

Sport and physical activity sector local skills plan

Gloucestershire: 2025–2028

CREATED BY

Sport and Physical Activity Sector
Local Skills Accountability Board –
Gloucestershire



Contents

Photo credits:

CIMSPA would like to thank 21 Union Fitness, Cirencester College, East Glos Club, Cheltenham Trust, PGL and Hartpury College for their support in sourcing photographs for this skills plan.

Introduction

Gloucestershire Sport and Physical Activity Local Skills Accountability Board

About the board

Co-Chair: Sarah Lee, Head of School – Sport, Equine and Performance Sciences at Hartpury University

Co-Chair: Michael Tambling, Head of Department – FE Sport, Outdoor Adventure and Uniformed Public Services at Hartpury College

Board member organisations

- 21 Union Fitness
- Active Gloucestershire
- Cheltenham Trust
- Cirencester College
- Department for Work and Pensions
- East Glos Club
- Freedom Leisure
- Gloucester Rugby Foundation
- Gloucestershire College
- Gloucestershire County Council
- Hartpury College
- Hartpury University
- Move More
- PGL
- Sense
- Sportily
- University of Gloucestershire

Funding and support

Our local skills work to engage with employability-focused organisations and build a representative sport and physical activity sector workforce is funded and supported by Sport England and the National Lottery.



Get involved

To learn more about this local skills plan or the work of your local skills accountability board please contact CIMSPA who will link you with their workforce development manager for Gloucestershire.

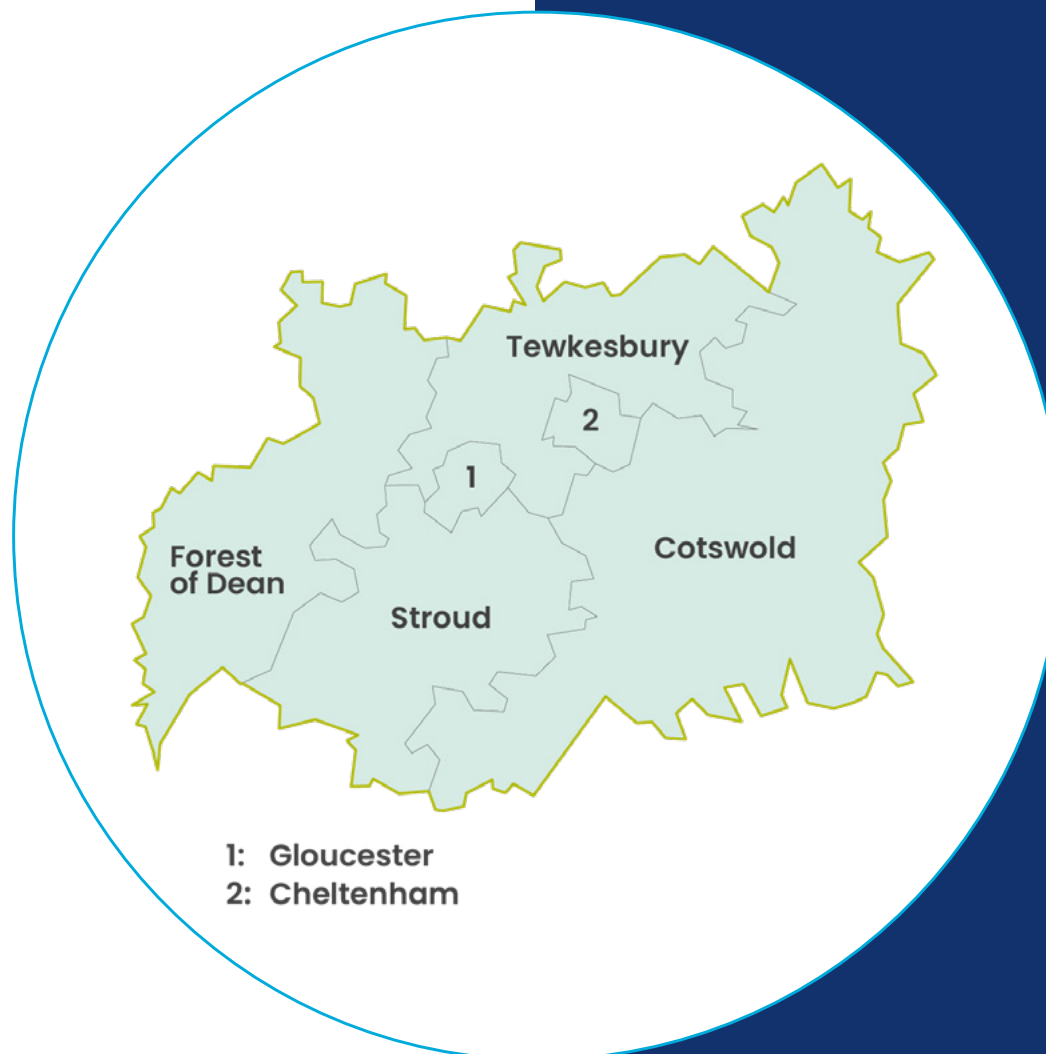
partners@cimspa.co.uk

LOCAL SKILLS ACCOUNTABILITY BOARD
WEBSITE PAGE [↗](#)

Gloucestershire – geographical area

The Gloucestershire Local Skills Accountability Board encompasses the ceremonial county of Gloucestershire, including six districts:

- Tewkesbury
- Forest of Dean
- Gloucester
- Cheltenham
- Stroud
- Cotswold



Foreword

Located in South West England, Gloucestershire is made up of six distinctive districts – Cotswold, Forest of Dean, Cheltenham, Gloucester, Stroud and Tewkesbury. While considered a rural county, Gloucestershire's character spans from vast rural landscapes to urban centres rich in heritage and industry.

On the surface, Gloucestershire appears healthy and economically resilient. In 2023, the employment rate was 81.7%, with unemployment just 2.7%, outperforming national figures¹. Life expectancy is also above national average, at 80 years for men and 83.8 years for women². However, these positive indicators mask some underlying inequalities. While only 3% of the county falls within the top 10% of deprived areas in England, in Gloucester that figure rises to 11.5%³. Unemployment in these areas is six times higher than in the least deprived, and men live 8.7 years less and women 6.5 years less⁴.

Physical activity levels also reflect this disparity. In 2024, just 46.2% of children across the county met the recommended activity levels, down from 50% in 2021 and below the national average. Although adult participation is higher, with 67.2% classified

as active, this varies by background and population. For example, there is a 10% difference in activity levels between the most and least deprived areas⁵.

A further pressing challenge is Gloucestershire's ageing population and how this demographic can be supported to 'age well'. The county already has a higher proportion of over-65s than the national average, and trends show a continued shift. It is a net exporter of 18–24-year-olds and has below-average populations of 0–64-year-olds⁶. In contrast, by 2043, the over-65 population is projected to grow by 38%, with the number of residents 85 and over increasing by 84%⁷. With activity levels tending to decline with age, and older adults requiring greater support from health and care services, having a workforce skilled in engaging this demographic is vital.

Undoubtedly sport and physical activity play a critical role in addressing these issues. Engagement in activity boosts physical and mental wellbeing, reduces isolation, builds stronger communities and drives economic impact. Indeed, in 2022/23, participation in sport and physical activity generated over £1.24 billion in social value across the county⁸.

But there is still more to do in Gloucestershire to ensure healthy futures. This local skills plan outlines how we will strengthen Gloucestershire's workforce to deliver inclusive, high-quality physical activity opportunities across all six districts. By investing in skills, improving pathways for young people and focusing on harder-to-reach groups, we aim to reduce inequalities, improve health and support the growth of a more connected and resilient county.

Together, we aim to build a healthier, fairer and more active Gloucestershire for all.

Sarah Lee

Head of School – Sport, Equine and Performance Sciences at Hartpury University

Co-Chair, Gloucestershire Sport and Physical Activity Local Skills Accountability Board

Michael Tambling

Head of Department – FE Sport, Outdoor Adventure and Uniformed Public Services at Hartpury College

Co-Chair, Gloucestershire Sport and Physical Activity Local Skills Accountability Board

Foreword references

- 1 [LOCAL INDICATORS FOR GLOUCESTERSHIRE, OFFICE FOR NATIONAL STATISTICS](#)
- 2 [HEALTH INEQUALITIES DASHBOARD, OFFICE FOR HEALTH IMPROVEMENT AND DISPARITIES](#)
- 3 [LOCAL INSIGHT SUMMARY REPORT, INFORM GLOUCESTERSHIRE](#)
- 4 [INDEX OF MULTIPLE DEPRIVATION 2019, GLOUCESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL](#)
- 5 [ACTIVE LIVES ONLINE, SPORT ENGLAND](#)
- 6 [POPULATION PROFILE 2025, GLOUCESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL](#)
- 7 [DEMOGRAPHIC FORECASTS, INFORM GLOUCESTERSHIRE](#)
- 8 [SOCIAL VALUE AND RETURN ON INVESTMENT OF SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY, SPORT ENGLAND](#)

CIMSPA and local skills



The right training, delivered in the right place, at the right time.

Our collaborative local skills project is bringing together employers, education providers and employability-focused organisations to effectively and efficiently match supply and demand.

CIMSPA – the Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity – is the chartered professional body for the sport and physical activity sector workforce.

In 2023, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport published “Get Active: A strategy for the future of sport and physical activity”. This strategy explicitly backs CIMSPA’s rollout of local-based skills and training: “We will support CIMSPA in the development of local skills improvement plans with full national coverage.”

In line with its “Uniting the Movement” strategy, Sport England has commissioned CIMSPA to help accelerate local-focused skills improvements within the sport and physical activity workforce.

CIMSPA has already deployed a complete delivery team of workforce development managers working at a local level across England, Wales and Scotland.

The CIMSPA workforce development manager within Gloucestershire works with the area’s local skills accountability board and with other organisations, carrying out skills diagnostics and helping to deliver the recommendations within this local skills plan.

[LOCAL SKILLS ACCOUNTABILITY BOARD WEBSITE PAGE](#)

Vision and context

Vision

The vision of this sector local skills plan is to:

“Enhance connectivity across Gloucestershire to provide training, skills and opportunities for the local sport and physical activity workforce that support regional health and economic priorities.”

Through strong collaboration between local education, employers and employability services, we will enhance career pathways to support routes to enter the local sector.

We will also provide skills and training for the existing and future workforce that allows individuals to progress in their roles and maximises the benefit of sport and physical activity on the health and wellbeing of the region.

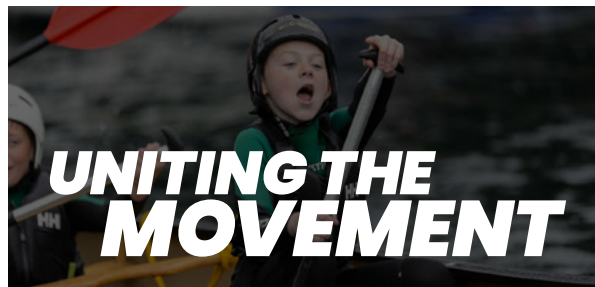


National context



DCMS strategy context

In August 2023, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport published “Get Active: A strategy for the future of sport and physical activity”. This strategy explicitly backs CIMSPA’s rollout of local-based skills and training: “We will support CIMSPA in the development of Local Skills Improvement Plans with full national coverage.”



Sport England strategy context

In 2021, Sport England launched Uniting the Movement, a 10-year strategy outlining the importance of the workforce in driving change to transform lives and communities through sport and physical activity.

Uniting the Movement strategic priorities include:

- Unleashing the power of diversity
- Ensuring people have access to help from those who relate to their experiences
- Training and qualifications fit for the future
- Better career choices
- Organisations contributing more to the social fabric of their communities

With this, the sector’s workforce must be representative of the community it serves, creating sustainable careers, placing local employer and individual need at the heart of training and development. There is a collective responsibility to ensure the sport and physical activity sector is a valued and accessible career choice with progression for individuals.



The Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022 context

The passing into law of the Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022 places employers at the heart of the skills system, making it easier for people to access the skills required to secure well paid jobs in industries with skills gaps.

Employers and training providers must work together to identify the skills needed locally and address the skills gaps. For further education colleges and training providers who access funding to deliver their training, it is now a legal requirement to work with employers to develop skills plans. Adult skills funding is being developed, and funding must align to the employer-identified priorities.

Local context

Gloucestershire Local Skills Improvement Plan

The Gloucestershire Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP), led by Business West, aims to align technical education with employer skills needs. Developed with extensive input from local employers and stakeholders, it addresses challenges and opportunities across key sectors, including digital, agriculture, construction and advanced manufacturing. The plan also highlights cross-cutting priorities like transferable skills, green skills and digital fluency.

Key objectives

- **Strengthen employer-provider collaboration** to ensure that education is aligned with real workforce demands.
- **Improve visibility and access** to training and careers advice for learners, job seekers and employers.
- **Support systemic improvement** in the way Gloucestershire identifies and responds to changing skills needs.
- **Incorporate green and digital skills** into provision design, supporting both the net zero agenda and modern workforce expectations.

While the Gloucestershire Local Skills Accountability Board does not currently work directly with the LSIP, the alignment of our education and skills priorities will ensure a consistent approach to improving career opportunities across the region.

It also opens up opportunities for future collaboration, as best practice and networking links can be shared between education providers, employers and other stakeholders to ensure that the skills system is as efficient as possible across all sectors in Gloucestershire.

[GLOUCESTERSHIRE LOCAL SKILLS IMPROVEMENT PLAN](#)

Gloucestershire's Economic Strategy (2024–2034)

Gloucestershire's Economic Strategy 2024–2034 sets out to achieve a future-ready, inclusive and green economy. Central to this is a commitment to developing a highly skilled workforce that supports the county's ambitions in sectors such as digital communications, cyber security, green and nuclear energy, agri-tech and advanced manufacturing.

Strategy priorities include sustainable growth, inward investment, employment and skills, and business innovation and support.

While sport and physical activity does not feature in this strategy, the work of the LSAB and skills plan certainly supports the strategy's employment and skills priority.

[GLOUCESTERSHIRE'S ECONOMIC STRATEGY \(2024–2034\)](#)

[GLOUCESTERSHIRE'S ECONOMIC STRATEGY – SUMMARY](#)

Themes, recommendations, partners and stakeholders

Themes

This plan has four themes.



