

Working in Partnership Across East Sussex



Department
for Work &
Pensions

East Sussex
County Council



Agreement
Document

WORKING TOGETHER

Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and East Sussex County Council (ESCC) are committed to work together to address employment and employability needs in the county. Through this Agreement Document, we set out how we will strengthen and formalise this positive working relationship.

To achieve our strategic aims we will need to work together to encourage and lead:

- Implementation of the national policy drivers announced by the government for example, its 'Plan for Jobs', at a local level.
- Stakeholder participation and collaboration – the council and DWP, employers, training providers, further education, universities, LEP, LSIP, business and education networks, and the third sector, all working together to address priorities
- Governance and accountability – monitoring and reporting, supportively challenging, and managing risks detrimental to recovery.

SKILLS EAST SUSSEX

Skills East Sussex, the strategic skills board, is facilitated by ESCC and brings together key stakeholders, including the DWP, to address the skills and employment needs of local residents in line with economic growth and business needs.

The Board is supported by a number of sector focused and area focused task groups. These bring together businesses with training and employment providers. [Skills East Sussex](#)

Skills East Sussex has set a range of strategic priorities:

- 1) Ensuring that national policy and funding supports the delivery of learning and skills in East Sussex**
- 2) Upskilling our workforce to minimum Level 3**
- 3) Supporting the unemployed and unqualified into work**
- 4) Enabling our FE/HE establishments to recruit excellent educators with specialist technical knowledge**
- 5) Improving our digital skills and digital inclusion**
- 6) Skills for a Net Zero future**

In East Sussex less than 50% of the population holds a Level 3 qualification and we have significant numbers of people who have no qualifications. We need to ensure that there are a wide range of targeted interventions available to move this cohort into learning and work. Some are a long way from being work ready and need specific pre-employment and work readiness programmes. Work needs to be done, via effective adult careers promotion activity and advice, to ensure that residents are aware of and encouraged to take up opportunities available to them.

Wherever possible, employment programmes such as Kickstart, Restart and Apprenticeships should be promoted to our employers, whilst retention of existing staff can be encouraged by greater awareness of Access to Work.

Schemes such as sector Work Based Academy Programmes (SWAP), delivered in partnership with the DWP and local training providers provide an excellent way to recruit to ring-fenced positions for new staff, while programmes such as ESTAR, which supports specific cohorts of unemployed people (those living in supported or temporary accommodation for example) should be supported and built upon.

As well as DWP promoting all opportunities, ESCC will also ensure that these are flagged on the East Sussex website: www.careerseastsussex.co.uk

The Skills East Sussex Board also worked together to create 'Mission Two: Building Skills, Creating Jobs' of the Economy Recovery Plan for East Sussex, with a wide range of activities to support employment and skills post pandemic. The action plan actively addresses the need to tackle increased unemployment, with youth unemployment being of particular concern. The plan also highlights the need to encourage recruitment into vacancies in key sectors such as health, construction and logistics which has seen increased demands for staff. [Economy Recovery Plan](#)

DWP Recruitment campaigns and specific sector focused recruitment will continue and complement the Skills East Sussex plan for jobs with the ESCC skills forums included in the planning and agreeing of deliverable outputs to ensure that joint priorities are met. In 2022 DWP are planning at least three additional sectoral campaigns. These will focus on:

- Health and Social care
- Agriculture and Farming
- Green construction industries

The Partnership Agreement

This partnership agreement outlines ways in which DWP and ESCC can collaborate to share information, improve referral pathways, maximise the use of resources, avoid duplication and strengthen the local skills infrastructure to better support residents and employers.

AGREED AREAS FOR PARTNERSHIP WORKING

1. DWP as active member of Skills East Sussex (SES) to help shape and improve the local skills offer, which includes contributing to the Economy Recovery Plan and attendance at SES meetings (3 times a year) and participation in sub-groups as agreed: Sector Based Task Groups, Careers Campaign Working Group, Apprenticeships East Sussex.
2. DWP to share and present more granular, localised data at SES meetings (annually – Autumn meeting of SES)

3. ESCC will work with DWP to help ensure local residents and DWP advisors have up to date information about local provision, courses, recruitment campaigns, and other support and resources available to their clients. This includes utilising and promoting Careers East Sussex platform, which houses an e-prospectus of local courses & training (for young people & adults), an online pre-employment support programme database, an online application system and careers information & resources. DWP to also help shape and develop Careers East Sussex to help meet their client's needs and feed into the development of the careers search tool which is currently being developed and added to the site.
4. Provision and support will be targeted to priority groups and/or wards most in need of additional intervention to improve employment outcomes, social mobility and raise aspirations. This also includes ensuring employment support is widely accessible, to maximise resident engagement. Based on current evidence from the Index of Deprivation, initial efforts will be focused on residents most affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, whilst not losing sight of the ABC ethos, as well as those who historically fare less well in the labour market, such as:
 - a. Unemployed Young People aged 18-24
 - b. Newly unemployed
 - c. Long-term unemployed
 - d. Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities
 - e. Unemployed people with health conditions and disabilities
 - f. Unemployed people with complex needs
 - g. Homeless people
 - h. Care Leavers.
5. Youth Hubs: DWP and ESCC to work together to ensure Youth Hubs are established across East Sussex to ensure support in place for young people (16-24yrs)
6. Explore/establish a mechanism for ESCC to help support local DWP, MHCLG, DfE and ESFA contractors (I.e. REED, TWIN UK, SCDA) to establish link/partnerships/referral routes with local colleges, training/employment support/careers providers
7. Preventative and early intervention work; over 400 16-18 year olds are NEET, most of which will not be current DWP clients. Explore and expand on work with schools to prevent NEET and opportunities to try and reduce existing 16-18 NEET
8. Kickstart; work together to improve the process of getting vacancies live and promoting vacancies far and wide. And provide reports on sectors and progressions
9. DWP to Co-chair ESTAR; focusing on how to support those in social housing, at risk of homelessness, ex rough sleepers. Group focusing on raising aspirations and motivation of long term unemployed – delivering some trial

initiatives which have potential to be expanded and built upon via FSF and other collaborative bids to address strategic priorities

10. To identify and support pathways to and from DWP paid for provision (Plan for Jobs), including Kickstart, Restart, Sector- based work academies

DWP and ESCC commit to meeting every 6 months to monitor and review the Partnership Agreement

On behalf of DWP

On behalf of ESCC

Print name:

Print name:

Signature:

Signature:

Role:

Role:

Date:

Date: