Local area report
Bolton

Data from the Greater Manchester
Local Skills Improvement Plan

Funded by
UK Government

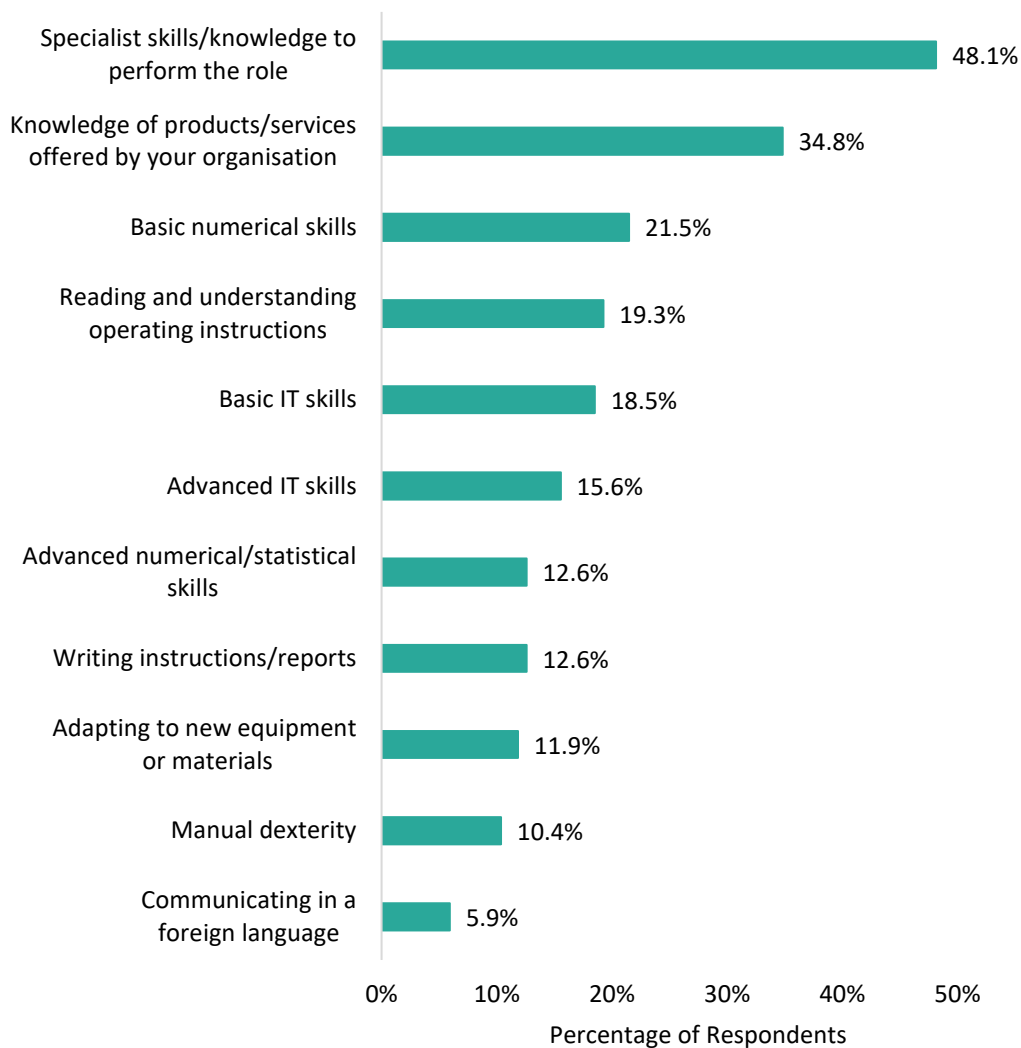**Greater Manchester
Chamber of Commerce**

Bolton

Approximately 70% of businesses in Bolton reported recruitment difficulties. This proportion was marginally higher compared to that of Greater Manchester (68.4%). The type of job that posed the most recruitment challenges was skilled and technical, with 36.5% of businesses reporting that they struggle to recruit staff for this type of role. This was followed by professional jobs (32.9%) and clerical jobs (21.2%). Roles that presented the least recruitment challenges were in the unskilled and semi-skilled categories (14.7%).

The hardest-to-find technical and soft skills in Bolton were similar to those of Greater Manchester as a whole. 48.1% of the respondents reported that 'specialist skills/knowledge to perform the role' was difficult to find in candidates. This was followed by 'knowledge of products/services offered by their organisation' (34.8%) and 'basic numerical skills' (21.5%).
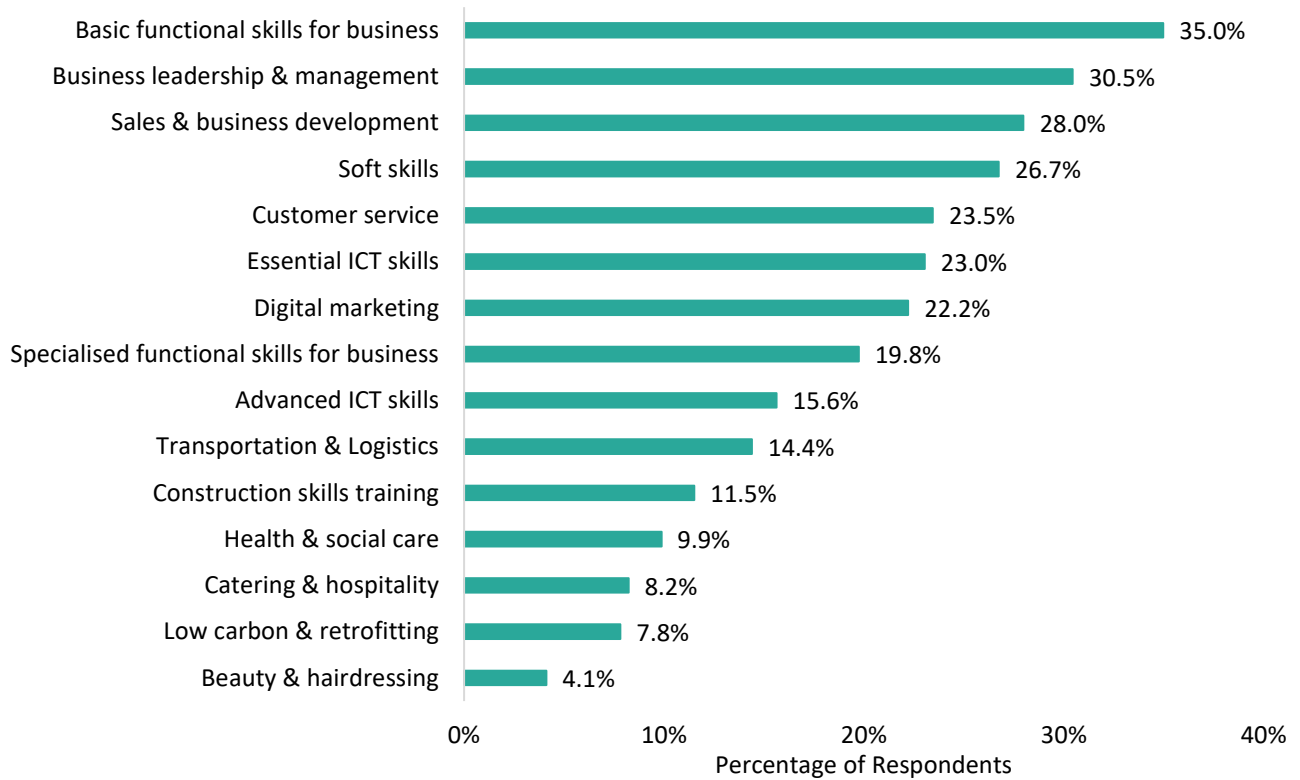
Technical Skills Difficult to Obtain From Candidates

Skill	Percentage
Specialist skills/knowledge to perform the role	48.1%
Knowledge of products/services offered by your organisation	34.8%
Basic numerical skills	21.5%
Reading and understanding operating instructions	19.3%
Basic IT skills	18.5%
Advanced IT skills	15.6%
Advanced numerical/statistical skills	12.6%
Writing instructions/reports	12.6%
Adapting to new equipment or materials	11.9%
Manual dexterity	10.4%
Communicating in a foreign language	5.9%

Percentage of Respondents

Regarding soft skills, businesses in Bolton struggled to find 'ability to manage own time and prioritise own tasks' (34.3%), 'managing own feelings or the feelings of others' (26.9%) and 'team working' (26.9%) in candidates. One difference between Greater Manchester and Bolton was that the lack of 'basic numerical skills' and 'team working skills' in candidates was greater in Bolton than in Greater Manchester.

Soft Skills Difficult to Obtain From Candidates

Soft Skill	Percentage
Managing own time/prioritising own tasks	34.3%
Managing own feelings/others' feelings	26.9%
Team working	26.9%
Sales	22.4%
Customer handling	21.6%
Managing/motivating staff	16.4%
Persuading others	14.9%
Teaching/training	14.2%
Making speeches/presentations	11.9%
Planning/setting objectives	11.2%

Percentage of Respondents

The training areas of interest were virtually the same in Bolton and Greater Manchester. The top area was 'basic functional skills for businesses', 35% of businesses showing an interest in these types of courses. The next most popular areas were 'business leadership & management' (30.5%), 'sales and business development' (28%), 'soft skills' (26.7%), and 'customer service' (23.5%).
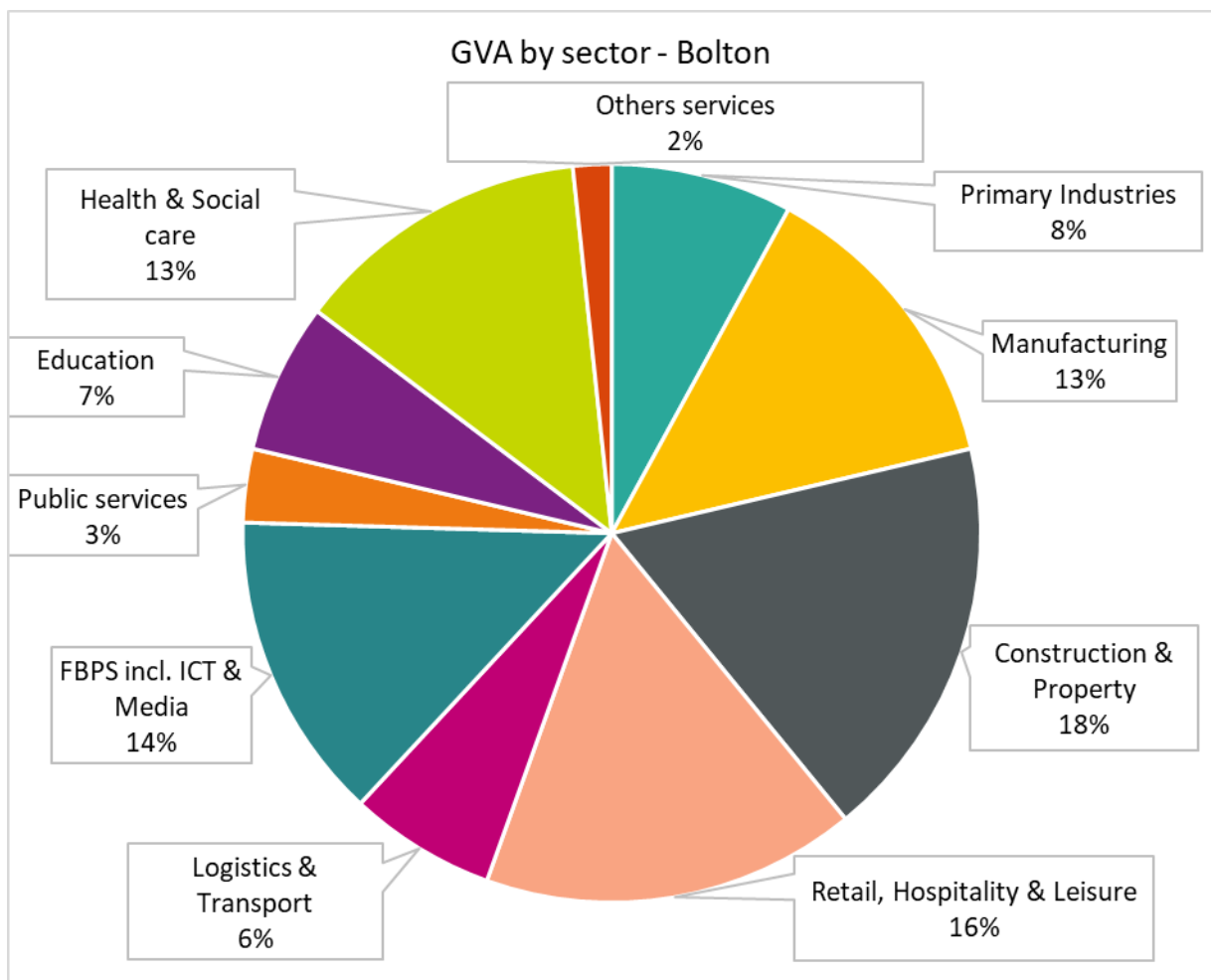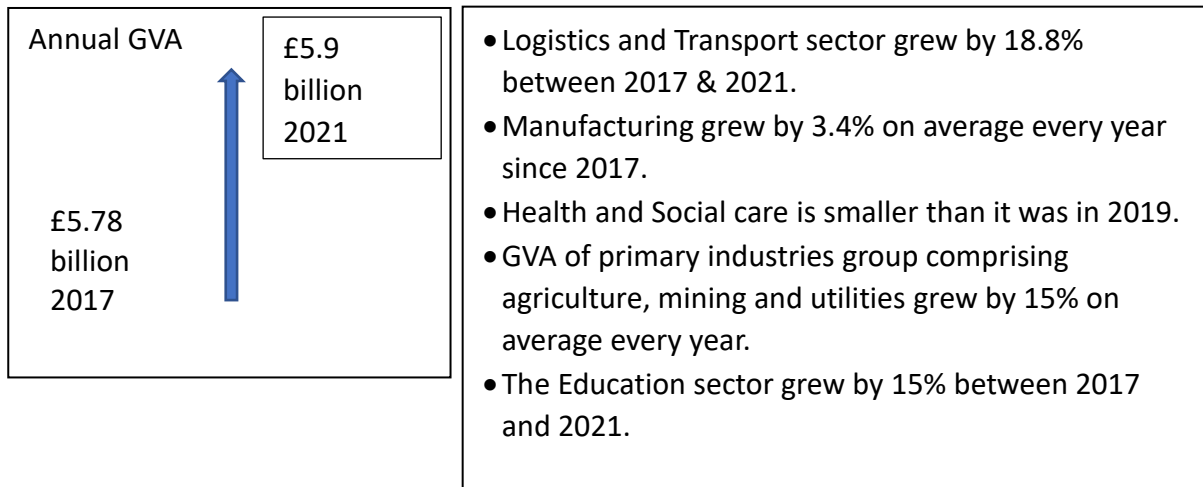
Training Areas of Interest for Businesses

Training Area	Percentage
Basic functional skills for business	35.0%
Business leadership & management	30.5%
Sales & business development	28.0%
Soft skills	26.7%
Customer service	23.5%
Essential ICT skills	23.0%
Digital marketing	22.2%
Specialised functional skills for business	19.8%
Advanced ICT skills	15.6%
Transportation & Logistics	14.4%
Construction skills training	11.5%
Health & social care	9.9%
Catering & hospitality	8.2%
Low carbon & retrofitting	7.8%
Beauty & hairdressing	4.1%

Percentage of Respondents

The table below shows the top 10 occupations in Bolton by the total number of vacancy postings from 2017 to 2022. This information has come from Adzuna.