Recommendations

This plan has four headline recommendations:

Align education and employers

1

Establish robust and clear pathways between education providers and employers to address both skills and recruitment gaps.

Connect and collaborate

2

Enhance connectivity with employability services across Gloucestershire to support local people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) and career changers into sport and physical activity roles.

Support health priorities

3

Develop skills within the sport and physical activity workforce to help support the health priorities of Gloucestershire.

Improve workforce retention

4

Provide the appropriate support and training to enable career progression and staff retention within the local sport and physical activity sector.

Partners and stakeholders

CIMSPA and the local skills accountability board will work collaboratively with a range of partners and stakeholders to deliver on the actions that underpin this plan's recommendations.

These include:

Education and training providers

Those delivering accredited training both sector/role specific and training around basic skills, knowledge and behaviours, for example further education colleges and higher education institutes.

Skills and sector partners

Those with knowledge and understanding of the sport and physical activity sector, with expertise to support both employers and training providers, for example Gloucestershire County Council Employment and Skills Hub, Active Partnerships, national governing bodies of sport and other system partners such as The Department for Work and Pensions.

Employers and deployers

For example, leisure providers, coaching companies and gym owners.



Recommendations, actions and milestones

RECOMMENDATION 1

Align education and employers: Establish robust and clear pathways between education providers and employers to address both skills and recruitment gaps.

Theme(s)	No.	2025–2028 actions	What does success look like?	How will it be measured?*
RECRUIT TRAIN	1a	Use key skills identified by local employers to inform employability-focused curriculum development.	▶ Education providers and learners understand the skills needed to enter the workforce ▶ Curricula reflect the skills need highlighted by local industry ▶ Students have skills portfolios and qualifications aligned with employer needs ▶ More students from local education entering the workforce	▶ Student destination data ▶ Employer recruitment data ▶ Local documentation and reporting
RECRUIT TRAIN SUPPORT	1b	Increase awareness of work placements and how they can be used effectively to support employers, students and education providers.	▶ Increase in the number of employers offering meaningful work placements ▶ Students view work placements as an effective way to develop skills for employment ▶ Meaningful work placements result in a more work-ready future workforce ▶ More local students are supported into local roles while studying	▶ Education provider work placement data ▶ Local workforce skills diagnostic data (more employers offering work placements)
RECRUIT	1c	Increase exposure and outreach to local schools to promote sport and physical activity pathways.	▶ Local schools use CIMSPA careers resources ▶ Increased engagement between the LSAB members and local schools ▶ More school-aged children choosing to study sports and physical activity ▶ More employers engaging with Gloucestershire Careers Hub	▶ Number of schools accessing CIMSPA careers resources ▶ Gloucestershire Careers Hub employer engagement data

To achieve recommendation 1, we must bring together local education providers and employers to identify key industry skills, provide more exposure to industry settings and highlight career pathways.

*See [glossary below](#) for more information on specific terms.

RECOMMENDATIONS, ACTIONS AND MILESTONES

RECOMMENDATION 2

Connect and collaborate: Enhance connectivity with employability services across Gloucestershire to support local people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) and career changers into sport and physical activity roles.

Theme(s)	No.	2025–2028 actions	What does success look like?	How will it be measured?*
RECRUIT TRAIN	2a	Identify key skills outlined by local employers to inform skills portfolios that support employment within the local sector.	▶ Local people who are NEET and career changers have a clear understanding of skills needed to enter the workforce ▶ Local people who are NEET and career changers have the opportunity to develop and evidence key skills needed in our sector ▶ More local people outside of the sector are entering the workforce	▶ Employer recruitment data ▶ Employability services track local residents moving into the sport and physical activity sector
RECRUIT TRAIN SUPPORT	2b	Improve awareness of career pathways linked to local training and skills that can be used to create career advice for local people who are NEET and career changers.	▶ Increased awareness of sector career resources such as the CIMSPA Careers Hub ▶ More people from Gloucestershire access the CIMSPA Careers Hub ▶ Increased interest in sport and physical activity roles	▶ Local workforce skills diagnostic data (employers no longer state interest in sector as a barrier to recruitment) ▶ CIMSPA Careers Hub data ▶ Local documentation and reporting
RECRUIT TRAIN SUPPORT	2c	Provide volunteering opportunities for local people who are NEET and career changers to experience roles within our sector.	▶ More local employers are offering meaningful volunteering opportunities to those currently outside the sector ▶ Local people who are NEET and career changers have opportunities to experience working in the local sector ▶ Local people who are NEET and career changers have a better understanding of jobs within our sector ▶ More local people who are NEET and career changers applying for local roles and entering the workforce	▶ Gloucestershire employment and skills hub data on number of sector employer collaborations ▶ Local workforce skills diagnostic data

*See [glossary below](#) for more information on specific terms.

RECOMMENDATIONS, ACTIONS AND MILESTONES

RECOMMENDATION 2 (continued)

Theme(s)	No.	2025–2028 actions	What does success look like?	How will it be measured?*
RECRUIT TRAIN SUPPORT	2d	Improve access to training that enables opportunities to enter the sport and physical activity sector.	▶ Increased awareness of local training already available to support local people who are NEET and career changers into the workforce ▶ Employability services are able to access suitable training for local residents interested in working in sport and physical activity ▶ Training supports more local residents into the workforce	▶ Local workforce skills diagnostic data (employers report receiving more job applications from individuals with the correct qualifications) ▶ Employability service reporting

To achieve recommendation 2, we must ensure employers are connected and collaborate with local support services to create training and volunteering opportunities for local people that want to join the workforce.

*See [glossary below](#) for more information on specific terms.

RECOMMENDATION 3

Support health priorities: Develop skills within the sport and physical activity workforce to help support the health priorities of Gloucestershire.

Theme(s)	No.	2025–2028 actions	What does success look like?	How will it be measured?*
SUPPORT	3a	Develop relationships with health organisations within Gloucestershire and on a wider scale.	▶ The LSAB engages with health organisations ▶ More trusted relationships with local health stakeholders ▶ Local health organisations are represented on and engage with the LSAB	▶ LSAB healthcare member data ▶ LSAB meeting attendance data
SUPPORT	3b	Understand health priorities in Gloucestershire and how the sport and physical activity workforce can support with these.	▶ The LSAB has a clear understanding of health priorities for Gloucestershire ▶ Health priorities that the local sport and physical activity workforce can support are identified ▶ The LSAB has a better understanding of the potential for collaboration between health and the sport and physical activity workforce	▶ LSAB members report having a better understanding of health priorities
TRAIN SUPPORT	3c	Work with education providers and employers to ensure the existing workforce has the skills to support priority health outcomes in the communities they work within.	▶ Local education provision has health-related skills embedded into training to equip the future workforce ▶ Local training is developed to support existing workforce to upskill in health-related areas ▶ The existing and future workforce has the skills needed to support identified health priorities for Gloucestershire	▶ Number of sport and physical activity health-related training opportunities available locally ▶ Number of employers delivering activities relating to health and long-term health conditions ▶ Local workforce skills diagnostic data (employers no longer report health as a skill gap)

To achieve recommendation 3, we must connect and build relationships with health organisations to understand and identify health priorities, which will inform local training needs.

*See [glossary below](#) for more information on specific terms.

