

# Sport and physical activity sector local skills plan

Lancashire: 2025–2028

CREATED BY

Sport and Physical Activity Sector  
Local Skills Accountability Board –  
Lancashire



# Contents

## Photo credits:

CIMSPA would like to thank Active Lancashire, Pro Sport Coaching Ltd and Swim England for their support in sourcing photographs for this skills plan.

# Introduction

## Lancashire Sport and Physical Activity Local Skills Accountability Board

### About the board

**Chair:** Andrea Pollard, Fundraising Lead, Lancashire Mind

**Vice Chair:** Dr Adrian Ibbetson, Director of Sport, University of Lancashire

### Board member organisations

- Active Lancashire
- Activity Alliance
- Alliance Leisure
- Burnley College
- Burnley Leisure & Culture
- Coach Core
- Department for Work and Pensions
- Edge Hill University
- Edstart Sports Coaching
- hfe
- Jetts
- Lancashire Cricket Foundation
- Lancashire Mind
- Lancashire Skills and Employment Hub
- Myerscough College
- Nelson and Colne College
- North and Western Lancashire Chamber of Commerce
- Pro Sport Coaching Ltd
- Swim England
- The Gym Group
- University of Lancashire

### 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 Lancashire.

[partners@cimspa.co.uk](mailto:partners@cimspa.co.uk)

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

## Lancashire – geographical area

Local government in the county of Lancashire comprises of an upper tier authority, Lancashire County Council and 12 district authorities namely:

Burnley, Chorley, Fylde, Hyndburn, Lancaster, Pendle, Preston, Ribble Valley, Rossendale, South Ribble, West Lancashire, and Wyre.

Blackpool and Blackburn with Darwen are unitary authorities that do not come under county council control.

The county, including the unitary authorities, borders Cumbria, North Yorkshire, West Yorkshire, Greater Manchester and Merseyside in the North West of England.



### Foreword

**The need for a comprehensive sector skills plan for Lancashire has never been more critical. As our region grapples with an ageing population, growing health inequalities and significant economic challenges, the importance of sport and physical activity in promoting healthier, more resilient communities cannot be overstated.**

In Lancashire, pockets of deprivation persist, mental health issues are rising and the long-term impacts of the pandemic continue to be felt. Sport and physical activity, with its proven physiological, psychological and social benefits, hold the key to addressing many of these challenges.

However, the increasing complexity and diversity of participation require us to rethink how we support the workforce that underpins this sector. It is essential that we equip the people working in sport and physical activity with the skills, knowledge and behaviours needed to meet the growing demand and evolving needs of our communities.

This local skills plan for Lancashire represents a collaborative effort among key stakeholders, supported by Active Lancashire and the Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity

**“Our goal is to create clear, actionable pathways for success, both in the medium and long term, that will ensure a thriving sport and physical activity sector in Lancashire.”**

(CIMSPA). It provides a strategic overview of the challenges and priorities identified through our collective work, focusing on how we can support the development of a skilled and resilient workforce to drive participation in sport and physical activity across the region.

Our goal is to create clear, actionable pathways for success, both in the medium and long term, that will ensure a thriving sport and physical activity sector in Lancashire. This plan serves as a tool to guide decision-making and investment, aiming to enhance the appeal of careers in the sector and ensure that every individual

in Lancashire has access to high-quality, inclusive opportunities to be active.

We are committed to sharing best practices not only within our region but also with neighbouring counties to foster collaboration and learning. Together, we can build a strong, capable workforce that can help transform the health, wellbeing and future prospects of our communities.

The Lancashire Local Skills Accountability Board, along with our partners, stands ready to lead this change, creating a healthier, more active Lancashire for all.

#### **Andrea Pollard**

Fundraising Lead, Lancashire Mind  
Chair, Lancashire Local Skills Accountability Board

#### **Dr Adrian Ibbetson**

Director of Sport, University of Lancashire  
Vice Chair, Lancashire Local Skills Accountability Board

### 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 multiple workforce development managers working at a local level across England, Wales and Scotland.

The CIMSPA workforce development manager within Lancashire 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:

**“To enable the sport and physical activity sector to play a pivotal role in transforming the lives of the communities in Lancashire by recruiting, training, supporting and retaining a representative, inclusive and skilled workforce that provides high-quality, inspirational and enjoyable experiences.”**

We will create a professionally recognised and valued sport and physical activity sector that offers clear career pathways and fosters robust collaboration networks through a localised, whole-systems approach.

Our three recommendations will ensure our initiatives are data-driven and impactful, thus boosting economic prosperity and making a real difference to local communities.

