

The Marches Local Skills Report



A Final Report by Hatch
March 2021

Marches Skills Advisory Panel

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Appendix A - Core Indicators

Local Landscape

Summary – Local Landscape

- A.1 The main challenges and opportunities arising as a result of the context of the local area, and reflected in the Core Indicators data, are the following:
- Challenges:
 - Deprivation is especially high in education, skills and training
 - Ageing population, faster rate than England
 - Lower wages than England
 - Productivity gap with England
 - Opportunities:
 - Employment specialised in agriculture and manufacturing, quite COVID-19 resilient sectors
 - Higher business birth rate than England
 - Consistently higher employment rate than England with lower claimant count rate
- A.2 The Marches [Local Industrial Strategy](#) sets out the twin priorities of clean (net-zero) growth as well as productivity growth. These priorities are evidently well founded when considering the following evidence, with both GVA per hour worked and wages below that of England, and the Marches' fairly carbon intensive sector base in manufacturing and agriculture.
- A.3 The Core Indicators generally accord with local intelligence concerning the local economic landscape. The slightly lower proportion of Marches residents with NVQ Level 4+ qualifications is reflected both in Skills Demand indicators as well as the [SEP Evidence Base](#) (2018) which highlights the need within the area for more technical training of a higher level.
- A.4 One aspect of the local landscape that is evident although not totally explicit in the Core Indicators is that employment opportunities are spread unevenly within the LEP. This has been reflected both in consultation, and through a local-authority view of the Core Indicators such as employment rates which vary considerably within the LEP (Annex B – Local Authority Level Data).
- A.5 COVID-19 has had a similarly high-level impact on the Marches' economy to that of England, with a comparable increase in the number of people claiming work-related benefits since the onset of the pandemic (approximately +3 percentage points) and a 32% take-up rate of the furlough scheme, out of all available workers.
- A.6 Examples of how national and local policies and interventions have impacted the Marches skills landscape are provided in the Local Skills Report Chapters 5 and 6. The influence and strategic oversight of the LEP and SAP has clearly supported improved partnership working between employers and skills providers and funding has enabled interventions which respond to priority skills challenges.

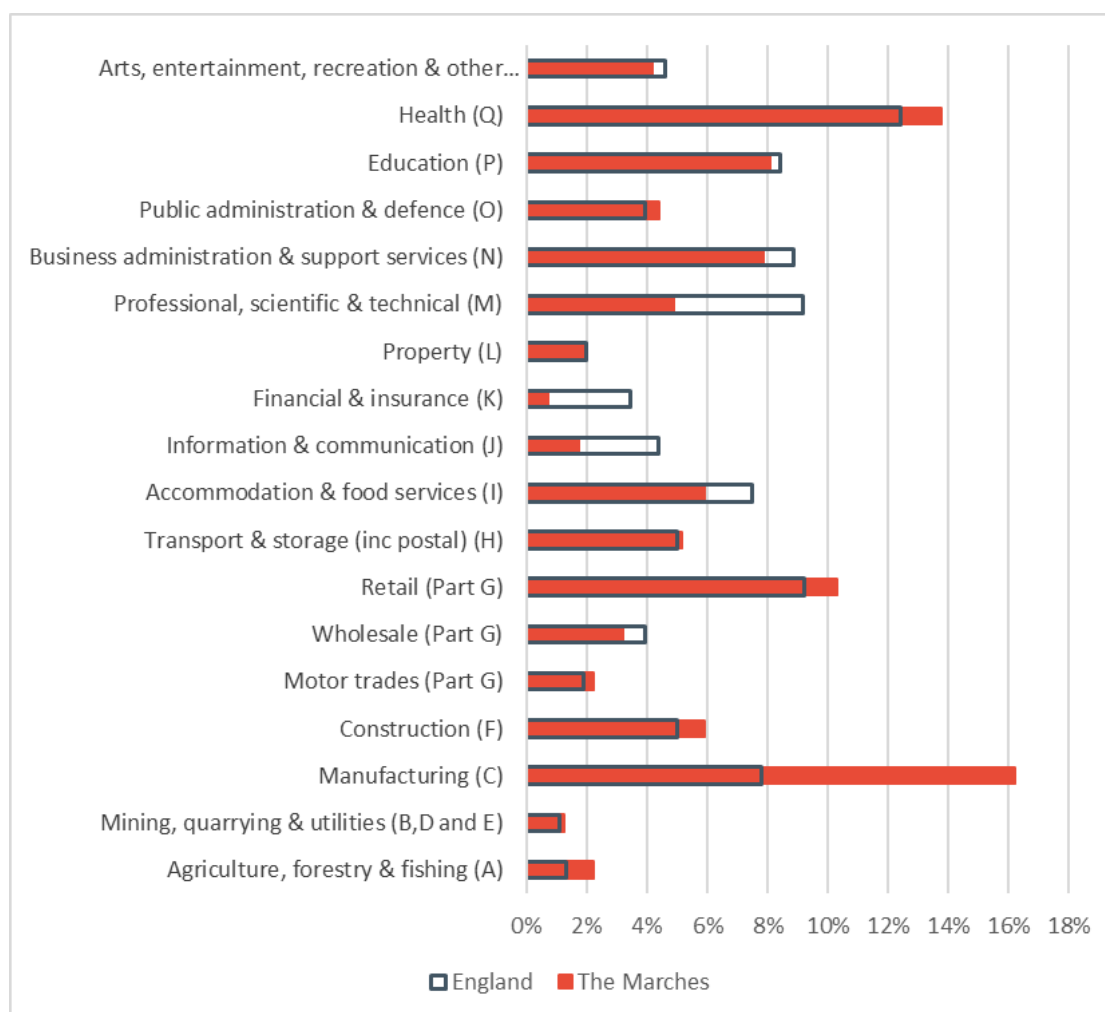
- A.7 The labour market performance of the Marches LEP is strong; it has a higher employment rate relative to England and fewer people claiming work-related benefits as a proportion of the working-age population. Whilst the number of job vacancies fell between February and June 2020, it grew consistently between July and October 2020. The subsequent impact of two national lockdowns in November 2020 and the current one beginning January 2021 is expected to have depressed this recovery.
- A.8 The skills performance of the Marches is based more in intermediate and trade-apprenticeship qualifications than the higher and degree-level qualifications reflected in the national average. Furthermore, there is generally less progression to tertiary education at school leaving-age which in the past has often led to gainful employment, but levels of workplace-based learning and apprenticeship uptake suggest too few young people are getting the training they need to succeed.
- A.9 The Marches fits into the hierarchy of UK statistical geography, so can be compared to various UK benchmarks. International comparison at the European level would be possible through an approximation to NUTS geography.

Employment by sector

- A.10 The main sectors of employment in the Marches are Health, Manufacturing, and Retail, whilst Accommodation and Food and Agriculture are also prominent. Agriculture, manufacturing, motor trades, and wholesale are all relatively specialised in the Marches with location quotients of 1.2 or above. The most significant of these sectors is Agriculture which is more than 5.5 times specialised in the Marches than England¹.

¹ Location quotients calculated from within the SAP Core Indicators – Employment by Sector (BRES), 2019

Figure A.1 Employment by Sector



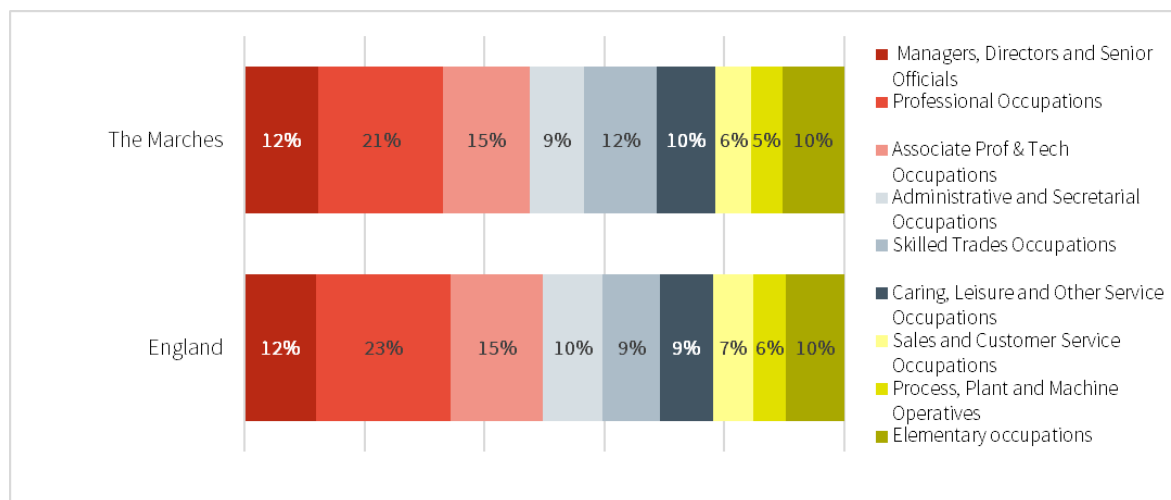
Source: Annual Population Survey, October 2019 – September 2020, 2020 SAP boundaries

- A.11 These sectors are highlighted in the Marches Strategic Economic Plan. Health and Social Care, Retail, and the Visitor Economy (which includes the accommodation and food sector) are named as enabling sectors due to their high employment and the vital services they provide for the economy. The advanced manufacturing sector (which overlaps with general manufacturing) and food and drink sector (including elements of the agriculture sector) are identified as Core Economic sectors given their high employment and high value. The related sectors of agri-tech, environmental technology and innovative health and social care are also listed as emerging sectors.
- A.12 Although more analysis will be needed of the impact of COVID-19 on various sectors in the Marches, partners are expecting a mixed picture to emerge. Throughout the UK, agricultural activities have been stable while other sectors have faced difficulties. There has been a particular strain on non-essential, restricted sectors such as those in the visitor economy and business facing sectors such as manufacturing industries which have seen reduced demand from some clients. In due course the demand for health and social care industries may evolve as the care homes recover from what has been a difficult episode.

Employment by occupation

- A.13 The main occupations of employment in The Marches are Professional occupations (21% of all), followed by Associate Professional occupations (15% of all). Managers, Directors and Senior Officials as well as Skilled Trades make up a further 12% each. This suggests a fairly balanced spread of occupations in the labour market. Compared to England, higher skill occupations make up a slightly smaller proportion of total jobs (-2%), whilst mid-level occupations take up a slightly larger share than the national average (+3%).
- A.14 The COVID-19 crisis has required more people to work from home and spend more time in their local area. This episode might encourage more urban to rural migration as people seek to continue to work remotely. The Marches is well placed to capitalise on this trend by promoting its outdoor landscape, school provision and leisure offer to help attract higher skilled workers to the area.

Figure A.2 Occupations by area, 2020

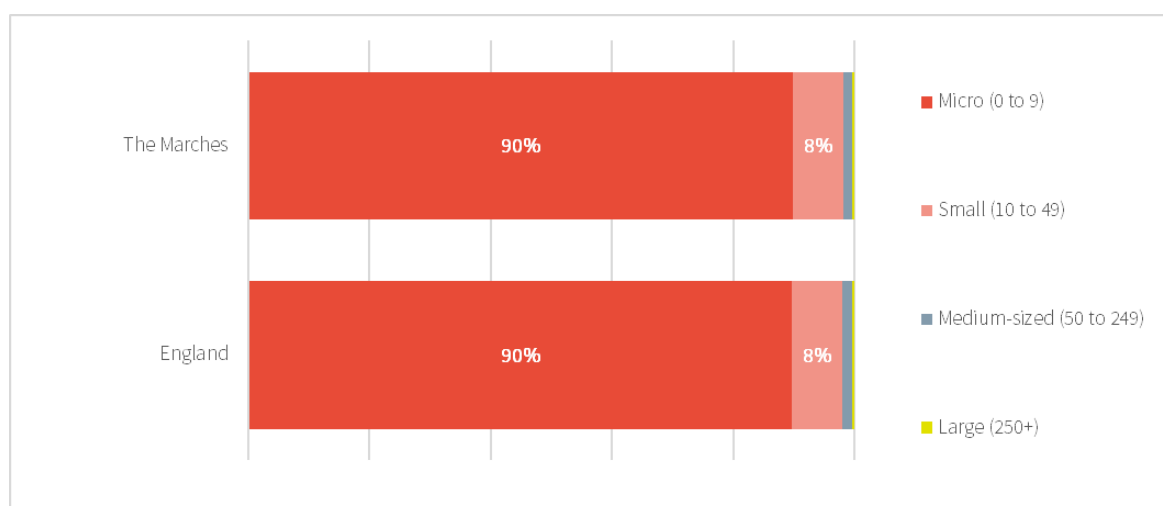


Source: Annual Population Survey, October 2019 – September 2020, 2020 SAP boundaries

Enterprises by employment size band

- A.15 The business profile in the Marches, in terms of business size, is similar to England, with a predominantly micro and small-sized base. The proportion of medium and large-sized businesses is approximately the same in England and The Marches (difference of <0.1% each).
- A.16 While the challenge is not unique to the Marches, the significant number of small businesses makes it difficult for the SAP to engage with a broad range of employers. This is particularly challenging given the large geographic spread of the area. The SAP engages with the business base via business groups and networks such as the business boards, the Federation of Small Businesses, and the local Chambers of Commerce. SAP members note that collaboration with small businesses has been particularly difficult throughout the pandemic as businesses are focused on survival and their time is even more limited than usual.

Figure A.3 Business size, 2020

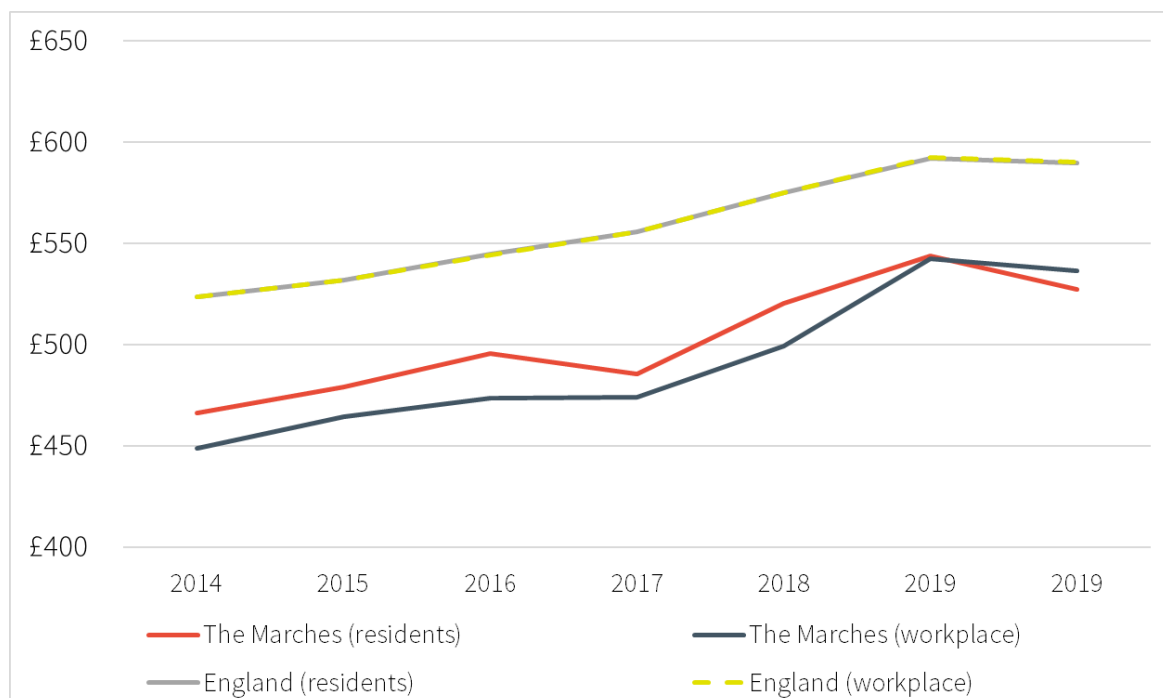


Source: UK Business Counts, 2020, 2020 SAP boundaries

Median gross weekly wage for full-time workers

- A.17 Resident and workplace wages have grown 17% and 18% respectively between 2014 and 2019 in the Marches, outpacing the 13% of England's wage growth. However, wages in the Marches have grown from a lower base than England, and wages remain below the national average.