RECOMMENDATION 4

Improve workforce retention: Provide the appropriate support and training to enable career progression and staff retention within the local sport and physical activity sector.

Theme(s)	No.	2025–2028 actions	What does success look like?	How will it be measured?
SUPPORT RETAIN	4a	Understand workforce retention by analysing current retention, targets and practice.	- Employers have a better understanding of their retention rates and barriers to retention - Local workforce skills diagnostic data is used to analyse retention across the region - Current retention practice is analysed and understood - Employers start to understand how to improve retention	Qualitative data
SUPPORT RETAIN	4b	Provide clear career progression pathways that identify key skills and knowledge needed to progress.	- Increased awareness of and engagement with CIMSPA professional status, which will help employers to identify skills needed within different roles - Increased awareness of resources to support career progression within the sector such as the CIMSPA Careers Hub - Employers provide workforce with upskilling opportunities, enabling further career progression - Sport and physical activity professionals progress in their careers	- Local workforce skills diagnostic data (improved retention rate) - CIMSPA professional status data - CIMSPA Careers Hub data - Qualitative data
TRAIN SUPPORT RETAIN	4c	Use a range of formal and informal training to develop skills for progression within the workforce.	- Current local training opportunities are identified and mapped - Diverse training opportunities are available to the workforce - Employers encourage and facilitate staff upskilling - Local training is inclusive and accessible to all - A better skilled local workforce	- Training providers reporting increased uptake in training offer - Number of training opportunities available

To achieve recommendation 4, we must better understand local workforce retention rates, identify and share best practices among local organisations and amplify local training opportunities.

*See [glossary below](#) for more information on specific terms.

Milestones

Achieved in 2023 and 2024

- Fully established the area's sport and physical activity local skills accountability board with appropriate representation.
- Conducted data collection and developed four key recommendations for this local skills plan.

In 2026 and 2027

The board and local partners will continue to both deliver the three-year action plan and reflect on up-to date insight, evidence and local intelligence to revise the action plan and ensure representation on the board as appropriate.

In 2025

- Established the Gloucestershire Sport and Physical Activity Local Skills Plan.
- Define a three-year delivery action plan and begin delivery.
- Continue to strengthen the local skills network and continue to collect data and insight from local organisations.

By 2028

The local sector is better able to recruit, train, support and retain a representative, inclusive and skilled workforce ready for employment in the physical activity and sport sector in Gloucestershire, which shall contribute towards building a healthier and active local community.

Case studies – “what good looks like”

This skills plan intends to build upon existing good practice within the region. Two examples are the high value work placements built into the student experience at Hartpury College and the sector-based work academy programmes at PGL Travel.

Everybody wins – students, college and employer

The partnership between outdoor education provider PGL Travel and Hartpury College has been ongoing for over 20 years and this long-standing collaboration between further education and employer continues to be a model of best practice in seamlessly transitioning learners into employment.

Students on the Level 3 Sport and Outdoor Activities course delivered by Hartpury College learn key skills of outdoor leadership across a range of activities before undertaking a compulsory work placement.

The college have aligned their timetable to this cycle by front-loading classroom and practical sessions to complete by Easter of the second year of study in order to free up time for an extended work placement through to June.



These work placements take place at PGL’s residential outdoor activity centres across England, providing continued training and the opportunity to lead real-life customers aged 7–17 during their residential trips. Up to 10 students per year complete placements with PGL.

As well as receiving full training, students are paid for their placements, continue to benefit from ongoing support from the college, and all have the opportunity to continue in employment with PGL after June to complete a full season.



The PGL Adventure trophy inspires students to achieve their best

CASE STUDY – EVERYBODY WINS – STUDENTS, COLLEGE AND EMPLOYER

Before beginning their placement, students get the opportunity to understand the experience upfront with a dedicated visit to PGL Liddington, one of Europe's largest outdoor activity centres. Several alumni have progressed into leadership and management roles at PGL, with this year's visit led by former Hartpury student Ben Griffiths, Lead Activity Specialist at PGL Liddington.

Like all good relationships, partnership requires an investment of effort from both sides. Hartpury hosts a curriculum event each year where placement providers are invited in to discuss the programme and suggest improvements.



Hartpury College students explore the work placement experience on a visit to PGL Liddington

PGL, job centres and SWAPs

PGL's resourcing team works with Jobcentre Plus and training providers to give adults the chance to fulfil their potential and find employment in sport and physical activity. This is facilitated through via the Department for Work and Pensions' sector-based work academy programme (SWAP).

PGL's activity instructor training programme is designed to upskill people with some experience of coaching or youth work. The learning covers the fields of session planning, training in outdoor activities, educational psychology, first aid and safeguarding.

Since 2022, PGL has been involved in 10 SWAPs on the Isle of Wight, in Surrey, Wiltshire and Lancashire with over 50 people gaining a foot on the employment ladder as a result.

The key to success is investing the time to communicate PGL's opportunities in job centres and hosting visits to PGL activity centres for people to see the environment first hand and ask current PGL staff any questions they want.

PGL will continue its programme in Autumn 2025 with two SWAPs for Gloucestershire and another in Lancashire.



Department
for Work &
Pensions



Wider alignment with local skills work

Gloucestershire Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy

The strategy, published by the county council, sets out a vision for Gloucestershire to be a place where everyone can “live well, be healthy and thrive”.

It prioritises a whole-systems, prevention-focused approach to addressing health inequalities and improving wellbeing, placing significant value on the role of community, physical activity, mental health and supportive infrastructure.

Seven key priorities form the backbone of the strategy:

- **Physical activity:** Increase activity levels across the population, aiming to make physical activity the social norm and engage at least 30,000 currently inactive individuals.
- **Healthy lifestyles:** Focus on reducing obesity and improving diet and activity habits through whole-system approaches.
- **Mental wellbeing:** Improve mental health outcomes by addressing social, economic, and environmental inequalities.
- **Social isolation and loneliness:** Strengthen social connections, particularly for vulnerable populations.
- **Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs):** Build resilient communities and systems capable of addressing trauma and promoting protective factors.
- **Early years and best start in life:** Improve outcomes from pregnancy to age 5 through better coordination and early intervention.
- **Housing:** Improve the quality and affordability of housing as a key determinant of health.

GLoucestershire Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy [↗](#)





WIDER ALIGNMENT WITH LOCAL SKILLS WORK

We Can Move

Linked to the physical activity priority is Active Gloucestershire's We Can Move movement.

The county-wide social movement, coordinated by Active Gloucestershire, aims to drive physical activity and target those residents who remain inactive. They will achieve this by promoting behaviour using a layered strategy:

- **Support the individual:** Employ behaviour-change insights (for example, COM-B) through direct conversations and tailored interventions
- **Build the community:** Energise social influencers (families, clubs, schools and employers) as part of a collective movement
- **Change the environment:** Advocate systemic changes in workplaces, schools, infrastructure and travel networks to make being active the default

How this skills plan will support

Key to both the We Can Move movement and Gloucestershire's Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy is physical activity and, more specifically, the local sport and physical activity workforce to deliver physical activity interventions and opportunities for local residents to become more active.

While the scope of this plan is not to directly affect physical activity levels across the region, it will support the local sport and physical activity workforce to develop key knowledge and skills around topics such as behaviour change, community engagement and wider determinants of health. This will enable sector professionals to maximise their benefits to the health and wellbeing of local communities.