2017		2018		2019	
Job title	Postings	Job title	Postings	Job title	Postings
General Nurse	954	General Nurse	727	General Nurse	566
Social Care Worker	658	Social Care Worker	659	Social Care Worker	562
Lorry Driver	497	Customer Service Adviser	589	Teaching Assistant	463
Assistant	483	Lorry Driver	491	Customer Service Adviser	424
NET Developer	428	Sales Executive	488	Lorry Driver	380

Childminder	424	Warehouse Worker	429	Sales Executive	361
Administrator	413	Manager	366	Assistant	328
Mental Health Nurse	386	Teaching Assistant	354	Manager	313
Primary School Teacher	374	Childminder	347	Primary School Teacher	288
Manager	359	Mortgage Broker	335	Administrator	265

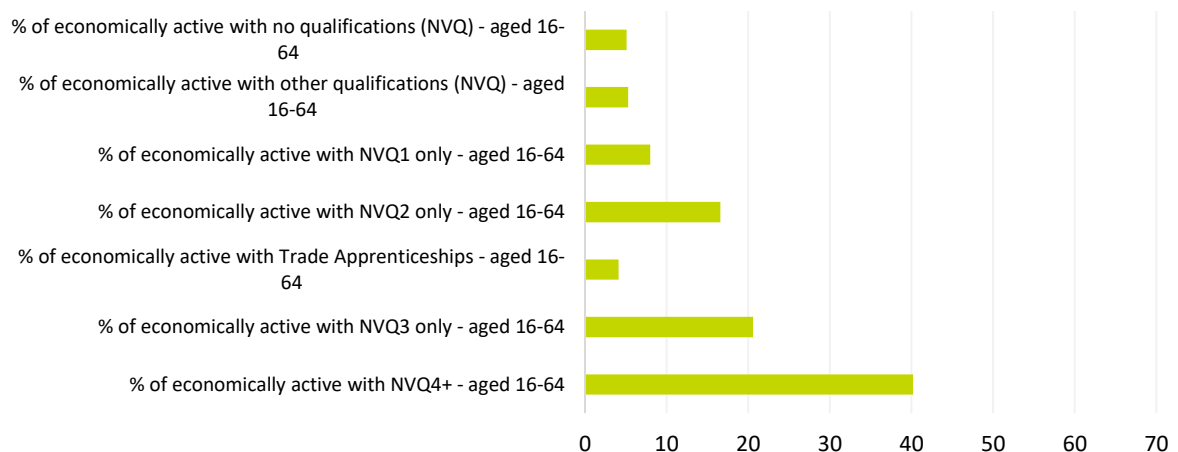| **2020**		**2021**		**2022**	
Job title	**Postings**	**Job title**	**Postings**	**Job title**	**Postings**
Social Care Worker	297	Social Care Worker	827	Warehouse Worker	1014
Teaching Assistant	201	Warehouse Worker	400	Social Care Worker	752
General Nurse	199	Teaching Assistant	274	Manager	482
Warehouse Worker	123	Cleaner	257	Lorry Driver	455
Cleaner	102	General Nurse	227	Tutor	444
Lorry Driver	100	Lorry Driver	222	Teaching Assistant	432
Primary School Teacher	98	Assistant	212	Administrator	419
Manager	89	Manager	203	General Nurse	417
Teacher	88	Driver	195	Assistant	407
Mathematics Teacher Secondary School	86	Administrator	181	Customer Service Adviser	403

Employment in Bolton

Annual GVA

£5.9 billion 2021

£5.78 billion 2017

- Logistics and Transport sector grew by 18.8% between 2017 & 2021.
- Manufacturing grew by 3.4% on average every year since 2017.
- Health and Social care is smaller than it was in 2019.
- GVA of primary industries group comprising agriculture, mining and utilities grew by 15% on average every year.
- The Education sector grew by 15% between 2017 and 2021.

