham has a thriving and inclusive economy, where residents and businesses are nurtured, inspired and empowered to flourish, prosper and progress to realise their potential.

Our Missions

The Rotherham Employment and Skills Strategy Missions closely align with the South Yorkshire Skills Strategy Missions, whilst reflecting Rotherham's particular opportunities and challenges.

Mission 1 – Supporting people into work

Rotherham partners will work together to create more opportunities for good work and support more residents to participate in the labour market, so people can prosper and realise their potential. This mission focuses on addressing disparities in the labour market to ensure that residents in all communities have the opportunities and support they need to progress *towards* work, *into* work and remain *within* work.

Mission 2 –Improving core skills for employment

Together, Rotherham supports residents to access lifelong learning opportunities and advance within their chosen careers through equipping them with the knowledge and skills they need to enter and progress in work. This mission seeks to ensure that everyone can access the education, training and competencies they need to prosper and grow.

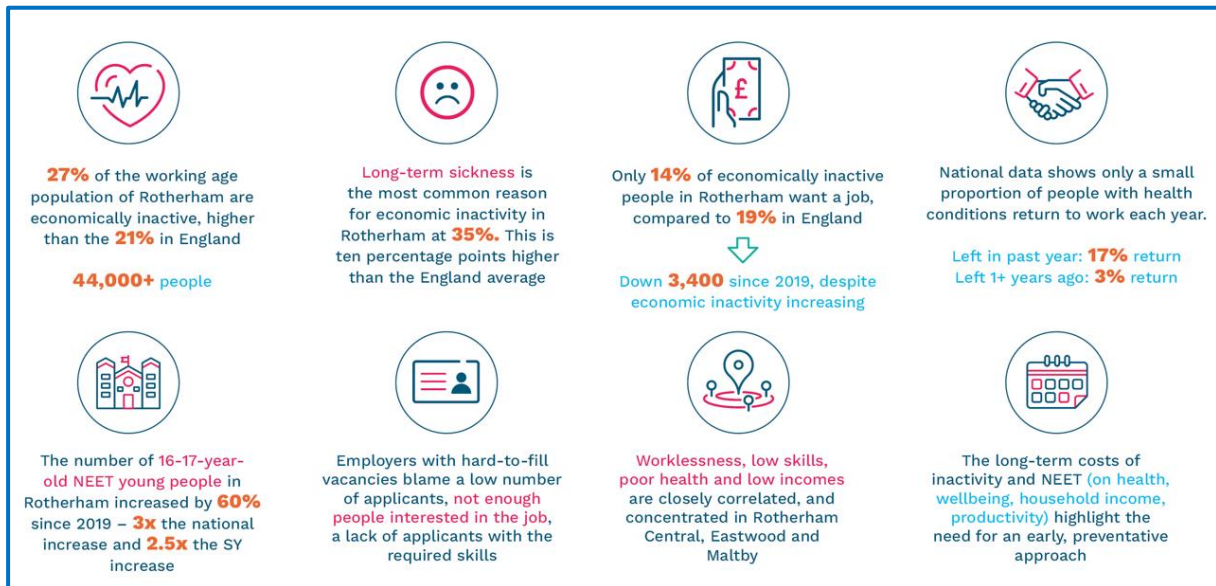
Mission 3 – Delivering a workforce for sustainable economic growth

In partnership, Rotherham is committed to developing, attracting and retaining a skilled workforce to create a thriving, inclusive economy, enabling Rotherham's employers to effectively compete and grow. This mission seeks to ensure that Rotherham's workforce has the skills they need to respond to the needs of a changing economy and seize opportunities as they arise, whilst also responding to the needs of business.

Mission 1: Supporting People into Work

Rotherham partners will work together to create more opportunities for good work and support more residents to participate in the labour market, to prosper and realise their potential.

The Case for Change



A whole-system approach is needed to support Rotherham's residents to participate in the labour market, engaging with partners across government, health, education, and employers. Economic inactivity is a major policy priority, driven by concerns over both labour shortages in key sectors and rising numbers of people unable to work. This issue is highly complex, involving diverse groups with varied and overlapping barriers to work. The data tells us that:

- Unemployment (4.2%) and economic inactivity (27%) in Rotherham is higher than comparator areas².
- Key contributors towards rising inactivity include long-term sickness (35%). Higher rates of inactivity are found amongst women, residents aged 50-64, and ethnic minorities.
- Barriers to work are numerous, including health (21% of Rotherham's population has a disability) and employment rates for disabled people are low (44%); skills (11% of the working age population have no qualifications); and transport (homeworking rates in Rotherham are low and over a third of commuters travel more than 10km to work, with long commutes posing a barrier to accessing job opportunities, particularly for those with transport challenges).
- 19% of children aged under 16 in Rotherham are living in absolute poverty and Rotherham performs poorly on childhood conditions for social mobility.

² Comparator areas include the South Yorkshire average, and a Statistical Neighbours average based on Dudley, Telford and Wrekin, Wakefield, Kirklees, Calderdale, Rotherham, Doncaster, Barnsley, St. Helens, Wigan, Tameside, Rochdale, Bury, Bolton, Gateshead and Darlington.

- There are 313 young people not in education, employment or training (NEET), accounting for 5% of the 16–17-year-old population—above all comparator areas. This has increased from 3% in 2019 (195 young people), when Rotherham performed relatively well—below comparator areas and in line with the national average. Males are more likely to be NEET than females.
- Employers in Rotherham report difficulties in filling vacancies, with 58% of vacancies identified as hard to fill, below comparator areas but slightly above the national average (57%). Causes include a low number of applicants generally, not enough people interested in the role, poor terms and conditions, and low number of applicants with the required skills.
- 35% of LSOAs in Rotherham fall within the 10% most deprived areas in England, with high levels of deprivation in the domains of employment (43%), education, skills and training (39%) and income (35%). There is a close relationship between areas with high levels of ill-health, deprivation, and economic inactivity.

This evidence highlights the need for person-centred, tailored, and integrated support to help Rotherham’s residents to progress into positive destinations such as education, training and employment. Demand side interventions, working with employers to facilitate the provision of quality opportunities to enable residents to access ‘good work’ that is fairly rewarded and supports progression and work satisfaction, are required in tandem. Actions are required that will encourage economic activity, provide quality employment opportunities and improve life chances.

Building on Existing and Planned Activity

The Rotherham partners work closely together to support people who are disadvantaged in the labour market and have had success in increasing access to employment for people with SEND (special educational needs and disabilities), adapting provision for young people who are NEET and integrating support for those who have health issues which limit their participation in the labour market. Significant additional investment is being made in this area through the Economic Inactivity Trailblazer (£10m allocation in year one) and the Health and Growth Accelerator (£8m investment in year one). This will provide a dedicated new service working with residents and employers to support people with health conditions and other barriers towards work and will be underpinned by a new “triage” system to make it quicker and easier to connect people to employment, health, and skills support.