[WE CAN MOVE](#)

District strategies

To support the success of county-wide initiatives, each local district council also has their own strategy aimed at improving health and wellbeing for their local residents.

The Gloucestershire LSAB aims to work closely with key stakeholders in each district to ensure that the local sport and physical activity workforce has access to the support and training needed to deliver the various local strategies and help local people from all areas of life to become more active and lead healthier lifestyles.

[GLOUCESTER CITY COUNCIL SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY STRATEGY 2023–2028](#)

[CHELTENHAM COUNCIL PHYSICAL ACTIVITY ACTION PLAN](#)

[STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL HEALTH & WELLBEING PLAN 2022–2025](#)

[STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL PHYSICAL ACTIVITY ACTION PLAN 2022–2025](#)

Other districts

Forest of Dean District Council is currently in the later stages of developing an Active Wellbeing Strategy for the District.

Both Cotswold District Council and Tewkesbury District Council don't currently have a direct sport and physical activity strategy. However, both councils still support physical activity across their respective districts through programmes such as the Active Cotswolds Physical Activity Programme.

This skills plan will ensure that the workforce in both districts is supported to deliver excellent physical activity experiences.



Data and insight that have informed this work

Sector business size

Source: Gloucestershire 2024 Regional Datapack, CIMSPA, 2024

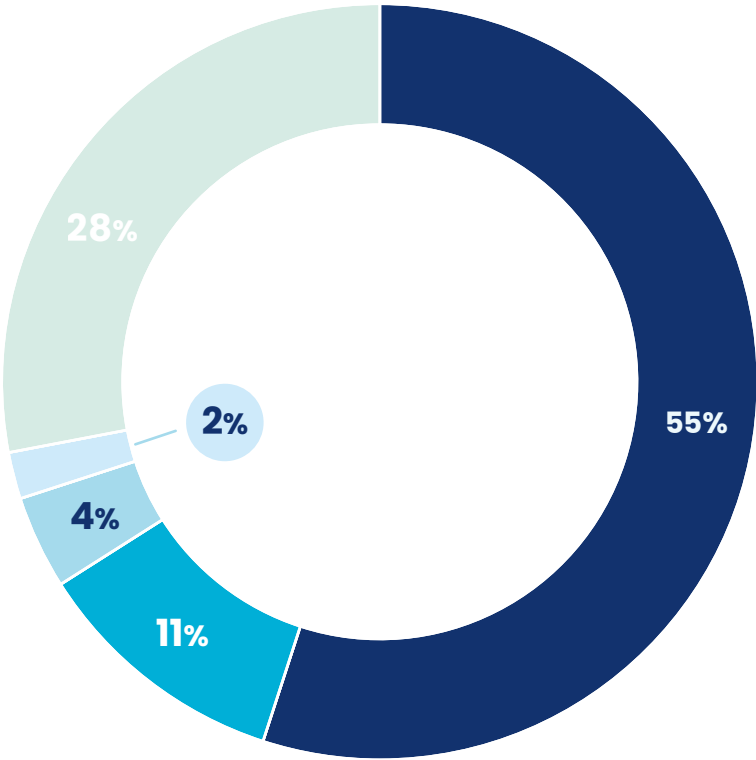
The chart illustrates the size of the sport and physical activity in Gloucestershire in 2024. Much like the national picture, the majority of businesses in Gloucestershire are classified as micro-enterprises (1–9 employees). This presents both opportunities and challenges for Gloucestershire.

There is clearly an opportunity for those interested in the local sector to set up, run and manage their own business. However, there is a challenge to ensure micro-enterprises receive workforce and skills support specific to their needs, as these are likely to be different to large organisations such as leisure centre operators. Furthermore, the capacity for a micro-enterprise to engage in this work will likely be far less due to business and capacity restraints.

Therefore, it is important that within Gloucestershire we give some consideration to how this work will support smaller micro businesses.

- 55% Micro-enterprises (1–9 employees)
- 11% Small enterprises (10–49 employees)
- 4% Medium enterprises (50–249 employees)
- 2% Large enterprises (250+ employees)
- 28% Businesses unaccounted for

28% of sport and physical activity businesses within Gloucestershire are not accounted for here due to either no company financials being available or 0/an unknown number of employees within the business, meaning that they cannot be categorised by business size.



Current and future job role requirements

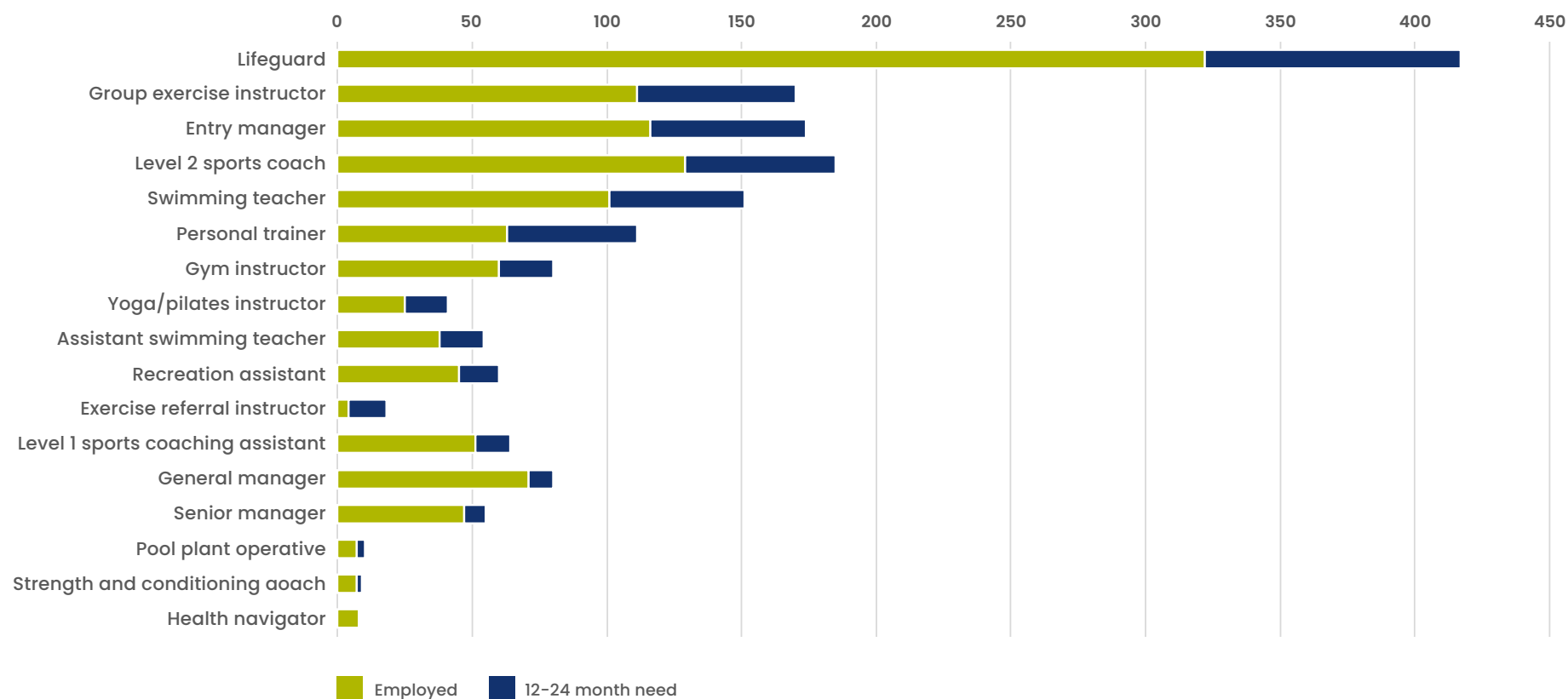
This chart (shown overleaf) illustrates future roles needed across Gloucestershire. Much like national trends, customer-facing and often entry-level roles seem to be of the highest need. This could be because of high turnover in those types of roles due to their often part-time nature. Therefore, they often attract students and those who are self-employed or looking for some secondary income.