GVA by sector - Bolton

- Others services 2%
- Primary Industries 8%
- Manufacturing 13%
- Construction & Property 18%
- Retail, Hospitality & Leisure 16%
- Logistics & Transport 6%
- FBPS incl. ICT & Media 14%
- Public services 3%
- Education 7%
- Health & Social care 13%

Employment – 127,900

- The sector with the largest employment in Bolton is Health and Social Care (BRES 2021).
- Between 2017 and 2021, employment in transport and storage sector grew by 83%.
- Manufacturing jobs declined by 15% between 2017 and 2021.

Employment by sector - Bolton

Primary Industries 1%
Manufacturing 10%
Construction & Property 8%
Health & Social care 15%
Education 8%
Public services 3%
FBPS incl. ICT & Media 20%
Retail, Hospitality & Leisure 26%
Transport & Logistics 9%
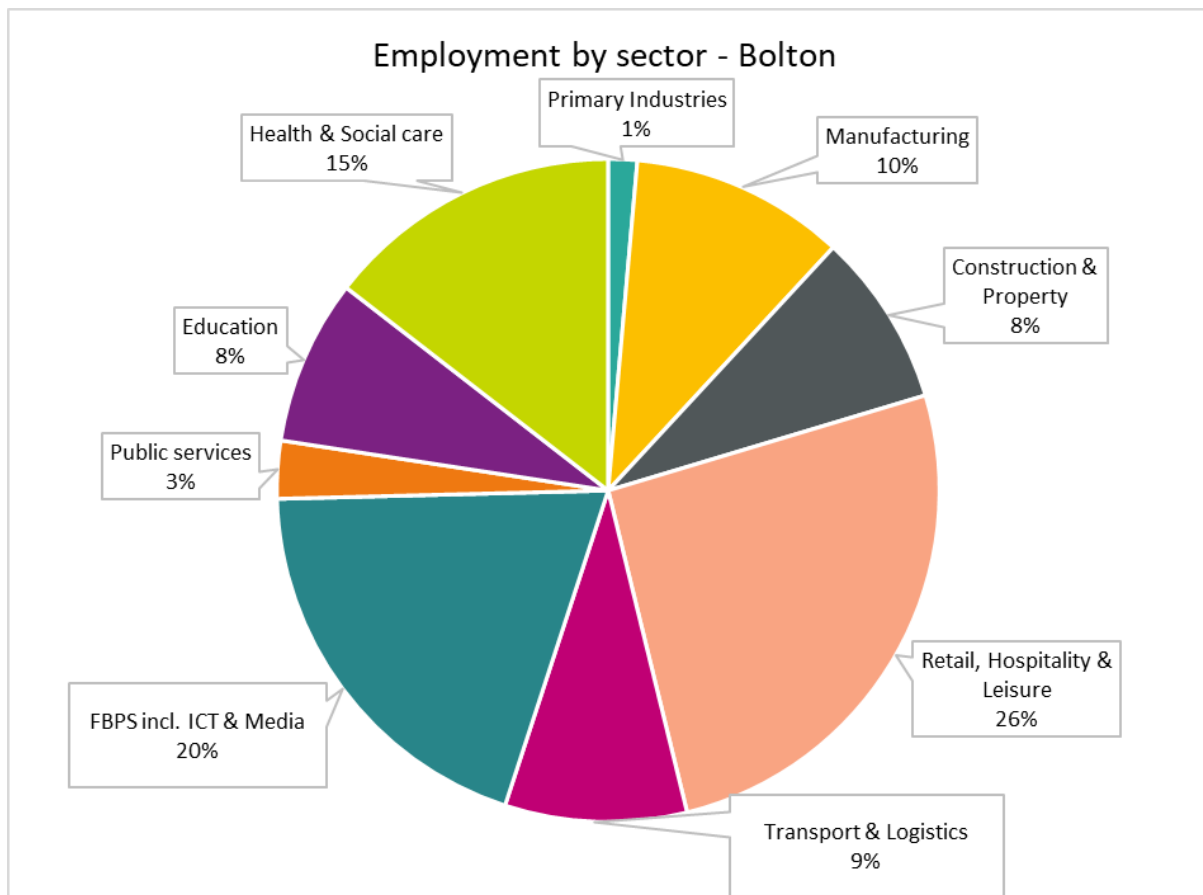
Percentage of economically active population with qualifications: Bolton

