

Greater Manchester LSIP - Annex A

Data sources used and gathered to establish economic context and skills shortages

Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs) are intended to create an agreed set of actionable priorities that employers, training providers and other stakeholders in a local area can get behind to drive change.

Since LSIPs place employers at the heart of the skills system, the broad aim of the research undertaken as part of the development of the GM LSIP was to understand the skills employers need. This meant establishing employers' current needs and particular roles they may be experiencing difficulties recruiting for. It also meant working with employers to understand trends in their sectors, which might change the skills they need in future.

Skills shortages in the UK and its bigger functional economic areas such as Greater Manchester are not new. Businesses have long reported recruitment difficulties. At the same time, a deficit in skills is not the cause of all of Greater Manchester's labour shortages. In some sectors, a combination of low pay and suboptimal working conditions could be contributing to fewer numbers of workers applying for jobs in the sector. Therefore, the research had to explore the full gamut of issues impacting employment and skills, including strategic growth plans for Greater Manchester and the 10 boroughs that make up the city region.

This section presents the research methodology used in this study. A mixed methods approach including quantitative surveys, qualitative interviews, vacancies data from Adzuna, construction projects data and supply side data from DfE's Unit for Future Skills and ESFA's data cube was adopted to create an in-depth and integrated understanding of the skills and training position in Greater Manchester.

Data was collected using the following methods:

1. Desk research covering relevant reports, articles and academic papers.
2. The Chamber's own Quarterly Economic Survey (QES) was used to establish the economic context for businesses in GM and focus on specific areas relevant to the LSIP. This survey and report was started in 1989 and is an accurate indicator for local economic conditions. The Chamber has a proprietary index – the Greater Manchester Index - which is a composite of key results from business and tracks economic performance in GM and is widely recognised and accepted externally as an accurate source of information.
3. To supplement this, ONS and BRES data alongside a range of GMCA reports were used to gather current and relevant local data, establishing on an area-by-area basis, local economic conditions and sizes of labour markets, growth sectors, provision etc.
4. A large quantitative proprietary survey was undertaken, covering core issues on employment, skills and training. The questions in the survey covered recruitment activity, recruitment difficulties, business training intentions, barriers to training and areas in which training was needed.

5. The findings from the above survey showed that businesses were particularly struggling with digital skills. It also emerged that understanding of digital skills was variable. Therefore, a shorter survey focused on digital skills was conducted to gather information on specific digital skills requirements in different sectors.
6. Green skills are another area where there is lack of clarity and specificity. Considering the importance of green skills and the skills needed to implement specific green measures within different sectors, a survey focused on green skills was conducted.
7. Information about job vacancies posted by employers was used to map demand for skills and how skills needs change over time. Adzuna provide vacancy data at a national level to the ONS, and the data can be filtered down to a local area.
8. Greater Manchester Chamber has particular expertise in the construction sector. In 2013, the Chamber developed the first Construction Pipeline Analysis for Greater Manchester, which created an economic and labour requirements model for the construction projects planned for a region. The pipeline analysis was refreshed as part of the LSIP research.
9. Qualitative data was gathered using in-depth interviews with business representatives and young people. The interviews were conducted in parallel with other research streams. A semi-structured approach was used in the interviews by posing the same set of questions to all interviewees while also offering the flexibility to ask follow-up questions based on the unique experiences and challenges faced by the interviewee. The young people interviewed were recently employed after having completed apprenticeships. In total over 100 interviews were held.
10. Data dashboards from DfE's Unit for Future Skills provided information on routes young people take through education and post-education employment, and their earnings outcomes.
11. Training and apprenticeship starts in Greater Manchester were also reviewed.

Each data collection method was chosen based on the requirements of the project. Some of the findings confirmed our awareness of existing problems while others yielded new insights.

By establishing local authority level economic and labour market data overlaid with skills provision and employers' needs we could establish accurate levels of shortages, areas where demand will increase and current levels of provision that we could then aggregate up to GM level.

Overall, we believe that the methodology adopted for the research has yielded valid and reliable results. We believe that sample size for the surveys and interviews combined with the other research streams make the results representative of the on-the-ground realities in Greater Manchester.

The findings from every source of data have been corroborated by the findings from another. The table below is an example of this. It shows a sample of job titles identified by employers as being difficult to recruit. The same job titles came up in different data collection methods, which means a high degree of reliability can be placed on the findings.

The list in the table below is not intended to be exhaustive about occupations nor about research findings, rather it is illustrative of how the data was verified for 4 key sectors in

the GM economy: Financial, Business & Professional Services; Construction; Manufacturing and Engineering; and the Green Economy/Net Zero.

Further details on data sources and how they were used across the whole project can be found in Annex B under the Stage A information.

Job Titles	Adzuna	LSIP Survey Findings	LSIP Interviews	Desk Research
Financial Business & Professional Services sector				
Accountant	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Business analyst	Yes	No	Yes	No
Team leader/manager	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Construction sector				
Electrician	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Construction Labourer	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Welder	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Quantity Surveyor	Yes	Yes	No	No
Manufacturing and Engineering				
Production Operative	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Electronics engineer	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Design Engineer	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Green Economy/Net Zero				
Retrofit skills	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Retrofit coordinator/ assessor	No	No	Yes	Yes
Carbon accounting	No	Yes	Yes	Yes