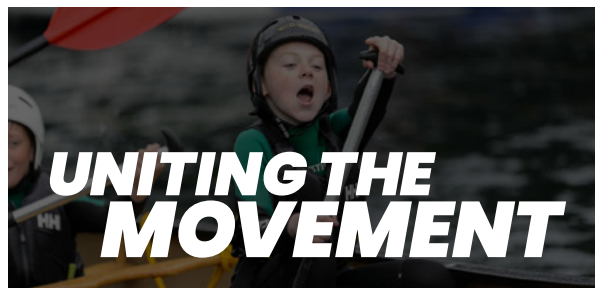


## National context



### 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

### Lancashire Local Skills Improvement Plan

Working in partnership, North and Western Lancashire Chamber of Commerce and the East Lancashire Chamber of Commerce launched the Lancashire Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) in 2022.

Since then, stakeholders in the region have worked together to create a more relevant, joined-up and flexible skills system that meets the needs of the local business community.

Many of the plan's priorities align with the work of the local skills accountability board (LSAB) and this local skills plan:

- **Addressing labour market demand** and skills shortages by identifying workforce needs and ensuring that skills training aligns with employer demand
- **Reducing barriers to training** by streamlining funding and increasing flexible learning opportunities
- **Providing employer-led training** with more industry-led skills initiatives and employer involvement in curriculum design

- **Building networks and partnerships** between employers, education providers and local government to improve technical education
- **Addressing local health needs** by increasing training for health and wellbeing roles to support the NHS and local health initiatives
- **Growing the economy by developing a sustainable workforce** through the promotion of continued professional development and apprenticeship opportunities
- **Using labour market intelligence** to assess and refine training programmes
- **Aligning future education with industry demand** through better data collection and analysis

The LSAB has been working closely with the LSIP to further align skills work in Lancashire and will continue to do so as this plan is delivered to achieve the shared goals of upskilling the workforce and improving stakeholder engagement. This will create a cohesive and responsive skills system across all sectors, including sport and physical activity, that meets local needs.

[LANCASHIRE LOCAL SKILLS IMPROVEMENT PLAN](#)

## Lancashire Local Skills Improvement Plan

# Themes, recommendations, partners and stakeholders

## Themes

This plan has four themes.



## Recommendations

This plan has three headline recommendations:

### 1 Create development opportunities

Create development opportunities that are fit for purpose to upskill a diverse workforce to professional standards and support professionals throughout their careers.

### 2 Enhance collaboration between stakeholders

Enhance collaboration between education providers, employers and CIMSPA, while exploring new opportunities beyond the sector.

### 3 Boost impact on communities

Create opportunities for the sector to positively impact the health of our local communities and boost economic prosperity.



## 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/occupation-specific training 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, Active Partnerships, national governing bodies of sport and other system partners.

### Employers and deployers

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



# Recommendations, actions and milestones

## RECOMMENDATION 1

**Create development opportunities:** Create development opportunities that are fit for purpose to upskill a diverse workforce to professional standards and support professionals throughout their careers

Theme(s)	No.	2025–2028 actions	What does success look like?	How will it be measured?*
<b>TRAIN</b> <b>SUPPORT</b> <b>RETAIN</b>	1a	Better connect high-quality education providers with sector employers and professionals to ensure that training is accessible and relevant.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ An active network connecting local education providers with sector employers and professionals</li> <li>▶ Employers and professionals are aware of and use the CIMSPA endorsed training directory and Training Academy</li> <li>▶ Connections between education providers and employers enable education offers to be tailored to local needs</li> <li>▶ Employee lived experience feedback to training providers informs learning delivery</li> <li>▶ Training co-designed by employers and education providers is available throughout Lancashire</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ CIMSPA endorsed training directory and Training Academy data</li> <li>▶ Local workforce skills diagnostic data (reduction in lack of relevant training as barrier to training)</li> <li>▶ <a href="#">Lancashire Active Learning Zone</a> data</li> <li>▶ Qualitative data</li> </ul>
<b>RECRUIT</b> <b>TRAIN</b> <b>SUPPORT</b> <b>RETAIN</b>	1b	Create inspiring and appropriate pathways for leaders of the future.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Comprehensive training programmes tailored to workforce needs, focusing on both technical and soft skills required for leadership roles, are identified and promoted</li> <li>▶ CIMSPA professional status and the sector's professional standards are used by employers to create clear, inspiring pathways for leaders to develop</li> <li>▶ Diversity is monitored to establish baselines, review progress and improve access to leadership roles</li> <li>▶ Local directories and the CIMSPA endorsed training directory are used to signpost to high-quality leadership training</li> <li>▶ More good quality leaders are working in the sector</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ CIMSPA Training Academy and endorsed training directory data</li> <li>▶ CIMSPA Training Provider Partner data</li> <li>▶ Local workforce skills diagnostic data</li> <li>▶ Lancashire Skills and Employment Hub data</li> <li>▶ Active Lancashire data</li> <li>▶ Together An Active Future data</li> </ul>