This mission will build on existing and planned Pathways to Work activity in Rotherham supporting residents to progress towards and into work, including:

- RMBC’s **Employment Solutions** team provide support for people who are unemployed through the Elevate programme, also providing support to economically inactive residents through the Pathways to Work Economic Inactivity Trailblazer, in collaboration with the VCS, focusing particularly on those residents who are socially excluded or experience barriers accessing employment or training. Employment Solutions provides support tailored to individual needs including employment and training support, and access to education, work experience and volunteering opportunities. Over 300 people have participated since 2020, with 66% going into work or training.

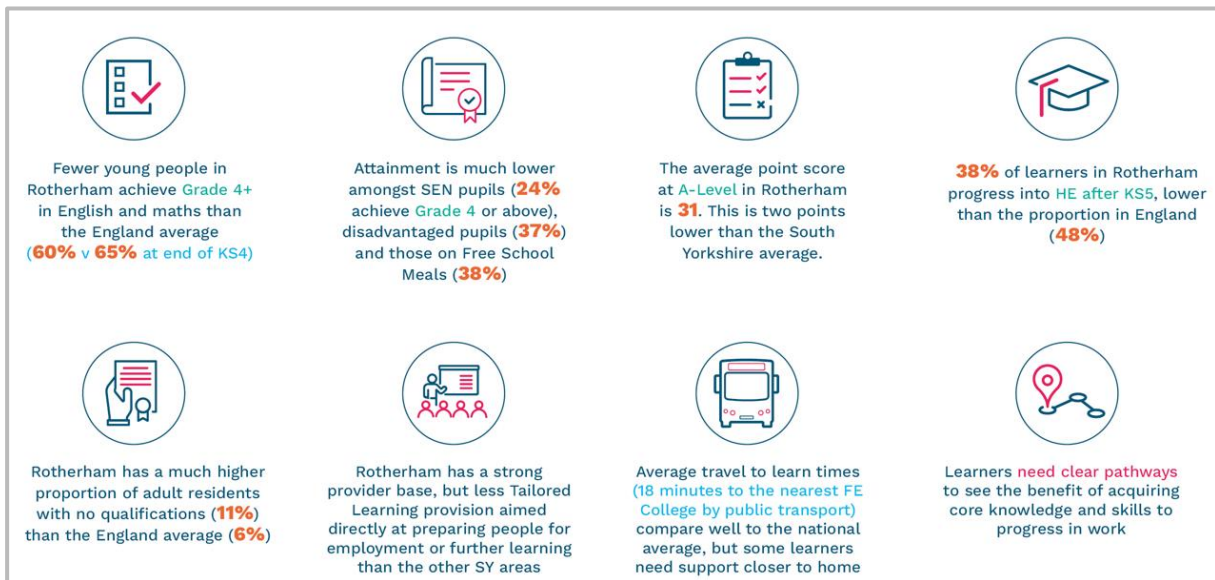
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- Alongside this, the **Connect to Work** programme commenced in 2025. This follows on from Working Win, which supported 6,500 people across South Yorkshire. The DWP-funded programme will support those who are furthest away from the job market, requiring more intensive support due to specific more complex barriers, such as long-term ill health or a disability. Delivery will follow both the Supported Employment Quality Framework and Individual Placement Support Models. This programme is expected to support 620 people in Rotherham to find suitable employment over five years.
 - Support focused on **young people** who are struggling in the labour market. This includes the **Ambition** project which supports young people to access employment, education or training, with half of these participants moving into the labour market. A traineeship programme linked to the **Children's Capital of Culture, Creative Skills**, provides young people with the opportunity to gain valuable, paid work experience in Rotherham resulting in increased employability and interpersonal skills. Seventy percent of economically inactive young people who engaged during the first cohort of delivery entered employment or training following the end of their traineeship. There is also tailored support for **young people leaving care** in Rotherham, including access to a Personal Advisor and a personalised Pathway Plan highlighting goals, plans and support needs.
 - There are many **community-based projects and programmes** providing support. **Open Arms Rotherham** enables those both in and out of the labour market to access provision regarding a variety of challenges including digital inclusion and job search support. It is expected that 400 people will engage in 1-2-1 support over the coming year and a further 2,200 residents will engage in at least one support session.

Existing projects and programmes have supported many Rotherham residents to take steps towards employment and connect employers to those facing disadvantage in the labour market. However, the additional investment which will be forthcoming through Pathways to Work is recognition of the continuing challenges which need to be addressed.

Mission 2: Improving core skills for employment

In Rotherham, we will support residents to access lifelong learning opportunities and advance within their chosen careers through equipping them with the knowledge and skills they need to enter and progress in work. Investing in knowledge and skills will support social mobility, productivity and wellbeing.

The Case for Change



Rotherham has a growing economy with major investment and regeneration activity underway, and planned, that will deliver opportunities which Rotherham's residents and businesses can access. To achieve this, we must align the current and future demand for skills with the supply of skills to support community wealth building and inclusive growth. The data tells us that:

- Education attainment in English and Maths (and more broadly at GCSE and A-Level) is low relative to the England average, and this can limit progression options.
- SEND pupil numbers are increasing in Rotherham and SEN pupils are less likely to attain grades 4+ in English and Maths GCSE, and more likely to be NEET compared to non-SEN pupils. Indicating a need to raise attainment at KS4 and KS5, including targeted support for disadvantaged and SEND pupils, to provide a platform for progression.
- 91% of KS4 leavers progress to sustained education, employment or apprenticeship destinations, broadly in line with the national average (93%). However, this decreases as the 16-18 cohort move through KS5, and the gap with comparator areas widens.
- The proportion of pupils leaving 16 to 18 education and progressing to higher education stands at 30%, eight percentage points below the England average. While Rotherham students are slightly more likely to take up apprenticeships (8%) than the national average (7%), overall progression to advanced qualifications—higher education or higher/degree-level apprenticeships—remains 8 percentage points below the national average.
- 11% of adults have no qualifications, significantly above the national average (6%).

- 36% of working age residents hold a Level 4+ qualification, but this is significantly below the national average (47%).
- Rotherham has a strong intermediate skills base, with 44% of working age residents holding L2 and L3 qualifications.

Brokering an effective relationship between the demand for skills and the supply of skills requires a responsive skills system that can equip residents with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed.

Raising awareness of further learning and employment options, alongside providing exposure to work through experience and encounters, can support progression to positive destinations. Research suggests that young people who have four or more employer encounters before leaving school are 86% less likely to become NEET³. Rotherham has a breadth of quality further education provision and a growing higher education offer. There is also a community-based learning offer that learners are accessing to build confidence, improve health and wellbeing and support children's learning. This provision provides a foundation upon which to build.

Actions are required that will provide pathways to positive destinations, secure basic and core skills, and deliver a responsive skills system which meets the needs of learners and employers and enable Rotherham to effectively compete and grow an inclusive economy.

