

# Sport and physical activity sector local skills plan

West of England: 2025–2028

CREATED BY

West of England Sport and  
Physical Activity Local Skills  
Accountability Board



# Contents

## Photo credits:

CIMSPA would like to thank Circadian Trust, Shine, City of Bristol College and Bristol Sport Foundation for their support in sourcing photographs for this skills plan.

# Introduction

## West of England Sport and Physical Activity Local Skills Accountability Board

### About the board

**Chair:** Alex Gaiger, Executive Director of Curriculum and Quality at South Gloucestershire and Stroud College

### Board member organisations

- Bath and North East Somerset Council
- Bath College
- Bristol City Robins Foundation
- Bristol City Council
- Bristol Sport Foundation
- Circadian Trust
- City of Bristol College
- Coach Core
- Department for Work and Pensions
- Empire Fighting Chance
- Everyone Active
- GLL
- Indoor Cycling Institute
- North Somerset Council
- South Gloucestershire and Stroud College
- Shine Wraparound Care
- Swim England
- University of Bath
- University of Bristol Sport, Exercise and Health
- Wesport
- West of England Combined Authority Careers Hub
- Weston College

### 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 West of England.

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

[LOCAL SKILLS ACCOUNTABILITY BOARD WEBSITE PAGE](#)

## Region – geographical area

The Region Local Skills Accountability Board area covers:

- Bath and North East Somerset
- Bristol
- North Somerset
- South Gloucestershire

This local skills plan covers the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority – comprising Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol and South Gloucestershire – as well as North Somerset, which is included in the West of England Local Skills Improvement Plan and Local Enterprise Partnership.



## Foreword

### **The sport and physical activity sector plays a vital role in the health, wellbeing and economic prosperity of the West of England.**

The region is made up of four unitary authorities: Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire, and is home to over one million people.

The area is known for its vibrant communities, a predominantly thriving economy and a culture that values active living, however there are significant health and economic disparities between urban and rural areas. Life expectancy is 10 years lower for males and 8 years lower for females in the most deprived areas compared to the least deprived<sup>1</sup>.

Physical activity levels vary within the West of England, with 48% of adults in the most deprived areas not meeting recommended levels compared to a regional average of 28%<sup>2</sup>. Economic challenges are evident, too: while unemployment has reduced, those in high-deprivation areas continue to face significantly higher rates than the regional average<sup>3</sup>.

The local sport and physical activity sector is well-positioned to support both health priorities and economic challenges of the region. Sport England estimates that sport and physical activity contributes over £2 billion in social value for the area<sup>4</sup>. However, like in many sectors, work is needed to address recruitment, retention and skill-gap challenges and to unlock the full potential of the local sport and physical activity sector.

This local skills plan has been developed to address these challenges and capitalise on the opportunities within the sector to deliver economic growth, improve health outcomes and drive positive social change. It is the result of extensive collaboration across local authorities, education, employers and other stakeholders, all united by a shared commitment to enhancing the capabilities and resilience of the sector.

By aligning skills provision with the sector's needs, the aim is to equip the local sport and physical activity workforce with the skills and support needed to succeed in an increasingly competitive and rapidly changing landscape. By providing both individuals and organisations with

accessible training pathways, diversifying talent pipelines and fostering a culture of lifelong learning, we can ensure that everyone – regardless of background – has the opportunity to thrive.

We invite you to engage with this skills plan as we collectively work to build a stronger, more resilient sector. Together, we can create a workforce that not only meets today's demands but also anticipates and shapes the future of sport and physical activity in the West of England.

### Alex Gaiger

Chair of the West of England Local Skills Accountability Board  
Executive Director of Curriculum and Quality at South Gloucestershire and Stroud College

### Links

1. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE PUBLIC HEALTH PROFILES [↗](#)

2. ACTIVE LIVES SURVEY DATA – SPORT ENGLAND [↗](#)

3. OFFICIAL CENSUS AND LABOUR MARKET STATISTICS [↗](#)

4. THE SOCIAL VALUE OF SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN ENGLAND – 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 multiple workforce development managers working at a local level across England, Wales and Scotland.

The CIMSPA skills hub manager within West of England 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

Create a thriving, skilled and diverse sport and physical activity workforce for the West of England that drives sector growth and improves the health and wellbeing of local communities.

## Vision detail

Together, we will forge a thriving ecosystem where employers, educators and individuals collaborate to develop skills, cultivate talent and enhance career pathways.

Through inclusive recruitment, upskilling opportunities and best-practice sharing, we will grow a resilient workforce that reflects the diverse communities it serves, cultivating long-term success and ensuring that sport and physical activity boost economic prosperity and community wellbeing.

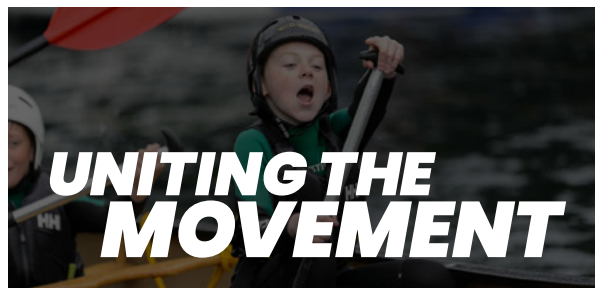


## National context



### 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

### West of England & North Somerset Local Skills Improvement Plan

Developed by Business West Chambers of Commerce, the West of England & North Somerset Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) addresses skills needs in the region. Its priorities are within advanced manufacturing, construction, health and social care, and creative industries, centred around cross-cutting themes such as sector-specific and technological change as well as critical workplace, core and transferable skills (including core digital skills).

The LSIP is primarily focused on working with education providers to improve post-16 technical education. Its aims include gathering and interpreting employer data on unmet skills needs, then supporting education providers to evolve learning to help close the gap between formal learning and work readiness.

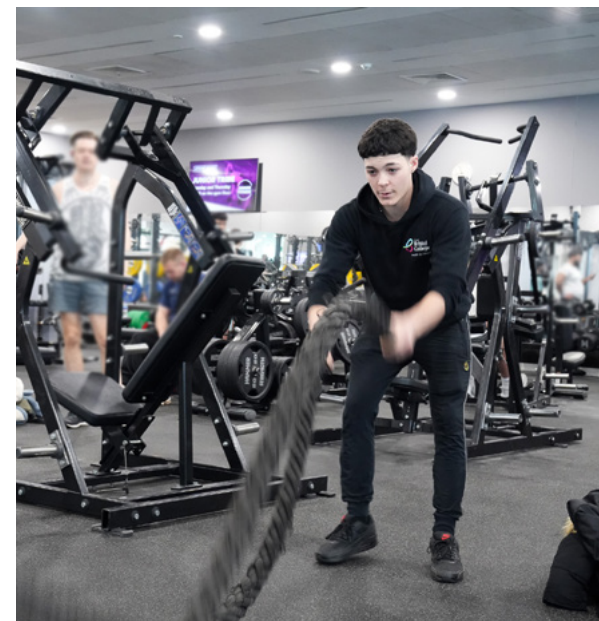
The West of England & North Somerset LSIP Progress Report (2024) provides a framework for aligning post-16 technical education with the skills needs of employers in the region.