## RECOMMENDATIONS, ACTIONS AND MILESTONES

### RECOMMENDATION 1 (continued)

Theme(s)	No.	2025–2028 actions	What does success look like?	How will it be measured?*
<b>RECRUIT</b> <b>RETAIN</b>	<b>1c</b>	Increase awareness of sector careers support and resources to improve understanding of career opportunities and progression pathways available.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Clear signposting for sector professionals to the CIMSPA Careers Hub</li> <li>▶ Clear signposting to local funded training opportunities</li> <li>▶ Established links between the LSAB and careers services within Lancashire</li> <li>▶ Mentorship programmes connect experienced professionals with emerging talent</li> <li>▶ Sector professionals and those considering working in the sector understand the pathways and opportunities available</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ CIMSPA Careers Hub data</li> <li>▶ Lancashire Skills and Employment Hub data</li> <li>▶ Local documentation and reporting</li> <li>▶ Qualitative data</li> </ul>
<b>RECRUIT</b> <b>TRAIN</b> <b>SUPPORT</b>	<b>1d</b>	Support fit-for-purpose work placements by improving collaboration between education and employers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Education providers are connected with employers willing to offer work placements</li> <li>▶ Employers receive support and guidance around work placements</li> <li>▶ Employers use the CIMSPA work-based and placement learning guidance to inform best practice in delivering work placements</li> <li>▶ More work placements are available</li> <li>▶ Work placements are undertaken by a diverse range of learners</li> <li>▶ Work placements are valuable to both employers and learners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Number of work placements</li> <li>▶ Education provider diversity data</li> <li>▶ Local documentation and reporting</li> <li>▶ Qualitative data</li> </ul>

To achieve recommendation 1, we must consider developing a network of education providers, employers and resources to enhance workforce development, offer tailored education opportunities, improve work placements and use data-driven insights to address local workforce needs across all industries of sport and physical activity.

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

## RECOMMENDATION 2

**Enhance collaboration between stakeholders:** Enhance collaboration between education providers, employers and CIMSPA, while exploring new opportunities beyond the sector.

Theme(s)	No.	2025–2028 actions	What does success look like?	How will it be measured?
<b>SUPPORT</b>	<b>2a</b>	Build awareness and understanding of the sector's professional standards and CIMSPA professional status as workforce development tools for employers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employers understand that training aligned with the professional standards is of the highest quality and will meet their needs</li> <li>Employers understand how they can use professional status pathways to support workforce development</li> <li>Employers use professional status in job descriptions and recruitment processes to specify required skillsets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local workforce skills diagnostic data (awareness of professional standards)</li> <li>Number of CIMSPA Employer Partners in Lancashire</li> <li>CIMSPA professional status data</li> <li>Local documentation and reporting</li> </ul>
<b>RECRUIT</b> <b>TRAIN</b> <b>SUPPORT</b> <b>RETAIN</b>	<b>2b</b>	Improve local sector communication channels to facilitate dialogue between education providers, employers and CIMSPA.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A record of partnerships and networks related to the sport and physical activity workforce</li> <li>Boards, meetings and forums each offer unique benefit to the sector</li> <li>Signposting to existing boards, meetings and forums where relevant</li> <li>Signposting to the CIMSPA Careers Hub and Lancashire Skills and Employment Hub as resources for best practice and guidance for employers and education providers</li> <li>Employers and education providers use the CIMSPA Careers Hub and Lancashire Skills and Employment Hub to inform practice and delivery.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meeting minutes and reports</li> <li>CIMSPA Careers Hub data</li> <li>Lancashire Skills and Employment Hub data</li> </ul>
<b>RECRUIT</b> <b>TRAIN</b> <b>SUPPORT</b> <b>RETAIN</b>	<b>2c</b>	Develop relationships with key strategic stakeholders that align with the sector, including NHS representatives and local government, to facilitate the delivery of this skills plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular stakeholder meetings are attended by LSAB representatives to discuss emerging trends, share insights and align on strategic priorities</li> <li>New co-creation and delivery opportunities are identified</li> <li>Key strategic stakeholders are aware of CIMSPA and its activity across partnerships</li> <li>Innovative approaches and best practices from other sectors that could be adopted in sport and physical activity organisations are identified</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meeting minutes and reports</li> </ul>

To achieve recommendation 2, we must build a stronger, more connected sector by improving communication and fostering collaboration and partnerships.

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

### RECOMMENDATION 3

**Boost impact on communities:** Create opportunities for the sector to positively impact the health of our local communities and boost economic prosperity.