Building on Existing and Planned Activity

Rotherham has many good quality FE and skills providers who deliver a range of education, skills and training programmes at all qualification levels to young people and adults across the borough. Existing and planned activity underway in Rotherham supporting residents to acquire knowledge and skills will be built upon, including:

- **Core 16-19 and Further Education provision** – Rotherham is home to a range of further education and independent training providers that support both adults and young people to obtain new qualifications, designed in conjunction with local employers and providing a range of accredited qualifications to enable young people to get on in work or progress to higher education. Effort is being made to diversify provision to ensure that it caters to more diverse needs and continues to respond to demand. Over 13,500 Rotherham residents aged 19+ were enrolled on education and training (including community learning) in 2023/24.
- **Adult Skills Fund** – The Adult Skills Fund provides opportunities for adults to upskill and reskill, and from 2024/25, the primary aim of which is to support learners into employment and to progress to further learning. In Rotherham, a high proportion of tailored learning has focussed on engaging and / or building confidence, equipping people to support children's learning and health and wellbeing. In comparison to other parts of South Yorkshire, a relatively small proportion is focussed on improving essential skills or work-specific learning. Over £5m of Adult Skills Fund is available in Rotherham in 2025/26.
- A new **Core Skills** programme will build on the success of **Multiply** – a national programme which sought to increase the number of adults achieving a maths qualification, enabling them to move towards the labour market or progress in their career. 85% of Rotherham residents participating in the final year of Multiply support progressed to a longer course. The new Core Skills programme delivers community-based courses in areas of high economic inactivity, focussing on the essential skills needed for work, including Maths, English and digital competency.

³ [Work visits result in fewer young 'Neets' - BBC News](#)

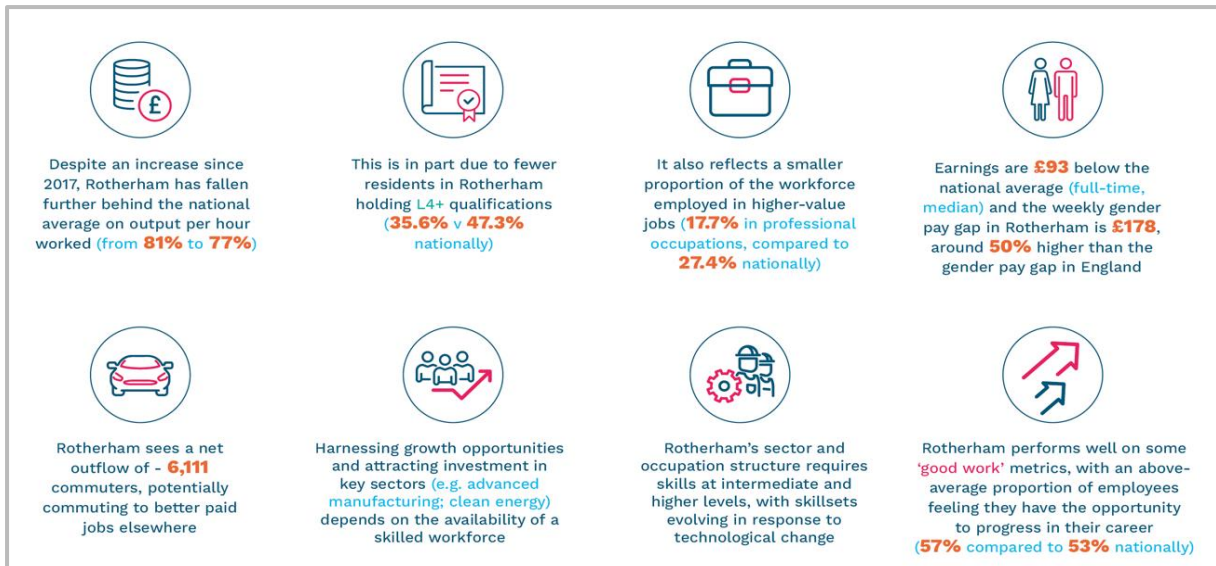
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- Rotherham MBC also delivers the **Advance** programme which supports employees to upskill and gain new qualifications, allowing them to progress in their career or enter into a new role.

Whilst this existing provision equips many Rotherham residents with the skills and qualifications they need to succeed in work, the data highlights that there are still significant skills gaps compared to the national average, and there is an opportunity to more closely align education, skills and training provision with the needs of employers to allow a seamless transition from education into work.

Mission 3: Delivering a workforce for sustainable economic growth

Rotherham needs to develop, attract and retain a skilled workforce to create a thriving inclusive economy and enable Rotherham's employers to effectively compete and grow.

The Case for Change



Rotherham has a diverse and innovative economy, providing a significant contribution to growth for the regional and national economies, driven by sectoral strengths and major investment providing opportunities for future growth. Securing the benefits of this investment depends on Rotherham's ability to attract and retain a higher skilled workforce to the area, and strengthening the skills and employment offer available to residents and workers. The data tells us that:

- Rotherham has experienced sluggish growth in the working age population (+1% in the last five years) and the proportion of residents of working age is below average at 61%, compared to 63% nationally.
- There is an ageing workforce, which is contributing to the number of working people experiencing limiting health conditions. Encouraging people to work longer within supportive work environments can help to reduce the number of people leaving the workforce.
- Rotherham has a lower proportion of KS4 pupils becoming graduates relative to the national median (24% compared to 30%) but graduates who grew up in Rotherham are more likely to return to Rotherham, with 64% of graduates still living there after achieving their qualifications, well above the national median (55%).
- Rotherham has a below average proportion of workers in highly skilled occupations (39%) compared to 55% in England. In contrast, elementary and skilled trade occupations are over-represented relative to comparators. While some manual and skilled trades may be more resilient to automation than certain mid-level administrative and clerical roles, lower-skilled occupations involving routine, predictable tasks tend to be more easily automated. This underlines the need to support reskilling and upskilling to provide resilience to disruptors of change.

- Rotherham has a productivity gap, with output (GVA) per job filled below average (20% below England). Productivity levels have increased over the past five years (3%) but at a slower rate than the national growth rate (5%).
- Rotherham has an entrepreneurial and innovative economy; however, businesses need to be supported to survive, grow and diversify to open up opportunities for employment and drive the retention and attraction of talent.
- Employment is increasing in Rotherham, with a 3% uplift in employment over the past five years, in line with comparable areas. Health, manufacturing and retail are key employment sectors in Rotherham, with growing and specialised sectors including transport and storage, construction and motor trades. Rotherham provides a valuable contribution to regional sector strengths in technology, green energy, health, advanced manufacturing and creative industries.
- Major investments such as the AMID are expected to create 2,000 jobs and represents a major growth opportunity.

