

SOUTH YORKSHIRE CHAMBERS'

PEOPLE AND SKILLS MANIFESTO 2022

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OUR REGION - WHERE ENGLAND'S

SKILLS SYSTEM IS RESHAPED TO

BECOME MORE AGILE AND MEET

MODERN BUSINESS EXPECTATIONS



FOREWORD

Improving workplace skills is the single biggest challenge facing South Yorkshire’s economy and residents. For this reason it deserves its own manifesto – a statement of ambition for our region and what it will take to achieve it.

Skills drive productivity and ultimately wages. The average output of workers in South Yorkshire is around 20% lower than for the UK – a gap that hasn’t narrowed in nearly 20 years. And while the factors behind this are complex, the evidence is that our region underperforms the UK on most indicators of employee skills.

A growing number of the policy levers to get the changes we want are held by the Mayor. Other changes are in the gift of institutions and businesses based in South Yorkshire. Some are at the national level. The Local Skills Improvement Plan process led by Chambers showed how as partners we can work together effectively. We publish this manifesto in the same spirit of partnership.

BARNSELY AND ROTHERHAM CHAMBER



Andrew Denniff
Chief Executive



Joda Allen
President



Dan Fell
Chief Executive Officer



Andy Morley
President

SHEFFIELD CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



Louisa Harrison-Walker
Joint Executive Director



Alexis Krachai
Joint Executive Director



Karen Mosley
President

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OUR VISION

...is for South Yorkshire to be the place where England's skills system is reshaped to become more agile and meet modern business expectations.

“Businesses expect to test the market and make informed choices when they invest. When they use brokers, they expect their information to be real-time and complete. They expect partnership with suppliers in the design of new products and services. They expect suppliers to bring knowledge of the cutting edge but also to respond to the needs of their business. They know that they get out of business relationships what they put in. And they know that effective, tech-enabled customer journeys influence spending.

“We want our skills system to be like that. We believe this is the key to unlocking the potential of our residents and better retaining talent in our economy. Our manifesto sets out how we can achieve this with the help of government and our regional partners in education and training. We know many features of the modern customer journey are missing from our skills system. Businesses see something that's difficult to navigate. Something that doesn't engage with them to understand their needs or deliver to their convenience. It's 'one-shot' and transactional when their everyday experience is of important business relationships maturing over time. Of course, some businesses do experience good outcomes. We need more of them.

“As a business community we must hold up a mirror to ourselves. We are slow to publicise the many great examples of where the system delivers quality. We need to focus more energy on engaging with the skills sector. It's not good enough to say we want to. We have to. It is essential to raise our game as employers and managers.

“In South Yorkshire, we have widespread skills shortages despite the best intentions of all involved. We must fix this urgently. If we do not, our economy will continue to underperform the UK on most measures of skills attainment, productivity and wages. Businesses know that systemic change makes demands of everyone. It was in this spirit that South Yorkshire Chambers of Commerce led the region's Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) pilot. It brought together businesses, training providers and local government around shared solutions. Our manifesto calls for the delivery of that plan in full, emphasising those elements for which we need local political leadership.”

OUR VISION



WHY NOW

WHY NOW

The labour market.

In the first quarter of 2022, 93%* of South Yorkshire businesses that tried to recruit experienced difficulties. That's a record high for our region and well above the UK average of 78%* despite our higher unemployment rate. Professional and managerial roles were the hardest to fill. These are the higher paid jobs that disproportionately impact the performance of businesses.

**2022 Q1 South Yorkshire and UK Quarterly Economic Surveys*

Stronger partnerships.

Over the last six months South Yorkshire Chambers of Commerce have worked closely with our partners across business, education and skills training to produce an ambitious Local Skills Improvement Plan. Our manifesto is put forward in the same spirit of partnership. It is not a one-sided wish list. We set out what Chambers and the business community can offer to achieve our goals and where we need the support of our partners.

New Mayor.

May 2022 saw the election of a new South Yorkshire Mayor. That is why we are challenging the post holder to develop a new skills strategy in their first 100 days in office. This would set out how they intend to deliver on the recommendations of this manifesto and South Yorkshire's Local Skills Improvement Plan.