Theme(s)	No.	2025–2028 actions	What does success look like?	How will it be measured?
<b>RECRUIT</b> <b>TRAIN</b> <b>SUPPORT</b> <b>RETAIN</b>	3a	Connect the Lancashire LSAB with key health sector organisations to support collaboration in improving the health of local residents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Strategic partnerships established between the LSAB and the NHS Integrated Care Board and NHS trusts across Lancashire</li> <li>▶ Sector organisations are integrated within NHS and local government collaborative health initiatives through community sport, e.g. walking football to combat social isolation and improve mobility</li> <li>▶ The sector workforce supports the delivery of community outreach programmes that raise awareness of the benefits of and increase participation in sport and physical activity for health and wellbeing</li> <li>▶ Reduced absenteeism in the workplace by supporting wellbeing to decrease economic inactivity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Meeting minutes and actions resulting from partnership meetings</li> <li>▶ Qualitative data</li> <li>▶ Local productivity reporting</li> </ul>
<b>RECRUIT</b> <b>TRAIN</b> <b>SUPPORT</b> <b>RETAIN</b>	3b	Understand local healthcare needs and ensure that the sector is equipped to support the prevention, treatment and management of these.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ The local sport and physical activity sector is better connected to primary care networks</li> <li>▶ Training tailored to local healthcare needs is available in the region</li> <li>▶ Education providers and those delivering sport and physical activity services understand local healthcare needs and are able to adapt their programmes accordingly</li> <li>▶ Healthcare professionals are aware of opportunities for the sport and physical activity sector to support with preventative care and the treatment and management of health conditions</li> <li>▶ Improved signposting to existing exercise referral and social prescribing physical activity programmes</li> <li>▶ The sector workforce is better qualified to support community health and wellbeing programmes</li> <li>▶ Increased representation of local Sport England Place Universal Offer-funded Place Partners on the LSAB, providing a collaborative response to the skills needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Joint Strategic Needs Assessment data</li> <li>▶ Local Skills Improvement Plan</li> <li>▶ WorkWell pilot data</li> <li>▶ Qualitative data</li> </ul>

## RECOMMENDATIONS, ACTIONS AND MILESTONES

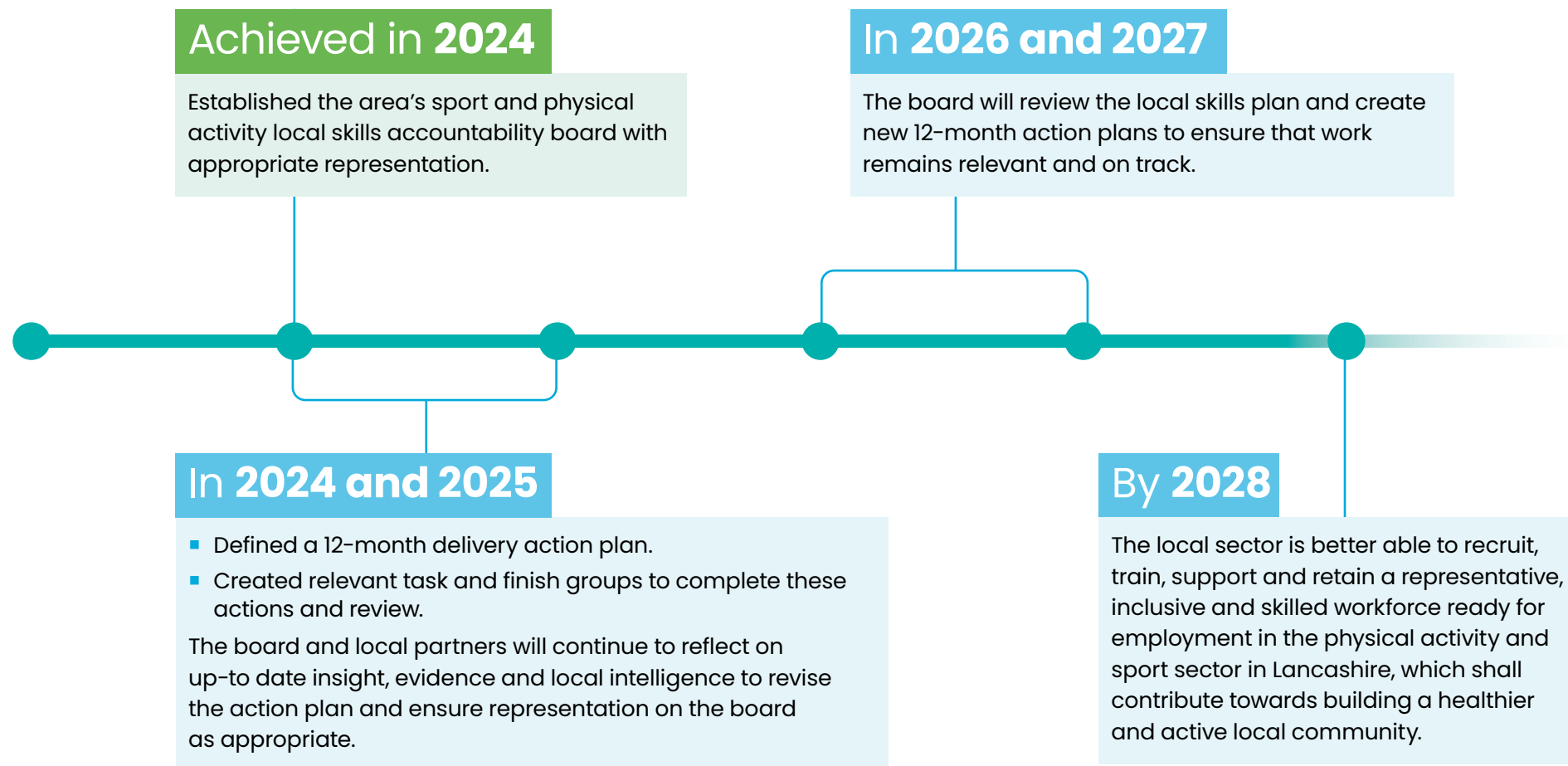
### RECOMMENDATION 3 (continued)

