



# Warwickshire Careers Strategy

2019/20 - 2024/25





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# Introduction



**Welcome to the Warwickshire Careers Strategy which it is my pleasure to introduce.**

In Warwickshire, we have a strong economy and high level of employment but that is not something that has happened by accident. Nor is it something that will be sustainable unless we put in the work and know what we are working towards.

At Warwickshire County Council, we know the importance of careers advice and employability skills. For several years we have invested in the Skills for Employment programme to support schools, colleges and employers to work together to enable students to improve their employability skills and career prospects.

Following the publication of the National Careers Strategy in 2017, we identified the opportunity to develop a more localised and bespoke careers Strategy for Warwickshire, focusing on the key opportunities that exist specifically within the county and one which builds on the strong foundations that we have laid with our partners in the education, training and business fields over the past few years.

This is an all-age strategy adapted for all of Warwickshire's residents. Naturally, it will focus on supporting our young people but it also recognises that we have an adult population who may want to re-enter the workplace, change careers or progress at work during their working life.

As you read this strategy, bear in mind that the world of work is changing incredibly rapidly as technology progresses at an exponential rate. It is estimated that 65% of children entering education now will enter into jobs that currently do not exist.

So given this, our careers strategy needs to be flexible, adaptable and forward-looking as it promotes the key transferable skills and competencies that are being increasingly recognised as the foundation for future employment.

It must also be inclusive and reflect the council's commitment to ensuring that all of our residents are supported in fulfilling their potential.

So, you will see, we place a particular focus on supporting our more vulnerable residents such as those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) to move into employment. And we also give special consideration to residents with mental health needs as we promote and introduce forms of support and resource.

This careers strategy is a joint effort, developed with advice from a range of partners and stakeholders from business and education, and with feedback from residents who responded to the public consultation. I would like to thank them for their input because that wider picture that they have helped to provide has given us the information we needed to create a strategy to fit Warwickshire's needs for the future.

**Cllr Colin Hayfield**

Portfolio Holder, Education and Learning



# Background

Effective careers and employability advice and support are critical components of a successful local labour market. They can help to:

- enable the development of the skills within the local population demanded by local businesses;
- enable individuals to identify and pursue Careers that stimulate their interest and match their particular talents;
- facilitate social mobility by raising aspirations and showcasing career pathways; and
- support individuals who want (or need to) change occupations as the economy grows and changes.

Careers and employability advice and support also provide clear social and economic benefits.

Numerous studies have shown that high quality careers support, along with effective interactions between young people and employers can: improve educational attainment; increase the likelihood of successful employment outcomes (and reduce negative destinations for people leaving education); and increase lifetime earnings. This is particularly important for our most vulnerable learners – such as those with special educational needs and disabilities, looked after children and those with wider social, emotional and mental health needs – where the evidence shows that employment rates within these groups after education is much lower than the average.

Furthermore, businesses routinely talk of skills shortages, the difficulties they face in finding and employing people with the right skills sets, and the negative impact that this has on the growth of their business. A recent business survey by the Council and the Coventry & Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce identified that nearly two-thirds of companies in the area were facing some form of skills shortage within their workforce. The Council is committed to ensuring Warwickshire communities and residents are supported to be safe, healthy and independent (particularly our most vulnerable residents). It is also committed to ensuring the Warwickshire economy is vibrant and supported by the right jobs, training, skills and infrastructure. This Warwickshire Careers Strategy therefore sets out our ambitions to work with our partners to develop and deliver a coherent, effective and locally relevant careers and employability advice and support.