Figure A.4 Median gross weekly wages (resident and workplace), Marches LEP and England



Source: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, 2014 - 2020, 2020 LEP boundaries

- A.18 Resident wages are approximately 3% higher than workplace wages in the Marches, suggesting that jobs are paid slightly better outside of the LEP area. This is in part related to the historic make-up of the Marches economy, around the traditionally lower paid agricultural sector and

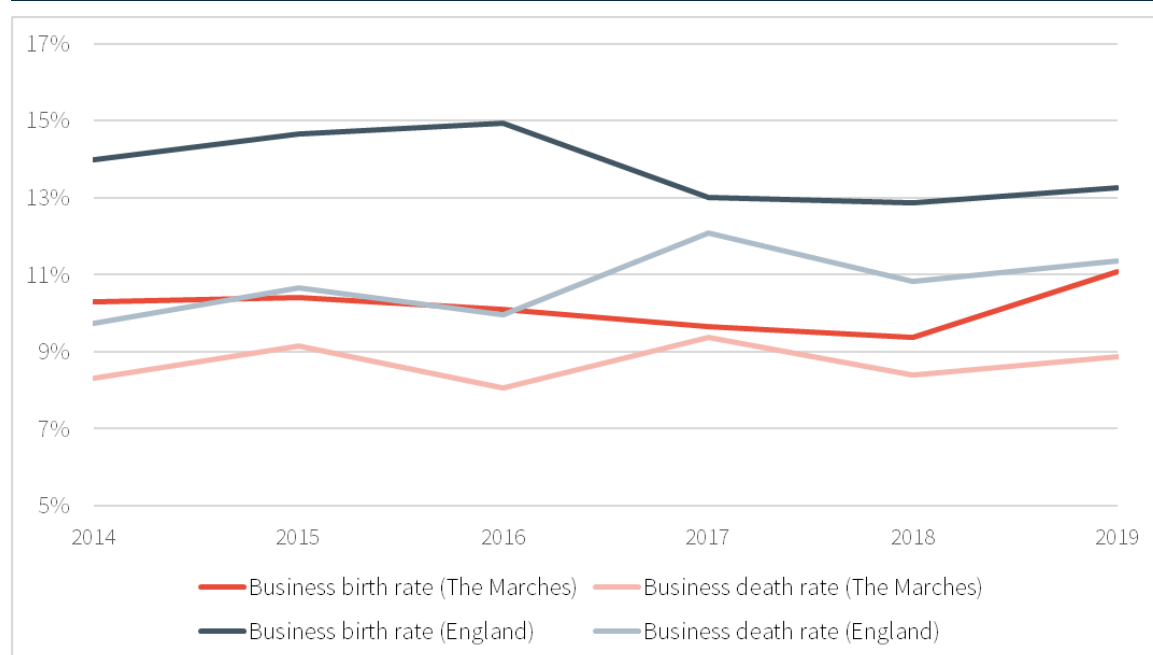
lower numbers of large employers. The Marches Local Industrial Strategy evidence base finds that a high number of Marches residents commute to urban areas of the West Midlands for work, particularly Wolverhampton, Birmingham, and Dudley.

- A.19 Shropshire has the highest resident earnings, whilst Telford & Wrekin has the highest workplace earnings. Workplace earnings in Herefordshire are particularly low compared to the rest of the Marches. Wage growth has been within 14-19% range for all areas of the Marches, aside from resident wages in Herefordshire which have grown 25% between 2014 and 2019.

Business birth and death rates

- A.20 Both business births and business deaths as a percentage of the business base have increased approximately 1% between 2014 and 2019 in the Marches, whilst they have births have decreased by approximately 1% and deaths increased by the same amount in England.
- A.21 Whilst local intelligence does not yet indicate the extent of the pandemic's impact on business demography, NatWest's West Midlands Business Activity Index indicated a strong rebound in confidence following the first lockdown, slightly above the national average.

Figure A.5 Business birth and death rates, 2014-19



Source: ONS Business Demography, 2014 - 2019 (published 2020), 2020 SAP boundaries

- A.22 The Local Industrial Strategy evidence base suggests that the Marches had good business survival rates pre-COVID-19 compared to similar LEP areas (Greater Lincolnshire and Heart of the South West), albeit with lower than average birth and death rates.

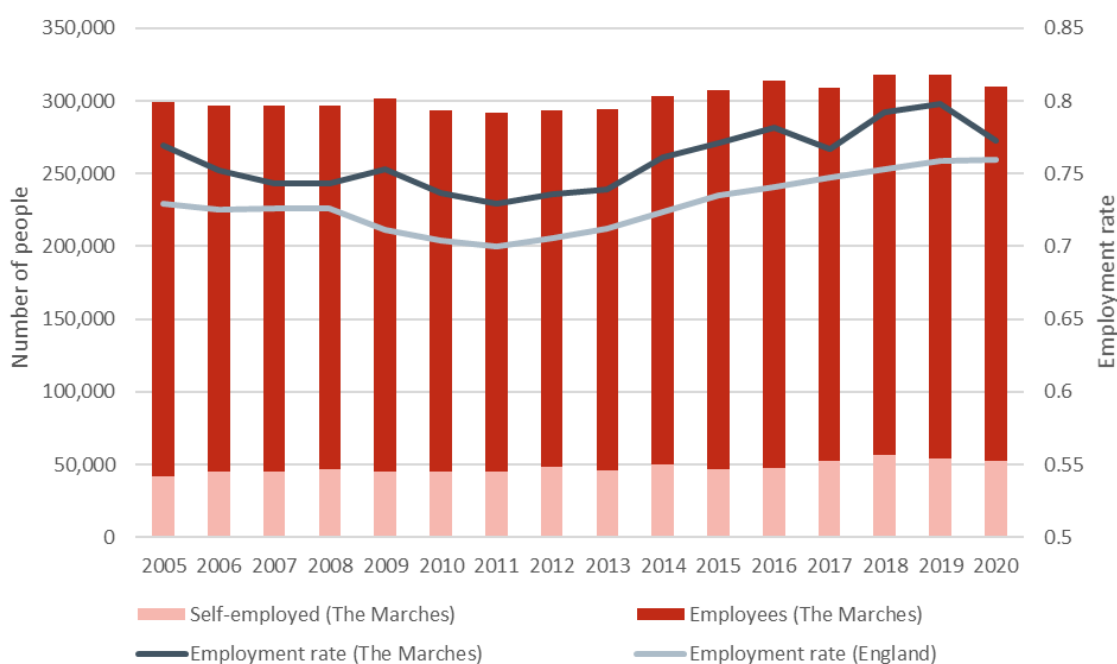
Employment rate and level

- A.23 The Marches reached its lowest employment level since 2004 following the Great Recession, at a rate of 73% in 2011. It then grew consistently to 2016, when it began to plateau through to 2020 at 77%. The Marches employment rate has been consistently higher than England's, yet within the Marches, there is significant variation, with Telford & Wrekin having a consistently lower rate

(75% or less) than Herefordshire and Shropshire, whose rates fluctuate above 75% over the period, peaking in the low-mid 80s towards the end of the past decade.

- A.24 The Marches has a slightly higher proportion of self-employed people than England (11% vs 9%). Within the Marches, Herefordshire has the highest proportion with 14%, followed by Shropshire (11%) and Telford & Wrekin (7%).
- A.25 The Marches has good levels of economic activity relative to England and does not experience any notable acute drivers of economic activity different to those at the national level.
- A.26 The Local Industrial Strategy evidence base finds, on the whole, the Marches has had higher levels of economic activity than the UK average. However, this is not uniform across the LEP as Telford and Wrekin has lower levels of economic activity.
- A.27 As the Marches has a high proportion of older workers, there is a risk that any older workers or workers with caring responsibilities who become out of work as an impact of COVID-19 will become economically inactive. Therefore, the economic inactivity rate may increase in the area.

Figure A.6 Employment rate (right axis) and employment level (left axis)



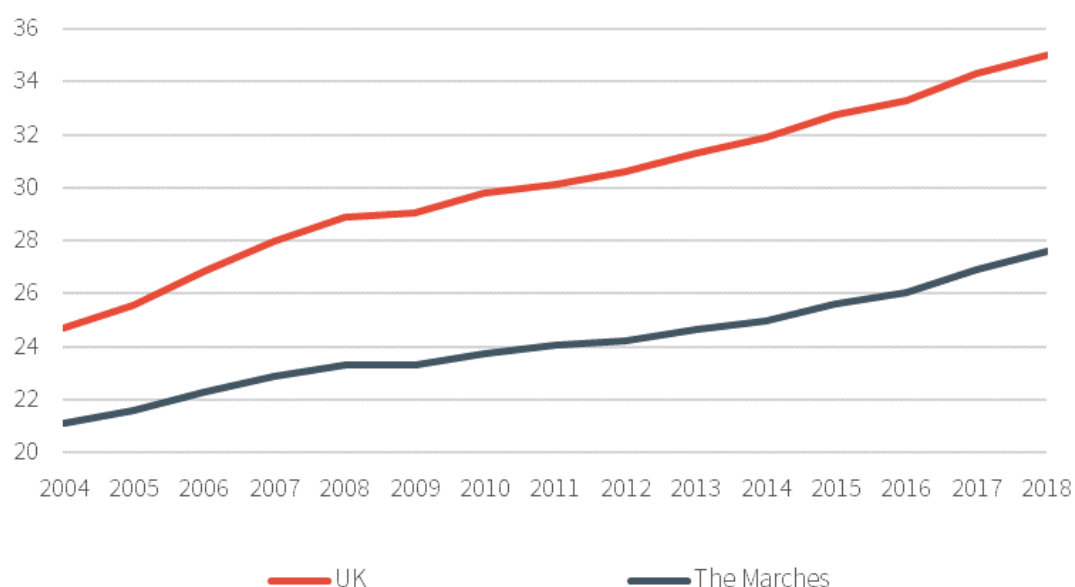
Source: Annual Population Survey, 2005 - 2020, 2020 SAP boundaries

Nominal GVA per hour worked

- A.28 Productivity is lower in the Marches than the UK. Productivity levels have also grown slower in the Marches (+31%) than the UK (+42%) since 2004. Amongst the Marches local authorities, Telford & Wrekin performs particularly well for productivity, although still below UK levels despite fast growth since 2013.

- A.29 Lower productivity is reflected in lower pay in the Marches. The Local Industrial Strategy evidence base finds that Marches median gross annual pay is lower than the regional average at £26,000 compared to £29,600 in the UK. Annual pay also varies by local authority with a lower Herefordshire average of £23,900. The Marches also has a higher share of earnings below the Real Living Wage for the Marches than the national and regional averages.
- A.30 The largest single sector in the Marches is manufacturing, which was worth £2.2bn in 2018. Other large contributors to GVA are the clusters of wholesale, retail, transport, accommodation, and food (£2.9bn in 2018) and health, education, public administration, and social security/social work (£2.5bn).

Figure A.7 GVA (£) per hour worked

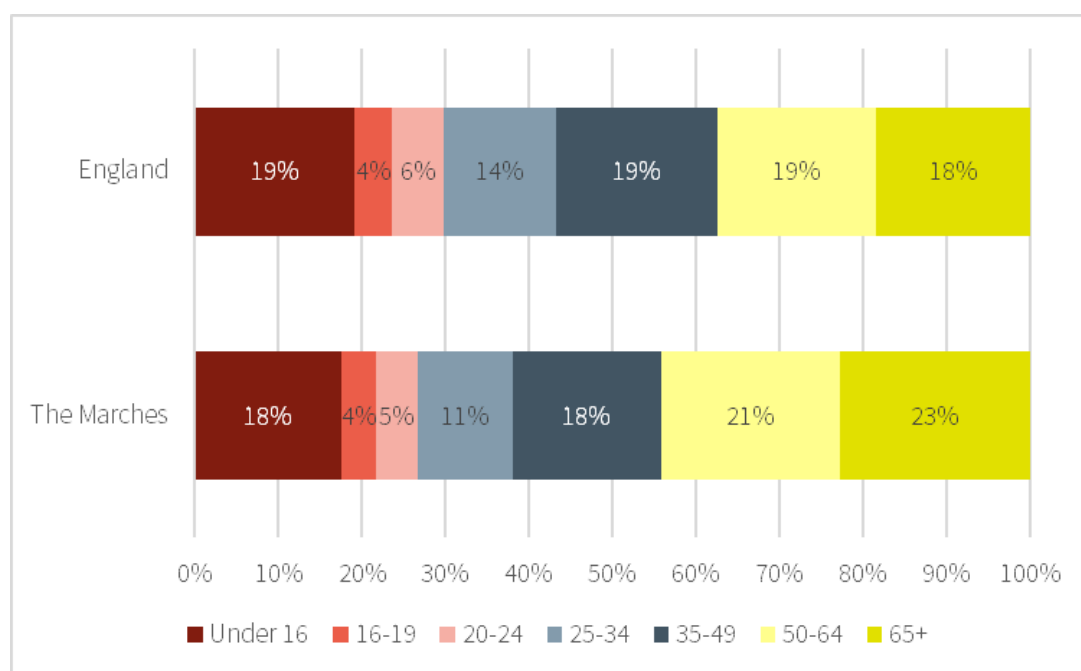


Source: ONS Subregional Productivity, 2004 - 2018 (published 2020), 2018 LEP/MCA boundaries

Population by age group

- A.31 The age profile of the Marches is slightly older than that of England, with higher proportions of people aged 50-64 and 65+ (44% over age of 50) than England (37% over age of 50). This gap has widened over time. In 2010, 39% of the Marches population were aged 50+, compared to 34% for England. This suggests the Marches population is ageing more rapidly than England.
- A.32 The quickly growing elderly population in the Marches may present challenges to the labour market in the form of labour shortages, particularly as demand in certain sectors like health and social care will likely increase as the population ages.

Figure A.8 Population by age, 2019

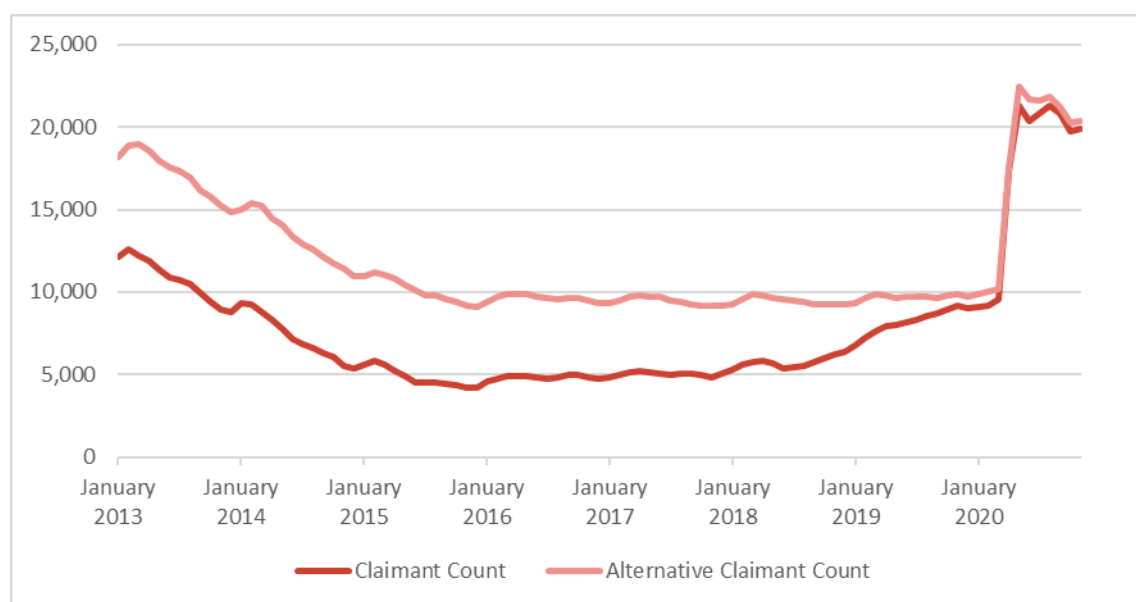


Source: ONS Mid-Year Population Estimates, 2019, 2020 SAP boundaries

Claimant Count and Alternative Claimant Count

- A.33 In the Marches, the claimant count declined between 2013-15, where it then remained at a stable low until increasing in 2020 following the pandemic. When the claimant count is expressed as a percentage of the working-age population, it can be seen that the Marches has a lower relative claimant count than England, showing a consistent gap of approximately 1% since 2013. Since the onset of COVID-19, the claimant count in the Marches has increased by approximately 3 percentage points, similar to England.
- A.34 In relative terms, the claimant count increased by approximately 109% between March and June 2020 in the Marches, a similar increase to England. The claimant count has remained at this as of December 2020, with approximately 20,000 claimants in the Marches.
- A.35 National initiatives to offset unemployment caused by the pandemic, notably the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (furlough) are widely considered to be suppressing the unemployment rate at the moment. This very much applies to the Marches where unemployment is currently a quite modest 3.7%.