Theme(s)	No.	2025–2028 actions	What does success look like?	How will it be measured?
<b>RECRUIT</b> <b>TRAIN</b> <b>SUPPORT</b> <b>RETAIN</b>	3c	Use the sector's professional standards and CIMSPA professional status to ensure that our workforce's competency is understood by the healthcare sector.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ More local training is aligned with the professional standards</li> <li>▶ Employers understand how the sector's professional standards and CIMSPA professional status can support workforce development aligned with healthcare sector needs</li> <li>▶ More professionals in Lancashire have completed training aligned with the professional standards</li> <li>▶ More professionals in Lancashire have CIMSPA professional status</li> <li>▶ LSAB members participate in consultations for new professional standards</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Endorsed training directory data</li> <li>▶ CIMSPA professional status data</li> <li>▶ Local documentation and reporting</li> <li>▶ Qualitative data</li> </ul>
<b>RECRUIT</b> <b>TRAIN</b> <b>SUPPORT</b> <b>RETAIN</b>	3d	Provide opportunities for a wider range of individuals to gain employment in and progress through the sector, which will contribute to economic prosperity in Lancashire.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Local skills funding is secured to provide training opportunities to economically disadvantaged groups such as those not in education, employment or training (NEET)</li> <li>▶ Sector career resources such as the CIMSPA Careers Hub are signposted to by local careers services</li> <li>▶ Workshops and resources providing information on self-employment opportunities in the sector</li> <li>▶ Career resources are easily accessible in online, bite-sized and on-demand formats</li> <li>▶ More local individuals undertake sport and physical activity training</li> <li>▶ Job vacancies are filled quicker</li> <li>▶ A reduction in skills gaps reported by local employers</li> <li>▶ A more diverse sector workforce</li> <li>▶ Sport and physical activity services are promoted as drivers of economic productivity through increased participation, job creation and skills development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Number of workshops</li> <li>▶ Lancashire Skills and Employment Hub course attendance data</li> <li>▶ Duration of sport and physical activity job advertisements in Lancashire</li> <li>▶ Local workforce skills diagnostic data</li> <li>▶ Local documentation and reporting</li> </ul>

To achieve recommendation 3, we must establish strategic partnerships within the health sector, identify local health needs, leverage the professional standards and ensure that we consider all industries across the sport and physical activity sector.

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

## Milestones





# Delivering with data

## How the Lancashire LSAB have used data to create this plan and will continue to make data-informed decisions in its delivery.

In creating this local skills plan, the Lancashire Local Skills Accountability Board has used both local and national quantitative data to shape its vision and recommendations. This has been balanced with collecting qualitative data through conversations with local employers, education providers and other sector stakeholders to gain a rounded picture of local need.

When shaping the recommendations, it was essential to understand what data would be required to measure the success of their delivery and report this back to key stakeholders. To create these performance indicators, the board researched the available data sources within the region relating to each action and explored gaining access to these. Examples of those identified include data from:

- Local workforce skills diagnostic surveys
- Combined authorities
- The region's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment

- CIMSPA Data Lens
- Lancashire Skills and Employment Hub
- Sport England's Social Value Reports
- Business Health Matters

In addition to ensuring that the board has access to appropriate and relevant data sources, it has also designed its own data collection processes to be deployed during the plan's delivery. This will be essential in collecting qualitative data, for example collating feedback from employees about training or creating case studies of college students completing sport and physical activity courses.

As the plan is delivered, it will be important to continuously monitor the data collected in order to refine and improve processes and actions. Further data requirements must be identified and requests made to ensure that any relevant data is accessible and can be used to inform any decisions to be made over the course of this plan's scope.