# The Current Position

## a) The Warwickshire Economy:

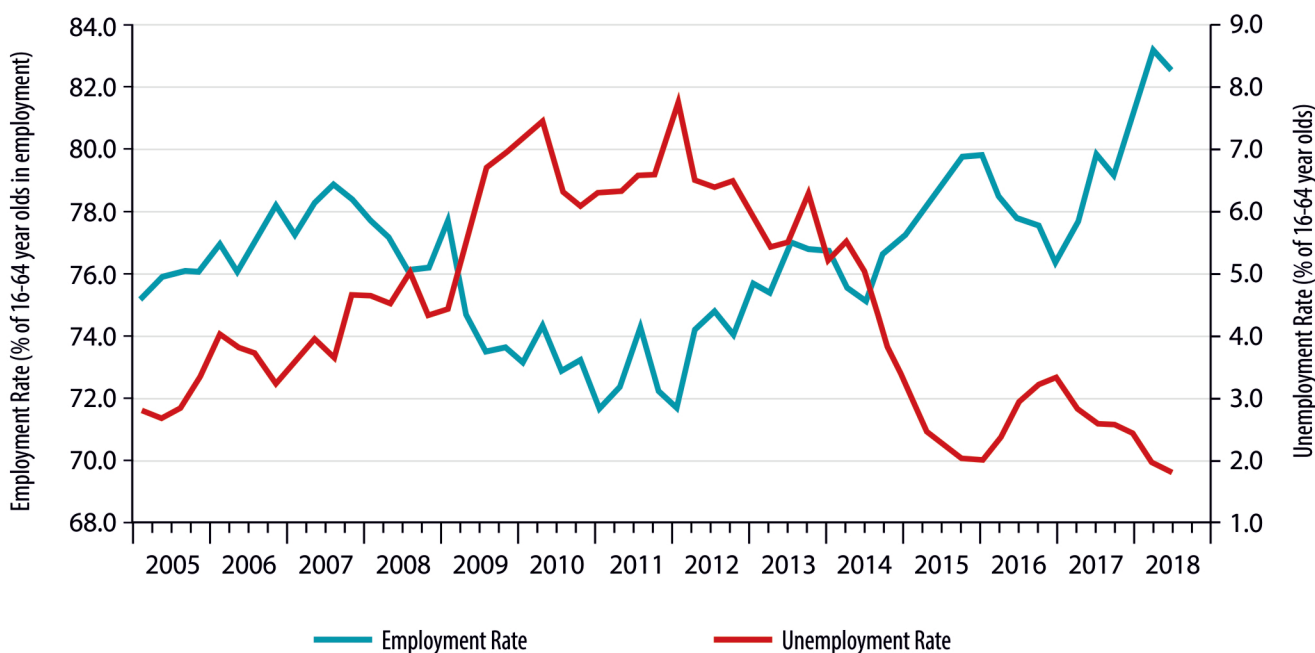
Warwickshire has a strong and growing economy. Indeed, since the recession of 2008/9, the County has experienced some of the strongest economic growth (as measured by Gross Value Added) of all local authority areas in England, including the fastest growth in productivity of all areas.

This growth in the economy has led to a very strong labour market, with our employment rate (the proportion of working age residents in employment) rising strongly to the highest levels seen this century, and unemployment to its lowest levels – see Figure 1 below.

The number of vacancies posted online for employment opportunities within the county have also been growing, and the ratio of vacancies to working age population is significantly above - and almost double - the national and regional averages (Figure 2).