IMPLEMENTING THE **LOCAL SKILLS IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

This manifesto follows from the submission to Government in April 2022 of South Yorkshire's Local Skills Improvement Plan. The development of this Plan was led by Chambers of Commerce between October 2021 and March 2022. Its development engaged hundreds of employers through workshops and surveys. It drew on the insights of trade unions, other business networks and anchor institutions across the region.

WHERE WE ARE NOW...



77%*

South Yorkshire's output per hour, per filled job as a fraction of the England average

**In 2019. From ONS Sub-Regional Productivity in the UK (July 2021)*



39%*

South Yorkshire

VS



34%*

England

Share of skills-shortage job vacancies that are high-skilled

**In 2019. Employer Skills Survey, DfE (Oct 2020)*



40%*

Share of South Yorkshire businesses who would like to play a greater role in supporting careers provision in schools and colleges

**South Yorkshire Skills Accelerator Survey, Jan 2022*



37%*

South Yorkshire

VS



43%*

England

Share of population with NVQ4+ qualifications (higher-level academic or vocational)

**Jan 2020-Dec 2020, Annual Population Survey, ONS (Sept 2021)*



53%*

Share of South Yorkshire employers who believe their reliance on digital skills will 'significantly increase' over the next 5 years

**South Yorkshire Skills Accelerator Survey, Jan 2022*

THE OPPORTUNITY...



If the output of South Yorkshire's workers equalled England's average, the region's economy (GVA) would be **£7.2bn bigger.***

**Based on productivity uplift of £13k applied to the total number of employee jobs (2020). Assumes total number of filled jobs unchanged by uplift; England productivity average also unchanged.*



If the share of South Yorkshire's population with higher-level qualifications matched England's, an extra **49,000 people would be qualified to NVQ level 4 or above in our region.***

**Based on ONS mid-year population estimates (2020)*



If 40% of South Yorkshire's businesses converted their willingness to engage into action, **16,000 businesses would play a greater role in supporting careers provision in schools and colleges.***

**Based on ONS estimate of total number of enterprises (2021)*



If the share of South Yorkshire firms that believe they lack the required advanced digital skills were to address this, **13,000 businesses would be upgraded with the latest know-how.***

**Based on 31% who 'strongly disagree' or 'tend to disagree' that they have the advanced digital skills their business needs (from South Yorkshire Skills Accelerator Survey, Jan 2022), and ONS estimate of total number of enterprises (2021)*

With the right policies, resources and political leadership we can achieve:



A modern customer journey

A business experience of navigating the skills system that matches the best of other sectors.

Businesses value well-functioning platforms that mediate between them and suppliers when they need to understand complex markets, such as insurance. As with finance, the best brokerage platform for training would be easy to use, up-to-date and comprehensive.



Co-creation in the design of policy, skills and training products

Businesses proactively engaged with local funders and providers.

Businesses value strong, long-term relationships with their most important suppliers. They know this empowers their partners to anticipate their needs and invest to meet them. Employers want the same level of partnership with South Yorkshire's skills system.



Skills delivery at the cutting edge of business need and working practices

Access to training that responds to the changing needs of employers.

Changes in knowledge and skills at an industry's frontier may cut across traditional boundaries and professions and develop faster than formal qualifications. Employers want a system that delivers timely skills upgrades that fit their way of working.



Higher visibility of growth opportunities through skills

Effective marketing to business of South Yorkshire's skills provision.

Businesses know that good marketing underpins the success of any product launch. It raises awareness, communicates benefits, challenges perceptions and stimulates demand. Employers will respond to positive messages, myth-busting and celebrating the successes of the South Yorkshire skills offer.



The release of hidden workforce potential in our communities

Businesses connected to talent in harder-to-reach groups.

Businesses spend a lot of time looking for opportunities that others overlook. Their ability to thrive depends on it. Employers want to work closely with others to open up new employment pathways for those facing barriers to work.

TOGETHER WE CAN...