The board also intends to assess the role of artificial intelligence in the collation and analysis of data to ensure that all available tools are considered for ensuring that progress is informed by evidence.



# Wider alignment with local skills work

## Lancashire Skills Pledge

**The Lancashire Skills Pledge offers businesses a single gateway to explore and engage with Lancashire's skills and employment initiatives, providing impartial advice, support and access to funded skills training.**

Through the Pledge, businesses can also gain recognition for their efforts in inspiring, recruiting and upskilling local talent.

Key pledge statements include the following:

- Recruit Lancashire people: access to candidates already equipped with job-specific skills
- Upskill your workforce: access to flexible training pathways, including funded and partially funded options and skills bootcamps
- Recruit an apprentice: advice and support to match businesses with a provider and to support new or existing apprentices
- Link with schools, colleges and universities: helping businesses inspire young people by offering meaningful school, college or university work placements
- There are now over 250 businesses engaged with the Lancashire Skills Pledge.

### How this links with the Lancashire local skills plan

The Lancashire Skills Pledge shows the power of connecting businesses with their local education system and its talent pool. Our local skills plan's priorities and recommendations parallel these goals and shows we are strategically aligned to the local focus.

The skills pledge also works to play a positive role in young care leavers' transition through into employment. As such, it is a great example of genuine workforce inclusivity that the Lancashire LSAB will reflect in its work.

[LANCASHIRE SKILLS PLEDGE](#)



## Active Lancashire: business health and active learning



**Active Lancashire is a Sport England National Place Partner strategic lead for physical activity, health and wellbeing across Lancashire.**

They have adopted a whole-systems approach to achieving their mission of empowering communities through impactful projects focused on physical activity, health, skills and employment.

They consider key data from regional and national studies to understand areas of concern; work with stakeholders to influence change; and talk to communities to understand barriers to health, skills and employment. Their Business Health Matters programme and Active Learning Zone platform are strong examples of their work.

[ACTIVE LANCASHIRE](#) 





### Business Health Matters

In collaboration with the University of Central Lancashire, ukactive and Lancashire Mind, Active Lancashire's Business Health Matters programme implemented a Workplace Health Champion initiative, contributing to a healthier, more productive workforce across Lancashire.

This supported 132 Lancashire businesses in improving employees' physical and mental health. With the workforce of gyms and leisure centres trained to carry out health checks, employees of local businesses benefited from wellbeing plans and support to make positive lifestyle choices.

A total of 1,202 screenings were delivered, and organisations with Workplace Health Champions reported increased health awareness among staff and management, expanded opportunities for health-focused activities, evidence of positive culture change and increased usage of employee assistance programmes.



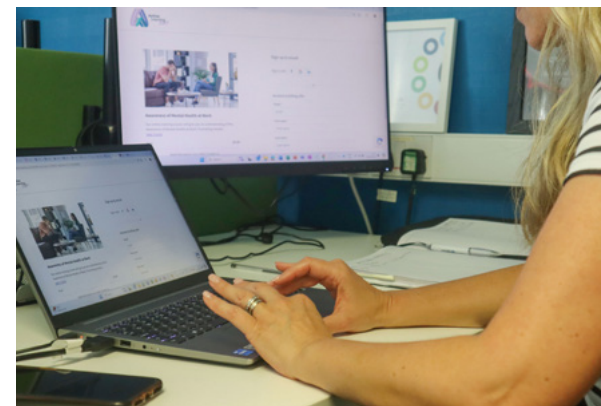
### Active Learning Zone

The platform features targeted products and services that respond to the specific needs of Lancashire's communities and organisations, focusing on skills, health and workplace wellbeing, with many courses enabling flexible and inclusive learning opportunities.

Their flagship course is the Workplace Health Champion Accredited Training – level 2 and 3 qualifications that integrate skills development and health promotion to enhance employment prospects and workplace performance. In-depth support for neurodiverse colleagues is also incorporated to enable more inclusive workplaces.

### How this links with the Lancashire local skills plan

Active Lancashire's initiatives support the local skills plan's goal of providing training for the sport and physical activity workforce that matches employer needs as well as maximising the talent pool for the sport and physical activity workforce through effective inclusivity such as support for neurodiverse colleagues in their health champion training. Also, their focus on using effective insight reflects the plan's data repository ambitions.



## Together an Active Future – Lead through Strengths programme

**Together an Active Future are a Sport England Place Partner who work to enable sustainable change in approaches to physical activity across Pennine Lancashire.**

Lead through Strengths uses the CliftonStrengths assessment to help those in management and leadership positions to increase their effectiveness in promoting the importance of physical activity for health and wellbeing – better understanding their talents and strengths, and how to use these to implement change in their organisational practice.