Figure A.9 Claimant count and alternative claimant count – The Marches

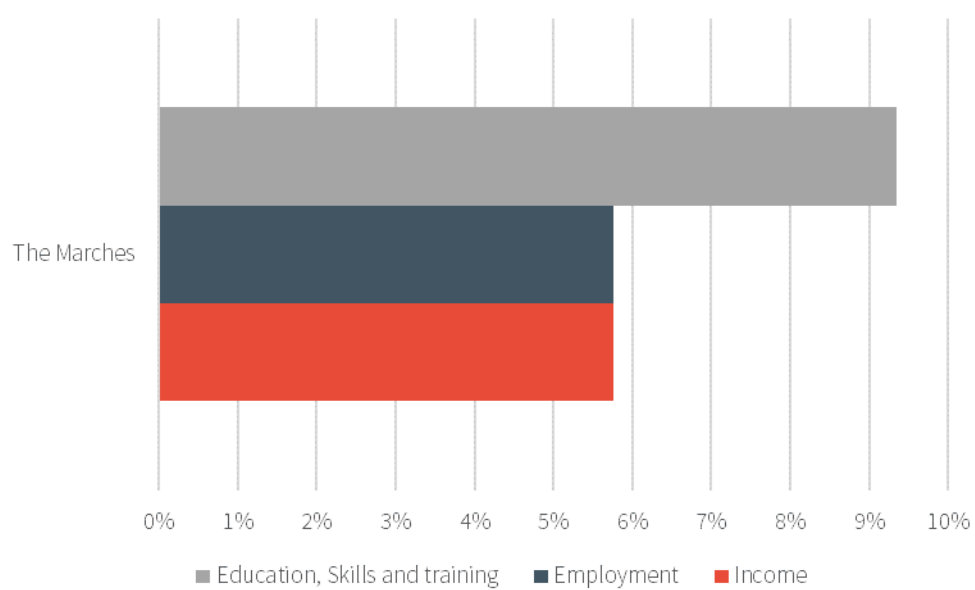


Source: ONS claimant count & DWP Stat Xplore, January 2013 – November 2020, 2020 SAP boundaries

Income, Employment and Education deprivation

- A.36 9% of neighbourhoods (LSOAs) in the Marches LEP are in the top decile (i.e. most deprived) for education, skills and training deprivation nationally. Also, 6% of neighbourhoods in the Marches LEP are in the top decile for employment and income deprivation nationally.
- A.37 Within the Marches, Telford & Wrekin experiences by far the most deprivation, with at least 18% of all neighbourhoods being in the top deciles for deprivation in education, employment, and income.
- A.38 Whilst Shropshire and Herefordshire experience relatively low employment and income deprivation, 6%+ of neighbourhoods in these areas are in the top decile for deprivation in education, skills and training, suggesting skills as an acute area of need within the Marches LEP.

Figure A.10 Proportion of neighbourhoods in 10% most deprived nationally



Source: Index of Multiple Deprivation, MHCLG, 2019, 2017 LEP boundaries

Skills Supply

Skills Supply – Summary

- A.39 In the most recent academic year ending 2020, the Marches had 9,155 Further Education achievements, 2,594 Apprenticeship achievements, and 1,150 Higher Education qualifiers. As such, FE is by a substantial margin the largest basis of provision in the Marches, and apprenticeships more than double HE qualifiers.
- A.40 Key challenges and opportunities in the skills pipeline for the Marches are set out below. These challenges and opportunities are both evident from the Core Indicators as well as reflect the experience of SAP members.
- Challenges:
 - Fewer residents with degree-level qualifications than England
 - Relatively unbalanced profile of HE qualifiers (predominantly agriculture)
 - Generally less progression through education after 16-18 years old than national average
 - Lower % of level 4 apprenticeships leading to jobs in the Marches
 - Low graduate retention
 - Opportunities
 - Relatively small proportion of residents with no qualifications
 - Further education attainments in high value-added subjects like health and business
 - High apprenticeship completions in manufacturing, aligned to sector base
 - Graduates from the Marches more likely than national average to enter sustained employment
- A.41 There are three FE colleges and a specialist college of Arts who account for the LEP's FE provision:
- Herefordshire, Ludlow and North Shropshire College
 - Telford College
 - Shrewsbury Colleges Group
 - Hereford College of Arts
- A.42 These are additional to the two HE providers: Harper Adams University and Harper Adams University College. As such, there is a relatively small number of FE and HE providers within the LEP, which will make for collaboration between sectors somewhat easier.
- A.43 Although there is a campus of the University of the Wolverhampton within the LEP area, this cannot be separated out in the data therefore Higher Education data for the Marches only covers Harper Adams University.
- A.44 Concerning the impact of COVID-19, consultations lead by Hatch have ascertained that COVID has had a massive interruption to learning on campus and that many students are eager to get

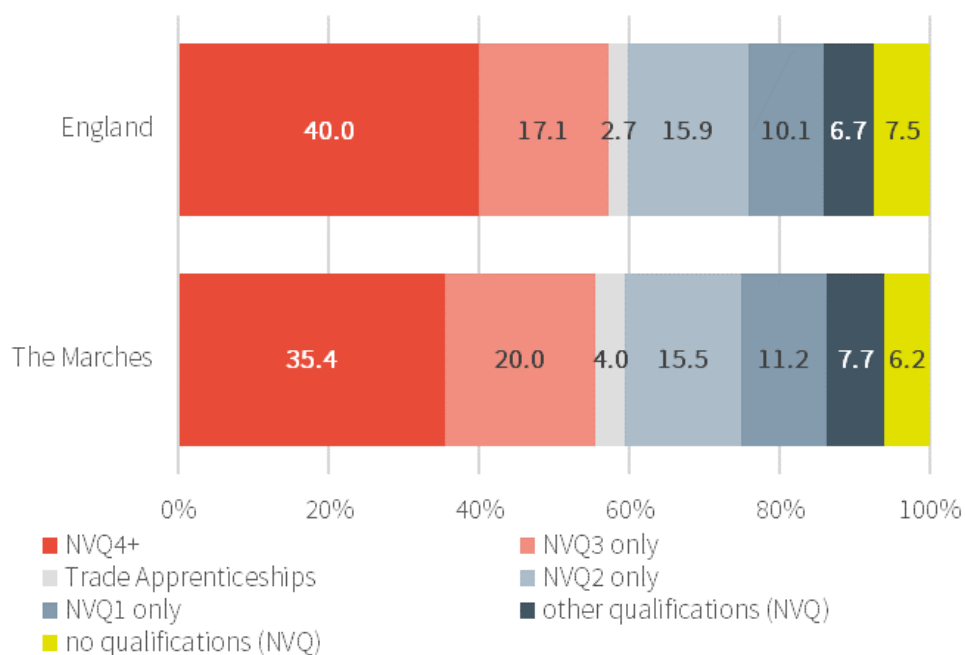
back to face to teaching. However, there is little evidence regarding how well students have managed to take advantage of online learning.

- A.45 Despite significant disruption, the necessary switch to online learning has forced providers into innovating their offer in beneficial ways – such as reaching more remote rural communities or reaching learners who juggle responsibilities such as child or adult care. Hatch’s consultations suggested that the FE colleges have progressed more with their use of online learning in 12 months than they had in the previous 25 years and were looking forward to maintaining the successful elements of what they have delivered. FE providers recognise that for rural areas remote learning can play an important role in helping learners who are juggling work and care responsibilities.
- A.46 Some concern was also registered that employers were sometimes not fully supportive of learners engaging with their college work during the lockdown as they might need to be, in part due to attendance being online. Another issue raised around work based learning is the difficulty of providing work placements given COVID restrictions.
- A.47 Another traceable impact of COVID-19 has been on apprenticeship vacancies in the Marches. Prior to the onset of the pandemic in March 2020, apprenticeship vacancies had been growing following an extended period of decline. They subsequently declined each month during March-August 2020.
- A.48 Discussions with employers and skills providers highlight that there is more to be done around transferring of Apprenticeship Levies and in communicating apprenticeship supply and demand to maximise apprenticeship benefits. There is a particular need to ensure smaller businesses in the Marches are taking advantage of the benefits made available by the Apprenticeship Levy.
- A.49 The Marches has put in place provisions to ensure the labour force will have skills for current and future demand, including with the undertaking of sector deep-dive studies to map skill needs and sector growth areas. The Marches SAP team have also established collaborative relationships between the local FE and HE providers and key employers. This collaboration will boost alignment in the long term between supply and demand for skills in the Marches.

Qualification levels

- A.50 The Marches has a smaller proportion (35%) of people with degree-level NVQ4+ qualifications than England (40%), however, it also has a smaller proportion of people with no qualifications. The Marches has slightly higher proportions of people with either trade apprenticeships or ‘other’ types of qualifications than England, as well as NVQ1.
- A.51 The qualifications profile differs significantly within the Marches, with Telford & Wrekin skewed much more towards NVQ1-3 as well as no qualifications. As such, Telford & Wrekin has a much lower proportion of people with degree-level qualifications (28%) than Herefordshire (36%) and Shropshire (40%). The proportion of 20 to 29-year-olds with NVQ4+ qualifications is significantly lower than other age groups (28%). This may reflect that some residents in this age group are still undertaking university studies and are yet to attain NVQ Level 4, particularly as the most represented qualification is NVQ Level 3 (31.6%). It may also imply that younger residents leaving the Marches area are often those with the highest qualifications. The 50 to 64 age group has the highest share of residents with either no qualifications or NVQ Level 1 (21.2%).

Figure A.11 Qualifications, 2019

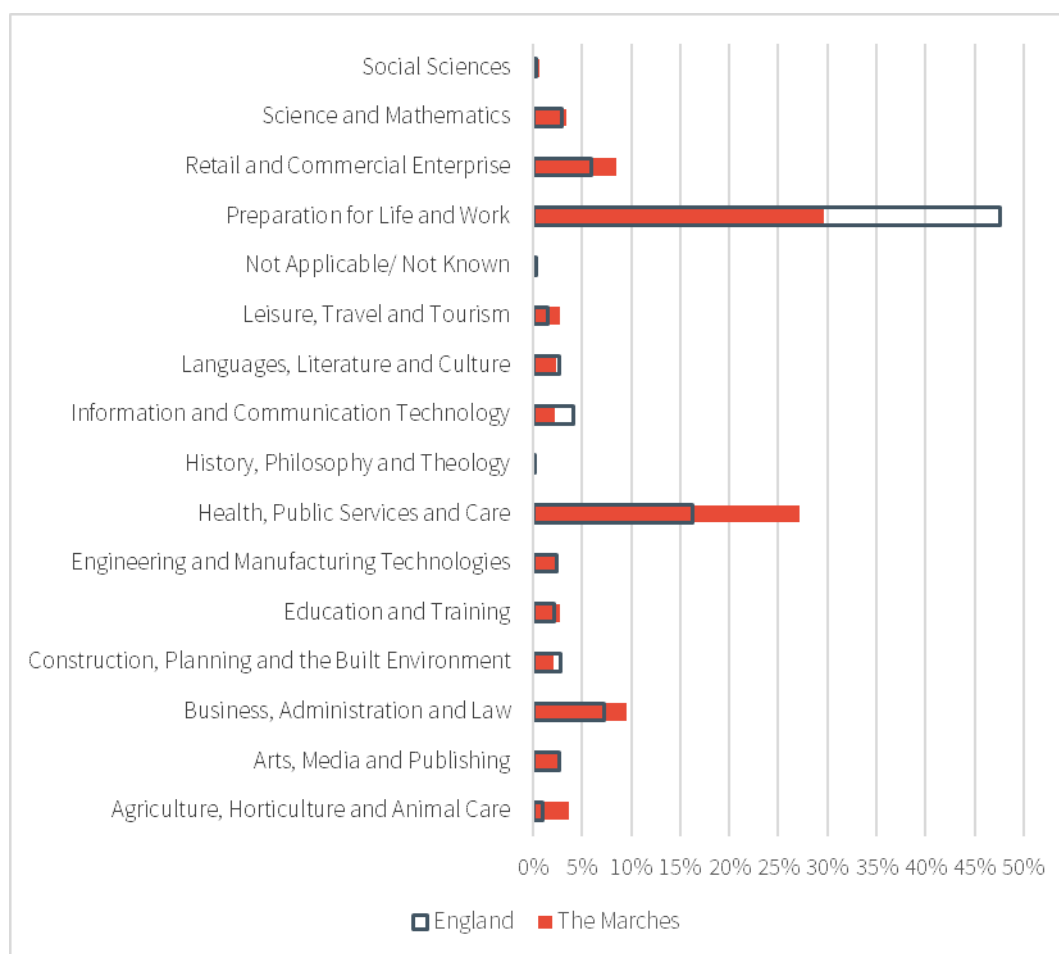


Source: Annual Population Survey, January 2019 – December 2020, 2020 SAP boundaries

FE Education and Training Achievements

- A.52 There are three FE colleges and a specialist college of Arts in the Marches who account for the LEP's FE provision:
- Herefordshire, Ludlow and North Shropshire College
 - Telford College
 - Shrewsbury Colleges Group
 - Hereford College of Arts
- A.53 27% of further education achievements in the Marches are in Health, Public Services and Care, in England it is only 16%. For England, 48% of achievements are in Preparation for Life and Work, whereas in the Marches this is just 29%. Two subject areas where the Marches stands out from England - Health, Public Services and Care and Business and Law – are priority growth sectors as well as substantial bases of employment within the LEP.
- A.54 Since 2010, the qualifications profile of the Marches has shifted towards higher-level qualifications, similar to England overall. For instance, the proportion of working-age residents with degree level qualifications in the Marches grew 8.2 percentage points (p.p.) between 2010 and 2019 (compared to 9 p.p. for England). The Marches has also seen a promising reduction in the proportion of people with no qualifications – down 5.5 p.p.