Developing targeted employment and skills interventions focused on the growth opportunities ahead of Rotherham will support inclusive economic growth. Actions are required that help to attract, retain and develop the talent pool needed to support and grow new and existing businesses and fuel economic growth; to realise the potential of the workforce by equipping them with the skills needed for current and future roles; and to ensure that growth opportunities are aligned with local talent to support an inclusive and sustainable economy.

Building on Existing and Planned Activity

Existing and planned activity underway in Rotherham supporting the workforce will be built upon, including:

- **Apprenticeships** are a key mechanism for developing a skilled workforce in Rotherham, with 1,225 starts and 580 achievements in 2022/23. South Yorkshire's **Apprenticeship Hub** is supporting partners in Rotherham to widen access to apprenticeships amongst both residents and employers, by providing information, advice and guidance to apprentices, parents and employers, and helping smaller employers access apprenticeship levy funds to support their training activity.
- Since opening in 2018, **University Centre Rotherham** has worked closely with large employers such as the NHS, AESSEAL and Premier Foods to offer higher level qualifications and degrees. The University Centre has supported people into medium and high skilled work and scores above the national average on metrics such as teaching support, wellbeing and assessments.
- Employers can access support to upskill their workforce through the **South Yorkshire Skills Bank**. The Skills Bank provides funding to employers to support them to invest in training for their workforce. Over 5,000 learners have been supported since 2016, with the aim being to increase productivity in the sub-region.
- Rotherham's **strategic growth locations such as the Don Valley Corridor**, and the strategy for **inward investment** will generate demand for workers at all skills levels, but with a concentration on higher-level and technical skills. Securing the investment required to bring forward Rotherham's growth ambitions requires investment in talent retention and skills development, particularly in advanced manufacturing, clean energy and defence.

Realising the Missions

The Employment and Skills Strategy is underpinned by the three interconnected missions, detailed above, that collectively aim to improve employment outcomes, enhance workforce capabilities, and drive economic growth.

There are multiple activities and interventions already underway, and planned, in Rotherham that will contribute to realising our missions. These interventions have been grouped under three overarching themes to describe a structured and coherent approach to delivery. This thematic grouping ensures that actions are logically connected, mutually reinforcing, and collectively address systemic challenges. Each theme represents a critical layer of the strategy:

The interventions are grouped into three themes:

- Capacity Building and Coordination – laying the foundations for effective delivery through joined-up provision and employer engagement by strengthening systems, partnerships and processes.
- Developing Interventions and Strategy – focuses on designing targeted, evidence-based solutions informed by research and stakeholder insight.
- Delivering Bespoke Solutions – translates groundwork into tailored, high impact responses to local challenges and opportunities.

By structuring interventions in this way, the strategy recognises the complementarity, and cross cutting nature, of interventions and ensures that each theme contributes to multiple missions, creating synergy and amplifying impact.

Monitoring Progress and Impact

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) have been identified for the Strategy, one under each mission. The KPIs and outcomes align closely with both Rotherham's Employment and Skills Strategy missions and the wider, regional Skills Strategy. Progress will be monitored against the following indicators:

Mission	Indicators
Supporting people into work	<p>Overarching KPI: Increase the employment rate of working age residents</p> <p>Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reduce the number of 16–18-year-old and 18–24-year-old residents categorised as NEET.• Reduce the number of residents economically inactive due to long-term sickness.• Narrow the disability employment gap.• Increase the number of individuals with SEND engaging with education and employment support interventions.• Increase the median weekly wage in Rotherham for both males and females.• Increase the number of Disability Confident employers in Rotherham.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increase the number of businesses offering work placements to Rotherham residents
Improving core skills for employment	<p>Overarching KPI: Increase the proportion of residents holding qualifications at Level 2+ and Level 3+</p> <p>Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increase the proportion of young people achieving Level 2 and Level 3 qualifications by age 19. ● Increase the number of young people engaging with Careers Education Information Advice and Guidance (CEIAG). ● Increase engagement with digital skills support provision, especially within neighbourhoods that experience the highest levels of digital poverty. ● Increase the number of intermediate and advanced apprenticeships offered in Rotherham, providing opportunities for progression. ● Increase the number of residents receiving job-related training in the past 13 weeks. ● Narrow the gap with the national average with regard to the number of residents with no qualifications.
Deliver a workforce for sustainable economic growth	<p>Overarching KPI: Increase the number of employers who are able to recruit skilled workers they need in Rotherham</p> <p>Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increase the percentage of the working-age population holding qualifications at Level 3+ and Level 4+. ● Increase the number of apprenticeships, higher-level apprenticeships and apprenticeships within growth sectors offered within Rotherham. ● Increase the number of employers collaborating with local providers to develop courses and shape provision. ● Reduce the proportion of employers facing skills mismatches. ● Increase median earnings in Rotherham

Rotherham MBC will be responsible for the overall monitoring of progress made against each of the actions, missions, outcomes and KPIs, using data publicly available and supplied by partners and businesses. Regular monitoring of progress will be reported through the RTP's Boards, and an annual progress report will track where KPIs are being met and identify any areas where additional focus is required. The Implementation Plan will be revised annually in response to emerging priorities and focus areas.

The interventions are summarised below alongside identification of key actions. The actions were tested, refined and prioritised through two stakeholder workshops. A priority action has been identified under each intervention theme to highlight areas of additional focus and attention. Each action contributes to one or more of the three missions as illustrated by a short summary table.

The organisations that will be best placed to deliver each action are identified. A proposed lead partner is identified, but collaboration is key, with multiple partners having a valuable role to play in delivering the actions. Timescale has been categorised into **short (2026/2027)** and **medium (2027/2028)**. Longer-term actions (beyond 2028) are not in the scope of this Implementation Plan. Similarly, the resource implication for each action has been categorised as **low (under £100,000)**, **medium (between £100,000 and £499,000)** or **high (above £500,000)**.

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Intervention Theme One – Capacity Building and Coordination

These actions will support capacity building and coordination of employment and skills activity in Rotherham, laying the foundations for delivery.

Priority Action: (1.1) Joined Up and Tailored Provision for 16–24 Year Olds

This action will map current provision influencing employability and skills for 16–24-year-olds to inform an effective triage and guidance service across initiatives in Rotherham. It will facilitate personalised approaches to match young people to opportunities and requires close employer engagement and demand stimulation to provide opportunities.

Action	Alignment with provision	Lead/Partners	Timescale	Resource Implication	Outputs (<i>contribution to outcomes shown at end of this section</i>)
1.1: Priority Action: Joined Up and Tailored Provision for 16–24-year-olds Map current provision of employability and skills for 16–24-year-olds to inform an effective triage and guidance service across the various initiatives and provision in Rotherham Deliver a programme of personalised, tailored support for 16-24 year olds, focussing specifically on those young people who are NEET and identified as being at risk of falling into long-term worklessness..	Ambition Children's Capital of Culture Creative Skills Rotherham Leaving Care Local Offer The Really NEET Project Pathways to Work	Rotherham MBC (PtW, Ambition) Education providers Jobcentre Plus South Yorkshire Careers Hub Children and Young People's Partnership Board	Short	Medium/High	Searchable provision directory / database Identification of gaps in support Improved referral and keyworkers support mechanisms for Rotherham's 16-24 year olds Development and launch of personalised and tailored support for young people in the borough (including employer engagement), building on past successful approaches.
1.2: Coordinated and Accessible Careers Education	RMBC Employment Solutions	South Yorkshire Careers Hub	Short	Low	Strategy to enhance current CEIAG approach agreed.