To help achieve its aims, the LSIP has identified actions within key areas. Several align with those of this local skills plan:

- Identifying provision, support and funding needs within the skills system
- Improving employer engagement with post-16 education and training
- Creating messaging and awareness to simplify and improve understanding of education provision, support and funding

While the West of England 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 the West of England.

[WEST OF ENGLAND LSIP](#)



# Themes, recommendations, partners and stakeholders

## Themes

This plan has four themes.



## Recommendations

This plan has four headline recommendations:

### Build relationships

1

Establish post-16 education pathways that forge strong relationships with the sector.

### Improve career pathways

2

Develop clear, meaningful and ambitious career pathways that support recruitment and progression opportunities in our workforce.

### Create a representative workforce

3

Create a workforce that is reflective of our diverse population and positively impacts the health and wellbeing of the communities we serve.

### Upskill and retain

4

Share best practices and provide opportunities to upskill the existing sport and physical activity workforce to support long-term sustainability and retention.

## 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, for example, 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

**Build relationships:** Establish post-16 education pathways that forge strong relationships with the sector.

Theme(s)	No.	2025–2028 actions	What does success look like?	How will it be measured?*
<b>RECRUIT</b> <b>TRAIN</b>	1a	Provide a clear understanding of the knowledge and skills required within the sector to support the development of co-created education courses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Education providers form key partnerships with local employers to support workforce development</li> <li>Education curricula reflect the knowledge and skills in demand by sector employers</li> <li>Students leave education with the relevant skills and qualifications needed to work within the sector</li> <li>Upon leaving education, young people are employed in local sector roles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sport and physical activity course destination data from education providers</li> <li>Employer data on the number of skilled education leavers recruited</li> <li>Local workforce skills diagnostic data (reduction in “skillset of applicant” as a barrier to recruitment)</li> </ul>
<b>RECRUIT</b> <b>SUPPORT</b> <b>TRAIN</b>	1b	Support employers and education providers to develop meaningful volunteering and/or work placement programmes and highlight these opportunities to learners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased collaboration between education providers and employers</li> <li>Education providers offer flexible work-placement modules that are valuable to both the employer and student</li> <li>Increased number of employers offering meaningful long-term work placement opportunities</li> <li>Students view work placement and volunteering opportunities as a valuable part of their education and upskilling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work placement data from employers and education providers</li> <li>Local workforce skills diagnostic data</li> <li>Qualitative data</li> </ul>
<b>RECRUIT</b> <b>SUPPORT</b>	1c	Raise awareness and increase use of career resources that equip students with the tools and opportunities needed to transition successfully into the workforce.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Education providers use CIMSPA careers guidance resources to highlight sector career opportunities to students</li> <li>Increased collaboration between education providers and employers to raise awareness of local sector job availability</li> <li>Employers report increased job applications for vacant roles</li> <li>More students move into local sport and physical activity roles after education</li> <li>Young people are retained in sector roles and successfully progress their career</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employer data on the number of job applications received from education leavers</li> <li>Sport and physical activity course destination data from education providers</li> </ul>

To achieve recommendation 1, we must support employers in engaging with education providers to share insight and learning opportunities that will prepare the future workforce.

\*See glossary below for more information on specific terms.



## RECOMMENDATIONS, ACTIONS AND MILESTONES

### RECOMMENDATION 2

**Improve career pathways:** Develop clear, meaningful and ambitious career pathways that support recruitment and progression opportunities in our workforce.

Theme(s)	No.	2025–2028 actions	What does success look like?	How will it be measured?*
<b>RECRUIT</b>	<b>2a</b>	Work with local schools to provide early information, advice and guidance on careers within the sport and physical activity sector including progression opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Increased number of meaningful employer engagements with local schools</li> <li>▶ Increased number of young people choosing to study sport and physical activity after year 11</li> <li>▶ More young people are interested in working within sport and physical activity sector</li> <li>▶ Increased retention within local sector roles due to school leavers understanding progression opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Number of employers engaging with local schools</li> <li>▶ Number of schools accessing CIMSPA careers guidance resources</li> <li>▶ Careers and Enterprise Company's West of England Careers Hub future skills questionnaire data</li> <li>▶ Employer data</li> </ul>
<b>RECRUIT</b> <b>SUPPORT</b> <b>RETAIN</b>	<b>2b</b>	Provide joined-up resources that clearly illustrate sector careers for those not in education or employment or those looking for a new career direction, showcasing progression and development opportunities available.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Increased awareness of sector career resources including the CIMSPA Careers Hub</li> <li>▶ Employers reporting increased interest in job postings</li> <li>▶ Increased retention within the local sector due to clearer progression opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Labour market job posting data</li> <li>▶ Local workforce skills diagnostic data</li> <li>▶ Employer data</li> </ul>
<b>RECRUIT</b> <b>SUPPORT</b>	<b>2c</b>	Increase the sharing of job vacancies in the local sector.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Employers advertise jobs using one centralised system</li> <li>▶ Jobseekers access a centralised system to find live local sport and physical activity vacancies</li> <li>▶ Increased number of applications for local job vacancies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Local workforce skills diagnostic data</li> <li>▶ Employer data and reporting</li> </ul>
<b>RECRUIT</b> <b>SUPPORT</b> <b>RETAIN</b>	<b>2d</b>	Showcase the impact and scope of local roles to increase positive associations with a career in sport and physical activity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ The sport and physical activity sector is recognised and supported by local stakeholders</li> <li>▶ More people are interested in working in sport and physical activity roles</li> <li>▶ Sports and physical activity careers are understood and valued</li> <li>▶ Increased awareness of the impact that both the local sector and individual roles have on local economy and health outcomes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Labour market job posting data</li> <li>▶ Local workforce skills diagnostic data</li> <li>▶ Qualitative data</li> </ul>

To achieve recommendation 2, we must develop and share clearer guidance on career pathways to attract more people into the industry and support those within it.

\*See glossary below for more information on specific terms.

## RECOMMENDATION 3

**Create a representative workforce:** Create a workforce that is reflective of our diverse population and positively impacts the health and wellbeing of the communities we serve.