Figure A.12 FE Achievements

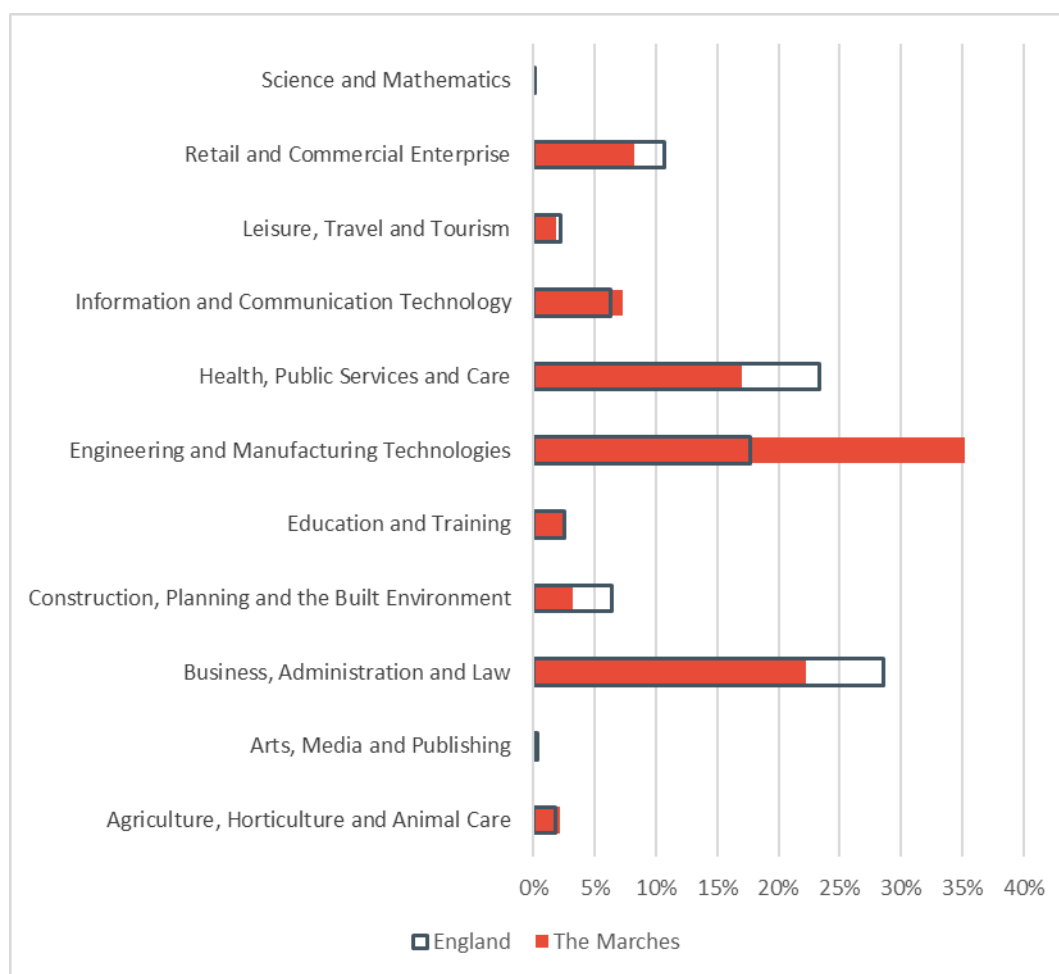


Source: Further Education & Skills data, DfE, (published 2020), 2020 SAP boundaries

Apprenticeship achievements

- A.55 As shown in Figure A.13, apprenticeship achievements in the Marches are well represented in Engineering and Manufacturing, which accounts for 35% of apprenticeships (compared to 18% in England). The only other subject area better represented in the Marches than England is ICT, which accounts for 7% of Marches apprenticeship achievements (6% for England). This accords with the intelligence of the local SAP team.
- A.56 Some consultees highlighted (Annex B) potential for higher apprenticeship numbers in priority growth sectors, particularly at the higher level by better aligning supply and demand of apprenticeships – e.g. Annex B Skills Supply, Agri-tech. Currently there is scope for greater recycling of unspent apprenticeship levy funds.

Figure A.13 Apprenticeship achievements by sector subject area

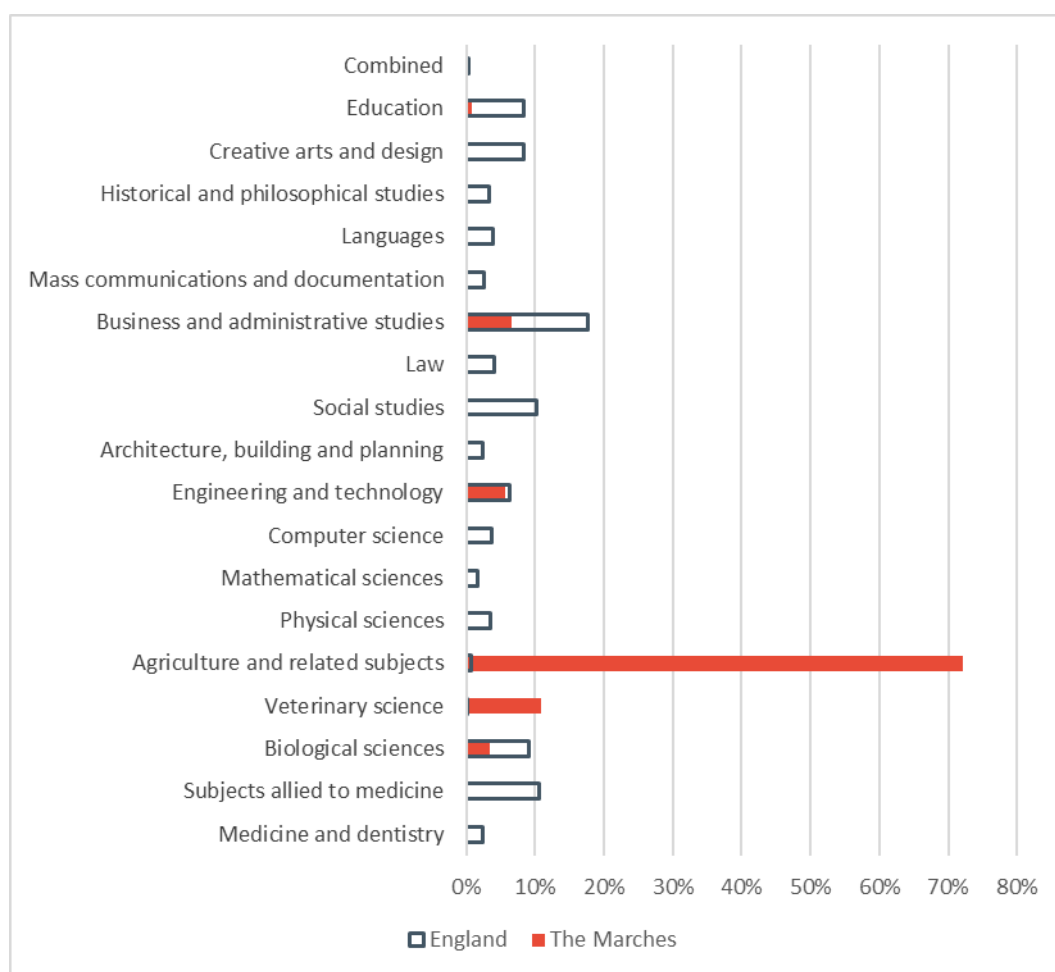


Source: Apprenticeships data, DfE, (published 2020), 2020 SAP boundaries

HE Qualifiers

- A.57 Higher education qualifiers are overwhelmingly concentrated in Agriculture, which is a large sector of local employment and accounts for 72% of qualifiers for the Marches (1% for England). Veterinary science accounts for a further 11% of HE qualifiers in the Marches, again much greater than England (<1%). These figures reflect graduates of Harper Adams University which is a national specialist institution in agriculture and animal sciences.

Figure A.14 HE qualifiers by sector subject area, 2018/19

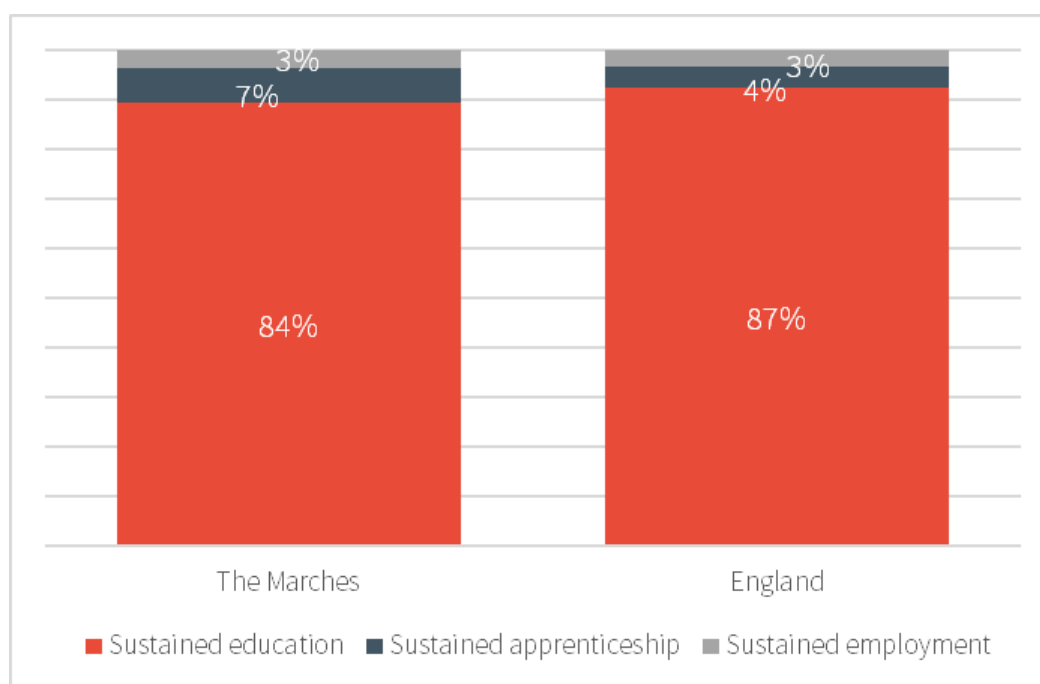


Source: HESA, 2018/2019 qualifiers (published 2020), 2020 SAP boundaries)

KS4 Destinations

- A.58 Destinations of KS4 students differ slightly in the Marches with England, with 1% more students going into both apprenticeships and employment, with a corresponding 2% fewer students going into sustained education.
- A.59 Local intelligence suggests strong performing schools, with each Local Authority of the Marches above the national average for Attainment 8, Grades 5+ in Maths and English and average points score for the EBACC. This suggests that quality of KS4 education offer is not holding back progression through education after KS4.
- A.60 The [‘Closing the Gap’](#) report from the Careers and Enterprise Company, as well as anecdotal intelligence conveyed by Marches employers to Hatch in consultation suggested that insufficient work-experience opportunities were being made available to students within the LEP area. Whilst this may seem inconsequential given the quite high proportion of Marches students entering employment, a lack of such opportunities may prevent students from entering the *kinds* of employment they desire, or which would be most beneficial for the LEP.

Figure A.15 Key Stage 4 destinations - state-funded mainstream schools

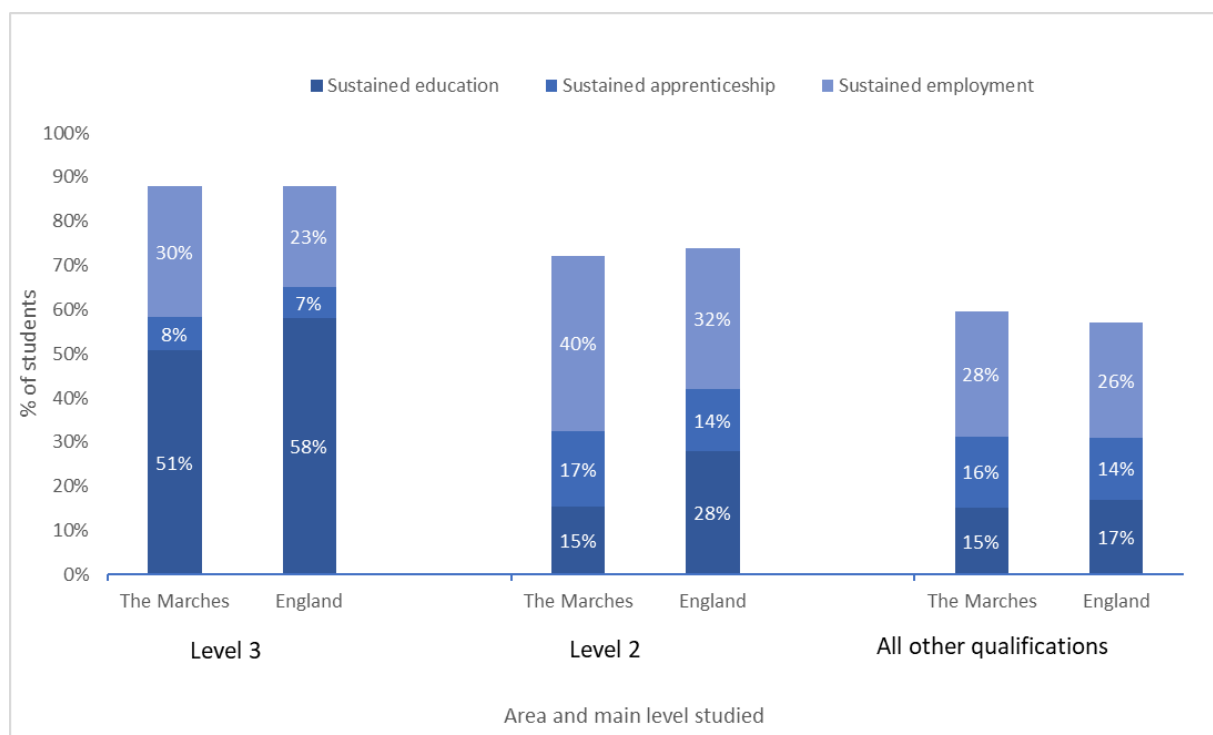


Source: KS4 Destination Measures, DfE, 2018/19 (published 2020), 2020 SAP boundaries

KS5 Destinations

- A.61 Across KS5 levels, students go on to education less in the Marches than they do across England. At level 3 KS5, 7% fewer 16–18-year-olds continue education in the Marches than England. At Level 2 KS5, this gap becomes 13% (15% in Marches continuing education vs 28% in England).
- A.62 In 2016, local intelligence provided by Worcester Research detailed a number of schemes linking schools with universities in the Marches such as NMITE Connect, the Children’s Universities and Explore University. Still, there has been a 12-percentage point reduction in the proportion of students in the Marches LEP who entered an A-Level or other Level 3 qualification progressed into an education destination since 2012/2013. Whilst the impact of such schemes has not been precisely determined, evidently more needs to be done to stop or reduce the decline of young people continuing education post-16.
- A.63 As mentioned, the ‘Closing the Gap’ report from the Careers and Enterprise Company, as well as anecdotal intelligence conveyed by Marches employers to Hatch in consultation suggested that insufficient work-experience opportunities were being made available to students within the LEP area. At the KS5 level, such opportunities prove valuable additions to university applications, particularly in vocational subjects. Increasing provision of work-experience may both lead to higher quality employment destinations, as well as further education opportunities for KS5 students.

Figure A.16 16 to 18 destinations - state-funded mainstream schools and colleges, 2018/19

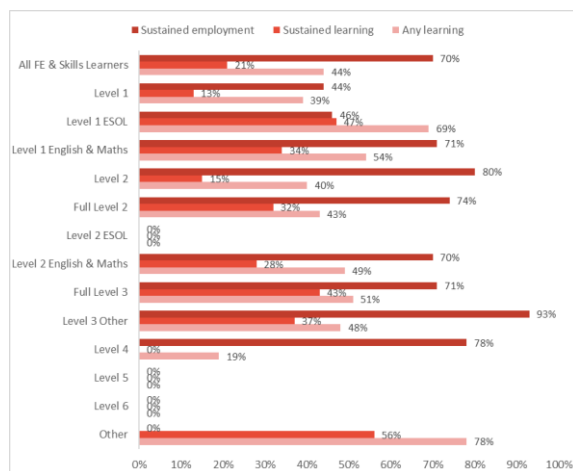


Source: 16-18 Destination Measures, DfE, 2018/19 (published 2020), 2020 SAP boundaries

FE and skills destinations

- A.64 For the Marches LEP, sustained employment is the primary destination for Further Education and skills learners (70% of learners), with any learning (44% of learners) and sustained learning (21% of learners) accounting for other destinations. Compared to England, this represents a slightly smaller proportion of learners continuing with any or sustained learning, and slightly more learners entering sustained employment.
- A.65 For the Marches, the percentage of learners continuing to sustained employment generally increases with the level of qualification, similar to England.