Interestingly, entry manager is the third most needed role. This isn't typically reflective of national trends but could be attributed to the high need for roles such as duty managers in leisure centres. This role is often used to support and cover customer-facing roles such as lifeguarding while also having a supervisory element. As such, employers often report that duty manager salaries aren't always a big enough increase to attract existing staff into the role compared to the additional responsibility involved.

Furthermore, the high turnover in customer-facing roles may also begin to affect entry and middle management roles, as there are fewer staff members with the required experience to progress into management roles.

It must be noted roles such as sports coach, personal trainer and group exercise instructor are likely to be occupied by high numbers of self-employed professionals. Because of this, the number of people currently employed in these roles could be inflated. For example, a self-employed swimming teacher will likely work across multiple sites and for multiple organisations. As a result, they would be counted multiple times in the data collection. Furthermore, roles such as lifeguarding may rely heavily on zero-hour or casual contracts, resulting in a high number of people being employed at any one time.

Current and future job role requirements



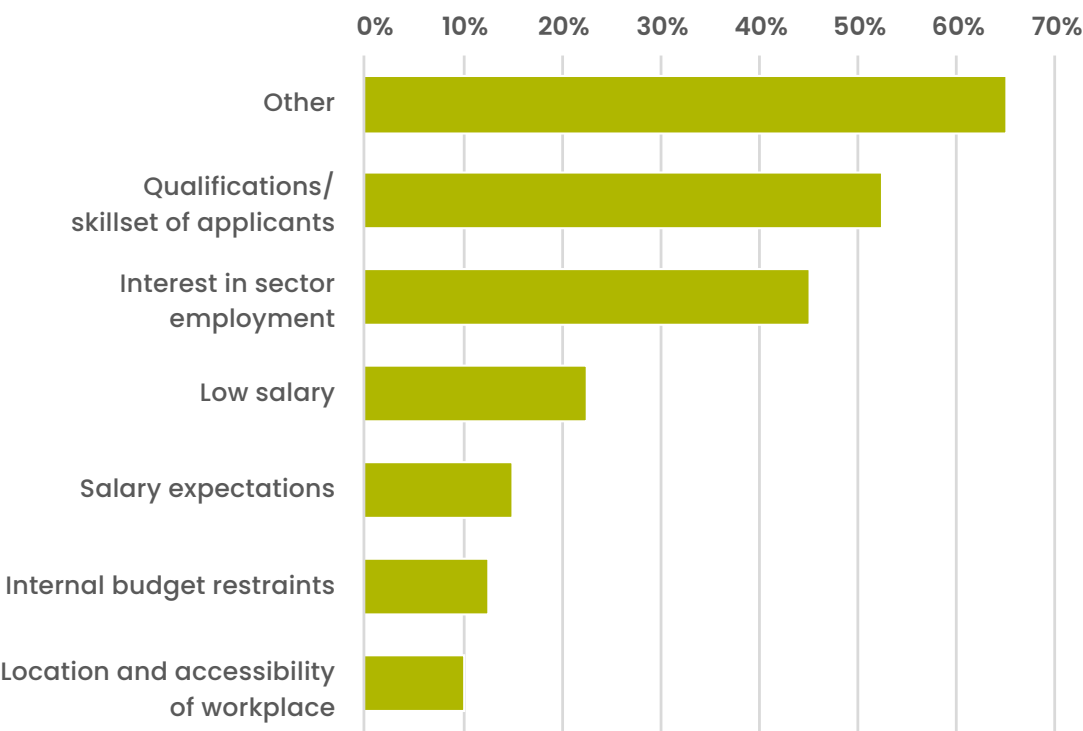
Source: Ongoing CIMSPA Gloucestershire business skills diagnostic process, 40 sport and physical activity operators, May 2023 – January 2025

Recruitment challenges

Over 50% of organisations state qualifications and skillset of applicants are a challenge when recruiting. Often, employers state that applicants do not have the correct professional qualification needed for the job role or they lack relevant soft skills such as communication and interpersonal skills. 45% of employers also report a reduced number of applications since the Covid-19 pandemic, suggesting fewer people are interested in roles within the sector. This is exacerbated in rural areas such as Cotswolds and Forest of Dean, where the population is sparser compared to built-up areas of Gloucester and Cheltenham.

The majority of employers also report other barriers to recruitment. Some of these factors include a lack of understanding about the expectations of the role, not being able to drive or poor public transport in rural areas preventing applicants from travelling to different work sites, unsocial working patterns and applicants not turning up to interviews.

Source: Ongoing CIMSPA Gloucestershire business skills diagnostic process, 40 sport and physical activity operators, May 2023 – January 2025