Theme(s)	No.	2025–2028 actions	What does success look like?	How will it be measured?*
<b>RECRUIT</b> <b>SUPPORT</b>	3a	Encourage employers to create a workforce representative of the communities they serve.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Employers have strong links with local community organisations</li> <li>▶ Employers understand the demographics of the areas they operate in and barriers faced by local people</li> <li>▶ Workforce demographics are more similar to those of the local communities that they serve</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ CIMSPA Workforce Insights Report data</li> <li>▶ Employer workforce diversity data and reporting</li> </ul>
<b>RECRUIT</b> <b>SUPPORT</b>	3b	Provide better education and support for employers to understand barriers faced by certain populations and enable inclusive recruitment strategies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Employers better understand and are more confident in implementing inclusive recruitment policies and procedures</li> <li>▶ More employers demonstrate their commitment to inclusive recruitment</li> <li>▶ Increased job applications per vacancy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Employer workforce diversity data and reporting</li> </ul>
<b>RECRUIT</b> <b>SUPPORT</b> <b>TRAIN</b>	3c	Provide accessible training and routes into sector careers for key demographic groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Training providers deliver inclusive learning opportunities and link training with job vacancies via employer collaboration</li> <li>▶ Free and funded training opportunities are shared and targeted towards local communities</li> <li>▶ Increased opportunities for alternative routes into employment such as apprenticeships</li> <li>▶ Increase in job applications for sector vacancies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Employer workforce diversity data and reporting</li> <li>▶ Training and education providers student diversity data and reporting</li> </ul>

To achieve recommendation 3, we must connect with local communities to better understand the demographic of the area and develop inclusive and accessible routes into local job roles.

\*See glossary below for more information on specific terms.

## RECOMMENDATIONS, ACTIONS AND MILESTONES

### RECOMMENDATION 4

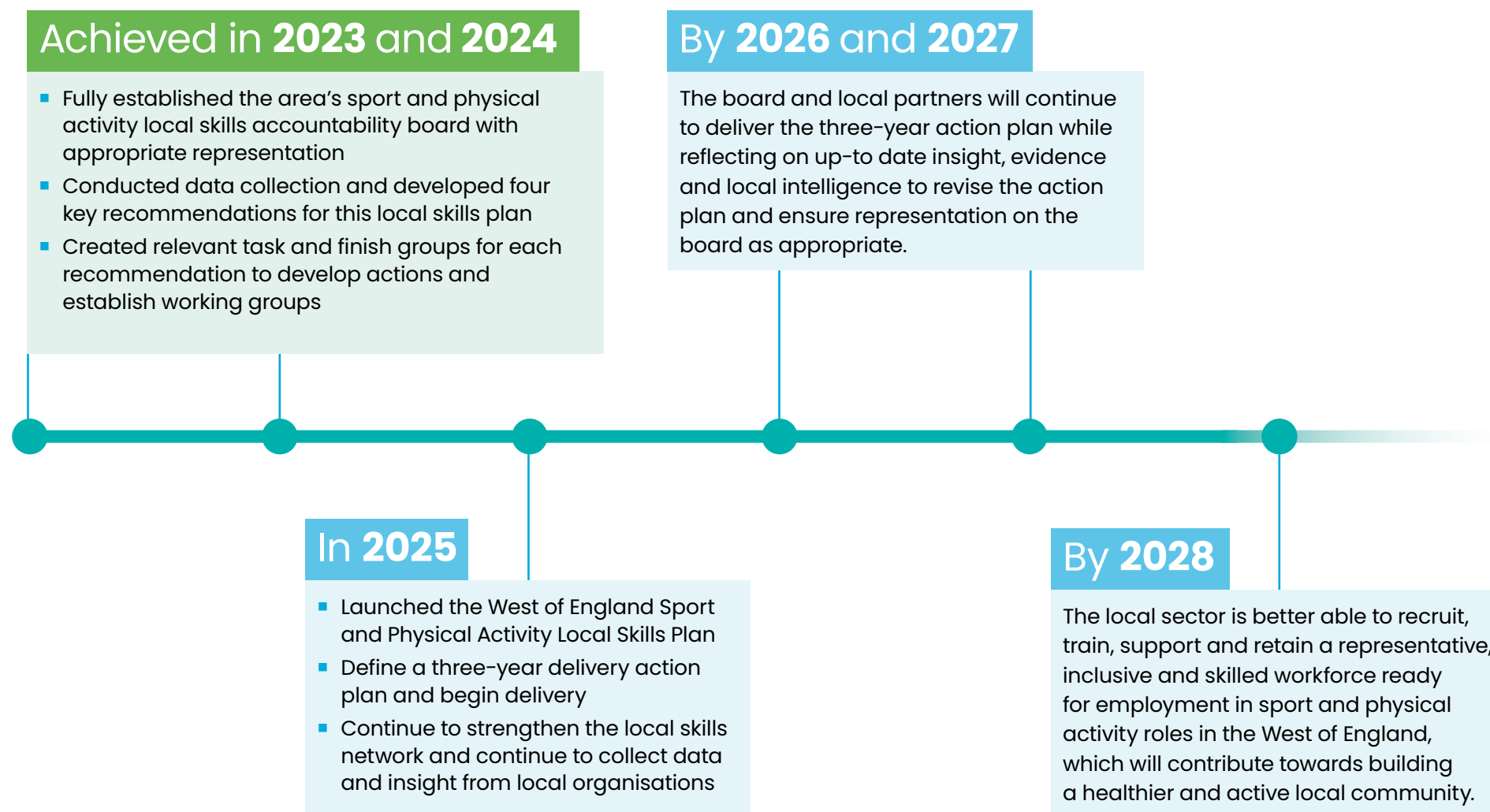
**Upskill and retain:** Share best practices and provide opportunities to upskill the existing sport and physical activity workforce to support long-term sustainability and retention.

Theme(s)	No.	2025–2028 actions	What does success look like?	How will it be measured?*
<b>SUPPORT</b> <b>RETAIN</b>	<b>4a</b>	Understand local workforce retention, identify barriers and support local employers to tackle these.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Retention rates within the local sector for specific job roles are understood</li> <li>▶ Barriers to retention are identified</li> <li>▶ Employers are more supported to improve workforce retention</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Local labour market data</li> <li>▶ Employer retention rate data</li> <li>▶ Local workforce skills diagnostic data (reduced turnover)</li> </ul>
<b>RECRUIT</b> <b>SUPPORT</b> <b>TRAIN</b> <b>RETAIN</b>	<b>4b</b>	Improve connectivity between employers, training providers and key stakeholders in the West of England to offer more upskilling opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ A joined-up skills system that caters to the needs of the local workforce</li> <li>▶ Local training opportunities are aligned to the needs of local employers</li> <li>▶ Training providers and employers work together to create a pathway between training and job vacancies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Local workforce skills diagnostic data (reduction in roles most needed and organisations unable to find relevant/appropriate training locally)</li> </ul>
<b>RECRUIT</b> <b>SUPPORT</b> <b>TRAIN</b> <b>RETAIN</b>	<b>4c</b>	Improve access to funded and local high-quality training provision within the West of England	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Increased funded and quality-assured local training</li> <li>▶ Training provision is accessible and caters to the needs of all individuals from different population groups</li> <li>▶ Members of the workforce are equipped with the skills to progress and be retained in the sector</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Local workforce skills diagnostic data (reduction in employers considering training too expensive)</li> <li>▶ Recruitment and retention data from local employers</li> </ul>

To achieve recommendation 4, we must understand the barriers to retention and provide accessible opportunities to upskill and support individuals to remain within the workforce.

