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# North Lincolnshire Skills and Employability Plan 2023 – 2028

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## North Lincolnshire Skills and Employability Plan

Welcome to the North Lincolnshire Skills and Employability Plan 2023 – 2028.

Economic growth and renewal is at the heart of our ambitions for North Lincolnshire. Ensuring people have the skills they need to realise their potential and businesses have access to a highly skilled workforce will be crucial to our success. We want to go further than supporting people to get a job, but instead focus on enabling people to build a career, encouraging personal ambition through lifelong learning, high quality education, training and opportunities to upskill and gain experience.

We have listened carefully to what our businesses and resident's skills needs are and working together we have already made great strides in increasing opportunities. However, we know more needs to be done to ensure businesses and residents can access the skills they need now and in the future.

This plan sets out how we will work in close collaboration with our businesses, partners, providers and communities to share expertise, target resources and take collective action to realise our growth ambitions and achieve a highly skilled workforce working in high value jobs.

## North Lincolnshire Skills and Employability Plan

The purpose of the Skills and Employability Plan is to provide a framework for the Council and its partners to work together as a system to improve employment and skills outcomes for the North Lincolnshire economy and its communities. We are focused on making the most difference locally through the best application of local and national resources.

### Our vision

North Lincolnshire is a great place to learn, work, upskill, re-skill and build a career

### Our Priorities for North Lincolnshire

- A place to build a great career
- A place enabling businesses to grow through skills and careers investment
- A place with a proud culture of local skills aspirations and proactive collaboration

### Supporting our plans for economic growth

The Skills and Employability Plan is a key document which underpins our plans for economic growth across North Lincolnshire.



## Economic Growth Plan 2023 – 2028

Building on the success of the previous plan, a new Economic Growth Plan has been developed to deliver a forward plan of interventions that will drive sustainable economic growth across the area.

### Economic Growth Plan Vision

*North Lincolnshire is a place with strong and sustainable economic growth, leading to wellbeing and prosperity for our residents and communities*

The Economic growth plan is arranged around 3 priorities and interventions that will create the conditions for economic growth and renewal, and support the council's ambition to be the best place for our residents.

Priority 1 - A place where people, places and products are connected globally to deliver sustainable economic growth

- Develop North Lincolnshire as a global trade gateway - connecting businesses across the UK, Europe, and Worldwide
- Delivering high quality, sustainable, resilient infrastructure
- Secure greater freedoms and flexibilities at a local level

Priority 2 - A place where businesses and residents make positive changes to create a cleaner, greener, healthier North Lincolnshire.

- Move to a net zero economy
- Enable high quality and environmentally sustainable homes in flourishing communities
- Promoting health, wellbeing, and a good quality of life

Priority 3 - A place which enables and encourages businesses, residents and communities to achieve their full potential

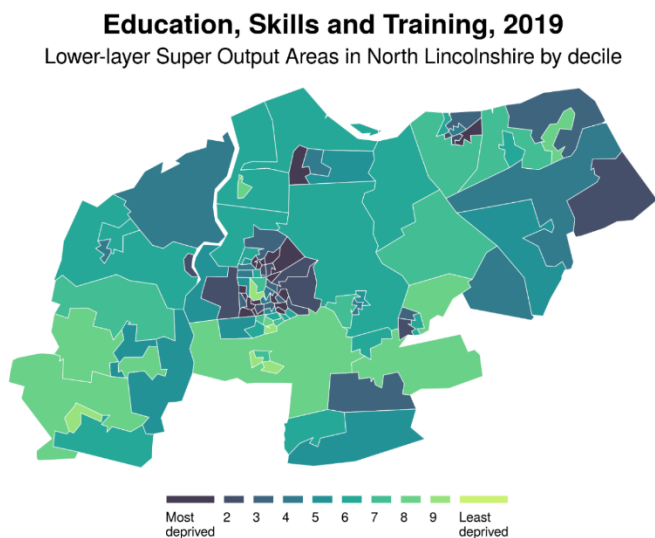
- Ensure everyone has the opportunity to learn, work, up-skill, re-skill and build a career
- Driving growth in our key sectors
- Regenerate town centres

Education and skills are vital to achieving the success of our plans for economic growth. It is essential that our economy has a skilled workforce to support the needs of current businesses and to attract further investment to the area. This skills plan is therefore key in setting out our plans to provide a highly-skilled and innovative workforce that will enable our ambitions for economic growth to be realised.