Figure A.17 Destinations for adult FE & skills learners, Marches LEP 2018/19



Source: FE outcome-based success measures, 2018/19 destinations, DfE, (published 2020), 2018 LEP boundaries

Figure A.18 Destinations for adult FE & skills learners, England 2018/19

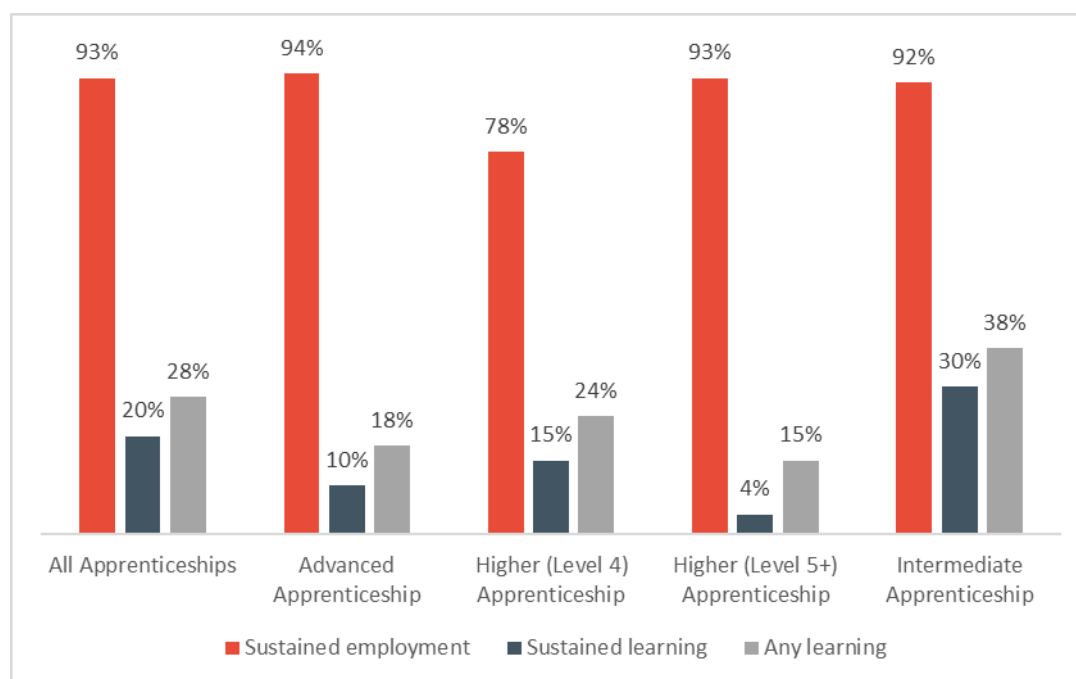


Source: FE outcome-based success measures, 2018/19 destinations, DfE, (published 2020), 2018 LEP boundaries

Apprenticeship destinations

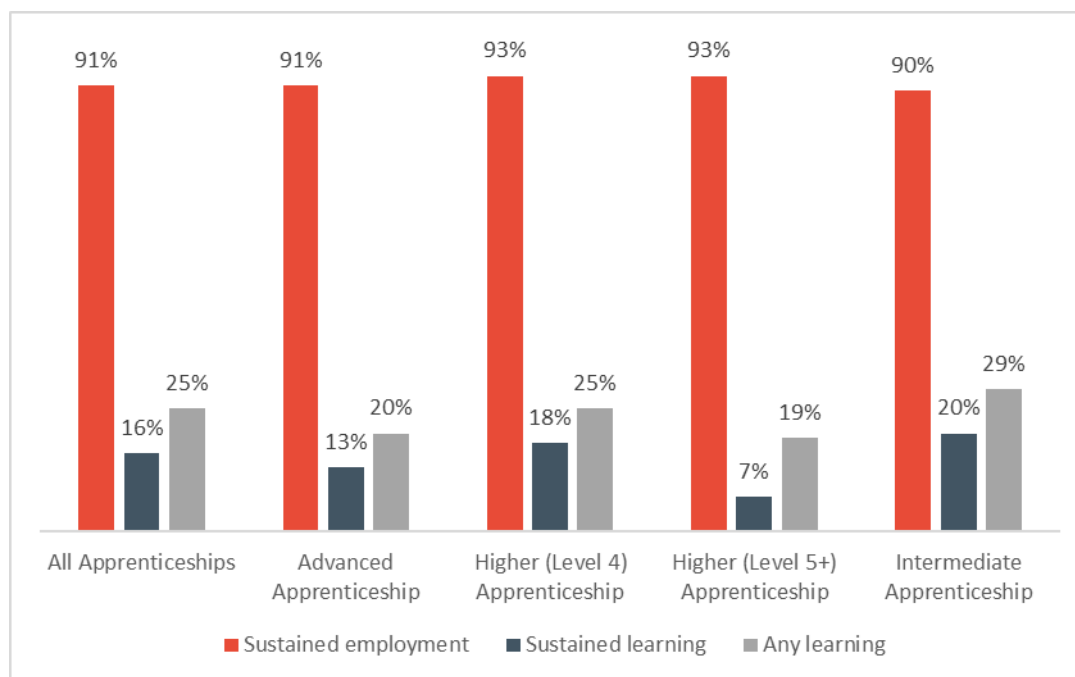
- A.66 In the Marches, over 90% of apprenticeships lead to sustained employment. This is the case for all levels of apprenticeship besides from Level 4, which sees 78% of apprenticeships leading to sustained employment. Apprenticeship destinations are broadly similar between the Marches and England, with the exception of level 4 apprenticeships across England leading to sustained employment at a rate of 93%.

Figure A.19 Apprenticeship destinations, 2018/19 – Marches LEP



Source: FE outcome-based success measures, 2018/19 destinations, DfE, (published 2020), 2018 LEP boundaries

Figure A.20 Apprenticeship destinations, 2017/18 – England

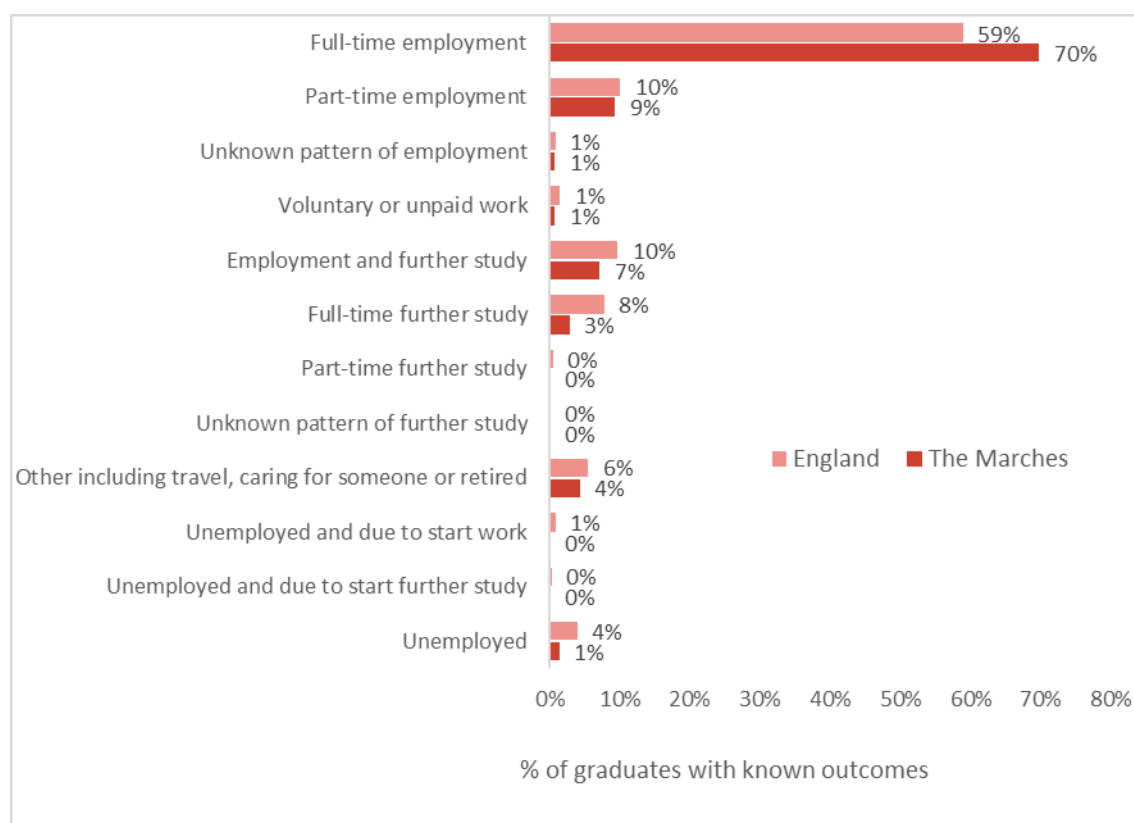


Source: FE outcome-based success measures, 2018/19 destinations, DfE, (published 2020),

HE graduate destinations

- A.67 Higher education graduates from the Marches enter full-time employment at a greater rate (70%) than England (59%). Regarding further study, a smaller percentage of Marches graduates (3%) pursue compared to England (8%).
- A.68 Local intelligence (Worcester Research) suggests that in spite of a relatively high proportion of Marches graduates entering the job market after graduation, only a small number of Marches employers (approximately 10%) had taken on graduate employees in 2016.

Figure A.21 Graduate destinations, 2017/18

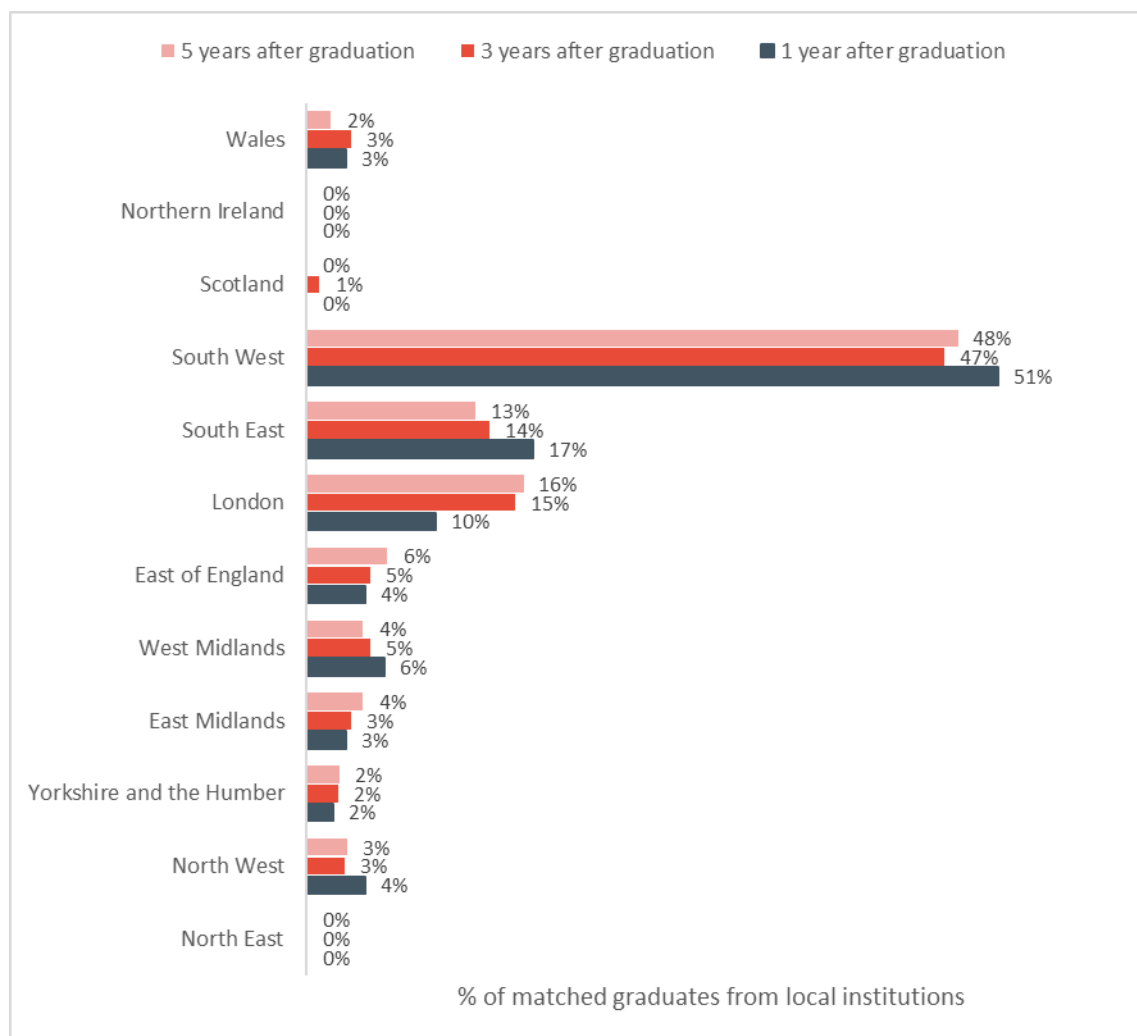


Source: HESA, 2017/18 graduates (published 2020), 2020 SAP boundaries

Graduate retention

- A.69 For the first year after graduation from a Marches higher education institute, approximately 1/5 of graduates remain in the West Midlands, increasing to 25% after 5 years. This is the most popular region for Marches HEI graduates. All other parts of England besides from the North East and London are destinations for approximately 10% (per region) of Marches HEI graduates. Few if any graduates from the Marches move to Scotland or Northern Ireland.
- A.70 Local employers and providers suggest that many young people leave the Marches for higher education and then do not return to The Marches for employment. This trend is common across more rural areas of the UK. Plus, providers attract national and international learners, many of whom do not intend to stay in The Marches after graduation. Given the occupational and sector mix of employment in The Marches, it is to be expected that some graduates will leave the area to seek employment opportunities in their chosen field of work.
- A.71 Education providers also recognise the importance of the area's strong educational, environmental, cost of living and general quality of life offer in attracting and retaining higher skilled workers.

Figure A.22 Current residence of graduates from Marches HEIs, 2017/18



Source: Graduate Outcomes in 2017/18, DfE, (published 2020), 2020 SAP boundaries

Employer-provided training

- A.72 Approximately 62% of employers in the Marches provide training, similar to England. This primarily consists of on and off-job training (32% of providers), also a similar proportion to England.
- A.73 This broadly supports local intelligence. The Marches Sector Deep Dive analysis finds a slightly high proportion of employers in The Marches have no skills budget or training plans in place than the UK (34% in The Marches, 31% in the UK) and that employers provide lower numbers of training days (3.7 in The Marches, 4.0 in the UK).
- A.74 Currently the main barriers reported by employers to employer training are a lack of resources. This is highlighted particularly amongst SMEs and it is believed this impact has increased during the pandemic. Employers consulted suggest core and soft skills are the most valuable currently, although this is expected to vary considerably by sector.

Figure A.23 Employers providing training over past 12 months



Source: Employer Skills Survey, 2019 (published 2020), 2019 LEP boundaries

Skills Demand

Skills Demand - Summary

A.75 Future demand, sectors and occupations:

- Health and social work sector forecast for 3rd highest growth in Marches, whilst health related occupations occupy 3/5 of the top occupations for forecast growth
- The top sector for forecast growth is arts and entertainment, whilst customer service occupations are the second top occupation forecast for growth
- Food, drink and tobacco (processing) and manufacturing are forecast for the lowest growth in the Marches. Occupations common to these industries, such as process, plant and machine operatives, are forecast to grow the least also.

A.76 Local labour market intelligence based on job advertisements suggests that agricultural (specifically poultry), personal care, learning disabilities, food manufacturing, and nursing were the most in demand 'hard skills' (i.e. those which must be taught or learnt) in the Marches LEP between January and October 2020. This continues to reflect the broad industry base of the Marches, rather than the acute demands of the pandemic on the economy. This suggests that future demand will continue to be driven by the Marches' priority sectors.

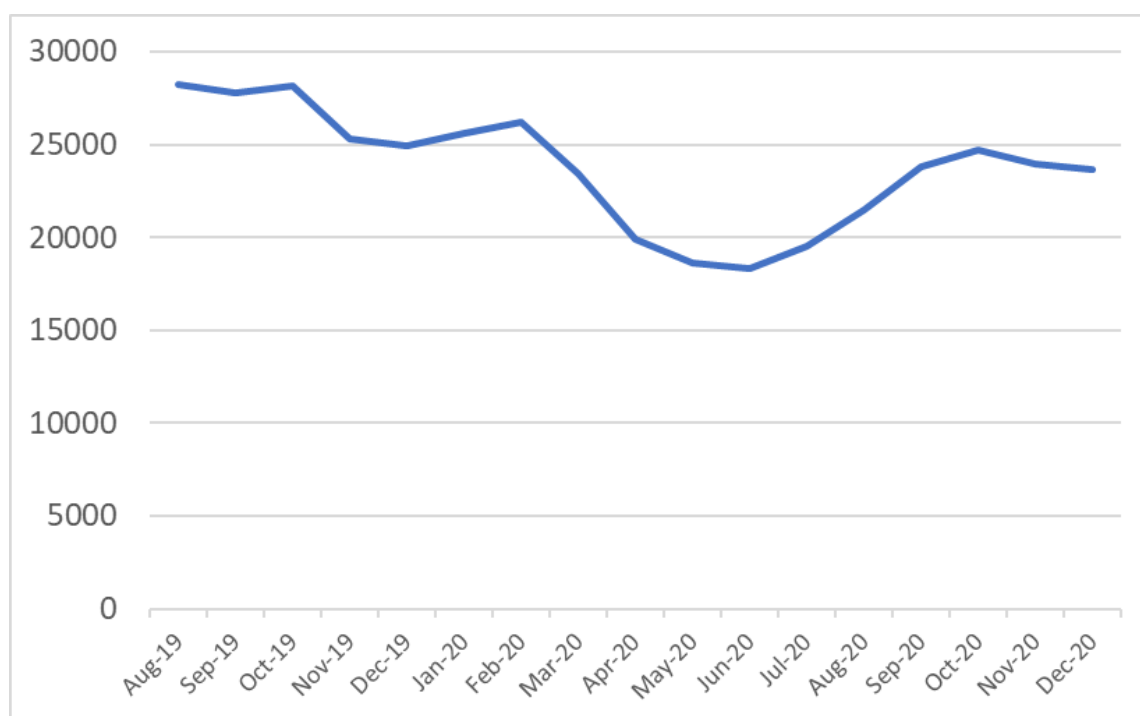
A.77 Marches partners understand the ongoing challenge of the need to boost digital skills, mid-career training, as well as careers advice for children and enterprise guidance for young people. The Marches SAP partners are looking to leverage the National Retraining Scheme as well as other national schemes to ensure skills support across all age groups in the face of rapidly changing demands in the workplace.