\*See glossary below for more information on specific terms.

## Milestones



## CASE STUDY

**“What good looks like...”**

**South Gloucestershire and Stroud College working with children's activity provider Shine Wraparound Care**

This collaboration effectively connects education to employment through authentic work placements that bring skills learning and education to life.





### Introduction

LSAB member South Gloucestershire and Stroud College (SGS College) are a prominent education institution in Bristol and Gloucestershire. They offer a wide range of vocational and academic courses for learners of all ages, including full-time, part-time and apprenticeship programmes.

Also part of the local skills accountability board, Shine Wraparound Care offer a wide range of provision for children. Their services include delivering sport and physical activity through after-school sessions, PE lessons and sports development squads. They engage with 5,000 children per week through a workforce of over 130.

Over the past three years, SGS College and Shine have collaborated to connect education and employment into an effective local talent pipeline.

### Sports coaching work placement

Second-year students at SGS College complete a year-long placement with Shine delivering multi-sport activities at local after-school clubs every other week – a powerful opportunity to practice soft skills, communication and to develop coaching confidence. It also provides an authentic environment for coaching assessments as part of the learner journey.

Around 60 learners take part each year and this collaboration has created over 2,300 hours of coaching exposure for learners since its inception.

### Sports fitness and conditioning experience

SGS students also deliver strength and conditioning sessions to Shine's football and netball development squads. This initiative provides over 280 hours of practical coaching work experience and engages around 70 learners throughout the year.

### Apprenticeship collaboration

As a further benefit to sport and physical activity training provision in the area, the partners have also created a Level 2 Community Activator Coach apprenticeship, currently in its first year with eight learners, and plans are underway to introduce a Level 4 Sports Coach apprenticeship in the fourth year of partnership.

### Value for education providers and employers

The close and ongoing SGS College and Shine partnership is a best-practice example of how developing relationships between employers and education can support local workforce development and achievement of this local skills plan's recommendations.

For the employer, it streamlines identifying and recruiting their next generation of workforce talent – one learner from the first year of the programme is now a full-time senior coach at Shine and six others are also now employed by the organisation.

For education providers, their learners can experience authentic work placements and bring their skills learning to life. Students can also connect directly with what could be their first employer.

The collaboration between the two organisations exemplifies how local employers and education can work together to support and grow the local sport and physical activity workforce.



# Wider alignment with local skills work

## West of England Employment & Skills Plan (2023)

The West of England Employment & Skills Plan (2023), published by the West of England Combined Authority, outlines strategies to strengthen the region's employment and skills system.

It sets out key employment and skills objectives for the West of England across five key areas:

- Strengthen and simplify the employment and skills system
- Enable all young people to achieve their potential
- Support unemployed and inactive people into work
- Support people to progress in work
- Address employer needs and skills gaps

### WEST OF ENGLAND COMBINED AUTHORITY EMPLOYMENT & SKILLS PLAN 2023

#### Our objectives



Strengthen and simplify  
the skills system



Enable all young people  
to achieve their potential



Support unemployed  
and inactive people  
into work



Support people to  
progress in work



Address employer needs  
and skills shortages

#### Our cross cutting themes...



Improve digital skills  
at all levels



Deliver green skills for  
our low carbon transition



## West of England Employment & Skills Plan (2023) cont.

This local skills plan aligns with the combined authority's plan by setting out how the local sport and physical activity sector can support these regional priorities. There are many ways that the sector can support the employment and skills objectives, including by raising awareness of local roles, providing clear pathways into employment, addressing skills gaps and supporting local employers with upskilling and retention.

The recommendations of this local skills plan speak directly to the West of England Employment & Skills Plan key objectives:

- **Recommendation 1** focuses on developing relationships between employers and local education to help address skill shortages and employer needs.
- **Recommendation 2** focuses on improving awareness and understanding of sector career pathways among young people, supporting progression and working closely with the West of England Careers Hub.
- **Recommendation 3** focuses on supporting local people into roles that are needed in the local sport and physical activity sector over the next 12–24 months, supporting more local people into work.
- **Recommendation 4** focuses on working with the combined authority to access skills funding via skills bootcamps, helping to upskill the existing workforce and supporting local people into employment in our sector.

[WEST OF ENGLAND EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS PLAN](#)





## WIDER ALIGNMENT WITH LOCAL SKILLS WORK

### Local health and physical activity strategies

While this skills plan aims to support the local sport and physical activity workforce across the West of England, a consequence of this is increasing activity levels across the region. In doing so, the local skills plan can help support the existing and developing health and physical activity strategies set out by each unitary authority.

South Gloucestershire Council are currently creating an Active Wellbeing Strategy. The board will continue to engage with the council to support them with local workforce needs for delivering this strategy and ensure collaboration between all local stakeholders.

In Bath and North East Somerset, the Be Well B&NES: Whole Systems Health Improvement Framework is being developed and will be published later this year. Achievable active lifestyles is one of the framework's health improvement aims, and an underpinning physical activity plan is being created to support the implementation of this aim in particular. The LSAB will continue to collaborate with the council and support the local workforce to improve physical activity in Bath and North East Somerset.

The following ongoing strategies for North Somerset and Bristol also set out to increase physical activity and ultimately reduce health inequalities across their respective areas.



## Local health and physical activity strategies

### Get Active: A Physical Activity Strategy for North Somerset 2023–2028

North Somerset Council’s physical activity strategy focuses on the vision that “every person has the opportunity to get moving, be active and enjoy healthier life in their local community”.

The strategy aims to provide North Somerset residents with the opportunities to be physically active now and in the future. Its main priorities are active places, active communities, healthy people and partnership. Its key themes include the built environment, natural environment, connectivity and travel, target groups, accessibility, behavioural influences, activities and promotion, and funding and resources.