## Place overview

<p>North Lincolnshire's population in 2021 is 169,674, increased by 2.228 (1.3%) between 2011 and 2021.</p>
<p>North Lincolnshire has a working age population of 102,189 (60.2% of the total population).</p>
<p>In North Lincolnshire in 2021, the rate of people in employment qualified to NVQ Level 4 or above was lower than the regional or national rates, but the number has increased over the last 5 years</p>
<p>In North Lincolnshire in 2021, some 9.2% of those aged 16 to 64 had no qualifications, compared to 7.8% in the region and 6.4% in England. The wards of Brumby, Frodingham, Crosby and Park and Town have the highest proportion of those with no qualifications.</p>
<p>In September 2022, North Lincolnshire was showing high levels of employment with an employment rate of 77.6%, higher than the rates for both the region and England.</p>
<p>North Lincolnshire's claimant count for December 2022 was 3.5% compared to 4.0% in the region and 3.8% in England</p>
<p>In September 2022, the employment rates for both males (80.1%) and females (75.0%) were higher than both the regional and national averages.</p>
<p>In September 2022, the unemployment rate in North Lincolnshire remains at an all time low rate of 1.6%, significantly lower than the region and England.</p>
<p>In April 2022, the median gross weekly pay for workers in North Lincolnshire was £518.90, making it slightly higher than the regional figure of £481.50 but lower than the national figure of £536.60.</p>
<p>North Lincolnshire has extremely high levels of employment in the Manufacturing Sector (24.1% of employment) compared the regional (11.5%) and national (7.3%) levels. Local specialisations include Steel, Chemicals (refining of petrochemicals) and Food Manufacture. Transport &amp; Storage, Energy and Construction are also well represented in the area.</p>
<p>As of September 2022, Skilled Trades (14.4%) and Process, Plant and Machine Operatives (8.2%) are well represented in the North Lincolnshire workforce, more so than in the wider regional and national workforces. Professional Occupations (15.5%) are underrepresented in North Lincolnshire</p>

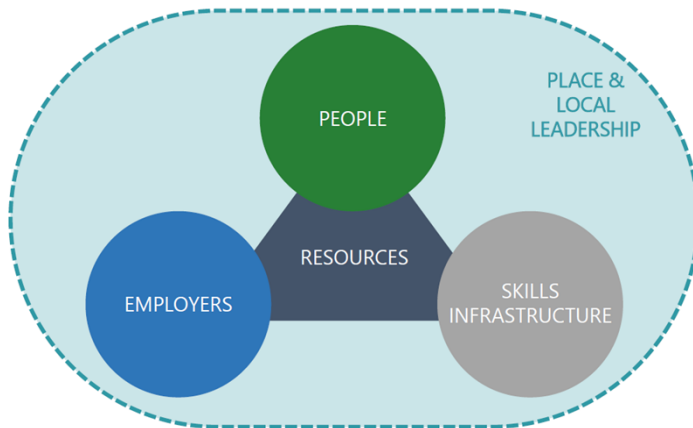
North Lincolnshire has pockets of education and skills deprivation as shown the Index of Multiple deprivation map relating to education, skills and training below.



Source: English Indices of Deprivation (2019), MHCLG  
Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2019

## Our approach to the Skills Plan

Our approach to developing this skills plan considers work that has taken place to understand the system in which skills operate within North Lincolnshire. Essentially, we have looked at 3 inter-related elements – People, Employers, and Skills Infrastructure. Resources sits at the centre of the model, cross-cutting the three elements and reflecting that all three in some cases have access to funds for skills improvements. The critical driver of ‘Place & Local Leadership’ on the local skills ecosystem is also recognised. This interrelationship is demonstrated in the diagram below.