A.78 With a proportion of staff not proficient for the skill requirements of their role roughly similar to England, businesses in the Marches faces many of the same barriers as those across the country in securing talent. However, within the LEP, the supply aspect is rather acute given the lower proportion of people with degree-level qualifications.

Online vacancies

A.79 Whilst job vacancies have not returned to pre-pandemic levels in the Marches, they rebounded strongly up to the third national lockdown.

Figure A.24 Number of job postings in the Marches LEP



Source: Emsi, 2021, 2017 LEP boundaries

- A.80 Nurses and care home workers are consistently the most numerous job vacancies in the Marches LEP, although as a proportion of total job postings they have grown approximately 1 percentage point between Dec-19 and Dec-20.
- A.81 As such, current levels of demand remain lower than before the pandemic, although with signs of recovery evident and a slight shift towards nurse and care occupations.

Sector growth forecasts

- A.82 To 2027, Arts and entertainment, Support services, Health and social work, Accommodation and food and Real estate are the sectors forecast for highest growth. Conversely, Food drink and tobacco, Rest of manufacturing, Finance and insurance, Agriculture and Education have the lowest forecast growth. This sits slightly uneasily with local intelligence, which relays the strength and specialisation of agriculture and particularly agri-tech within the LEP – however it is likely that the Working Futures data is unable to treat these sectors as distinct.
- A.83 Job postings in the Marches have been particularly buoyant in health and care, as well as logistics related roles. It is notable that these sector projections were made well before the onset of the pandemic, and the healthy long-term growth for such sectors as Arts and Entertainment and Accommodation and Food will depend on a strong rebound following successive national lockdowns.

Table A.1 Sectors with highest and lowest forecast growth, The Marches 2017-2027

	Sectors with highest forecast growth (2017-2027)	Sectors with lowest forecast growth (2017-2027)
1.	Arts and entertainment	Food drink and tobacco
2.	Support services	Rest of manufacturing
3.	Health and social work	Finance and insurance
4.	Accommodation and food	Agriculture
5.	Real estate	Education

Source: Working Futures, 2017-2027 (published 2020), 2017 LEP boundaries

Occupation growth forecasts

- A.84 To 2027, Caring personal service occupations, Customer service occupations, Health and social care associate professionals, Corporate managers and directors and Health professionals are the occupations with highest forecast growth. Conversely, Secretarial, and related occupations, Process, plant and machine operatives, Textiles, printing and other skilled trades, Skilled metal, electrical and electronic trades, and skilled agricultural and related trades are forecast for the lowest growth.
- A.85 The Marches LEP Sector Deep Dive summary reports on expected growth in occupations between 2018 and 2022. The findings are similar with highest growth expected in Caring, Leisure and Other Services Occupations and Managers, Directors and Senior Officials. However, the deep dive reports also list relatively high growth in skills trade occupations. This difference is likely due to the change in timeframe.
- A.86 Local labour market intelligence based on job advertisements suggests some of the occupations forecast to grow the least are actually highly buoyant in the LEP's labour market. For instance, skilled agricultural and related trades occupations had grown 52% between January and October 2020, whilst process, plant and machine operative job postings grew 43% over the same period.

Table A.2 Occupations with highest and lowest forecast growth, 2017-2027

	Occupations with highest forecast growth (2017-2027)	Occupations with lowest forecast growth (2017-2027)
1.	Caring personal service occupations	Secretarial and related occupations
2.	Customer service occupations	Process, plant and machine operatives
3.	Health and social care associate professionals	Textiles, printing and other skilled trades
4.	Corporate managers and directors	Skilled metal, electrical and electronic trades
5.	Health professionals	Skilled agricultural and related trades

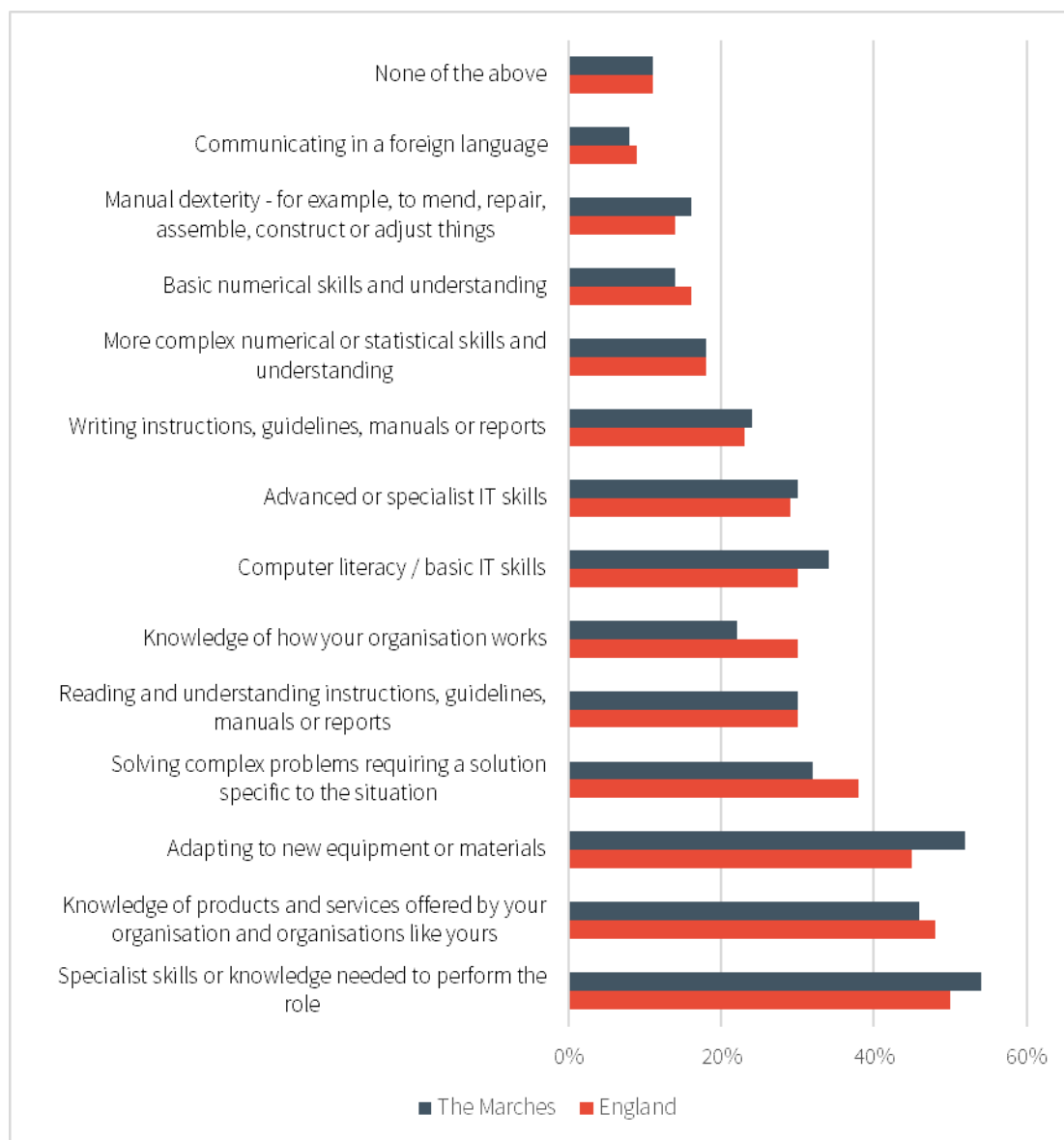
Source: Working Futures, 2017-2027 (published 2020), 2017 LEP boundaries

Skills that need developing

- A.87 'Specialist skills or knowledge needed to perform the role', 'knowledge of products and services offered by your organisation and organisations like yours' and 'adapting to new equipment or materials' were the top 3 skills reported that need developing by employers both in the Marches and England.

- A.88 Marches employers have relayed the need for supply of future facing higher-level skills especially in tech intensive sectors such as advanced manufacturing. However simultaneously, employers in priority growth sectors highlight the need for core and soft skills (Annex B – Skills Demand, advanced manufacturing, and enviro-tech), which accords well with the Employer Skills Survey results outlined below which also underpin the importance of generalist skills (e.g. knowledge of products offered, adapting to new equipment).
- A.89 Many employers recognised a need for digital competency and soft skills for the workplace, as although there has been progress in developing these skills, gaps remain. Education providers also note that students who have moved to home learning will have missed out on opportunities to develop core and soft skills through spending time in school and the extracurricular activities which have been paused due to the Covid-19 crisis. There may be a need for additional intervention to help these students to catch up on development of these skills. This is likely to be a national issue.

Figure A.25 Skills that need developing in the workforce, 2019 – Marches and England



Source: Employer Skills Survey, 2019 (published 2020), 2019 LEP boundaries

Mapping Supply and Demand

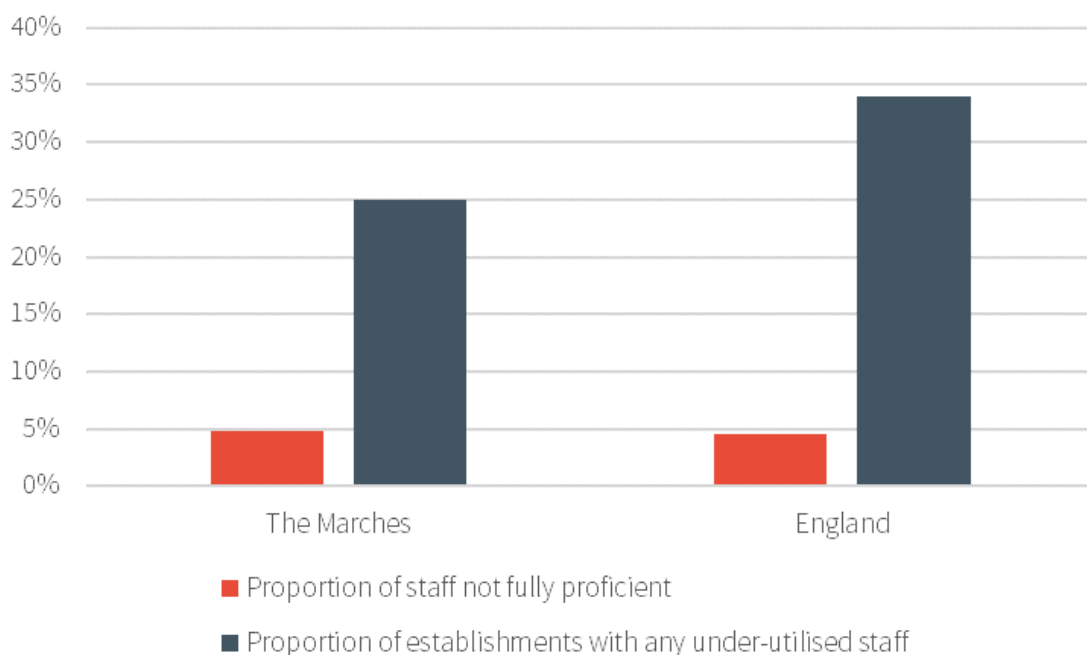
Skills Supply and Demand – Summary

- A.90 The Marches, like England, experiences a high proportion of over-qualified staff (albeit less than England's proportion). It also has a high proportion of skill-shortage vacancies, which suggests that supply and demand for skilled workers is misaligned to a substantial extent in the Marches, which is also true of England.
- A.91 Local intelligence provided by Worcester Research in 2016 finds that across the Marches overall, only 10% of establishments had recruited any workers from a University or HEI in the previous 2-3 years. Furthermore, 43.7% of students who studied HE in the Marches LEP and entered employment entered into the agriculture industry. For students who domiciled in the Marches LEP and entering employment, 40.1% entered the 'public sector and support services sector'. This suggests strong demand for graduates in the public sector in the Marches, however the LEP's HE offer is strongly based around agriculture.
- A.92 Alignment of supply and demand for skills may deteriorate in the short-medium term future, as those sectors forecast to grow the most in the Marches – the visitor economy, health care, business and professional services – are those where Marches HE provision currently lacks relative to neighbouring areas.
- A.93 The Marches skills system is highly responsive and willing to adapt its offer in the face of changing and evolving requirements from the labour market. This is evident through the collaborative efforts driven the Marches SAP team in creating informal networks between employers and FE and HE providers within the LEP, and also formal collaborative efforts such as the SOLVD Initiative to boost digital skills provision in Telford & Wrekin and Shropshire, detailed at Figure 6.3.
- A.94 Matching skills supply and demand is increasingly difficult as technology continues to progress meaning that skills demands are evolving. This is particularly challenging given the time required to embed new skills and the make-up of the Marches priority sectors which are increasingly requiring digital skills (e.g. Cyber, Agri-tech, Enviro-tech, Healthcare).
- A.95 National policies and local interventions are helping to support alignment of supply and demand. For example, by investing Growth Deal funds into new equipment to support up to date learning and developing responsive specialist skills provision such as the new Marches Centre for Health, Allied Health and Social Care and the Marches Construction Ready Partnership.
- A.96 The Marches has high levels of learners (at KS4 and KS5) who leave learning to go into employment, as well as low levels of unemployment (in the labour market). More work can be done to align supply and demand to boost employment and productivity, but broadly speaking the Marches is successful in terms of people finding their way into work as they leave education. To 'fully exploit' this supply now and in the future, provision of the right sort of skills – as determined through collaboration between providers and employers, which is ongoing in the Marches as described above – will be essential.

Proficiency of workforce

- A.97 In the Marches, 4.8% of staff are under qualified and 25% are overqualified. This compares to 4.6% and 34% for England respectively. This suggests there are supply and demand matching issues in terms of supply of some skills and there is scope for more demand of some higher skills, however relative performance to England is good.
- A.98 Local insight gained from Hatch's consultation with Marches employers suggests that the increasing importance digital skills across and between sectors (i.e. business-to-business and the supply chain) could be creating a proficiency mismatch, with highly varying levels of digital proficiency within and between sectors.
- A.99 Generally, however, when it comes to sector-specific proficiency, Marches employers have suggested the LEP's workforce proficiency is on par with the national average (e.g. Annex B – Mapping supply and demand, advanced manufacturing).
- A.100 Based on consultations with employers and skills providers, we find there is concern around amongst some employers around education leavers having the core skills required for work, and that this is a long-term issue which requires further discussion. Both skills providers and employers also report they have limited capacity to tackle work-readiness, although the SAP notes public interventions such as those of the Careers and Enterprise Company can help to support this.