The West of England Local Skills Accountability Board aims to work closely with key stakeholders in North Somerset. The board will support partnership and ensure that the local sport and physical activity workforce have access to the support and training they need to deliver the Get Active strategy and help local people from all areas of life to become more active and lead healthier lifestyles.

[GET ACTIVE: A PHYSICAL ACTIVITY STRATEGY FOR NORTH SOMERSET](#)



## Local health and physical activity strategies

### A Sport and Physical Activity Strategy for Bristol 2020–2025

Bristol City Council's sport and physical activity strategy has the vision "to ensure that all Bristol citizens have the encouragement, opportunity and environment they need to lead active, healthy and fulfilling lives".

The strategy aims to deliver four key outcomes: reducing health inequalities, increasing physical activity in socio-economically deprived wards, halting obesity rates in children and adults and positioning Bristol as the most active Core City. To help achieve these, the strategy focuses on four key themes: active people, active partnership, active environments and active places.

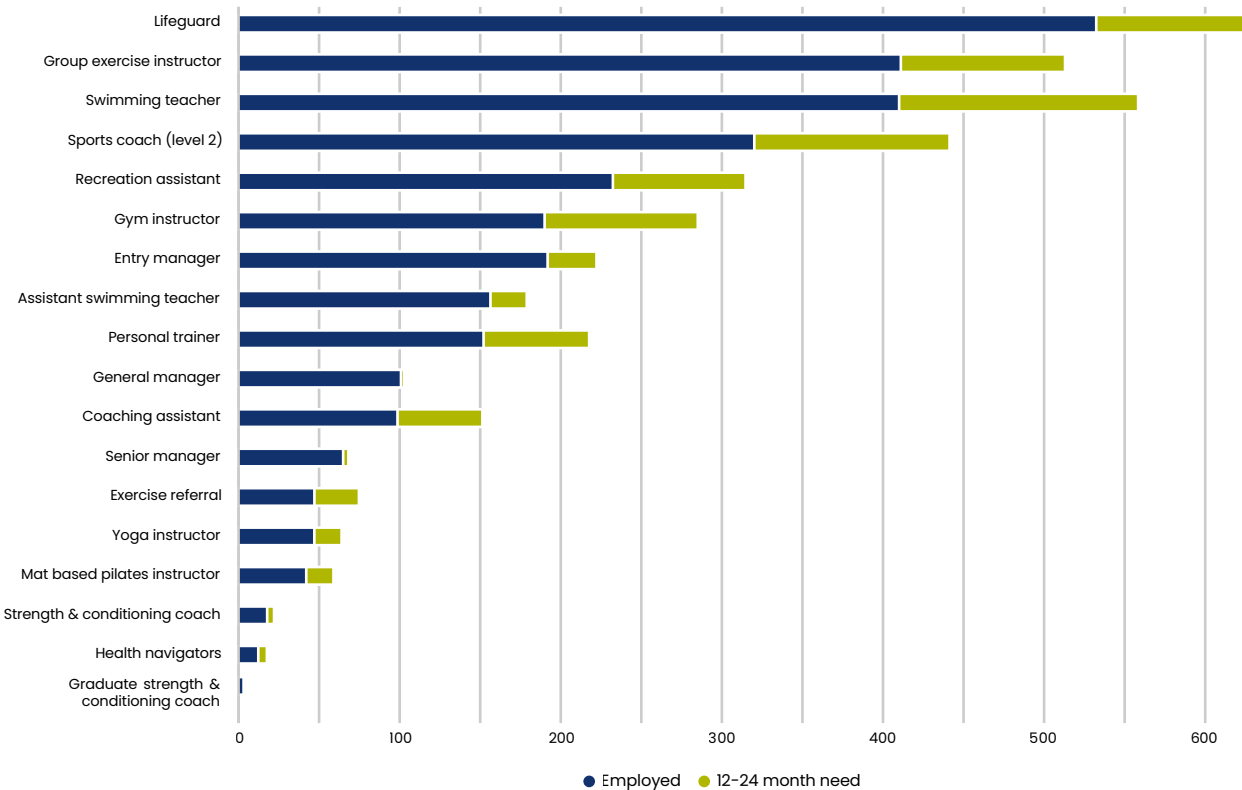
The LSAB will continue working with Bristol City Council and other key stakeholders across the city to support this strategy and any future iterations, providing support to the local workforce to help achieve the physical activity goals of Bristol.

[SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY STRATEGY](#)



# Data and insight that have informed this work

## Current and future job role requirements



According to the data collected, customer-facing roles are both the most needed and most employed in the local sector. This correlates with national data from the CIMSPA Workforce Insights Report 2023, which identifies that 63% of the sport and physical activity workforce are classified as working in frontline roles.

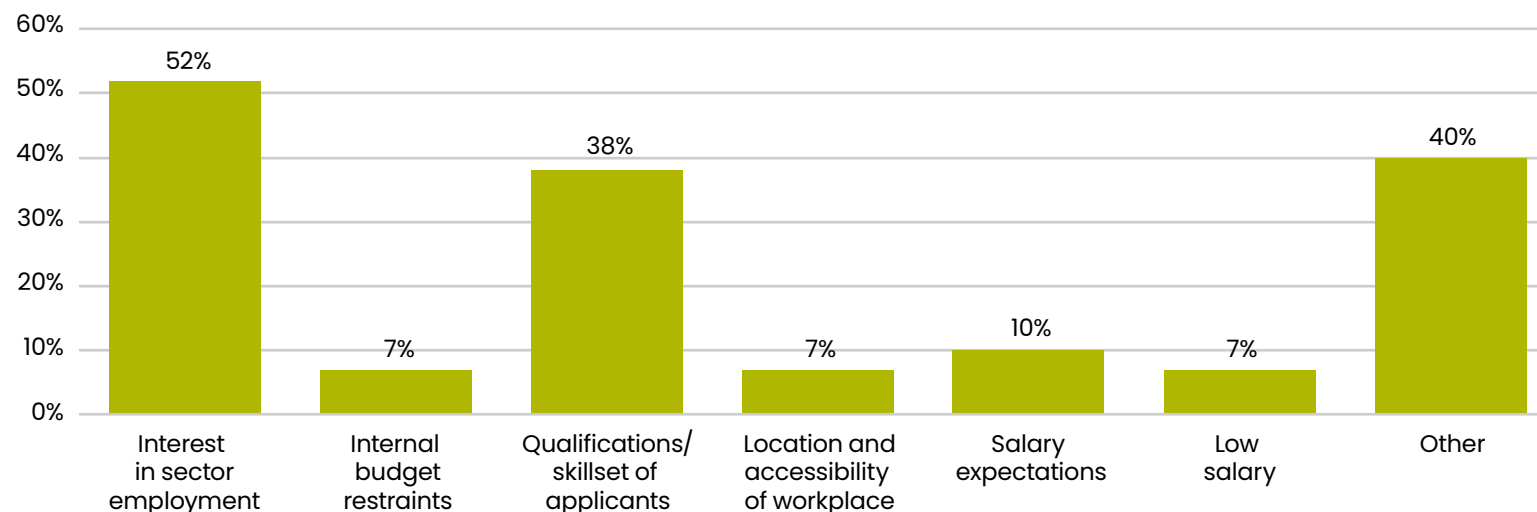
A large number of these roles such as lifeguard and swimming teacher are not commonly full-time roles and will include part-time and zero-hour contracts. Therefore, it is worth noting that where these roles have high need, they are unlikely to be full-time roles.