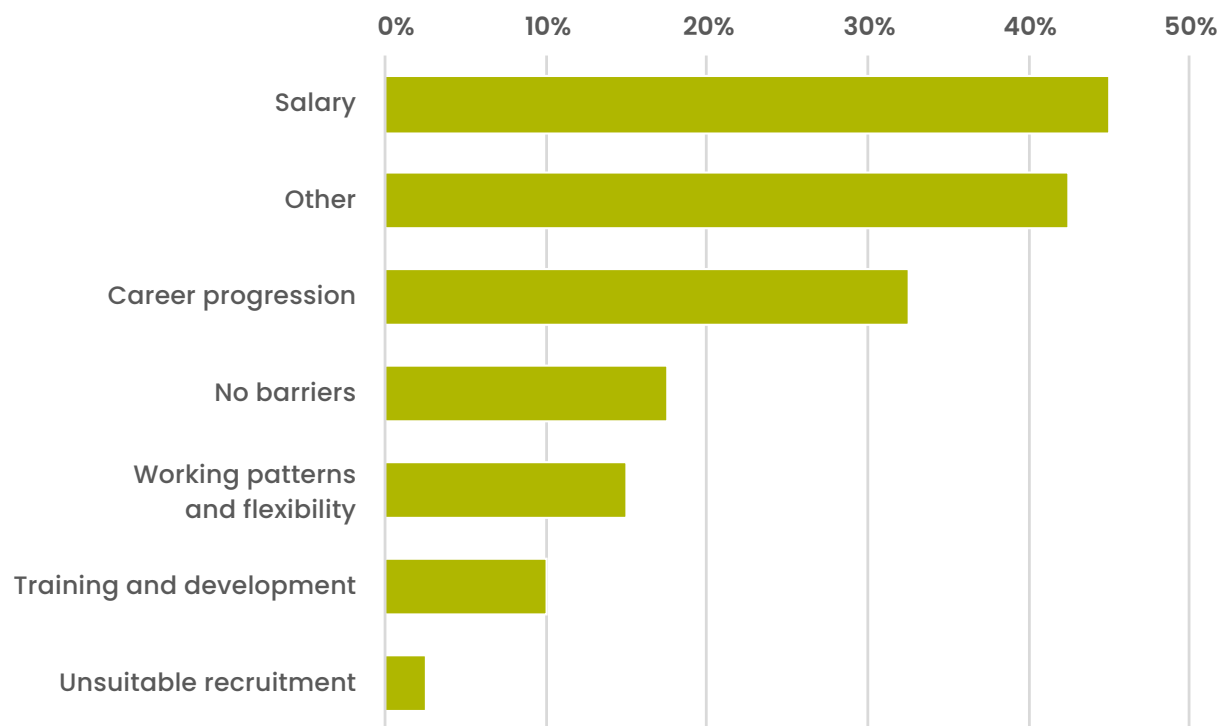
Retention challenges

Employers believe that salary is the most common barrier to retaining staff, often stating that they are unable to offer as much as other sectors, and as such often lose staff to higher paid roles in other sectors.

Career progression was the third most common barrier. This was often apparent in smaller micro-enterprises where the number of roles and employees was low, resulting in very little opportunity to progress and staff ultimately seeking new employment.

Other barriers reported included recruiting large student cohorts and as such they would naturally move away from the area or into a different sector once they had finished studying. Gaps in soft skills such as communication and business skills for self-employed roles were also common challenges, as well as role expectations not being fully understood by new employees.

Source: Ongoing CIMSPA Gloucestershire business skills diagnostic process, 40 sport and physical activity operators, May 2023 – January 2025

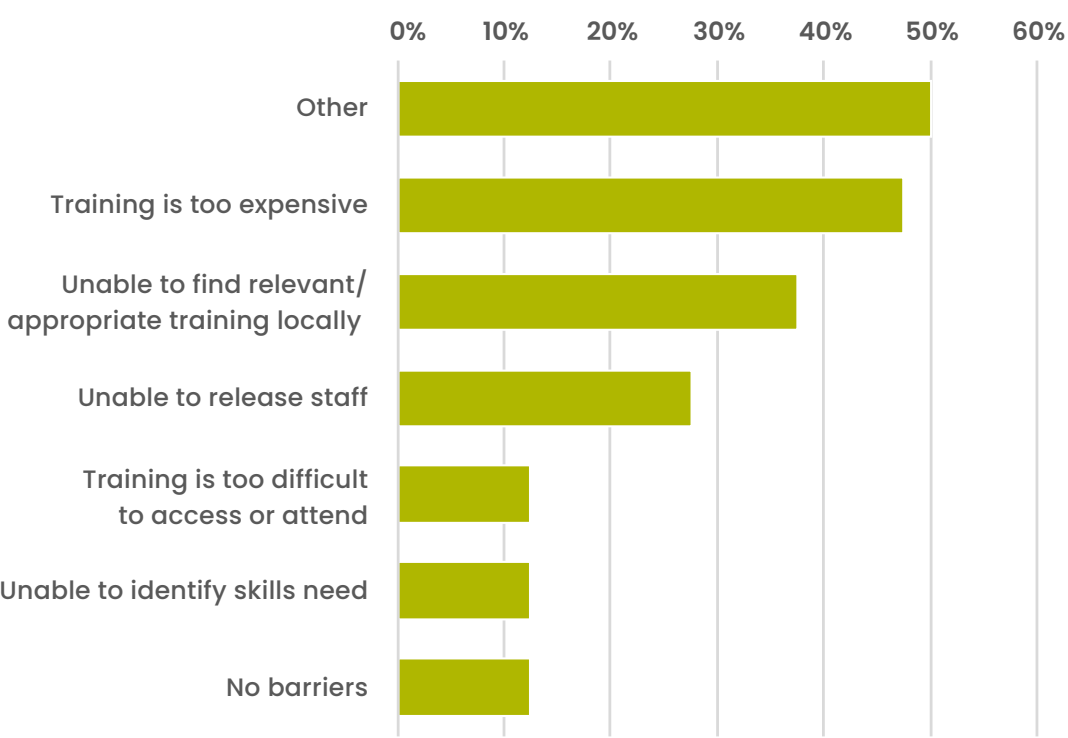


Training barriers

87% of organisations stated that at least one barrier has prevented them from offering more training to staff. 50% of organisations reported other reasons for this, reporting that training is often too long, they are unable to find CIMSPA-endorsed training for particular subjects, and they are unable to find a time when the majority of staff are free all at once.

This illustrates a need for local training that is accessible, flexible and endorsed. Employer feedback must be considered when developing local training to ensure their workforce can access and benefit from upskilling opportunities. Access to training for staff is not only important for continued professional development but can also support retention due to staff feeling invested in.

Source: Ongoing CIMSPA Gloucestershire business skills diagnostic process, 40 sport and physical activity operators, May 2023 – January 2025



Work experience

Encouragingly, 80% of organisations stated they would be willing to host industry experience. This provides a great opportunity to build upon existing work experience programmes and help support more students and local people to gain experience within the sector and develop industry skills that are often seen as a barrier to recruitment.

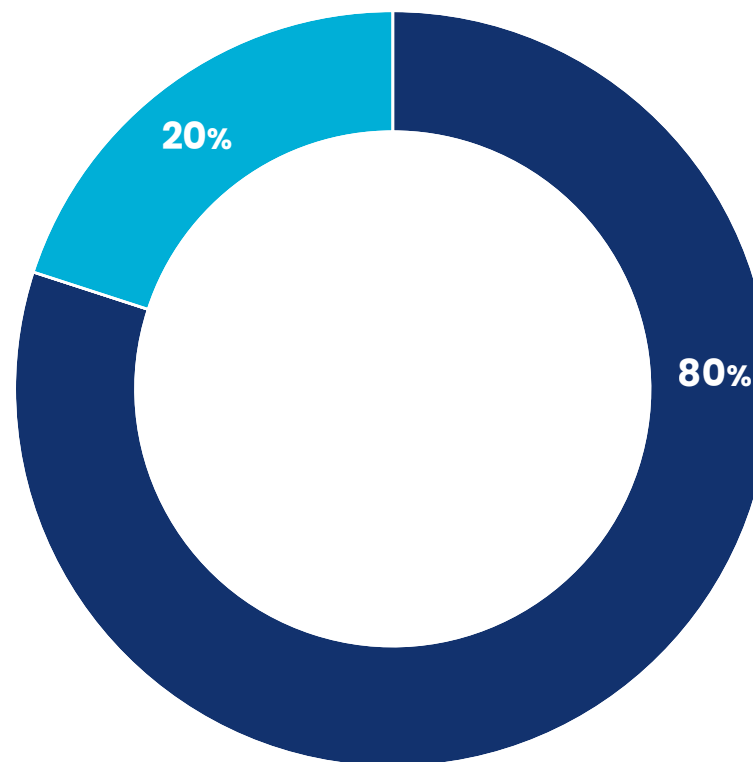
However, it is important that industry experience is seen as meaningful for both the individual and organisations. Employers must be made aware of pathways and support available to maximise the impact of industry experience.