Qualification	Value
% of economically active with no qualifications (NVQ) - aged 16-64	~5
% of economically active with other qualifications (NVQ) - aged 16-64	~5
% of economically active with NVQ1 only - aged 16-64	~8
% of economically active with NVQ2 only - aged 16-64	~16
% of economically active with Trade Apprenticeships - aged 16-64	~4
% of economically active with NVQ3 only - aged 16-64	~20
% of economically active with NVQ4+ - aged 16-64	~40

LA priorities[1]

- Advanced Manufacturing
- Logistics
- Health and social care
- Construction
- Professional and financial services

Future investment / projects[2]

Bolton is part of Wigan and Bolton Growth Corridor. Employment growth sectors include: logistics, distribution, manufacturing and health innovation. There is also inclusion of infrastructure development: a quality bus corridor, motorway improvemenys, rail expansion and house building. The transition to a resource efficient or green economy will require new skills in many net zero related jobs. The key priorities for this growth cluster and the implication for employment / skills development are laid out in the following table.

Investment benefits	Development	Skills areas or job titles
Construction	Transport infrastructure, bus corridor, Motorways, rail expansion, Homes, warehouses	Civil engineers, Labourers, Site supervisors, Quantity surveyor, roofers, tile fitter, scaffolder, Plasterer, Painter, Bricklayer, ceiling fixer, Highway engineer, rail engineer
Logistics	Transport and distribution	Drivers, warehouse workers, forklift operators, Transport managers, assembly operatives
Health	Public Investment	Care workers, care assistants, Nurses
Education	Public investment	Teachers, Teaching assistant, Tutors, SEN assistant
Health innovation	Health Research and innovation (biosensors, genomics and precision medicine, diagnostics, Biopharmaceuticals and application of advanced materials.)	Digital and AI transformation in health, Pharmaceutical Researcher, Bioinformatician, clinical data analyst

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[1] Bolton's Economic Strategy (2016-2030) https://www.bolton.gov.uk/downloads/file/1099/bolton-economic-strategy

[2] Greater Manchester's Growth Locations (aboutgreatermanchester.com)

Green Opportunities	Green infrastructure, transport, manufacturing	Plumbers – Heat Pump, Retrofit Assessor, retrofitting coordinator, Digital skills needed for green transformation, Energy Consultants, Low carbon project manager, Electrical engineer, waste recycling management roles
Manufacturing	Advanced manufacturing, Commercialisation of advanced manufacturing techniques, Research on Advanced manufacturing	Production operative, Software developer, Mechanical engineer, Electric engineer, Automotive design Engineer, project engineers (materials), AI skills, Production design skills

Occupations most in demand identified from Adzuna data:

Sector	Job Titles
FBPS	- Manager - Administrator - Recruitment Consultant - Project Manager - Accountant - Software Developer - Financial Controller - Purchase Ledger Assistant
Health and Social care	- Social Care Worker - General Nurse - Healthcare Assistant - Dental Nurse
Education	- Teaching Assistant - Tutor - Primary School Teacher - Cover Supervisor - Teacher Secondary School (STEM) - SEN Assistant - Learning Support Assistant
Transport and storage	- Warehouse Worker - Hand Packer - Driver - Forklift Operator
Manufacturing	- Maintenance Engineer - Production Operative