Furthermore, 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.

Source: ongoing CIMSPA West of England business skills diagnostic process. 59 sport and physical activity operators, May 2023 – January 2025.

## Recruitment challenges

Over 50% of organisations stated interest in the sector as a barrier to staff recruitment. This was largely as a result of having a low number of applicants for a vacant position. Quality/skillset of applicants was another common barrier to recruitment, and under “other”, reasons included candidates’ lack of experience in the sector as well as employers not knowing where to advertise and being unable to offer full-time hours.

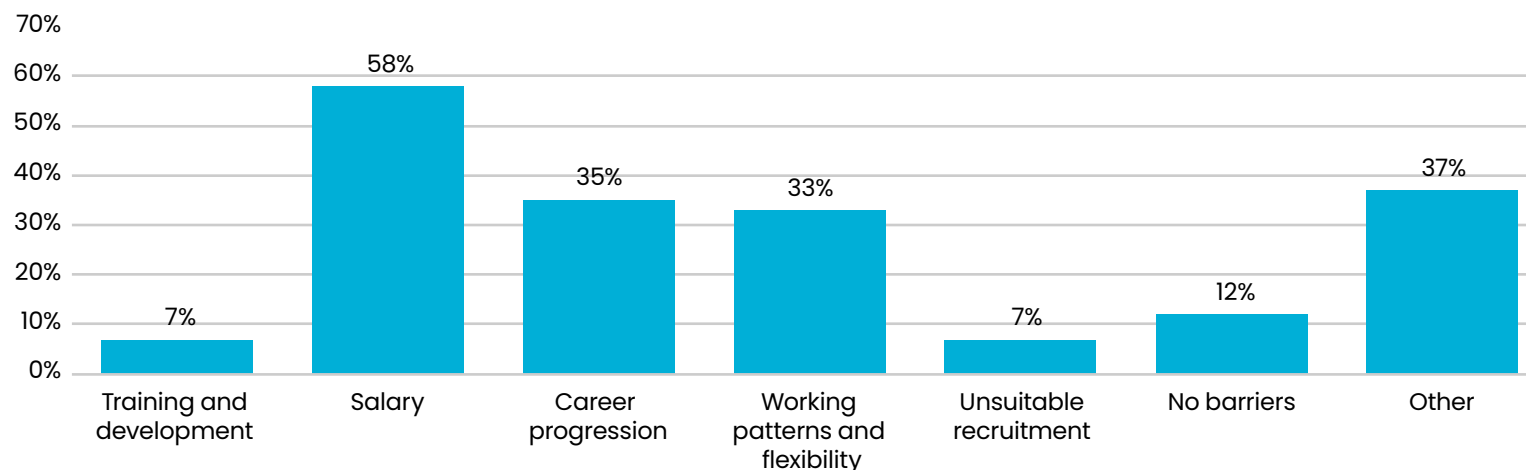


Source: ongoing CIMSPA West of England business skills diagnostic process. 59 sport and physical activity operators, May 2023 – January 2025.

## Barriers to retention

58% of organisations stated salary as a barrier to staff retention. In most cases this was in relation to salary compared to other sectors. The cost of living and housing in the West of England is considered to be high compared to the rest of the UK, particularly in city areas such as Bristol and Bath. This only magnifies salary as a primary barrier in staff retention when comparing sport and physical activity roles to other, higher-paying sectors.

Popular barriers stated in the “other” option include a high student workforce causing natural turnover when students move back home or to university, skills gaps in sales and marketing for self-employed personal trainers, expectations of the role and hours available being dependant on funding.



Source: ongoing CIMSPA West of England business skills diagnostic process. 59 sport and physical activity operators, May 2023 – January 2025.



## Barriers to training staff

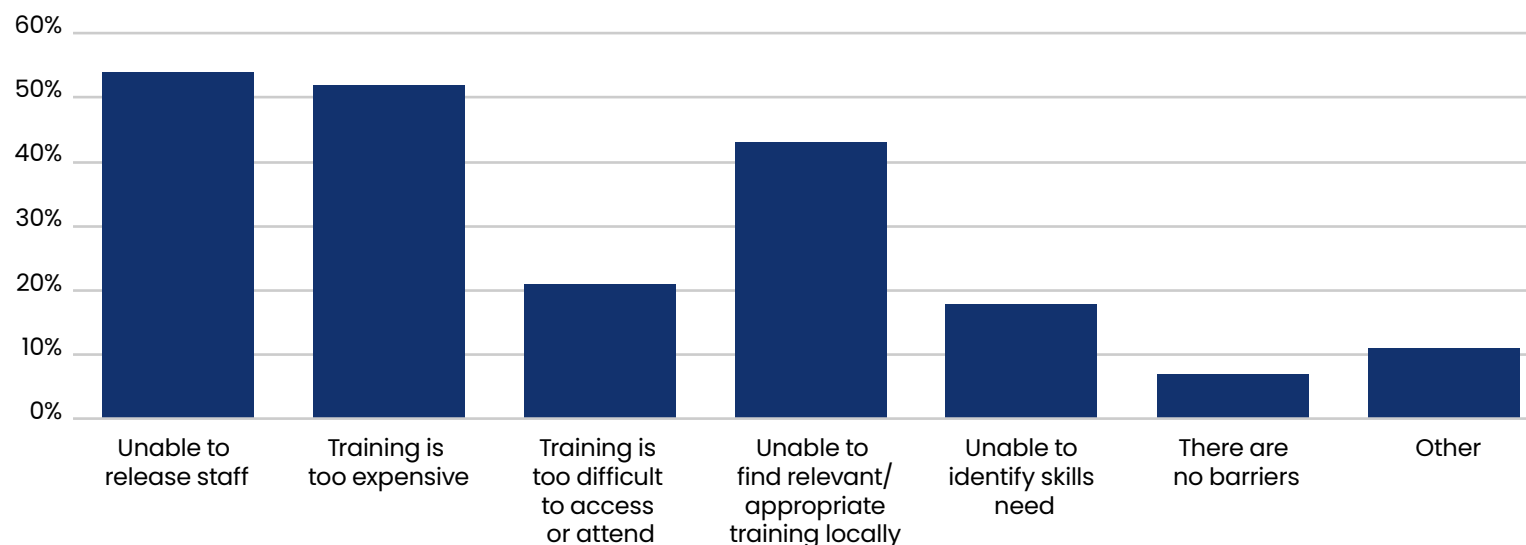
Over 50% of organisations report the key barriers preventing them from offering more training to their employees are:

- being unable to release staff from their duties
- training being too expensive.