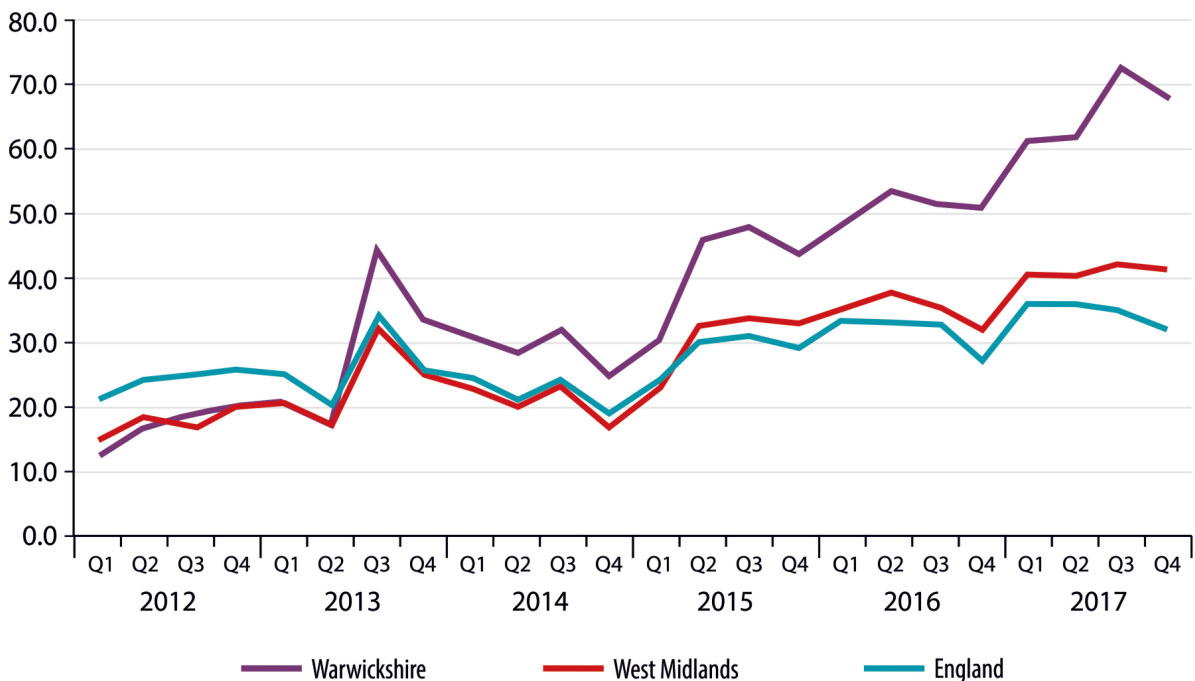
A tight labour market with limited excess capacity, coupled with strong demand for labour, inevitably leads to problems with recruitment and skills shortages. Recent surveys of local businesses have found that 70% of companies were facing recruitment difficulties due to not being able to find people with the right skills that they required, and that 62% of businesses believed that their firm was suffering from a skills shortage.

Table 1: Employment & Unemployment Rates in Warwickshire (2004-2018)



Source: Annual Population Survey

Table 2: Job postings per 1,000 population



Source: Labour Insight & ONS

Improving the flow of new entrants into the labour market with the skills and behaviours being demanded by our local businesses is therefore critical to helping address these difficulties being faced in the local economy. We also need to encourage businesses to consider recruitment from a wider pool of labour, including those with health and learning disabilities. Finally, helping employees and adults to explore alternative careers and undertake training to take up employment opportunities in demand will also help address this imbalance between supply of labour and demand from businesses.

## b) Technology & future economic growth

Local Industrial Strategies are being developed at both the regional/WMCA level, and also at the Coventry & Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership area. A key focus of these is around longer-term, future growth opportunities and the new technologies and industries of the future in which the UK could become a world leader. Coventry & Warwickshire are extremely well placed with respect to the development of low carbon vehicles; connected and autonomous vehicles and future transportation systems; digital technology (including gaming, augmented reality and virtual reality); and smart & connected factories/automation.

These are all industries that have huge economic opportunities, but which will also be highly disruptive, and have a significant impact on the future labour market. Moreover, the technologies are developing at an exponential rate, making it increasingly unclear what future occupations and careers might look like. Indeed, a study by the World Bank estimated that two-thirds of children entering primary education today will go into jobs that do not yet exist.