## Our Priorities

### A place to build a great career

Our aim is to build a place where those living and working in North Lincolnshire and the surrounding area can develop and build a great career. This priority is focused on enabling people to access routes to local, high-quality careers in North Lincolnshire.

Our priority will be to ensure people have the information, advice and guidance they need to access skills and employment opportunities that are linked to the requirements in the labour market. We will work in partnership to ensure all age groups, from primary school upwards, have access to high quality information and advice.

North Lincolnshire has significant plans for growth linked to our key sectors: manufacturing and engineering, ports and logistics, construction, energy, food, and health and care. In addition, we recognise there are sectors which continue to require focus due to the enabling role they play in the local economy and impacts on our local population. We have identified the visitor economy and digital sector as enabling sectors. Our ambitions for growth are set out in our Economic Growth Plan 2023 – 2028 and we will ensure effective systems are in place to communicate the areas of growth and labour market information to residents, and to the people who influence them, such as family and teachers, so that they can gain a full understanding of local opportunities to best inform career choices.

In order to support our economic growth ambitions, there is a need to ensure that the area is a visibly attractive place to build a career for residents and non-residents living within commuting distance. Programmes of work, including the Town’s Fund Programme and the Future High Street Fund are building on the previous investment in Scunthorpe to deliver the Scunthorpe Master Plan vision and regenerating the town to support local ambitions.

We will build on existing programmes, such as the Lifelong skills for jobs programme aimed at upskilling those aged 50+ and the multiply programme to increase adult numeracy levels.

Recognising that North Lincolnshire has stubbornly elevated levels of long-term unemployment and fluctuating levels of economic inactivity, we will provide direct support to those out of work and the economically inactive to understand local labour market dynamics and enable them to develop the employability skills required to be work ready.

Some groups, such as young people, and some communities, have higher levels of long-term unemployment with a higher proportion of economic inactivity and entrenched skills deprivation. In addition, we recognise that covid lock-downs and other factors have impacted on mental health, social skills development and work encounters for all ages, but particularly for young people. Utilising our evidence base, we will develop bespoke programmes for targeted groups to support people to reach their full potential.

In addition, businesses have highlighted that employability skills are of equal importance to technical 'hard skills'. These include skills such as communication, time management and work readiness.

#### Opportunities for interventions

- Young People

For young people, we will ensure consistent careers education for all which promotes the employment and skills opportunities in North Lincolnshire linked to the current and future labour market requirements in our key and enabling sectors. We will build on collaboration opportunities with higher education to continue to increase higher level skills across the area and work with businesses to promote work experience opportunities. We will also look to the community and voluntary sector to support volunteering opportunities to enable young people to gain valuable experience including the development of the employability skills which are the foundation of any career.

- Unemployed / Economically Inactive

For the unemployed and economically inactive, we will work with our partners to tackle barriers to skills and employment, including areas such as numeracy levels, mental health challenges, transport barriers and childcare. We will build on previous successes for increasing employability, job outcomes and support more local, bespoke programmes enabling people to achieve their potential.

- Adults In Work

For working adults, we will promote a new focus on lifelong learning and in-work skills progression including the promotion of opportunities in North Lincolnshire to gain additional higher levels skills linked to current and future labour market requirements and our key and enabling sectors as set out in the Economic Growth Plan.

- 50+

For adults aged 50+, we will support projects providing skills development for older workers and work with businesses to enable them to support the reskilling and upskilling of this cohort, allowing businesses to maximise the value and experience of the older workforce and remove any barriers to those looking to secure employment.

- People with disabilities



We will support the objectives to increase the number of Disability Confident employers by encouraging employers to think differently about disability and to take positive action to improve how they attract, recruit and retain disabled workers.