Through the programme, 107 colleagues with a strong connection to physical activity have been upskilled in Together an Active Future strengths coaching, with these then coaching at least 1 person in their organisation.

The work also facilitated 18 team ‘dynamics’ days with organisations who play a key role in physical activity across the system, leading to a direct change in their approach to strengths-based leadership in their organisation.

### Learning highlights

- Individual empowerment – making sector professionals feel valued and invested in
- Team cultures – positive impact on developing a sense of togetherness
- System-change impacts – sharing examples of brave leadership, better connections and innovative thinking
- Linear vs systems thinking – as each organisation is unique, a flexible approach is adopted

### How this links with the Lancashire local skills plan

This programme aligns well with the plan’s key recommendation to provide fit-for-purpose development opportunities to support and upskill a diverse workforce to professional standards, ensuring ongoing engagement and creating inspiring pathways for leaders of the future.

[LEAD THROUGH STRENGTHS PROGRAMME](#)

Together  
an Active  
Future  
»»»»

Lead through  
Strengths





# Data and insight that have informed this work

## An informed approach to skills and employment priorities for Lancashire

The Lancashire Skills and Employment Strategic Framework 2024–2029 articulates the skills and employment priorities for Lancashire and stresses the importance of moving to a higher-skilled and more productive workforce in Lancashire.

Key insight includes:

- how adults achieving employment-linked qualifications at Levels 2 and 3 provides a route to more secure employment options
- how those with qualifications below Level 2 are vulnerable to becoming trapped in low-paid and insecure employment.

It also highlights clear negative links between economic activity levels, sickness absence and productivity in Lancashire:

- 77,000 people are on incapacity and disability benefits (11% of the workforce) in Lancashire.
- Lancashire has higher-than-average sickness absence rates in a number of authority areas, which is impacting on the productivity of the local economy.

Reducing the health gap between Lancashire and the UK would equate to an increase of up to £650m of GVA (gross value added) improvement per year within the local economy.

### How this links with the Lancashire local skills plan

Sport and physical activity is an accessible and attractive employment sector with entry points at level 2 and level 3 as well as, with appropriate support, for those without formal qualifications.

As such, the Lancashire local skills plan can be a valuable part of wider work to transition people into skilled work as per the strategic framework, both to minimise financial support needed and to enable individuals to be more prosperous and contribute to Lancashire's economy.

[LANCASHIRE SKILLS AND EMPLOYMENT STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK 2024–2029](#)

## Sector business size

A majority of local employers within Lancashire are microenterprises, many of which struggle with skills shortages, recruitment and staff retention. These challenges are particularly acute in rural areas, where lower population levels limit the available workforce and make it harder for businesses to attract and retain talent. Added to this are wider economic pressures, with only 37.8% of the 582 organisations in the area classed as stable in terms of growth<sup>1</sup>.

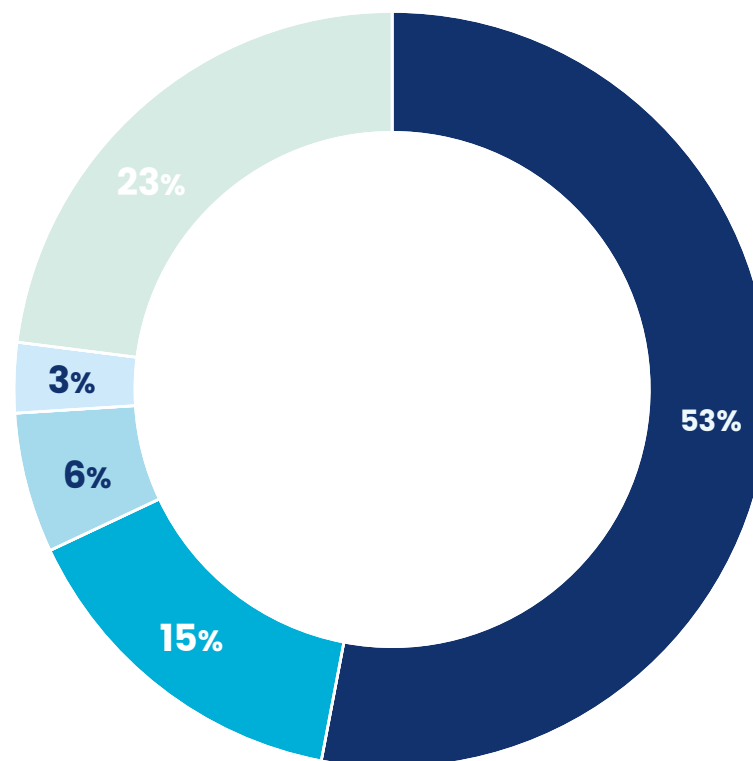
To respond to these issues, the skills plan will raise awareness of careers support, build knowledge of local career opportunities and promote clear progression pathways to support retention.