Action	Alignment with provision	Lead/Partners	Timescale	Resource Implication	Outputs (<i>contribution to outcomes shown at end of this section</i>)
<p>Ensure a clear coordinated and accessible Careers Education Information Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) offer is in place to support residents of all ages and at any point within their career.</p> <p>Showcase the breadth of career opportunities and pathways within Rotherham, to support progression, attraction and retention of talent.</p> <p>Develop a best in class careers workforce in Rotherham, by offering training and CPD to careers leads to the appropriate standard</p>	<p>South Yorkshire Skills Bank</p> <p>Post-16 provision</p> <p>Rotherham University Centre</p>	<p>Education providers</p> <p>Training providers</p> <p>Jobcentre Plus</p>			<p>Careers advisors / employment and skills advisors upskilled.</p> <p>Sector-focused case studies produced highlighting opportunities to develop a career in key sectors in Rotherham.</p> <p>An increase in the number of Rotherham residents aged 16-64 accessing careers advice.</p>
<p>1.3: Identifying and Responding to Employer Skill Needs and encouraging 'Good Work'.</p> <p>Establish an "HR Director Network" of the largest employers in Rotherham to support identification of employer needs, gather their views on workforce challenges/gaps, and showcase good practice in employer engagement and delivery</p> <p>Coordinate and centralise the approach to employer engagement across Rotherham to support effectiveness and reach and minimise duplication.</p>	<p>South Yorkshire LSIP</p> <p>South Yorkshire Skills Bank</p> <p>Access to Work</p> <p>Pathways to Work: Economic Inactivity Trailblazer / Health and Growth Accelerator/ Connect to Work</p>	<p>Chamber of Commerce</p> <p>Business Growth Board</p> <p>Employment and Skills Board</p> <p>Rotherham MBC</p> <p>Training providers</p>	Short	Low	<p>HR Director Network established.</p> <p>Coordinated approach to employer engagement established.</p> <p>Employers engaged in discussions and activities related to 'good work'.</p>

Action	Alignment with provision	Lead/Partners	Timescale	Resource Implication	Outputs (<i>contribution to outcomes shown at end of this section</i>)
<p>Promote 'good' work principles to employers to make them aware of the benefits of supportive and inclusive work environments, in recruiting and retaining staff. This could include raising awareness of schemes like Access to Work and Disability Confident.</p> <p>Encourage more supportive and inclusive work environments, including the provision of volunteering and supported internships</p>					
<p>1.4: Utilise the potential of the Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector.</p> <p>Build capacity and capabilities of the VCSE sector to engage and support target groups, through delivery of new and existing activity within their communities.</p> <p>Build on the VCSE sector's key role in delivering support and activity within communities, across a wide range of issues and challenges.</p>	<p>Open Arms Rotherham</p> <p>Core Skills/Multiply</p> <p>Pathways to Work; Economic Inactivity Trailblazer/Connect to Work</p> <p>Access to Work</p>	<p>VCSE sector</p> <p>Rotherham MBC</p> <p>South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority</p>	Medium	High	<p>Number of VCSE organisations involved in delivering employment and skills support within local communities</p> <p>Identification of increased opportunities to deliver employment and skills support through VCSE organisations, including funding mechanisms.</p>

Capacity building and coordination actions – contribution to KPIs and outcomes		1.1: Joined up and tailored provision for 16-24 year olds	1.2: Coordinated and Accessible Careers Education	1.3: Identifying / Responding to Employer Skill Needs and encouraging 'Good Work'	1.4: Utilise the potential of the VCSE sector
Mission 1	Increase employment rate of working age residents	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
	Reduce 16—24-year-old NEET number	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
	Reduce economic inactivity due to long-term sickness	✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓
	Narrow disability employment gap with UK figure	✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓
	Increase number of individuals with SEND accessing support	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓
	Narrow gap with UK figure for the median wage in Rotherham (males/females)		✓	✓	
	Increase the number of Disability Confident employers	✓		✓✓	
	Increase number of businesses offering work placements to Rotherham residents	✓		✓✓	
Mission 2	Increase proportion of residents holding qualifications at Level 2+ and Level 3+	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓
	Increase proportion of young people achieving L2 and L3 by age 19	✓✓✓	✓✓✓		✓
	Increase number of young people engaging with CEIAG	✓✓✓	✓✓✓		✓✓
	Increase digital skills engagement, especially in areas experiencing digital poverty	✓	✓		✓✓✓
	Increase number of intermediate / advanced apprenticeships	✓✓		✓✓	
	Increase the number of residents receiving job-related training	✓		✓✓	
	Narrow gap with the national average for % of residents with no qualifications	✓✓			
Mission 3	Increase number of employers able to recruit the skilled workers they need	✓	✓✓	✓✓✓	
	Increase % of working-age population holding qualifications at L3+ and L4+	✓✓			
	Increase number of apprenticeships (inc. higher-level and in growth sectors)			✓✓	
	Increase employer collaboration with local providers to develop courses / shape provision			✓✓	✓✓
	Reduce proportion of employers facing skills mismatches		✓✓	✓✓	
	Increase median earnings		✓✓	✓	

Intervention Theme Two – Developing Interventions and Strategy

These actions will inform the development of employment and skills interventions and strategy to ensure they are effectively targeted to respond to identified need and opportunity.

Priority Action: (2.4) Develop a borough wide workforce investment plan.

This action focuses on identifying employer demand for sufficient numbers of suitably skilled and qualified staff and supporting employers to provide quality and sustainable employment opportunities, which offer the chance of progression.