- Work readiness

We will work to promote the importance of developing employability skills alongside technical and higher-level skills for those preparing to enter the workplace to ensure that they are work ready. We will do this through working in partnership with schools, skills providers and employers to increase workplace encounters in our key sectors.

We recognise that it is important for potential employees and employers to understand each other's expectations of each other and for potential employees to understand the careers opportunities on offer and the potential routes for progression our key sectors provide to enable successful employment and career outcomes.

- Place

In recognition of the linkages between the quality of the place and the attractiveness of the employment offer, we will continue to support place-based strategies utilising available funding for town centre and market town regeneration, as well as promoting the quality of life in North Lincolnshire's rural areas.

### **Outcome**

Local residents, and people living within commuting distance, understand, find inspiration from and can access routeways to local high-quality careers in North Lincolnshire.

## **A place enabling businesses to grow through skills and careers investment.**

The last decade has seen relatively strong job growth in the local economy, but over the past five years vacancy numbers have increased rapidly. Employers have also been increasingly citing hard-to-fill vacancies as well as skills shortages. Despite the pressure on filling immediate front-line vacancies, employers have confirmed a long-term demand for higher level skills. Although the area has made positive progress in reducing the number of residents with no or low qualifications, there is a growing gap in the number of people with qualifications above Level 4 compared to nationally.

There is therefore a need to ensure encouragement and support towards higher level learning. Skills investment for both employers and residents remain a high priority, despite immediate frontline skills shortages.

In addition, apprenticeships have declined substantially over recent years, particularly in important sectors such as engineering, and learning providers have reported ongoing challenges sourcing applications for both apprenticeships and traineeship vacancies. Despite recent reports of an increase in demand, there continues to be a strong need to raise the profile of apprenticeships and traineeships to improve local take up and achievement through supporting both employers and residents.

We will continue to work with our businesses to recognise the demand and supply in the market and build on findings from initiatives including the Local Skills Improvements Plan being developed by the Federation of Small Businesses across Greater Lincolnshire.

In order to really drive growth of our key and enabling sectors, we will work closely with businesses to identify their needs and explore projects which provide us with an opportunity to develop a cluster approach – growing partnerships between businesses, colleges and universities and the public sector to deliver anchor projects and provide centres of excellence. In addition, we recognise that to grow, some of our sectors require people qualified to level 5+, such as those working in the advanced engineering sector.

We will work with businesses to upskill people from low skills to medium up to higher level skills – increasing the number of people who have a L3 qualification (needed to move us from a low skilled workforce and enabling people to move into the labour market).

Recognising the success to date, we will continue to build on the programme of careers enterprise co-ordinators, matching businesses representatives with local schools and colleges to encourage a focus on work experience and curriculum content which increasingly matches businesses future needs.

In recognition of the importance of both physical and mental wellbeing, we will continue to work with businesses to deliver the North Lincolnshire Workplace Health Strategy, including the Healthy Workplace Awards scheme. This includes a programme of activity to build mental wellbeing and resilience and can be delivered to employees in local workplaces through the workplace health programme and other means.

### Opportunities for interventions

- **Training**

#### *Learning, Development and Skills Progression*

We will enable targeted in-work skills training support for employers to help them to develop a competitive, inclusive employment offer increasing their skills investment with connections to national programmes such as apprenticeships (including higher apprenticeships) which will support development of higher-level skills and careers progression for employees.

We recognise the need to move from a low skilled population towards higher level skills, prioritising the progression towards achievement of Level 3+ and Level 5+ qualifications and building on the increases made in people going into higher education.

#### *Pre-employment and work experience*

Strong partnerships between businesses, schools and skills providers will help to develop the culture of aspiration and drive the increase towards higher level skills. Promoting T levels and apprenticeships as a prestigious alternative to A levels will open up opportunities for people in North Lincolnshire and support the development of the skills that employers require in our key and enabling sectors.

Alongside this, increasing work experience opportunities for young people in our key sectors is important in helping them to understand the world of work, the employability skills they require and to link their learning to future skills and careers which will inspire them to forge a career in North Lincolnshire. We will devise programmes to grow local talent and retain skills in this area.