Figure A.26 Staff that are not fully proficient and under-utilised, 2019

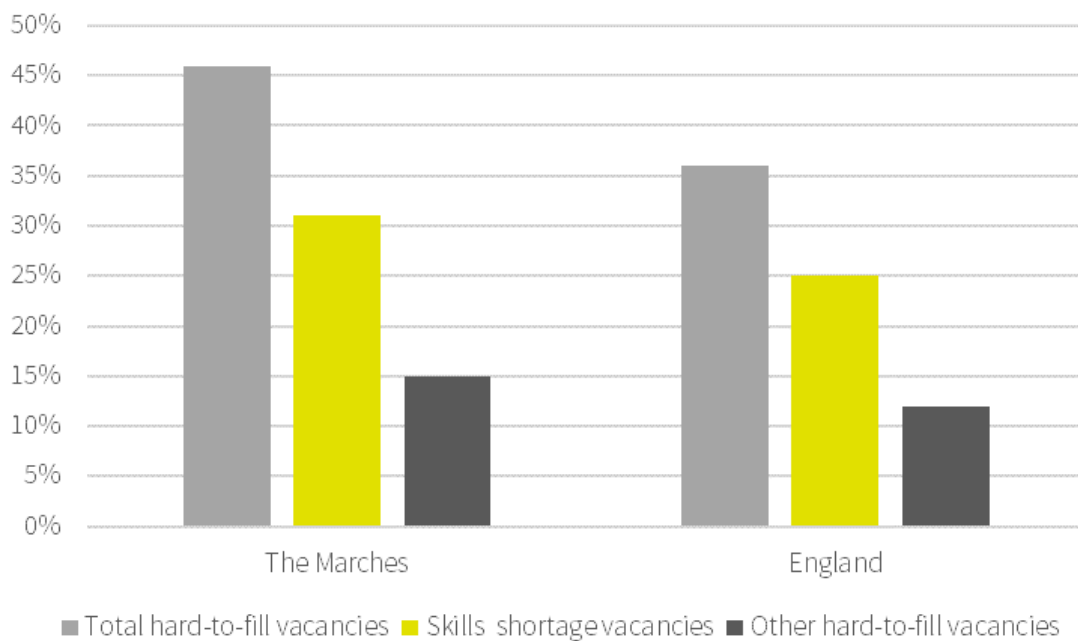


Source: Employer Skills Survey, 2019 (published 2020), 2019 LEP boundaries

Hard-to-fill and skills shortage vacancies

- A.101 In the Marches, 46% of vacancies are hard to fill, with 31% of vacancies being skills shortage vacancies. Both of these proportions are higher than the England equivalents of 36% and 25% respectively.
- A.102 Local employers and education providers have suggested that some vacancies are hard to fill due to poor perceptions of work in certain industries which are large employers in the Marches, for examples agriculture or health related roles. Skills shortages are noted in manufacturing roles of soft skills, metal work, furniture making and ceramics and glass, agricultural roles of poultry, welfare and general agriculture and Level 1 and 2 Food and Drink sector roles. Across sectors the need for competency in digital skills was noted.

Figure A.27 Proportion of vacancies that are hard-to-fill, 2019

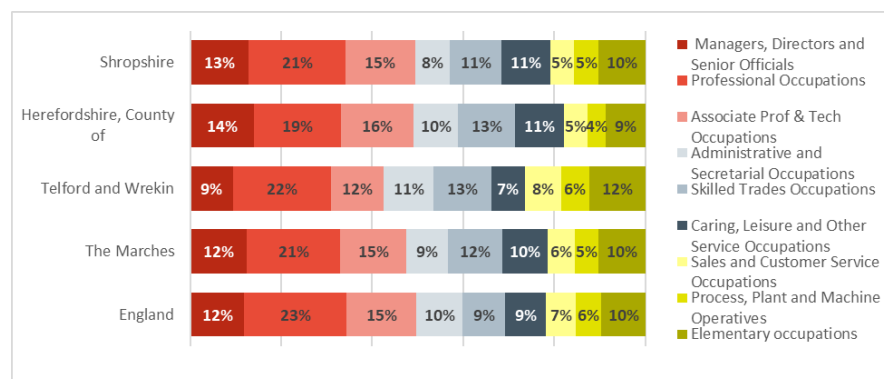


Source: Employer Skills Survey, 2019 (published 2020), 2019 LEP boundaries

Appendix B - Additional Analysis And References

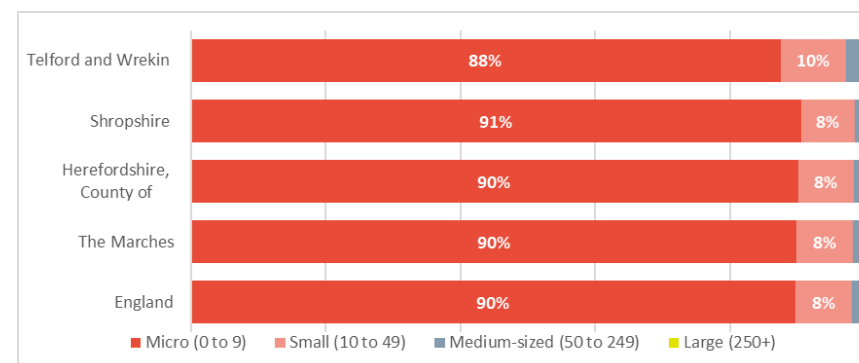
Local authority-level data

Figure B.1 Occupations by area, 2020



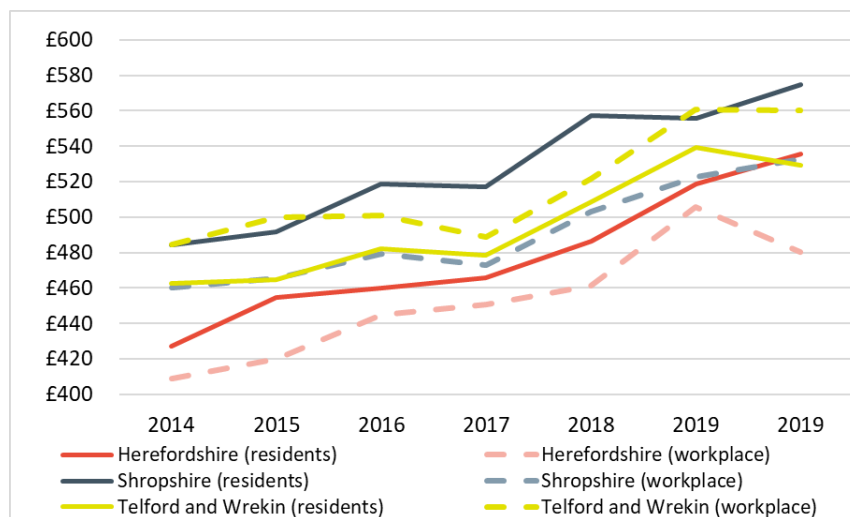
Source: Annual Population Survey, October 2019 – September 2020, 2020 SAP boundaries

Figure B.2 Business size, 2020



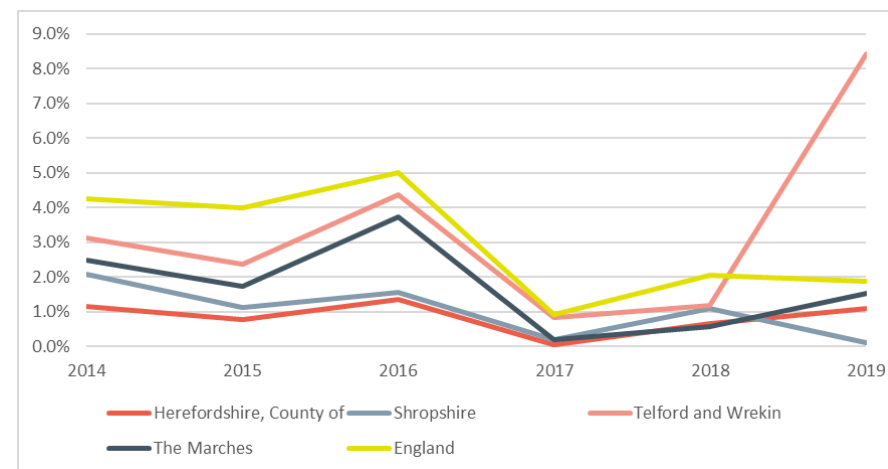
Source: UK Business Counts, 2020, 2020 SAP boundaries

Figure B.3 Median gross weekly wages (resident and workplace),
Marches local authorities



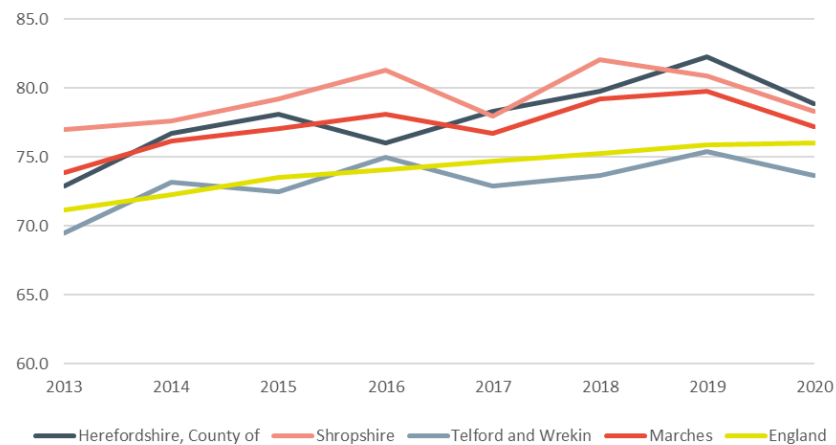
Source: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, 2014 - 2020

Figure B.4 Net business birth rate



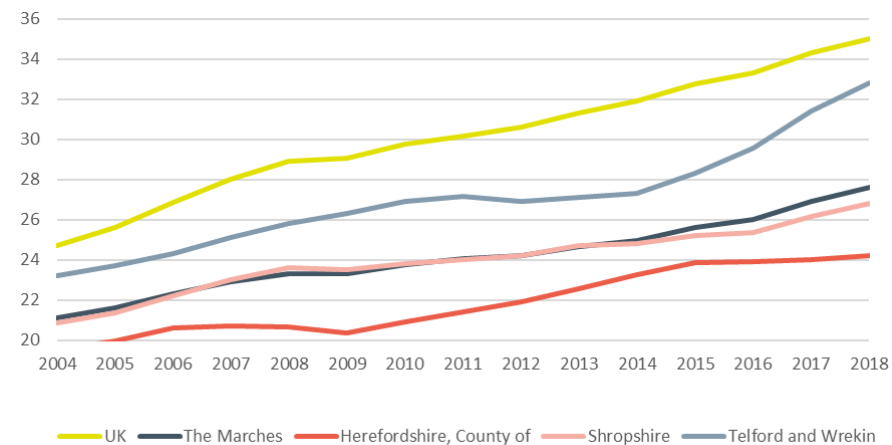
Source: ONS Business Demography, 2014 - 2019 (published 2020), 2020 SAP boundaries

Figure B.5 Employment rate



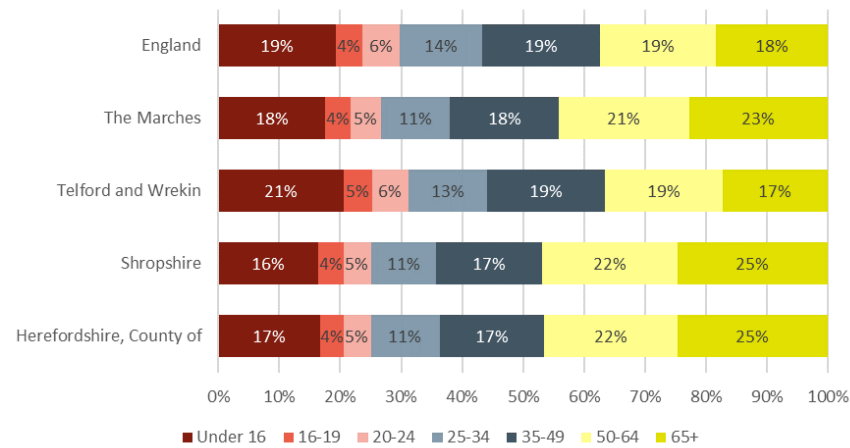
Source: Annual Population Survey, 2005 - 2020, 2020 SAP boundaries

Figure B.6 GVA per hour worked



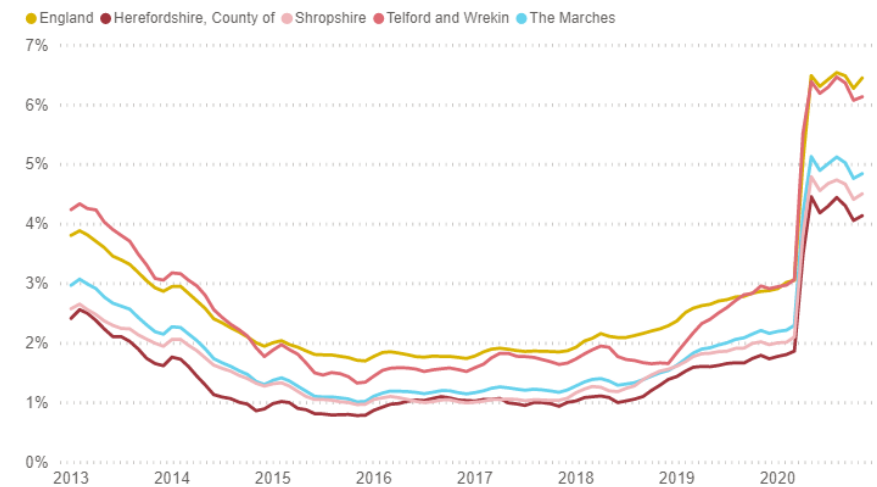
Source: ONS Subregional Productivity, 2004 - 2018 (published 2020), 2018 LEP/MCA boundaries

Figure B.7 Population by age, 2019



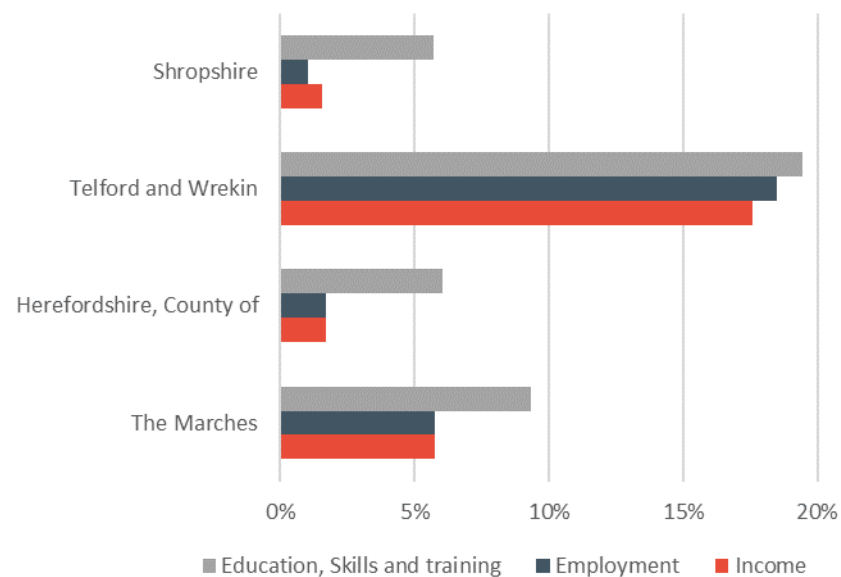
Source: ONS Mid-Year Population Estimates, 2019, 2020 SAP boundaries

Figure B.8 Claimant count as a % of working age population



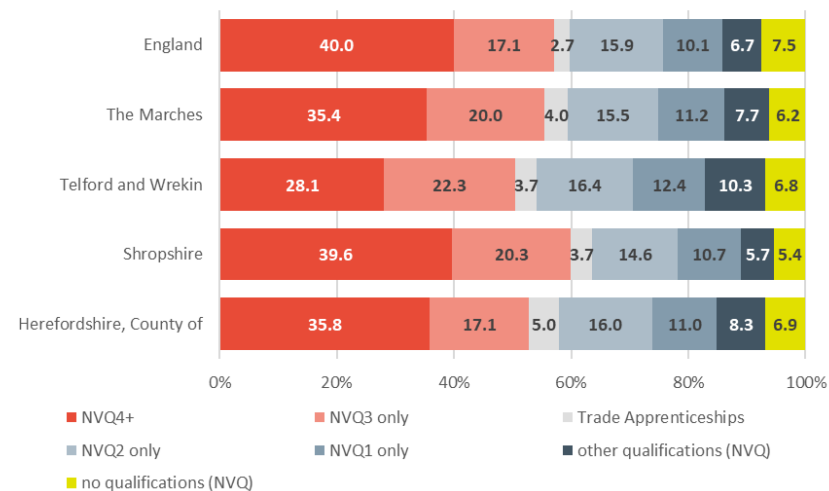
Source – ONS Claimant Count, January 2013 – November 2020, 2020 SAP boundaries