Action	Alignment with provision	Lead/Partners	Timescale	Resource Implication	Outputs (<i>contribution to outcomes shown at end of this section</i>)
<p>2.1: Articulating the Employability and Skills Offer to Learners and Employers.</p> <p>Map the current picture of employability and post-16 skills provision support in Rotherham to support coordination, simplification and minimise duplication and to support understanding of the current skills offer to provide a strategic overview of gaps.</p> <p>Review the RMBC Employment Solutions Service and wider RMBC employment and skills activity to ensure it aligns with local/regional policy, responds to identified need and opportunity and can provide a sustainable offer</p> <p>Drawing on mapping and review insight (action 1.2), develop resources to</p>	<p>Pathways to Work: RMBC Employment Solutions</p> <p>South Yorkshire Skills Bank</p> <p>South Yorkshire Apprenticeship Hub</p> <p>Advance</p> <p>South Yorkshire Skills Platform</p>	<p>Rotherham MBC</p> <p>Employment and Skills Board</p> <p>South Yorkshire Combined Authority</p> <p>Training providers</p> <p>Education providers</p>	Medium	Medium	<p>Searchable provision directory / database (via South Yorkshire Skills Platform)</p> <p>Agreement of any proposed changes to RMBC employment and skills support to deliver strategic missions.</p> <p>Development of new Rotherham-focussed resources to articulate the employability and skills offer.</p>

Action	Alignment with provision	Lead/Partners	Timescale	Resource Implication	Outputs (<i>contribution to outcomes shown at end of this section</i>)
<p>support CEIAG, promote the employability and skills offer, help learners and employers to engage with the skills system and support effective case making for investment in skills provision to meet diverse learner and employer requirements.</p> <p>Provide a local response through the South Yorkshire Skills Platform</p>					
<p>2.2: Deep Dive Research into Economic Inactivity in Rotherham.</p> <p>Generate a deeper understanding of economic inactivity in Rotherham, the reasons behind why people are economically inactive, and to provide recommendations to tackle the issue. This will require quantitative and qualitative research, including surveys, interviews and focus groups to secure insight on the inactive cohort, their situation and their needs. The research will identify the economic cost of inactivity to Rotherham to support understanding of the case for intervention. Groups at risk of economic exclusion will be identified alongside the support mechanisms in place to mitigate this.</p>	<p>Pathways to Work: Economic Inactivity Trailblazer/Connect to Work</p> <p>Access to Work</p>	<p>Rotherham MBC Jobcentre Plus</p>	Short	Low	<p>Shared understanding of key causes of economic inactivity</p> <p>Clear recommendations for re-shaping support to address barriers identified</p> <p>Production of resources that highlight different pathways to work including apprenticeships, self-employment and internships.</p>

Action	Alignment with provision	Lead/Partners	Timescale	Resource Implication	Outputs (<i>contribution to outcomes shown at end of this section</i>)
Priorities and recommendations will be developed to enable partners to trial, shape and implement new and improved approaches to tackling economic inactivity. It will also inform how partners can convey the benefits and expectations of work to those at risk of economic exclusion, including raising awareness of the different options available to progress into work, including self-employment, apprenticeships, internships, volunteering etc					
2.3: Develop targeted, person-centred interventions for young people at risk of becoming Not in Education Employment or Training (NEET) This includes appropriate triaging and guidance; engaging schools, employers and parents/guardians; addressing barriers to work through 1-1 coaching and personalised support; and matching young people to opportunities for work and training.	Talent Match The Really NEET Project Rotherham Leaving Care Local Offer Young Futures Hubs/Youth Access Children's Capital of Culture Creative Skills	Education providers VCFSE sector Children and Young People's Partnership Board Rotherham MBC	Medium	Medium	New interventions developed. Number of 16–24-year-old residents at risk of NEET supported. Number of school / employers / parents and guardians engaged.

Action	Alignment with provision	Lead/Partners	Timescale	Resource Implication	Outputs (<i>contribution to outcomes shown at end of this section</i>)
<p>2.4: Priority Action: Develop a borough wide workforce investment plan.</p> <p>Work with employers to produce a borough wide workforce development plan, which delivers sufficient numbers of suitably skilled and qualified staff, and which supports employers to provide quality and sustainable employment, with progression opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the major investment opportunities and priority sectors for economic growth in the Rotherham economy Coordinate contributions from employers, intermediaries, investors and providers aligned to these opportunities and sectors, to identify common and specific skill requirements required now and in the future. Articulate the scale of opportunity and need in Rotherham to support the investment in skills infrastructure to meet current and future demand Showcase the breadth of career opportunities in Rotherham presented by major investments and priority sectors to attract and retain talent. 	<p>University Centre Rotherham</p> <p>South Yorkshire Apprenticeship Hub</p> <p>South Yorkshire Skills Bank</p> <p>South Yorkshire Investment Zone</p> <p>Templebrough Corridor</p> <p>Rotherham Gateway</p>	<p>Rotherham MBC</p> <p>Business Growth Board</p> <p>Chambers of Commerce</p>	Short	Low	<p>Employers and intermediaries engaged in workforce skills discussions and planning.</p> <p>Series of tailored employment and skills plans produced, for specific investment areas / sectors in Rotherham.</p> <p>Gaps in skills provision identified and approach agreed to making case for further investment where required.</p> <p>Content / materials produced and disseminated to showcase career opportunities (link to action 1.2).</p>

Action	Alignment with provision	Lead/Partners	Timescale	Resource Implication	Outputs (<i>contribution to outcomes shown at end of this section</i>)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop recommendations to align demand and supply of skills to meet current and future workforce requirements to realise this investment and growth potential. 					

Developing interventions and strategy actions – contribution to KPIs and outcomes		2.1 Articulating the Employability and Skills Offer to Learners and Employers	2.2: Deep Dive Research re. Economic Inactivity in Rotherham	2.3: Develop targeted, person-centred interventions for young people at risk of becoming NEET	2.4: Develop a borough wide workforce investment plan
Mission 1	Increase employment rate of working age residents	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
	Reduce 16–18 and 18–24-year-old NEETs	✓	✓✓	✓✓✓	
	Reduce economic inactivity due to LT sickness	✓	✓✓✓	✓	
	Narrow disability employment gap	✓	✓✓	✓✓	
	Increase individuals with SEND engaging with support	✓	✓✓	✓✓	
	Increase median wage in Rotherham (males/females)	✓			✓✓
	Increase the number of Disability Confident employers	✓		✓✓	
	Increase number of businesses offering work placements to Rotherham residents	✓		✓✓	✓✓✓
Mission 2	Increase proportion of residents holding qualifications at Level 2+ and Level 3+	✓✓		✓	✓✓
	Increase proportion of young people achieving L2 and L3 by age 19	✓✓		✓✓	
	Increase number of young people engaging with CEIAG	✓✓		✓✓	
	Increase digital skills engagement, especially in areas experiencing digital poverty	✓			
	Increase number of intermediate / advanced apprenticeships	✓✓			✓✓
	Increase the number of residents receiving job-related training	✓✓			✓✓
	Narrow gap with the national average for % of residents with no qualifications	✓✓		✓	✓
Mission 3	Increase number of employers able to recruit the skilled workers they need	✓✓		✓✓	✓✓✓
	Increase % of working-age population holding qualifications at L3+ and L4+	✓		✓	✓✓
	Increase number of apprenticeships (inc. higher-level and in growth sectors)	✓✓		✓	✓✓
	Increase employer collaboration with local providers to develop courses / shape provision	✓✓	✓		✓✓
	Reduce proportion of employers facing skills mismatches	✓✓✓		✓	✓✓✓
	Increase median earnings	✓			✓✓

Intervention Theme Three – Delivering Bespoke Solutions

The groundwork laid in the preceding intervention themes will enable the development of bespoke, Rotherham-focussed solutions to meet identified needs.