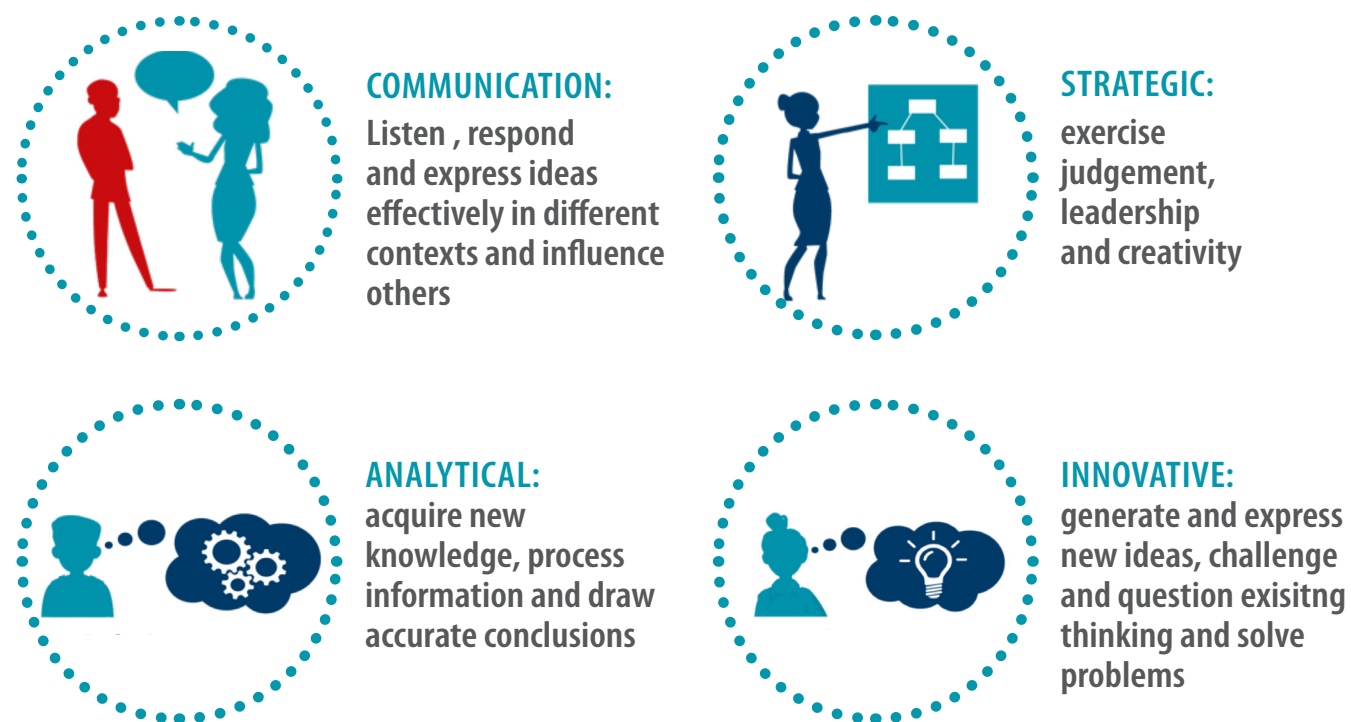


Automation of activities and occupations is also starting to take effect, with artificial intelligence and robotics able to effectively replicate many tasks that humans currently do. This technology is also developing rapidly, and a number of studies have been undertaken recently examining the type and scale of occupations that could potentially be automated. We have replicated these studies at the Warwickshire level, and estimate that around 40% of all our current occupations are at a high risk of being automated by 2030. This is greater than the national average, largely due to the sectoral composition of our economy which means we have higher than average employment in sectors at high risk – such as distribution, logistics, tourism, and skilled manual trades.

Automation presents both opportunities in terms of economic benefits from developing and exploiting the technologies (which Warwickshire is well placed to do and will feature in our Local Industrial Strategy), but also risks in terms of displacing a wide range of existing occupations – which are often those at the lower skilled level. Retraining of existing employees in these occupations to be able to move into new careers will therefore be vital, along with helping to “future-proof” education and skills training now so that young people are more able to adapt to a rapidly changing labour market.

Research has identified four key skills sets that will be critical in terms of future employment. These skills sets focus on functions and activities that are difficult to automate, and also provide individuals with a flexible skill base that will enable them to effectively move through different careers. The skills sets identified are set out below.