- 53% Micro-enterprises (1–9 employees)
- 15% Small enterprises (10–49 employees)
- 6% Medium enterprises (50–249 employees)
- 3% Large enterprises (250+ employees)
- 23% Businesses unaccounted for

### Notes

- 23% of sport and physical activity businesses within Lancashire 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.

<sup>1</sup>Source: Lancashire 2024 Regional Datapack, CIMSPA, 2024

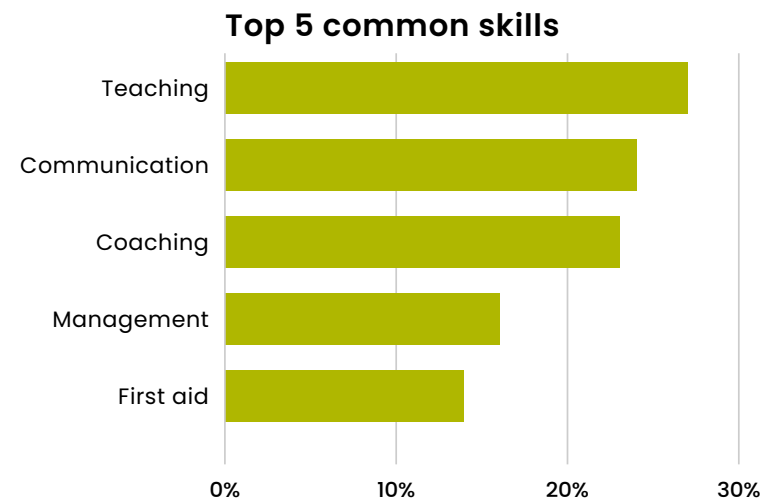


## Recruitment skills



The data shows the top five specialised skills (typically unique to sport and physical activity sector roles) and common skills (highly transferable skills essential to many job roles across multiple sectors) listed in sector job postings in Lancashire.

Source: Lancashire 2024 Regional Datapack, CIMSPA, 2024



With coaching being one of the most desired skills in both the specialised and common skill categories, the local skills plan will support this need with tailored education opportunities, improved work placements and the use of data-driven insights to address local workforce needs across all sectors of sport and physical activity.

## References and data sources

### Within recommendation 1 (above)

[CIMSPA Sport and Physical Activity Workforce Observatory](#)

CIMSPA local regional data pack for Lancashire – see Appendix 1, below.

[Labour Market Information](#), Lancashire Skills and Employment Hub, 2021

[Economic Inactivity: Insight Report](#), Lancashire Skills and Employment Hub, 2023

[Lancashire Local Skills Improvement Plan](#), North and Western Lancashire Chamber of Commerce and East Lancashire Chamber of Commerce, 2022

[Lancashire Local Skills Improvement Plan: Progress Report, 2024](#), North and Western Lancashire Chamber of Commerce and East Lancashire Chamber of Commerce, 2024.

[Census Maps: Census 2021](#), Office for National Statistics, 2021

- Work including industry and occupation
- Education highest level of qualification
- Population insight including age, sex, household makeup

### Within recommendation 3 (above)

[Lancashire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment Annual Commentary 2023/4](#), Lancashire County Council, 2024

[Unlocking the potential: How sport, recreation and physical activity can help improve the health and wellbeing of the nation](#), National Sector Partners Group, 2024.

[Social value and return on investment of sport and physical activity, 2023/24](#), Sport England, 2025

[Contribution of sport to society and economy with particular reference to impact on young people's health and wellbeing and to community sport](#), Local Government Association, 2024

[Sport Satellite Account for the UK 2024: Key Findings](#), Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 2024

[Local Skills Dashboard](#) (filtered on Lancashire), Department for Education

## Appendices

### Appendix 1:

[CIMSPA Regional Datapack: Lancashire](#), CIMSPA, 2024

### Appendix 2:

[CIMSPA Business Diagnostic UK-wide Report 2023-2024](#), CIMSPA, 2024

# 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

<b>Sector workforce</b> 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*.
<b>Broader workforce</b>	Receptionist, bar staff, kitchen and catering assistant, waiting staff, cleaning assistant, domestic assistant, sales and retail assistant, chef.

\*Occupations supported directly by other professional bodies

### Support chain occupations

<b>Sector workforce</b> Occupations aligned with CIMSPA professional standards	Entry manager, general manager, senior manager, tutor, assessor, coach developer, health navigator, pool plant operative.
<b>Broader workforce</b>	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

<b>Enablers</b> 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.
<b>Influencers</b> 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

## 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.

## 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.

### 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.

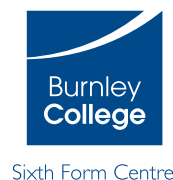
### Sport and physical activity sector local skills plan

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 – Lancashire



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