BUT WE NEED TO FIX...

BUT WE NEED TO FIX...



A customer journey for skills fragmented by government funding requirements, with too many providers working at cross-purposes



The deficit between employer enthusiasm to engage and their actual involvement in developing curriculums, programmes and qualifications



The perception, and sometimes the reality, that skills provision isn't at the cutting edge of content or delivery, with few of the 'bite-sized' or 'light-touch' options that employers like



The absence of a quality learning culture in too many workplaces



Resource gaps and structural barriers to skilled employment for our harder-to reach communities

BACKGROUND TO

SOUTH YORKSHIRE'S LOCAL

SKILLS IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Our region's Local Skills Improvement Plan is a 'trailblazer' programme for embedding employer needs more firmly into the skills system. In late 2021, South Yorkshire joined seven other areas across England, commissioned by the UK government, to convene employers, funders, unions, and education and training providers around a shared plan for improving workforce skills. South Yorkshire's Plan was led by Doncaster Chamber. It includes 46 recommendations for action and these are echoed in our manifesto. They pioneer new structures for long-term, local leadership of England's skills system. South Yorkshire's Skills Accelerator Board, which guided its development, included representatives from business, professional bodies and institutes, further and higher education and the Mayoral Combined Authority.

Access our Plan and the research and data that underpin it online:

www.sy-skillsaccelerator.co.uk/resources



WITH RESOURCES, WE CAN OFFER...

A modern customer journey

TO CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE

...convene businesses around a 'big-bang' overhaul of skills brokerage in South Yorkshire.

...provide broad-based business expertise to an audit of existing, publicly-funded portals; time and capacity to design new systems.

...promote a new Apprenticeship Hub service to link people and businesses to apprenticeship opportunities, share best practice and publicise successes.

TO BUSINESSES ACROSS SOUTH YORKSHIRE

...provide user testing and technical expertise in developing new solutions.

...use and contribute to networking services for supporting the region's apprentices, such as the Apprenticeship Hub.

Co-creation in the design of policy, skills and training products

TO CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE

...provide continued business leadership to the employer-focussed structures for skills strategy piloted in the Local Skills Improvement Plan.

...co-produce 'how to' guides with partners for effective recruitment, retention and skills development with signposting to local agencies.

...convene local businesses and anchor employers around a new industry placement scheme for teachers and educational leaders.

TO BUSINESSES ACROSS SOUTH YORKSHIRE

...work with partners to design effective incentives for increasing employer engagement in regional skills planning.

...work as anchor employers to support smaller businesses in taking a strategic approach to skills planning and recruitment.

...participate in placement schemes aimed at promoting better connections between education and industry.



Skills delivery at the cutting edge of business need and working practices

TO CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE

...convene providers and employers around quarterly knowledge transfer events on industry trends and emerging skills requirements.

...support the boosting of capacity within the Mayoral Combined Authority skills team with joint roles, secondments and placements.

...explore opportunities for co-location with partners.

TO BUSINESSES ACROSS SOUTH YORKSHIRE

...recognise quality-mark schemes for high-quality bite-sized learning.

...support 'entrepreneurs in residence' programmes at education and training providers.

...provide expertise from within the digital sector to help articulate digital skills needs and transfer knowledge of new modes of learning.

Higher visibility of growth opportunities through skills

TO CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE

...organise high-profile showcase events for career opportunities and innovative learning practices, such as a new 'Festival of Learning'.

...celebrate success and actively showcase skills development best practice across South Yorkshire.

...support the development of a new programme to celebrate best practice around developing the potential of labour market entrants, such as a new 'Investors In Young People' scheme.

TO BUSINESSES ACROSS SOUTH YORKSHIRE

...promote, attend and sponsor regional careers and skills showcasing efforts.

...contribute time and expertise to the design of new standards in career development.

...participate in programmes to celebrate and accredit business best practice around developing talent.



The release of hidden workforce potential in our communities

TO CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE

...run campaigns aimed at showcasing and improving employer engagement with harder-to-reach groups.