Priority Action: (3.1) Work Ready Placement Programme.

Design and deliver employer led short, sharp sector specific training courses linked directly to work placements to support out-of-work people secure employment in industries where there are high numbers of vacancies, and for key cohorts facing specific barriers, such as NEETs.

Action	Alignment with provision	Lead/Partners	Timescale	Resource Implication	Outputs (<i>contribution to outcomes shown at end of this section</i>)
<p>3:1: Priority Action: Work Ready Placement Programme</p> <p>Design and deliver employer led short, sharp sector specific training courses linked directly to work placements to support out-of-work people secure employment in industries where there are high numbers of vacancies, and for key cohorts facing specific barriers, such as NEETs.</p> <p>Intensive sector-based training “Bootcamps” to improve work readiness and confidence</p> <p>Sector-specific training to address skills gaps in key industries;</p>	<p>Pathways to Work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic Inactivity Trailblazer • Elevate Connect to Work • SYMCA Skills Bootcamps 	<p>RMBC</p> <p>VAR</p> <p>Local training delivery partners</p> <p>Chamber of Commerce: Employers</p>	Short	Medium	<p>Reduce the number of 16–18-year-old and 18–24-year-old residents categorised as NEET.</p> <p>Reduce the number of residents economically inactive due to long-term sickness.</p> <p>Narrow the disability employment gap.</p> <p>Increase the number of businesses offering work placements to Rotherham residents</p> <p>Increase the number of residents receiving job-related training in the past 13 weeks</p>

Action	Alignment with provision	Lead/Partners	Timescale	Resource Implication	Outputs (<i>contribution to outcomes shown at end of this section</i>)
<p>Local delivery ensuring accessibility and relevance</p> <p>Salary subsidy/funded placements scheme to support alternative recruitment processes, incentivise employer engagement and provide real-world of work experience with local small to medium employers</p> <p>Employer-led design to ensure alignment with job market needs.</p>					<p>Increase the number of employers collaborating with local providers to develop courses and shape provision. Reduce the proportion of employers facing skills mismatches.</p>
<p>3.2: Increase employer engagement in schools and colleges.</p> <p>Increased investment in career provision to facilitate joined-up provision for 16-24-year-olds and to help schools and colleges meet the Gatsby Benchmarks.</p> <p>Highlight realistic opportunities and positive role models and expand the internships and multiple encounters offer to provide a breadth of career inspiration across sectors, raise ambition and aspiration to those at transition points (Years 9-13).</p>	<p>Careers Hub</p> <p>Children's Capital of Culture Creative Skills</p> <p>South Yorkshire Apprenticeship Hub</p> <p>Rotherham Leaving Care Local Offer</p>	<p>Education providers</p> <p>Employers</p> <p>South Yorkshire Careers Hub</p> <p>South Yorkshire Apprenticeship Hub</p>	Medium	High	<p>Increase in the number of employer encounters taking place in schools.</p> <p>Increased number of under 18s engaging in at least one day of workplace visits or work experience.</p> <p>Development of school-focussed materials that provide up to date information regarding how to navigate the labour market, including information regarding CVs,</p>

Action	Alignment with provision	Lead/Partners	Timescale	Resource Implication	Outputs (<i>contribution to outcomes shown at end of this section</i>)
					interviews and employer expectations (link to action 1.2 and 2.4).
3.3: Develop extra-curricular and enrichment activity for children and young people. Provide a more strategic approach to nurturing children and young people to realise their potential by equipping them with the skills, aptitude, expectations and knowledge they need to progress into positive destinations. This could also include raising awareness of the benefits of work and changing the perception of employment, especially for those at risk of disengaging with the labour market. Deliver an enhanced enrichment offer to support the development of essential skills in young people to help prepare them for work through securing investment and support from anchor institutions, employers and providers	Children's Capital of Culture Creative Skills 16-19 provision South Yorkshire Apprenticeship Hub South Yorkshire Careers Hub Rotherham Family Hubs and Giving Your Child the Best Start in Life	VCFSE Education providers Rotherham MBC South Yorkshire Careers Hub South Yorkshire Apprenticeship Hub	Medium	Medium	Coherent and curated extra-curricular offer made available to Rotherham's young people. Increase in the number of young people participating in extra-curricular activities.
3.4: Tailor Community Learning Opportunities to Identified Need including Digital Upskilling Continue to offer learning opportunities that support upskilling and workforce participation. Aimed towards adults with lower-level qualifications and through	Multiply/Core Skills Adult Skills Fund Open Arms Rotherham	VCFSE Rotherham MBC Training providers	Short	Medium	Re-focussed community learning programme linked to employment and core skills for work.

Action	Alignment with provision	Lead/Partners	Timescale	Resource Implication	Outputs (<i>contribution to outcomes shown at end of this section</i>)
<p>promoting the importance of basic and core skills provision to residents.</p> <p>Provision of digital confidence and skills training to support workforce participation, targeted on neighbourhoods and cohorts with high levels of digital exclusions.</p> <p>Provision of support that will enable residents to access digital resources, such as technology loans and hardware to support those experiencing digital poverty and exclusion.</p>					<p>Digital skills and inclusion programme developed and rolled out.</p> <p>Number of residents benefiting from community learning and digital upskilling.</p>
<p>3.5: Develop employment and skills plans for regeneration areas.</p> <p>Develop area-based employment and skills plans to provide local hyper-local delivery of engagement activities, tailored community learning and employment support. Linking with businesses to identify their workforce needs and provide local employment.</p> <p>Secure social value contributions from major investment to support local workforce development</p> <p>Coordinate the strategic planning of interventions and major investments with enabling infrastructure providers to mitigate barriers to work. This includes transport and childcare.</p>	<p>Inward Investment Strategy</p> <p>South Yorkshire Investment Zone</p> <p>Rotherham Gateway development</p> <p>The Rotherham Town Centre Masterplan outlines the new leisure, domestic and business opportunities in and around Forge Island, identifying a number of opportunities for growth and</p>	<p>Rotherham MBC</p> <p>VCSE</p> <p>Employers</p> <p>Business Growth Board</p> <p>RNN</p> <p>Infrastructure providers</p>	Short	High	<p>Employment and skills plans developed in partnership with employers and communities.</p> <p>Funding invested in resident upskilling and employment support.</p> <p>Number of residents benefitting from work experience, placements and internship opportunities.</p> <p>Number of residents supported to overcome wider barriers to employment e.g. childcare and transport barriers.</p>