## Key Future Skills



Underpinning these four core skills sets is the importance of digital skills, and a need to embed a digital culture within the workplace. According to Microsoft, in the next two decades, 90% of jobs will require some form of digital skills, and without further action to significantly increase understanding of programming (understanding the “how”, rather simply the “what” through increased utilisation), the skills gap is likely to continue to increase significantly.

## c) Careers and Education policy

The Government published a new National Careers Strategy in December 2017. This strategy sits alongside the new Industrial Strategy, and seeks to support the Government’s ambition to improve social mobility by ensuring that everyone has access to effective careers support. Through this strategy, the Government aims for:

- all young people to understand the full range of opportunities available to them, to learn from employers about work and the skills that are valued in the workplace and to have first-hand experience of the workplace;
- all young people in secondary school and college to get an excellent programme of advice and guidance that is delivered by individuals with the right skills and experience;
- everyone to get support tailored to their circumstances. All adults should be able to access free face-to-face advice, with more bespoke support for those who most need it
- everyone to get the information they need to understand the job and career opportunities available, and how their knowledge and skills can help them in considering suitable Careers.

The Government are also progressing plans to introduce a new education route through the development of “T Levels”. T Levels will follow GCSEs, will be equivalent to 3 A Levels, and will be 2-year courses focussing on technical education and training. The courses are being developed in collaboration with employers and businesses so that the content meets the needs of industry and prepares students for work. T Levels are expected to be introduced from 2020, although it will take a number of years until the full range of courses are available.

The development of this Warwickshire Careers Strategy will therefore help support the local implementation of the national strategy and enhance the delivery of Warwickshire relevant careers information and support to help young people navigate the increasing choices that they will be able to make as part of their journey through the education system. The Warwickshire Careers Strategy is also a fundamental component of the recently developed Warwickshire Education Strategy for 2018-2023, which includes a specific priority around employment outcomes (WE4: Our challenge is to champion employability by promoting the best opportunities for all learners).

In addition, the West Midlands Combined Authority is currently considering developing a new regional all-age Careers service, and a regional Careers Strategy. The development of a Warwickshire Careers Strategy will enable us to effectively influence, shape, inform and ultimately maximise the benefit from this regional approach.





## Vision & Priorities:

### **Our vision for this strategy is that:**

“We want to ensure that all residents of Warwickshire are able to access the education and skills they need to enable them to secure fulfilling, appropriate, sustainable and well-paid employment throughout their lives, which supports the growth and prosperity of Warwickshire’s economy.”

By following this vision, and successfully implementing this strategy for residents of all ages, we hope to achieve the following key success measures:

- All young people within our schools, colleges and universities have access to high quality, relevant, inspiring and locally focussed careers information, guidance and support and are able to make informed choices
- All our young people successfully transition from education and learning into sustainable employment
- Our most vulnerable learners are particularly supported with this transition, and achieve positive destinations appropriate to their needs
- Our businesses are able to access the skilled labour that they need to grow and compete
- Our residents are able to develop and acquire new skills throughout their lives to meet the rapidly changing labour market. This applies to those in work who wish to progress or switch roles, those seeking work and those who are or wish to be self-employed.

We aim to achieve this by focussing on the following five key priorities:

- I. Raising the awareness of the range of career and employment opportunities locally, inspiring residents of all ages to develop their education and skills as far as possible
- II. Building the capacity of our education providers to deliver effective and sustainable Careers support and advice
- III. Providing targeted support and help to our most vulnerable learners
- IV. Improving alignment of demand and supply of skills, now and in the future
- V. Encouraging and enabling businesses to recruit from a richer and wider talent pool

The following provides an overview to each of these five key areas, and summarises our key ambitions for activity. A more detailed Implementation Plan will sit alongside this strategy, outlining the shorter-term activities to drive this strategy forward.