...support the streamlining of skills strategy structures around private-sector leadership – including the merger of the Skills Accelerator and Skills Advisory Network Boards.

TO BUSINESSES ACROSS SOUTH YORKSHIRE

...adopt the Armed Forces Covenant and similar pledges

...support mentoring and peer networks that help employees to learn from each other, such as a new Apprenticeship Network.

...contribute expertise and time to work-readiness initiatives such as 'last mile bootcamps'.

FROM OUR MEMBERS...

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"There is a growing desire from businesses for a greater level of signposting in relation to skills and learning. We need to build on the work done to date to enhance our regional offering and extend this into micro and SME businesses."

Matt Travis, Director of Enzygo, member of Barnsley & Rotherham Chamber of Commerce



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“As an employer in the social care sector, we can offer rewarding, highly-skilled and varied careers. What matters most to us is finding and retaining employees that share our values and who care deeply about the customers we support. We embrace talent wherever it comes from and are fully committed to the development of our people. We support the region in launching further initiatives to broaden the talent pool and help us further diversify our workforce. It’s imperative for our region to get better at showcasing these career opportunities to local people. By harnessing the talents of all our communities, we can address the acute skills and people shortages facing sectors like mine, transform individual lives and the economy too.”

**Heather Boyce, CEO, Age UK Doncaster,
member of Doncaster Chamber of Commerce**

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“Skills training should be easily accessible to any organisation to develop their existing workforce and grow their business to offer new opportunities. Signposting to providers and funding should be a one-stop shop. The positive impact on the South Yorkshire economy through upskilling and offering a wider range of roles where people can continue to learn would be felt much wider, extending into social and health benefits.”

**Dan Kirkland, Co-founder of TribePad, member of Sheffield
Chamber of Commerce**

BUT TO DELIVER OUR VISION WE NEED OUR PARTNERS TO...

A modern customer journey

PROVIDERS

...support, co-fund and provide timely information for an overhauled skills brokerage system and shared platform for connecting employers and residents to training.

GOVERNMENT IN SOUTH YORKSHIRE

...lead an audit of existing, publicly-funded skills portals and brokerage services.

...provide programme design and convene capacity for a 'big bang'-style overhaul of brokerage in which providers are directly involved.

...launch a new Apprenticeship Hub service to link people and businesses to apprenticeship opportunities, share best practice and publicise successes.

UK GOVERNMENT

...provide greater flexibility within sub-national funding streams (such as UKSPF) to support system changes, not just programme interventions.

Co-creation in the design of policy, skills and training products

PROVIDERS

...sign up to regular knowledge and relationship building activities with business engagement staff across partner organisations.

...develop short courses for middle leaders along the lines of Help to Grow or Common Purpose to promote better people management in South Yorkshire's priority sectors.

...promote a new marketing campaign for the proposed Institute of Technology to businesses across South Yorkshire.

...participate in new industry placement schemes for teaching staff and educational leaders.

GOVERNMENT IN SOUTH YORKSHIRE

...commit ongoing funding to make permanent the business-facing engagement of skills and trade bodies piloted in the LSIP.

...provide financial support for developing and promoting employer-led 'how to' guides for workforce skills development.

...fund and deliver the marketing campaign for the proposed Institute of Technology.

UK GOVERNMENT

...pilot in South Yorkshire a new cash grant award scheme to incentivise employer engagement on skills with schools, colleges and universities.

... show more willingness to reform the Apprenticeship Levy, allowing unspent funds to be channelled back into the priorities identified with local employers and their representatives.



Skills delivery at the cutting edge of business need and working practices

PROVIDERS

...develop courses for a new pilot system of 'micro-badging' and 'credentialing' for bite-sized training.

...attend quarterly briefing events where businesses and their representatives brief providers on industry trends and skills needs.

...design a standard set of data and evidence requirements on local labour market intelligence for the business community to respond to as part of the skills planning process.

...meet business expectations for swift and supportive customer service – publicly committing to service standards and targets.

...explore opportunities for co-location with partners.

GOVERNMENT IN SOUTH YORKSHIRE

...fund and programme manage the new system of micro-badging and credentialing of short courses.