Action	Alignment with provision	Lead/Partners	Timescale	Resource Implication	Outputs (<i>contribution to outcomes shown at end of this section</i>)
	regeneration. Building on this Masterplan and developing similar pieces that highlight the benefits of other developments in Rotherham would increase the attractiveness of the area.				
3.6: Support employers to identify and horizon scan their current and future skill needs and provide supportive workplace environments. Undertake skills needs diagnostic assessments and developing workforce development plans for SMEs Simplify and extend the current offer to ensure employers are supported with advice and guidance to develop their workforce and facilitate access to skills provision. This includes championing apprenticeships and supporting employers to access the apprenticeship levy. Provide advice and support to employers to offer supportive, inclusive and accessible workplaces, including occupational health	Advance Rotherham South Yorkshire Growth Hub South Yorkshire Apprenticeship Hub Through the LSIP, Chamber of Commerce and Growth Hub, businesses are supported to share their skills gaps and access upskilling opportunities for their workforce.	Training providers Rotherham MBC South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority Business Growth Board	Long	Medium	Number of employers engaged in future skills needs discussions and planning. Number of employers implementing new approaches to create a supportive workplace. Number of employers introducing apprenticeships / increasing number of apprenticeships offered, including within the key growth sectors in Rotherham.

Action	Alignment with provision	Lead/Partners	Timescale	Resource Implication	Outputs (<i>contribution to outcomes shown at end of this section</i>)
support provision for SMEs, inclusive recruitment practice advice					

Developing bespoke solutions actions – contribution to KPIs and outcomes		3.1: Work ready Placement Programme	3.2: Increase employer engagement in schools and colleges	3.3: Develop extracurricular and enrichment activity for children & young people	3.4: Tailor community learning opportunities to identified need including digital upskilling	3.5: Develop employment and skills plans for regeneration areas	3.6: Support employers to identify and horizon scan their current and future skills needs and provide supportive workplace environments
Mission 1	Increase employment rate of working age residents	✓✓✓	✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓
	Reduce 16–18 and 18–24-year-old NEETs	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓			
	Reduce economic inactivity due to LT sickness	✓✓			✓✓	✓	
	Narrow disability employment gap	✓✓			✓✓		
	Increase individuals with SEND engaging with support	✓	✓	✓✓	✓		
	Increase median wage in Rotherham (males/females)	✓✓✓				✓✓	✓
	Increase the number of Disability Confident employers					✓	✓✓
	Increase number of businesses offering work placements to Rotherham residents	✓	✓✓	✓		✓✓	✓
Mission 2	Increase proportion of residents holding qualifications at Level 2+ and Level 3+	✓	✓✓✓	✓	✓	✓✓	✓
	Increase proportion of young people achieving L2 and L3 by age 19	✓	✓✓✓	✓✓			
	Increase number of young people engaging with CEIAG	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓			
	Increase digital skills engagement, especially in areas experiencing digital poverty			✓	✓✓✓	✓✓	
	Increase number of intermediate / advanced apprenticeships	✓✓					✓✓
	Increase the number of residents receiving job-related training	✓✓			✓✓		✓✓
	Narrow gap with the national average for % of residents with no qualifications			✓	✓✓		✓
Mission 3	Increase number of employers able to recruit the skilled workers they need	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓✓
	Increase % of working-age population holding qualifications at L3+ and L4+	✓	✓	✓			✓✓
	Increase number of apprenticeships (inc. higher-level and in growth sectors)	✓✓	✓				✓✓
	Increase employer/local provider collaboration to develop courses/shape provision	✓	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓		✓✓
	Reduce proportion of employers facing skills mismatches	✓✓✓	✓		✓✓		✓✓✓

Developing bespoke solutions actions – contribution to KPIs and outcomes		3.1: Work ready Placement Programme	3.2: Increase employer engagement in schools and colleges	3.3: Develop extracurricular and enrichment activity for children & young people	3.4: Tailor community learning opportunities to identified need including digital upskilling	3.5: Develop employment and skills plans for regeneration areas	3.6: Support employers to identify and horizon scan their current and future skills needs and provide supportive workplace environments
	Increase median earnings	✓✓			✓✓		✓✓

Delivering the Employment and Skills Strategy

Partnership and Governance

The Employment and Skills Strategy is part of the framework of projects and initiatives that benefit local people and places provided by the Rotherham Together Partnership (RTP). The RTP brings together a range of partners, including Council, NHS, College, Chamber of Commerce and the private and voluntary sector to oversee progress towards the shared priorities set out in the Rotherham Plan. There are a number of thematic partnerships with RTP, all seeking to improve the quality of life for residents in Rotherham.

Overall governance for, and oversight of, the Strategy will sit with the Employment and Skills Board of the Partnership, with annual updates on the progress and impact of the Strategy being reported to the RTP Chief Executive Officer's Group.

Strategy Delivery

Delivering the Strategy will require the support and engagement of a wide range of partners and stakeholders, including the VCSE sector, education and skills providers, the Council, South Yorkshire MCA, DWP, and employers and residents of Rotherham.

Rotherham MBC will play a key role as convener, responsible for bringing together the most appropriate partners and bodies needed to address an issue or deliver an activity. The Council will play an active role in connecting employment and skills activity to wider initiatives being delivered in Rotherham such as through the Place-Based Investment Strategy and Digital Inclusion Strategy. Rotherham MBC will also ensure that delivery aligns with regional initiatives such as the inactivity trailblazer and regional policies including the South Yorkshire Skills Strategy, LSIP and the Get Britain Working Plan.

With an increasing focus on health and employment, both in terms of stemming the flow into inactivity and supporting those who are inactive to find good work, the NHS will play a key role in identifying common barriers to work and working with employers to support employees living with a long-term health condition or disability. This could include the provision of occupational therapy, mental health support for those in receipt of a sick note and early intervention for those with at risk of leaving work due to a new diagnosis.

Employers will play an integral part in the delivery of the Strategy. Businesses drive demand for skills and create employment opportunities for local people – and it is their choices and constraints that determine the quality of the jobs on offer in Rotherham. Through the Strategy, employers will be encouraged and supported to enable them to work with young people, apprentices, hire and retain residents with a health condition and upskill their current employees. They will receive more education as to how adopting inclusive workplace practices could boost their productivity and support their workforce. Businesses will also be supported to form new connections with education providers, ensuring that young people can develop an idea of the workplace possibilities within Rotherham.

VCSE organisations will be supported to strengthen their current work within local communities and support community-based and hyper-local delivery of activities linked to the Employment and Skills Strategy, such as Core Skills. The VCSE sector is well-placed to tailor engagement approaches and marketing to the needs of their local community.

Education and skills providers will deliver activity at a range of levels to ensure that all of Rotherham's residents are able to access training and development that is appropriate to their aims and circumstances. This could include developing their core skills and work readiness offer, their higher-level apprenticeship offer and their in-work upskilling offer.

Rotherham MBC will ensure the Strategy and Missions are embedded into future policy and activity, continuing to facilitate positive collaboration between partners and across the wider region.