- **Key Sectors, Businesses & Entrepreneurship**

<i>Our key growth sectors</i>	<i>Our enabling sectors</i>
Ports and Logistics	Visitor Economy

Food Energy and Chemicals Manufacturing and Engineering Construction Health and Care	Digital
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To meet our future skills gaps, we need to focus on addressing the current and future needs identified within our key growth and enabling sectors

- Manufacturing and engineering
  - North Lincolnshire's largest sector, directly employing 18,000 people, 24% of total employment in the area
  - Forecasted strong growth
  - Long-term requirement to recruit and/or develop higher level skills – particularly engineers, as businesses innovate and develop sustainable, higher tech processes and products.
- Ports and logistics
  - Immediate skills shortages reported include ports, freight, vehicles maintenance and managements roles, but there is a need for collective awareness locally of the sector and its potential for more residents to consider jobs and training opportunities
- Health and care
  - Third largest sector in NL, directly employing 9,000 people.
  - Sector employment forecast suggest strong growth over the next decade
  - High vacancy rate and particular shortage of front-line domiciliary and residential care workers
  - High number of locally trained staff required over next 5-10 years
- Construction
  - Major inward investment plans locally will intensify the demand for construction workers over the next decade and are likely to increasingly require workers from a much wider area on a daily or weekly commuting basis.
  - Increasing need and demand for a carbon neutral economy
  - Need to upskill and reskill to transform the industry with a focus on new innovative, sustainable technologies and behaviours such as inclusivity
- Food
  - New technologies such as automation/AI/Robotics provide a high investment medium term option to workforce challenges but will require new leadership and technical skillset

- Energy and Chemicals
  - High number of significant energy-related projects identified for the Humber up to 2030 requiring a skilled workforce to match demand.
  - The chemicals sector is a highly skilled sector with a 6% employment growth expected up to 2030.
  - Renewables viewed as a cross-cutting sector as low carbon occupations are reflected across most sectors.
- Visitor economy
  - Immediate employability development opportunities
  - Work with wider partners over the 'Place' offer
- Digital
  - Digital roles are growing in all sectors and influence all aspects of life.

Our key and enabling sectors are central to our Skills Plan. We will work in partnership with our businesses from our large anchor employers through to our SMEs and potential future investors, to develop a competitive skills and employment offer.

Particular focus will be on increasing the number of people who hold level 4+ qualifications in our key and enabling sectors and supporting businesses to provide greater opportunities for the postgraduate population through appropriate level roles and training packages. Active involvement in the Local Skills Improvement Plan will be encouraged to ensure that supply matches skills demand throughout the area.

We are ambitious about what we want to achieve in North Lincolnshire and continuous engagement and collaboration with our businesses around the skills agenda is crucial in order to drive progress in the areas that are important for businesses and to encourage inward investment.

- Wellbeing

Wellbeing is an important foundation in achieving the outcomes throughout the Skills Plan. Through creating partnerships between businesses and public health we will promote good physical and mental health within and outside of the workplace as well as tackling barriers to employment caused by poor wellbeing.

We will support the objectives to increase the number of businesses in North Lincolnshire who are committed to the Disability Confident scheme by encouraging employers to think differently about disability and to take positive action to improve how they attract, recruit and retain disabled workers. This will involve businesses talking to businesses, with disability confident employers sharing their evidence and experience.

Outcome

- Thriving local businesses with competitive employment offers and established skills investment plans providing opportunities for local people

## A place with a proud culture of local skills aspirations and proactive collaboration

North Lincolnshire has been recognised as having an impressive local infrastructure of innovative, enterprising employment and skills providers rooted in or very near to North Lincolnshire with a real appetite to collaborate to benefit local employers, communities, and local provision. This is linked to a high concentration of post-16 students in Scunthorpe, a new Higher Education North Lincolnshire University Campus and Institute of Technology plus renowned local providers ensuring an excellent breath of course opportunities available locally. Utilising this strong starting point, we will work in partnership to embed a culture of local skills aspirations and ensure the best skills offer for residents and businesses reducing the skills 'miles'. This approach will provide the opportunity for our residents to be able to gain their qualifications locally and gain high value employment without having to completely leave the area.