...fund South Yorkshire's digital and EdTech sectors to work with employers and skills providers to identify digital skills needs and modes of delivery.

...build and distribute provider-facing data dashboards of the latest labour market intelligence relevant to skills planning.

...use its flexibilities within procurement and commissioning to build delivery capacity within South Yorkshire based providers.

...explore opportunities for co-location with partners.

UK GOVERNMENT

...commission national statisticians to collect and publish regular, in-year data on employer skills needs, putting this on an equal footing with economic statistics similar to inflation.

...reform guidance for Local Skills Improvement Plans to be fully inclusive of other providers, including higher-education institutions and the private sector.

...preserve BTECs on the curriculum.

...increase engagement with small employers at the policy design stage of major reforms to address cultural and operational disconnect, as exemplified by the unachievable work experience requirements of T-Levels.

Higher visibility of growth opportunities through skills

PROVIDERS

...contribute to the design and accreditation of standards for business excellence in developing those at the start of their careers, upskilling or re-skilling staff.

GOVERNMENT IN SOUTH YORKSHIRE

...launch a new and high-profile 'Investors in Young People' standard for business excellence in developing those at the start of their careers and for upskilling or re-skilling staff.

...provide long-term stability of funding for skills showcasing activity.

UK GOVERNMENT

...provide pilot funding for a nationally significant 'Festival of Learning' to showcase opportunities for continuous learning, community programmes and parental engagement.



The release of hidden workforce potential in our communities

PROVIDERS

...build more connected skills programmes like Tech for Troops.

...improve training and development programmes for those in disadvantaged communities, building on successful elements of the ESF Pathways programme and related initiatives.

...use their contacts with learners to promote a new Apprenticeship Network for current and past apprentices.

GOVERNMENT IN SOUTH YORKSHIRE

...fund campaigns to improve employer engagement with harder-to-reach groups.

...fund 'last-mile bootcamps' to improve the work-readiness and commercial skills of those about to join the workforce.

...fund and deliver a new Apprenticeship Network for current and past apprentices.

UK GOVERNMENT

...reverse real-terms cuts to art education and promote arts pathways for careers.

...increase real-terms funding to support people with childcare or carer responsibilities to remain in the workforce.

WE WILL JUDGE OUR POLITICAL LEADERS BY...

1.

Their ability to secure and commit funding, where it's needed, to deliver our manifesto and South Yorkshire's Local Skills Improvement Plan

2.

Their success in convening South Yorkshire's businesses, skills and education establishments to deliver on the shared responsibilities set out in our manifesto and the Local Skills Improvement Plan

3.

Their success in achieving the national-level commitments and changes needed to deliver our manifesto and the Local Skills Improvement Plan



SOUTH YORKSHIRE PROVIDERS NETWORK

“On behalf of the South Yorkshire Providers network and its members, we are pleased to endorse the recommendations articulated in this manifesto. These recommendations are derived from real lived experiences from local employers, stakeholders, providers and residents. We believe the inclusive and collaborative approach that resulted in the recommendations means that making the manifesto a reality will support positive economic growth and work towards closing the gaps in attainment and engagement in the region that currently exist against national measures. This will benefit employers, the economy and, most importantly, improve opportunities for our residents.”

Jayne Vose, Chair

SHEFFIELD DIGITAL - representing Sheffield's digital industries

“We need to be a region that is able to design, develop, deploy and market digital products and services at an industrial scale - for our members and for new start-ups, but also to transform longer-established businesses into more dynamic, data-aware and service-oriented organisations. We're a long way from the necessary skills being ubiquitous among our workforce, but there's no shortage of ideas to address the gap.”

Chris Dymond, Director

ASSOCIATION OF EMPLOYMENT AND LEARNING PROVIDERS

“AELP is delighted to have been involved in the development of the South Yorkshire Local Skills Improvement Plan. It's vital that all training providers have a strong part to play in the development of these plans, as they will be key in delivering the training needed to support local economies. South Yorkshire now has a great plan in place to support the development of high-quality skills that local people and businesses need, and I hope other areas follow suit.”