Many also stated that they struggle to find relevant or appropriate training locally.

High staff turnover likely creates a constant need to recruit, meaning that cover for staff to undergo training is limited.

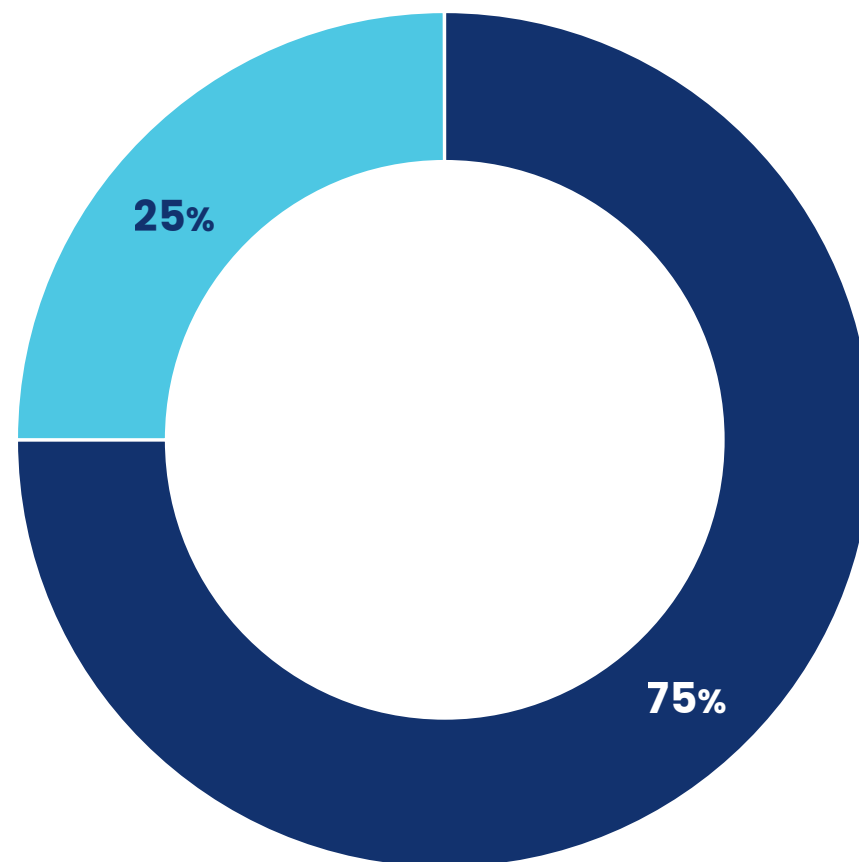
We have also seen a transition to more training online to help make it more accessible; however, this is likely causing a reduction in local training courses. Providing local, funded training could be a solution to these challenges, alongside supporting both recruitment and retention in the local sector to free up more staff time for training and upskilling.



Source: ongoing CIMSPA West of England business skills diagnostic process. 59 sport and physical activity operators, May 2023 – January 2025.

## Work placements

75% of the organisations surveyed stated that they would be willing to offer work placements or industry experience opportunities. While there appears to be a high appetite from employers to host work experience programmes, there is a need to ensure that experiences are meaningful and well thought-out. This will ensure these opportunities are useful to all involved and support people to gain better understand working in sport and physical activity and to gain skills needed to work within the sector.



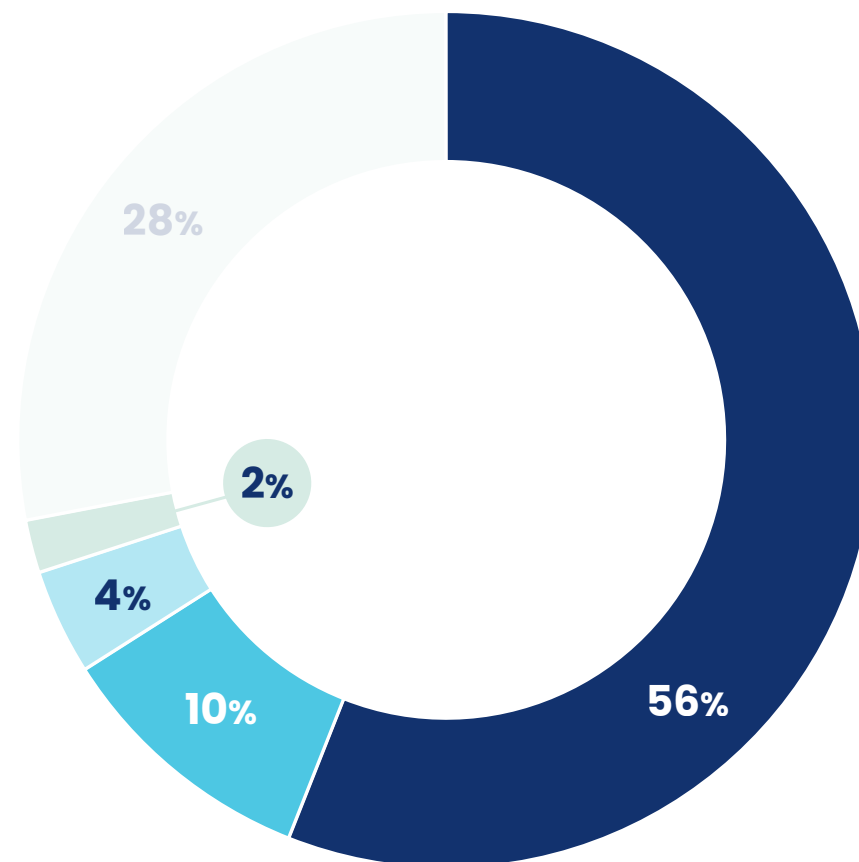
Source: ongoing CIMSPA West of England business skills diagnostic process. 59 sport and physical activity operators, May 2023 – January 2025.

## Local sector overview

### Business size

The chart shown here illustrates the composition of organisations in the region. It is clear from the data captured that a large proportion of the local sector is made up of micro-enterprises. Given this, it's essential that support provided via this local skills plan is tailored to both small and large organisations and made to be as accessible as possible.