A challenge exists around higher-level skills and a perceived lack of supply of, and sometimes need for, higher level skills and qualifications. This risks creating and perpetuating a lower skilled, lower wage and lower growth equilibrium. Through our partnership work, and strong labour market intelligence we will work in partnership to change this perception. Aligned to this, we will embed our approach to working closely with universities to increase opportunities for residents, businesses and providers leading to better skills, increased innovation, research and development and make North Lincolnshire the place to attract investment.

Our 'place' offer also needs to be appealing enough to attract the best people from a global market place. North Lincolnshire has some of the best opportunities for highly skilled jobs in key growth sectors, for example, advanced manufacturing, engineering, energy, chemical and processing sectors. We are ambitious to build on these opportunities to attract an international, globalised workforce.

Our Skills Transformation Board comprises public and private organisations with a joint ambition to drive forward skills levels to meet market conditions in North Lincolnshire. The Board will focus on ensuring alignment between what businesses require to meet our growth ambitions as well as the training and qualifications currently on offer.

### Opportunities for interventions

- Governance & Partnerships

The Skills Transformation Board will provide strong governance for the Skills & Employability Plan and provides a forum to strengthen existing partnerships and create new, sustainable partnerships between businesses, universities, schools and colleges. Sustainable partnerships will provide oversight to gather data-centric insight to ensure that skills provision meets the needs of the current and future workforce and a culture of innovation.

The creation of a Skills Compact will further support and drive the Skills Plan forward by providing focus to the skills transformation agenda that businesses are engaged in and have committed to.

A Devolution deal for Greater Lincolnshire will also transfer powers, funding and flexibility to the region and provide the catalyst to improve learning, training and pathways into higher skilled jobs to raise living standards and level up for local residents.

When required, we will be proactive to enable collaboration between inward investors, existing businesses, providers and local stakeholders and partners to address the skills required for significant inward investment opportunities.

- Marketing & Reputation

We want to build on our reputation for attracting the best talent from around the world to work in our key sectors. Through working in partnership with universities to offer continuous opportunities for skills development, research and innovation we can develop and promote the concept of North Lincolnshire as a centre of skills excellence linked to our key sectors.

The concept of a North Lincolnshire Learning Campus which builds on the opportunities for learning we have in Scunthorpe and the existing student population would further build our reputation and create a student culture which attracts people to live, learn and work in the area. A single post-16 and adult prospectus for North Lincolnshire residents, workers and business will help to support this.

- Innovation & Ambition

We will work closely with businesses to access higher skills and create collaboration with universities to drive innovation, growth and productivity. We will aim to work together to understand the challenges facing businesses in accessing research, development and innovation grants and aim to increase the number of businesses innovating in the area.

We want to drive equality of opportunity through implementing place-based skills and employability programmes to support ambition across North Lincolnshire to ensure that all areas demonstrate progression, and everyone has the opportunity to achieve their ambitions.

Outcome

- A place to upskill and develop a career with an enterprising, innovative partnership of local education and skills providers collaborating to support economic growth and career opportunities for local people.

## Our Local Skills Framework

Oversight and governance for the Skills and Employability Plan will be through the Skills Transformation Board which meets on a quarterly basis through the year and more frequently if required. Terms of reference for the Board setting out purpose, plan, responsibility and membership and can be found on the council's website.

## Developing a Local Skills Compact

In order to move the Skills and Employability Plan forward a Local Skills Compact will be developed. The Local Skills Compact will be the place where local action around skills can take place and enable a wider base of businesses and partners to be involved in the local skills agenda. Local employers and skills providers can agree to work either independently or collaboratively to support skills transformation in and for North Lincolnshire. Participants engaged in the Compact will be guided by the Skills and Employability Plan but with a focus on participation and action.