## Raising the awareness of the range of career and employment opportunities locally, inspiring residents of all ages to develop their education and skills as far as possible

Current existing careers information is relatively poorly marketed and promoted so that there is limited awareness and understanding of what is available, it can seem somewhat remote and detached from the real world that people find themselves in, and is often fairly generic and does not highlight the particular local economic opportunities and circumstances of Warwickshire.

Warwickshire's economy is particularly dynamic and vibrant, with a huge range of activity in many areas of cutting edge technology, new business areas and disruptive industries. We want to excite our population – young and old, children and parents - about the range of opportunities and career pathways that exist in the county. We want to people to find the occupations that will engage and interest them, enabling more fulfilling and productive careers. Finally, we want to ensure that we capture and retain the local talent we have in the local area.

key focus of this priority will, therefore, be around developing a new, localised careers information service which is effectively marketed and promoted. This will comprise a mix of web-based activity and promotion in public places such as doctors' surgeries.

It will be important that this new information support does not seek to duplicate or replace existing provision like that available from the National Careers Service.) and adds value by acting as local hub that helps guide and signpost individuals to the most appropriate support, aided and supplemented with local economic and labour market information.

We will explore ways of increasing the amount of work tasters/work experience available for young people and work with our business partners to ensure employers are aware of how they can provide more part-time jobs for young people still in education.

Our consultation on the draft strategy indicated there is considerable scope for us to promote existing forms of support more widely and effectively so residents become more aware. There are opportunities to utilise a wider range of the Council's communication channels and services in order to reach and support residents e.g. libraries and Adult & Community Learning.

### Building the capacity of our education providers to deliver effective and sustainable Careers support and advice

The National Career Strategy has placed greater requirements on education providers to provide careers support and advice, and the quality of provision will become an increasingly important part of inspections by OFSTED on schools and colleges. However, we know that our education providers face significant financial challenges and competing pressures for time and resources. We therefore want to work with our providers to develop an effective

and appropriate support function that helps add value to their planned activity, and enables and facilitates the development of effective and sustainable careers support and advice. The County Council funded Skills for Employment programme will provide a strong focus for this activity, working in partnership with the Careers and Enterprise Company and other key stakeholders. Increasing opportunities for business/education collaboration will be a key area of activity in order to enable schools and colleges to provide the level of employer encounters required to meet requirements of the National Careers Strategy.

## Providing targeted support and help to our most vulnerable learners

Our most vulnerable learners, on average, have poorer positive outcomes from education than their wider cohort. For example, the proportion of 16 & 17 year old Children Looked After who were Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) in 2017/18 was just under 20% in Warwickshire in 2017/18, compared to the average for all 16 & 17 years of just 3.8%. According to the British Association of Supported Employment, only 5.7% of people with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) go into paid employment, despite 78% of people with SEND wanting to be in such employment. Given the average cost of putting a young person through a Special School education (upwards of £365,000), and the cost to society through lost income and increased social support, this is a significant loss of potential talent that could be utilised by businesses in an area that is facing a tight labour market and recruitment difficulties. In 2019 the Council established a new Supportive Employers' Forum to encourage and enable businesses to work with SEND learners. We aim to engage a larger number and wider range of businesses in this forum in order to provide more employment opportunities.

We will ensure all Special Schools are fully aware of the grants and support available from our Skills for Employment programme so they can benefit from this assistance.

The needs of residents with mental health issues will be given particular consideration when new forms of Careers support and promotion of support and resources are introduced.

The new, localised careers information service will highlight free and paid-for local and national support for older residents such as the over 50's. We will seek to access any new programmes funded by European Social Funding (its successor or new initiatives) for this age-group.

There are huge opportunities to work pro-actively with our education providers, vulnerable learners and businesses to better identify and promote employment and career opportunities, and to put in place support packages that help all three parties to enable significant improvement in the proportion of vulnerable learners to enter into sustainable employment. This priority will focus on developing a co-ordinated approach to this ambition.