- 56% Micro-enterprises (1-9 employees)
- 10% Small enterprises (10-49 employees)
- 4% Medium enterprises (50-249 employees)
- 2% Large enterprises (250+ employees)
- 28% Businesses unaccounted for

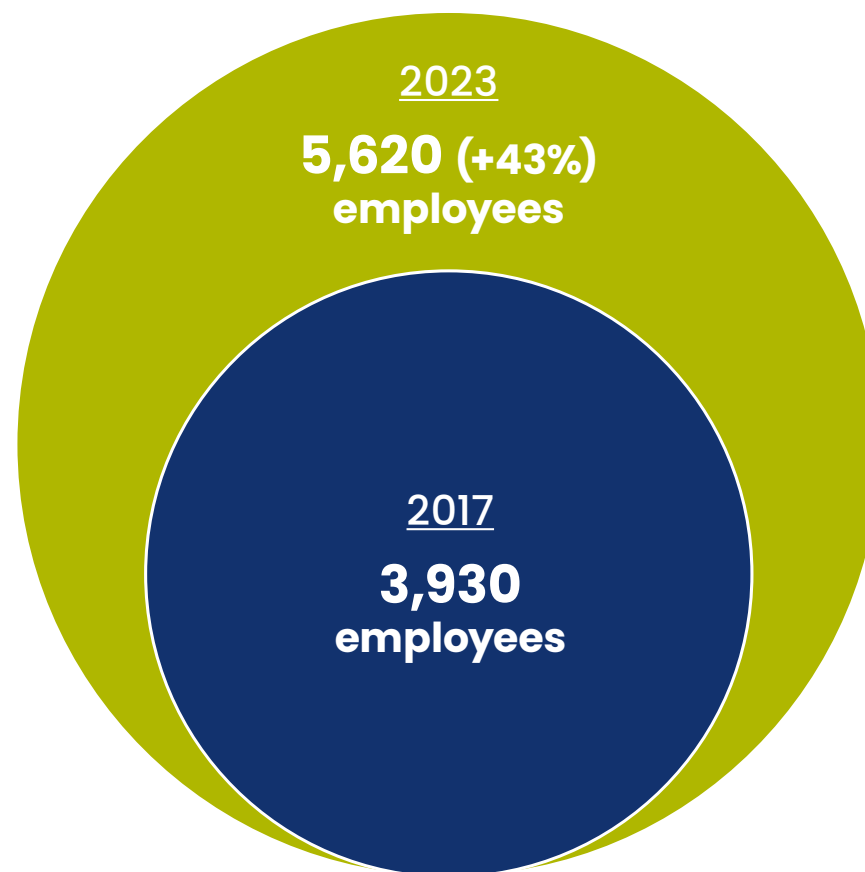


Source: West of England 2024 Regional Datapack, CIMSPA, 2024.

## Employee growth

There has been a growth in the size of the workforce employed by the West of England's sport and physical activity sector of 1,690 since 2017, representing a total increase of 43% over the six-year period. This shows growth across the sector within the region and suggests that either new sport and physical activity businesses have formed or that existing ones have expanded.

The data below suggests that the sector will continue to grow steadily over the coming years, highlighting a continued need for new members of the workforce. As the sector grows, it is imperative we have skilled professionals that can move into the sector and be retained to support businesses with continued recruitment challenges.



Source: West of England 2024 Regional Datapack, CIMSPA, 2024.

## Sport and physical activity sector demographics

The national picture outlined below will allow the West of England Local Skills Accountability Board to benchmark the data we collate against these national averages to improve diversity within our workforce.

National workforce data from the CIMSPA Workforce Insights Report (2023) highlights how sport and physical activity core occupations tend to be less diverse than the UK-wide workforce.

- **Age:** On average, workers in sport and physical activity occupations are young, with 30% of jobs held by those between 16–24 years of age. This is three times the average of all occupations.
- **Gender:** The share of male workers in sector occupations overall is 56%, down from 62% in the previous Workforce Insights Report (2020). In contrast, women are more likely to work part time (38%) than men (14%) in the overall economy\*.
- **Disability:** Fewer workers within the sport and physical activity workforce report having a disability (13%), compared to the average of all occupations (16%).
- **Socio-economic group:** Compared to the wider workforce, the sport and physical activity workforce has a higher proportion of workers in lower socio-economic groups, driven by higher shares of students and semi-routine occupations (28% vs 23% workforce-wide). Sector occupations also have a higher proportion of small employers and own-account workers (23% vs 9% workforce-wide) consistent with the importance of freelancers to the sector.
- **Ethnicity:** On average, the sport and physical activity workforce is less diverse than the UK as a whole, with more than 87% of sector professionals being of White British ethnicity compared to 79% elsewhere.

WOMEN AND THE UK ECONOMY RESEARCH [↗](#)



## Local workforce diversity data

### Comparing the national picture to the West of England

Source: CIMSPA local workforce skills diagnostics data, May 2024 – Jan 2025

#### Sport and physical activity organisations

	National	West of England
Actively monitor the diversity of workforce	72%	61%
Have taken actions to improve diversity	44%	32%

#### Question as asked in the survey:

“How would you describe the makeup of your workforce?”

	National	West of England
Largely have the “same” people in their workforce	25%	22%
Some diversity	47%	39%
Diverse across all/most groups	16%	30%
Diverse and representative	12%	9%

While caution should be used when comparing these statistics, as the national dataset is significantly larger than the West of England dataset, it appears the majority of organisations actively monitor and have awareness of workforce diversity. However, with most organisations reporting a lack of or some diversity in their workforce, there is work needed to improve this. Given less than half of organisations have taken actions to improve diversity, it suggests support might be needed to help organisations actively tackle this.

## DATA AND INSIGHT THAT HAVE INFORMED THIS WORK

### Data sources

#### Additional data and information that have informed this plan

Active Lives Survey Data, Sport England, 2024

[LINK](#) 

Physical Activity and Health Profiles, Bristol City Council, 2024

[LINK](#) 

The state of the West of England, West of England Combined Mayoral Authority, 2024

[LINK](#) 

Nomis official census and labour market statistics, Office for National Statistics, 2024

[LINK](#) 

Where is the NHS going?, Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire Integrated Care Board, 2024

[LINK](#) 

Workforce Insights Report, CIMSPA, 2023

[LINK](#) 

### Appendix

CIMSPA West of England Regional Datapack 2025

[LINK](#) 

# 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.

**DATA LENS** [↗](#)

## 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.



# Glossary

## Local workforce skills diagnostic data

CIMSPA has a team of local skills hub managers working across England, Scotland and Wales.

These skills hub 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 – West of England



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