Jane Hickie, CEO

NORTHERN COLLEGE

“It's great to know that South Yorkshire's businesses welcome talent wherever it comes from. We look forward to genuine partnership with employers and providers in the region to provide accessible and relevant skills training that helps to remove the barriers to good work faced by some in our communities.”

Yultan Mellor, CEO and Principal





THE MANUFACTURING FORUM

“The manufacturing sector in South Yorkshire faces some significant challenges in the years ahead but also some exciting opportunities. Industry 4.0, digitalisation and green energy are all growth areas for manufacturers to operate within and prosper. In order to embrace and maximise these opportunities, manufacturing businesses have to be prepared. Having the appropriate skill sets within the organisation are imperative. We fully support adopting a thoughtful, co-ordinated skills programme for the region and therefore are happy to endorse this manifesto.”

Peter Edwards, CEO, International Trade Forum

SHEFFIELD HALLAM UNIVERSITY

“Hallam welcomes this manifesto. South Yorkshire has significant skill challenges that can only be solved through collaboration between business and education. Sheffield Hallam already plays a major role in shaping and developing our regional workforce; we produce highly-skilled graduates that work across all sectors of our region. We have a significant degree apprenticeship portfolio working with over 500 employers. However, we need to do more to support our businesses and our economy. We will contribute positively to systems-based leadership to ensure our education system is navigable by learners and employers. We will work proactively with education partners across the region to support learner progression to higher-level programmes; develop highly-applied programmes in partnership with industry, ensuring we support learners into high-skilled employment; and develop learning pathways with other education providers to support learner ambition and employer need.”

Chris Husbands, Vice-Chancellor

BARNSLEY COLLEGE

“There is much to be proud of across the region around how we develop the skills required for a modern workforce but the opportunity to further focus attention specifically around the needs of local businesses is key to real partnership between business and skills. Barnsley College is fully committed to this collaboration and welcomes discussion at all levels through our College Business Centre.”

David Akeroyd, Deputy Principal



RESPONDING TO THE CHALLENGE



THE UNIVERSITY OF SHEFFIELD

"In order to deliver the much-needed transformation in productivity levels, we need to rethink how we develop skills in relation to innovation. The AMRC Training Centre is an exemplary model of employer-led skills linked to innovation and thus to productivity gains in South Yorkshire. We'd welcome initiatives that link innovation and skills, for example incentivising employer engagement with universities, to provide more placement and knowledge transfer opportunities."

Professor Dave Petley, Vice-President for Innovation

THE SHEFFIELD COLLEGE

"We need to improve how we support people across South Yorkshire to train, retrain, skill and upskill. Our challenge is to ensure that we are working in collaboration to provide training opportunities that support people to gain work, progress in work, to develop their talent and to achieve their potential in their chosen field. We will continue to work closely with employers. We want to fully understand business needs and to develop coherent, accessible and flexible opportunities for people to train and gain skills. We must maximise existing opportunities for gaining skills and must ensure that we have agile systems to develop and deliver bespoke training for employers when and where they need it."

Angela Foulkes, CEO and Principal

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JOIN OUR CAMPAIGN

Help us to spread the word on social media

→ **#SouthYorkshireSkillsManifesto**

For more information visit:

www.brchamber.co.uk

 @brchamberUK

www.doncaster-chamber.co.uk

 @DNChamber

www.scci.org.uk

 @SheffChamber

SOUTH YORKSHIRE
CHAMBERS IN NUMBERS
2021/22

13,019

BUSINESSES SUPPORTED
EACH YEAR

COMMUNICATION
REACH OF

69,742

£203,973,041

VALUE OF EXPORTS
FACILITATED BY CHAMBERS

2,707

CHAMBER
MEMBERS

57

CHAMBER
WORKFORCE

671

EVENTS AND BUSINESS
TRAINING COURSES
DELIVERED

383,368

STAFF EMPLOYED BY
MEMBERS

21,413

YOUNG PEOPLE
SUPPORTED