## Improving alignment of demand and supply of skills, now and in the future

Ensuring that our local education and training providers effectively provide the skills being demanded by our business base is critical to continued growth of our economy, and the





employment prospects of our residents. However, within a dynamic labour market and with rapidly changing technologies, it can be hard for businesses to clearly articulate future skill requirements, and for education & training providers to adapt and change as demands change. Improving the connection between businesses and education - particularly in terms of communication flows and translating between the two very different cultures and language of education/training and business.

There is also a need to take a future-scanning role, looking at forecast and anticipated change in the economy and the different occupations and skill requirements that may be required. We also need to consider how changing technology, and the increase of automation, artificial intelligence and machine learning could transform occupations and require different skills sets, or even entirely new jobs that currently do not exist.

This priority will therefore focus on improving both the conversations and connectivity between education and business, and also look to future changes in the labour market and how we can seek to adapt and change our education and training provision in line with this in a strategic, considered and evidence based manner. Foreexample, we will increase opportunities for education providers and young people to access high quality Digital skills provision like the Digital Skills House programme the Council has funded for 3 years.

We will also provide more regular information on the local economy and employment market covering a comprehensive range of sectors and occupations to help businesses plan recruitment and to enable Careers staff, young people and parents to see where future jobs will be.

## **Encouraging and enabling businesses to recruit from a richer and wider talent pool, and to undertake training and development of their employees**

With so many businesses in the local area regularly reporting skills shortages and recruitment difficulties, we need to work with employers to consider how they can widen their search pool of potential candidates.

Within Coventry & Warwickshire, there are over 130,000 people of working age but who are economically inactive for a variety of reasons (health conditions, disabilities, students, lifestyle choice, etc.). Some 25,000 of these have actively stated that would like to work, and it is likely that many others would be interested in employment if suitable arrangements and flexibilities could be put in place to meet their particular needs.

Many businesses have already benefitted from employing from this wider workforce and we need to better promote the opportunities that are available, and the help and support that can be secured to enable any required adjustments needed to job roles and the physical workplace.

This priority will therefore focus on raising awareness of the opportunities for business, and helping create new and enhanced careers and employment options for a wider range of Warwickshire residents.





# Monitoring Impact And Success



Measuring the impact of effective careers information and advice is difficult, as many academic studies have concluded. This is because it is often hard to clearly associate cause and effect over a sustained period of time, when many other factors and influences could be involved. It is also difficult to clearly articulate what a success might look like at the strategic level, given that these are often personal to the individual and hard to aggregate. Finally, there is difficult to identify a suitable “counter-factual” or control group with which compare outcomes against. Not only would we seek to ensure as many people as possible accessed effective careers and employment support and advice (and therefore consciously seeking to minimise a control group), it is very difficult and resource intensive to track people over the period of time that would be needed to really monitor and review impacts.

Based on these difficulties, we therefore propose to use a mixture of output data that is related to undertaking particular activities (i.e. number of students having an employer engagement experience, number of people accessing careers support, etc.), and a number of high level impact indicators (such as reduction in young people who are NEET, or the proportion of businesses reporting skills shortages). The link between these is explained through the logic chain, shown in Figure 2 below. Given the difficulties identified above, we are not stating that the outputs and the impacts are conclusively linked (even accounting for the time lag that would clearly exist between the two). Instead, we are suggesting that if we undertake the activities proposed both in this strategy and the accompanying Implementation Plan then, all other things being equal, we should see an improvement in the strategic impact indicators detailed in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Logic Chain Diagram







# Governance and Delivery

## Governance

This Warwickshire Careers Strategy will be overseen by the new Warwickshire Employability & Skills Group, which is contained within the wider governance model for the Warwickshire Education Strategy.

The Warwickshire Employability & Skills Group seeks to bring together a range of partners and stakeholders from education providers, public sector and key intermediary bodies. The voice of businesses will be clearly articulated to the Board by regular engagement and discussion with business groups, networks and sector bodies across the county.

## Delivery

An annual Implementation Plan will be developed, setting out the identified key activities under each of the five priorities. A copy of the proposed Implementation Plan for 2019/20 is contained within Appendix A.