Our aim will be for 100 businesses to have signed up to the local North Lincolnshire Skills Compact, demonstrating how they are helping to transform the skills agenda in North Lincolnshire.

## Performance Measures

Through the development of the Local Skills Compact, we will develop the targets and baseline information for the Skills and Employability Plan performance measures and build on the following aims:

- All adults in North Lincolnshire have access to careers advice
- All schools in North Lincolnshire to offer every pupil encounters with employers and employees to enable them to learn about work, employment and the skills that are valued in the workplace
- All schools in North Lincolnshire to offer every pupil the opportunity to have first hand experiences of the workplace through work visits, work shadowing and/or work experience to help them to explore career opportunities and expand their networks
- All schools in North Lincolnshire to have links with businesses in our key growth and enabling sectors
- Increased levels of people who are economically active
- Increased level of long-term unemployed people gaining paid work
- Increase apprenticeship starts and completions in North Lincolnshire
- Increased number of Higher/Degree apprenticeship starts and completions
- Annual North Lincolnshire job fair and careers fair held
- Businesses supported with a Workforce Skills Plan
- Increased level 4+ course available in North Lincolnshire linked to our key growth and enabling sectors
- Increased partnerships and collaboration between higher and further education and businesses
- Increase in skills levels across all wards in North Lincolnshire.
- 100+ businesses sign up to the North Lincolnshire Skills Compact
- Increase local businesses awareness and commitment to the Disability Confident scheme



## Appendix – Qualification levels explained

### England, Wales and Northern Ireland

There are 9 qualification levels.

Level	Qualification Types
<b>Entry Level</b>	Each entry level qualification is available at three sub-levels - 1, 2 and 3. Entry level 3 is the most difficult. Entry level qualifications are: entry level award; entry level certificate (ELC); entry level diploma; entry level English for speakers of other languages (ESOL); entry level essential skills; entry level functional skills; Skills for Life.
<b>Level 1</b>	First certificate; GCSE grades 3, 2, 1 or grades D, E, F, G; level 1 award; level 1 certificate; level 1 diploma; level 1 ESOL; level 1 essential skills; level 1 functional skills; level 1 national vocational qualification (NVQ); music grades 1, 2 and 3.
<b>Level 2</b>	CSE grade 1; GCSE grades 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4 or grades A*, A, B, C; intermediate apprenticeship; level 2 award; level 2 certificate; level 2 diploma; level 2 ESOL; level 2 essential skills; level 2 functional skills; level 2 national certificate; level 2 national diploma; level 2 NVQ; music grades 4 and 5; O level grade A, B or C.
<b>Level 3</b>	A level; access to higher education diploma; advanced apprenticeship; applied general; AS Level; International Baccalaureate diploma; level 3 award; level 3 certificate; level 3 diploma; level 3 ESOL; level 3 national certificate; level 3 national diploma; level 3 NVQ; music grades 6, 7 and 8; T level; tech level.
<b>Level 4</b>	Certificate of higher education (CertHE); higher apprenticeship; higher national certificate (HNC), level 4 award, level 4 certificate, level 4 diploma; level 4 NVQ.
<b>Level 5</b>	Diploma of higher education (DipHE), foundation degree, higher national diploma (HND), level 5 award; level 5 certificate; level 5 diploma; level 5 NVQ.
<b>Level 6</b>	Degree apprenticeship; degree with honours (BA Hons or BSc Hons); graduate certificate; graduate diploma; level 6 award; level 6 certificate; level 6 diploma; level 6 NVQ; ordinary degree without honours.
<b>Level 7</b>	Integrated master's degree (e.g master of engineering MEng); level 7 award; level 7 certificate; level 7 diploma; level 7 NVQ; master's degree (MA or MSc); postgraduate certificate, post graduate certificate in education (PGCE); postgraduate diploma.
<b>Level 8</b>	Doctorate (PhD or DPhil); level 8 award, level 8 certificate, level 8 diploma.