Source: Ongoing CIMSPA Gloucestershire business skills diagnostic process, 40 sport and physical activity operators, May 2023 – January 2025

Appendix

Gloucestershire 2024 Regional Datapack, CIMSPA, 2024

LOCAL SKILLS ACCOUNTABILITY
BOARD WEBSITE PAGE [↗](#)



The scope of the sport and physical activity sector

Sector and industries definitions

The sport and physical activity sector:

“Everyone working in the sport and physical activity workforce in the industries and occupations detailed below and overleaf.”

Sector industries

Industry definitions from CIMSPA for the purpose of this strategy are shown in the table (right).

Paid/voluntary workforce

This sport and physical activity sector local skills plan aims to be broad enough in its outcomes to not need to be separated by employment/deployment status.

Industry	Definition
Exercise and fitness	Services, activities and venues that predominantly improve participant physical fitness.
Community sport	Sport/skill-based services, activities and venues that increase participation and develop skill, sometimes targeting under-represented groups and inequalities.
Leisure operations	Services, activities and venues that predominantly improve participation in physical activity.
Health and wellbeing	Holistic services and activities that promote improvements across all aspects of health, sometimes involving health care and other non-sector professionals.
Adventure sport	Activities, services and venues both indoor and outdoor improving participation in sport perceived as having a high level of risk.
Performance sport	Competitive sport and activities including those in which athletes receive payment for their performance; professional, semi-professional and grass roots sport.

Occupations

Introduction

“Occupations” are a standardised set of job roles that cover the whole of the sport and physical activity sector. For example, what some operators might call a “leisure attendant” is considered to be part of the “recreation assistant” occupation.

Definitions

- Frontline – occupations in sport and physical activity directly servicing the needs of the participant.
- Support chain – occupations in sport and physical activity servicing the needs of the front line and/or the facilities.
- Extended workforce – enablers and influencers of sport and physical activity who are not part of the sector workforce.

Frontline occupations

Sector workforce Occupations aligned with CIMSPA professional standards	Gym Instructor, core group exercise instructor, coach, coaching assistant, personal trainer, strength and conditioning trainer, pilates based matwork instructor, yoga instructor, aspiring manager, entry manager, health navigator, swimming teacher, lifeguard, recreation assistant, assistant swimming teacher, sports therapist*, nutritionist*, sport nutritionist*, physiotherapist*. *Occupations supported directly by other professional bodies
Broader workforce	Receptionist, bar staff, kitchen and catering assistant, waiting staff, cleaning assistant, domestic assistant, sales and retail assistant, chef.

Support chain occupations

Sector workforce Occupations aligned with CIMSPA professional standards	Entry manager, general manager, senior manager, tutor, assessor, coach developer, health navigator, pool plant operative.
Broader workforce	Sport development officer, researcher, teacher, administrative occupations, finance occupations, health and safety, quality manager, environmental manager, auditor, sports media and reporters, general assistant, maintenance operative (examples).

Extended workforce

Enablers Enablers of sport and physical activity who don't necessarily hold a CIMSPA-recognised professional qualification	Primary school teachers, teaching assistants, PE teachers, childcare workers, carers, sport event staff/volunteers, activity group leaders (e.g. scouts, guides etc), officiating.
Influencers Influencers of sport and physical activity who don't necessarily hold a sector-specific professional qualification	Parents, sport role models, sport and fitness models, sport and fitness social media influencers.

Glossary

Business skills diagnostic

CIMSPA has developed and launched a business diagnostic process through its workforce development team.

Sole traders and micro-enterprises of fewer than 10 employees make up 89% percent of the businesses in our sector, including over 73,000 freelancers and sole traders.

The diagnostic focuses in particular on this business type – building an understanding of their business needs and exploring how we can position our product offer and partner support to meet these.

CIMSPA Data Lens

The CIMSPA Data Lens is a real-time intelligence dashboard for the UK's sport and physical activity sector.

The Data Lens system uses web-scraping APIs to open access data and machine learning, all segmented through real-world definitions specific to the sport and physical activity sector.

It can be interrogated specifically in niche areas such as exercise and fitness or community sport, or even specific geographies at a county or town level.

DATA LENS 

Gloucestershire Careers Hub

As a local arm of The [Careers and Enterprise Company](#) career guidance service, the Gloucestershire Careers Hub works strategically with local education providers, employers and careers professionals to link business with education, providing careers education and opportunities for young people.

Local documentation and reporting

Throughout the lifespan of this local skills plan, CIMSPA and the local skills accountability board will look to incorporate any new sector-specific data created by local stakeholders that helps us understand the impact of our actions.

For example – employability and skills reports, survey results and impact reports.

Local skills accountability board (LSAB)

A group of local education and training, skills/employability, health and employer stakeholders across a region and within the sport and physical activity sector.

LSABs are co-ordinated and managed by CIMSPA, enabled by Sport England

and National Lottery funding. An LSAB is collectively responsible for the creation, implementation and renewal of a sport and physical activity sector local skills plan.

Local skills improvement plan

Local skills improvement plans (LSIPs) provide an agreed set of actionable priorities that stakeholders in a local area can get behind to drive change.

LSIPs:

- place employers at the heart of local skills systems
- facilitate direct and dynamic working arrangements between employers, providers and local stakeholders
- help learners gain the skills they need to get good jobs and increase their prospects.

Each LSIP has a designated Employer Representative Body (ERB), appointed by the Department for Education.

This document is **NOT** an LSIP.

Local workforce skills diagnostic data

CIMSPA has a team of local workforce development managers working across England, Scotland and Wales.

These workforce development managers are engaged in collecting workforce skills intelligence directly from employers in their local area, through a detailed and standardised workforce skills diagnostic survey.

This data can then be segmented at the level of the local skills accountability board for use in better understanding local workforce needs and in monitoring the success of workforce improvement initiatives.

Micro-enterprises

Micro-enterprises are very small organisations with 1–9 employees and a turnover or balance sheet total of less than €2 million.

Professional status

Professional status is a defined understanding of the level at which an individual can apply their skills, knowledge and experience to working in the sport and physical activity sector. Professional statuses are issued by CIMSPA as a chartered professional body and recognised regulator.

Qualitative data

Qualitative data is non-numeric, descriptive information that gathers experiences and perceptions. It includes case studies, feedback via surveys and forms, and interviews.

Skills portfolio

A skills portfolio is a collection of the skills, knowledge and achievements an individual can evidence.

Its purpose is to showcase to potential employers the practical and applicable skills an individual has acquired to help their transition into working in the sector.

It also serves to identify key skills required by employers to help individuals focus their professional development and employability potential.

A skills portfolio may also outline areas for improvement that can connect forwards into ongoing continuous professional development and reinforce the importance of lifelong education.

Within the context of local skills plans, the ambition is that skills portfolios are aligned to local employer needs.

SME (small- and medium-sized enterprises)

An SME is any organisation that has fewer than 250 employees and a turnover of less than €50 million or a balance sheet total less than €43 million.

Sport and physical activity sector local skills plan

This document is a sport and physical activity sector local skills plan. It is a local skills plan specific to the sport and physical activity sector in a specific region.

The plan has been created by the local skills accountability board (see above), coordinated and managed by CIMSPA.

The Sport and Physical Activity Sector Local Skills Accountability Board – Gloucestershire



Active
Gloucestershire



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