	• Electrician • Operations Manager • Welder
Hospitality	• Customer Service Adviser • Sales Executive • Chef • Kitchen Assistant • Sous Chef • Waiter/Waitress
Construction	• Electrician • Quantity Surveyor • Bricklayer • Tile Fitter • Painter • Plumber • Roofer

Survey findings

Jobs that are difficult to recruit

Employers were asked: *"What are the job title(s) that you face difficulties recruiting for?"* The table below shows the most cited job titles for the largest sectors in Bolton.

Sector	Job Titles
FBPS	• Manager • Administrator • Accountant
Health	• Care Worker • Support Worker
Hospitality	• Manager • Chef
Logistics	• Bus Driver • HGV Driver (Heavy Goods Vehicle)
Manufacturing	• Production Operative • Welder • Engineer

Key causes of recruitment difficulties

Businesses were asked *"What are the main reasons why you are facing recruitment difficulties?".* The top reasons were:

- Low number of applicants with the required skills
- Low number of applicants with the required aptitude
- Lack of qualifications the company needs.

- Low number of applicants generally

Recommendations

1. Manufacturing is a significant sector in terms of employment and advanced manufacturing is a priority. Bolton College already has some provision in engineering qualifications. The manufacturing sector is expected to undergo largescale digitalisation and the adoption of automotive technologies including robotics is set to increase further. Future training in manufacturing will need to include computing, IoT sensors and manufacturing data analytics.

2. Within sectors like manufacturing, construction and health and social care, there is demand for entry level occupations that do not require high levels of skills. But the same sectors also report problems with both retention and progression of employees. Therefore, training provision for upskilling, career progression and enabling employees to progress to higher skilled/ higher wage jobs is critical.

3. With construction activity needing to ramp up for future investment projects, demand for all construction trades is likely to go up. This includes the skills needed for house building but also for warehousing and commercial development - e.g., dry lining, structural and steel erection.

4. Logistics has been identified as a priority area for Bolton. In the last five years, there was a lot of demand for logistics related occupations such as warehouse workers, forklift operators and operations managers etc. With further expansion and development of Logistics North, demand in this area is likely to increase. Currently, there isn't adequate provision to meet potential demand for training and qualifications in Logistics. This could be a priority area for creating training provision in.

5. There is already reported high demand for Health & Social Care occupations with care workers, care assistants and nurses being amongst the most demanded roles. The sector also reports a serious retention challenge. ONS Population Estimates indicate that Bolton will face an increase in population of older age groups and decline in the working age population (16-64) between now and 2037. These trends will accelerate demand for Health & Social Care professionals. There is training provision in Bolton College for Health & Social Care occupations but pathways to enable career progression and improve staff retention will need to be created.

6. Health & Social Care is undergoing digitalisation and workers in the sector will need new digital skills. With the sector being a local priority, Bolton is also well placed to take up opportunities in Health Innovation, which is a Greater Manchester Local Industrial Strategy priority. Life sciences and Health Informatics are two potential growth areas where new courses and skill sets will be required. New training

provision to address the impact of digital in healthcare – for example, T-Level qualifications in healthcare related digital design, development and support could be required to address future skills needs. Alongside this, courses for upskilling existing staff will also be required. Existing links with key employers such as the NHS will need maintaining and, where necessary, expanding.

7. The LSIP survey identified that there is a lot of demand for clerical / office administration roles including specialised roles in HR, finance etc. Another area identified by businesses as a challenge was on the skills staff needed to progress into leadership and managerial roles. Current provision included T-levels and apprenticeships but new training provision in leadership and management for existing workforce/adult learners could become a requirement.