Figure B.9 Proportion of neighbourhoods in 10% most deprived nationally



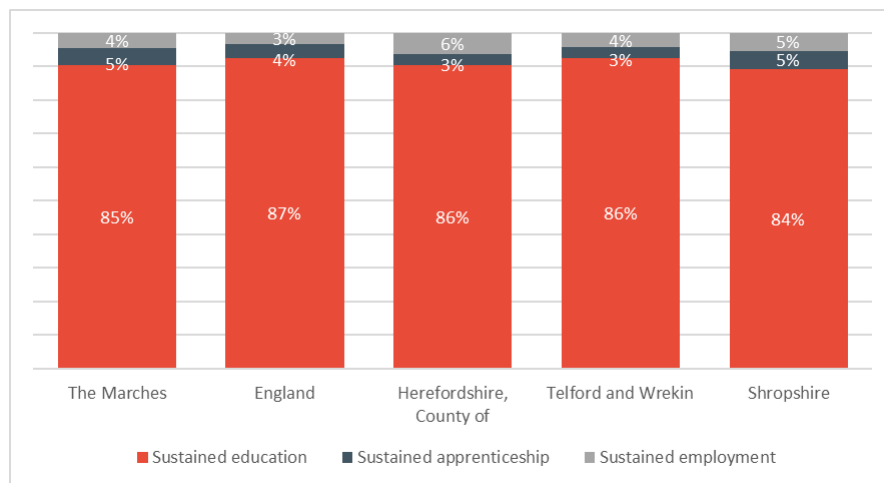
Source: Index of Multiple Deprivation, MHCLG, 2019, 2017 LEP boundaries

Figure B.10 Qualifications of people aged 16-64, 2019



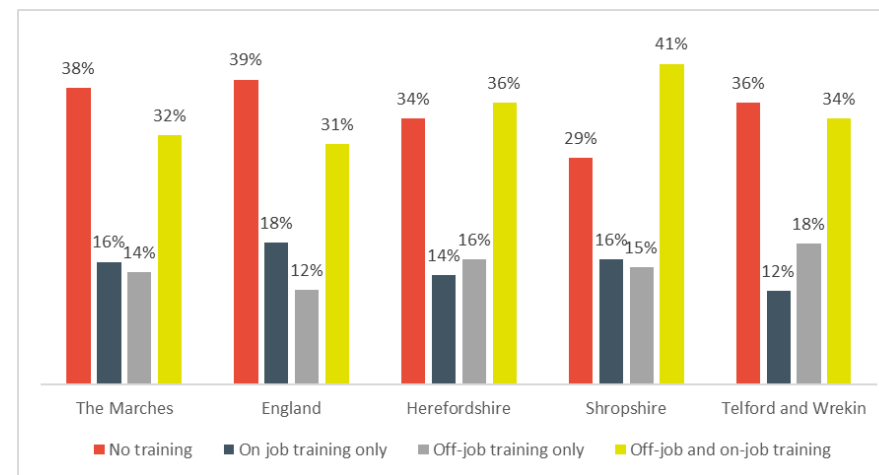
Source: Annual Population Survey, January 2019 – December 2019, 2020 SAP boundaries

Figure B.11 Key Stage 4 destinations - state-funded mainstream schools



Source: KS4 Destination Measures, DfE, 2018/19 (published 2020), 2020 SAP boundaries

Figure B.12 Employers providing training over past 12 months



Source: Employer Skills Survey, 2019 (published 2020), 2019 LEP boundaries

Figure B.13 16-18 destinations - state-funded mainstream schools and colleges, 2017/18

Area	Level	Sustained education	Sustained apprenticeship	Sustained employment
Herefordshire, County of	Total	37%	11%	32%
Herefordshire, County of	Level 3	50%	7%	29%
Herefordshire, County of	Level 2	13%	19%	40%
Herefordshire, County of	All other quals	11%	17%	29%
Shropshire	Total	37%	11%	34%
Shropshire	Level 3	47%	8%	32%
Shropshire	Level 2	15%	17%	40%
Shropshire	All other quals	9%	18%	29%
Telford and Wrekin	Total	44%	11%	28%
Telford and Wrekin	Level 3	57%	9%	25%
Telford and Wrekin	Level 2	20%	15%	38%
Telford and Wrekin	All other quals	27%	12%	26%

Source: 16-18 Destination Measures, DfE, 2018/19 (published 2020), 2020 SAP boundaries

Local Landscape

Theme	Challenge	Evidence	Reference
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Digital 	<p>There are several elements to the digital challenge:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Access - Vertical digital skills (including sector specific skills) - Horizontal digital skills - Digital skills needs are ever evolving 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is both an immediate and long term due to the ever-present and evolving nature of the work. Digital is too generic a term and thinking of it as a single entity is unhelpful – ‘Digital’ pervades all aspects of life and work and the skills required need to be more clearly defined within each. Quality of online skills provision needs to be monitored to ensure it is valuable. To some extent core digital skills are being developed in the education system already Upskilling of SME owners may be needed to ensure they benefit from digital opportunities 	Anecdotal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ageing Workforce 	<p>The Marches ageing population is creating growing demand to ensure people at later stages of their working life have the right skills and help transfer skills to younger generations of workers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proportion of over 65s is growing faster in the Marches than the UK. Provision for older people re-entering the labour market is limited. Skills Support for the Workforce and Skills Support for Redundancy programmes are addressing these. 	SEP Evidence Base, 2018 Anecdotal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inspiring Young People 	<p>Marches needs to secure more residents with higher-level skills to match national levels and compete.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A relatively low proportion of the population are qualified to NVQ L4+, particularly in Telford & Wrekin (T&W). A greater range of levels >4, including higher level technical training should be provided by the sector and supported by business. 	SEP Evidence Base, 2018 Anecdotal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Barriers to Participation 	<p>There remain areas where access to education is difficult. One potential solution is for colleges to provide a wide range of opportunities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In areas where access to education is difficult, there is a need within each geography (and therefore college catchment) to provide a wide range of opportunities. 	Anecdotal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Barriers to Participation 	<p>Although the Marches economy has a strong track-record of generating employment opportunities, these are not evenly available/accessible.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the Marches, 80% of the working age population are active, compared to 78.2% nationally. There is also a high employment rate of 76.7% compared to the UK average of 74.7%, however, Telford and Wrekin have lower levels of economic activity and higher unemployment rate than the UK average. 	SEP Evidence Base, 2018

Theme	Challenge	Evidence	Reference
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Barriers to Participation 	Digital Connectivity may be holding back learning and digital adoption in businesses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Marches has areas with high proportion of premises with slow/medium speeds e.g. Ludlow, Bishop's Castle, Bridgnorth. 	SEP Evidence Base, 2018
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Barriers to Participation 	Employment support should continue to consider opportunities to support people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Derwen College is an important asset for the Marches as it provides specialist further education for people with SEND. There is a continued need to consider availability of employment opportunities and support for people with SEND. 	Anecdotal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vocational Pathways 	The area's strong base in technical skills offers an attractive backdrop to grow and attract new businesses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marches has a higher proportion of medium skills (NVQ Level 2 and 3) and occupations than national average 	SEP Evidence Base, 2018
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agri-Tech 	The sector is not a major contributor to Marches' GVA or jobs. Growth has been stagnant in recent years and jobs are projected to shrink by 2022.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The agri-tech sector accounts for 4.6% of total GVA and 3.7% of total jobs. Both jobs and GVA have been static and jobs numbers are expected to fall by 2022. The sector's Jobs (92%) and GVA (65%) are very much dominated (65%) by "Growing of crops, market gardening, horticulture; Farming of animals" LQ (4.8). This is a low value subsector with average wage £21k and is also expected to contract by around 300 jobs by 2022. Two-thirds of jobs are farmers and farm worker roles with just 10% in managerial roles and no noticeable scientific/tech roles identified 	Agri-tech deep dive, 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agri-Tech 	The Marches has an HE anchor asset to build on.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Harper Adams University specialises in the agricultural and rural sector and has significant agri-tech research and innovation capability and has 4,700 students enrolled in agri-subjects (80% of total). There are a further 3,000 at University of Chester and Wolverhampton, but on their main campus, outside the area. 	Agri-tech deep dive, 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business & Professional Services (BPS) 	BPS is a large and rapidly evolving sector which will increasingly rely on skilled knowhow to compete and succeed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BPS is a large employer (19% of jobs) which generates significant GVA (~30%) for the economy. BPS is also the largest overall contributor to GVA growth in Marches (accounting for nearly half of growth between 2017/18) It is diverse (average wages and added value vary widely across the sector from £10k to £55), has an important role in sustaining other sectors and competes for skills sets relevant across the business base. 	BPS Deep Dive, 2020

Theme	Challenge	Evidence	Reference
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BPS sector needs both detailed subject knowledge and transferable skills to be part of vocational qualifications. In future medium sized firms are likely to face the biggest challenges and technology/self-service platforms are expected to replace lost of lower/mid-tier roles. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business & Professional Services (BPS) 	The Marches does not have any major BPS sector strengths, but it holds its own in some key sub-sectors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall the Marches' BPS has a Location Quotient of 0.7 but within it some big sub sectors around 1.0 e.g. employment agencies, other personal services, business and other management consultancy activities and head offices. It has a base in some key sub-sectors such as computer consultancy activities, professional, scientific, and technical activities, business support service activities and renting /real estate but these sub-sectors are under-represented against the national average. There is a reasonably broad spread of occupations within the BPS with no single role accounting for more than ~10% of jobs. Although most common occupations are in lower-value roles such as book-keeping, receptionist sales roles etc there is a good profile of business development roles, financial managers/directors, HR, sales execs, project management professional, accountants, marketing professionals etc 	BPS Deep Dive, 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enviro-Tech 	The Marches has ambitions to grow its enviro-tech sector as the global interest in low carbon and sustainability evolves, but the sector is small locally and success will require a shift to higher value and innovation sub-sectors, as well as wider access to softer general skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enviro-Tech accounts for 1% jobs ~3,000 in Marches according to Deep Dive but nearly 8,000 according to the sector needs assessment, however it is growing, and the area aims to create 1,000 new energy sector jobs by 2030 Demand for low-skill workers has decreased and the demand and rewards for higher-skill workers have increased. The green economy is not well defined as a sector of activity and some of the core environmental skills are not necessarily different from general traditional labour skills. Sustainability and the environment are diverse topics that cut across many employment sectors with an interest in efficiency, resource management and waste reduction. Roles in the sector tend to be low on the automation index. GVA is growing although the data is skewed by electricity, water collection, treatment and supply and the collection of non-hazardous waste accounting for nearly 66% of the total sector GVA. 	Enviro Sector Needs Assessment, 2017 Envirotech Deep Dive SEP, 2020

Theme	Challenge	Evidence	Reference
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Marches has aspirations to grow its anaerobic digestion for power, solar and water management expertise alongside a growing stewardship role for the countryside. 13% of the UK's anaerobic digestors are in the Marches. Building upon the work of the Marches Nature Partnership (MNP), the Centre for Research into Environmental Science and Technology (CREST) at University Centre Shrewsbury (UCS) puts the Marches on the map in terms of natural resource management and natural capital management. The Marches is a lower ranked LEP on a range of key innovation indicators. Government's Energy White Paper and 10 Point Plan promote the need for this sector to help "build back better". The development of the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy's (BEIS') Green Homes Grant demonstrated the need to increase skills within the supply chain. The Midlands Energy Hub has therefore run a skills competition to boost the availability of green skills training. With the new Gigafactory announced for Coventry, there will be a need for the wider supply chain to be skilled up in this technology. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enviro-Tech 	The sector is hard to define but it appears that a lot of people are in lower skill roles but with good wages on offer.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Although wage levels are generally good across the sector, Marches has a high concentration of jobs in lower value sub-sectors Collection of non-hazardous waste which employs over 1,000 and has LQ of 1.79 (Deep Dive) Other engineering and Technical Testing Needs Assessment show up is the Sector Needs Assessment as large and with high level of specialisation in Marches. 29% of employees have L4+ qualification cf 39% nationally. Enviro-tech occupations are hard to define and the one used in the Deep Dive has (Landscape) Gardeners accounting for one third of jobs. Just 10% of the 2,600 jobs identified are Environment Professionals however there are other high skilled roles in the definition such as town planning, architecture, conservation roles 	Enviro Sector Needs Assessment, 2017 Envirotech Deep Dive, 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enviro-Tech 	Like many other sectors, the Low Carbon Environmental Goods and Services sector has seen significant decline in under the pandemic.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the Marches sales in the Low Carbon Environmental Goods and Services sector have decreased by £70m between January and October 2020. This has occurred consistently across the subsectors of environmental sales, renewable energy sales and low carbon sales. 	Midlands Region and LEPs

Theme	Challenge	Evidence	Reference
			Low Carbon Environmental Goods and Services COVID-19 Impact, 2021
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enviro-Tech 	Prior to the pandemic growth in low carbon environmental goods and services subsectors was expected in environmental monitoring, marine pollution control, geothermal, biomass and waste management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental Monitoring with small GVA but very high scalability (stronger position than the Midlands average) Marine Pollution Control with small GVA but very high scalability (stronger position than the Midlands average) Geothermal with good GVA and high Scalability (stronger position than the Midlands average) Biomass with good GVA and medium Scalability (stronger position than the Midlands average) Waste Management with good GVA and medium Scalability (stronger position than the Midlands average) The average annual growth rate in jobs was around 3.5% with a total of 12,800 jobs in 2019. 	Midlands Region and LEPs Low Carbon Environmental Goods and Services COVID-19 Impact, 2021
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food Manufacturing & Processing (FMP) 	Food and drink is an important and growing sector for the Marches in terms of large employers and innovation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food and drink accounts for 3.8% of Marches GVA, 3.2% of jobs, 0.6% of establishments. These proportions are higher than the national base. FMP employment grew double the national rate from 2009-16. The Marches FMP LQ is 2.5. The Marches has all aspects of the production chain, some larger businesses (Muller, Avara Foods), an international reputation and pioneering research is delivered at Harper Adams University. The sector grew above UK levels (0.5% compared to 0.3%). The sector provides good average wages in the Marches (£28,420) This rises to £37,361 in the spirits industry and £36,630 in the cider and fruit wine manufacturing industry, accounting for 25 establishments in total. 	Food and Drink Deep Dive, 2020 FMP Sector Needs Assessment, 2017
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food Manufacturing & Processing 	Some food manufacturing industries are highly specialised in the Marches e.g. manufacture of cider and other fruit wines, processing and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High LQs (over 4) include: manufacture of cider and other fruit wines (38.91), processing and preserving of poultry meat (10.37), operation of dairies and cheese making (6.75) 	Food and Drink Deep Dive, 2020

Theme	Challenge	Evidence	Reference
	preserving of poultry meat, operation of dairies and cheese making.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employment in Herefordshire accounts 43% of Marches FMP. Half of Hereford's FMP employees work for Cargill Europe. Other clusters are in Oswestry, Ellesmere, Shrewsbury, Market Drayton, Telford, and Bromyard. The number of jobs in these industries are expected to grow. By 2022 there are forecast, new jobs in processing and preserving of meat (206), processing and preserving of poultry meat (154), manufacture of cider and other fruit wines (93), distilling, rectifying, and blending of spirits (32). Also 57 new jobs expected in manufacture of beer 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food Manufacturing & Processing 	The Marches has HE bases in food and drink related studies on which to build.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Harper Adams University specialises in the agricultural and rural sector with an important focus on Primary production, food processing and related management and engineering disciplines. 160 students study Food and Drink sector subjects at Harper Adams. University of Wolverhampton also offers specialist training courses for the sector and the Marches Centre of Manufacturing and Technology offer apprenticeships and training. National food security is high on the agenda. There may be an opportunity to grow this industry given the rise of interest in food, quality, provenience, and alternative food sources. 	Food and Drink Deep Dive, 2020 FMP Sector Needs Assessment, 2017 Anecdotal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defence and Security 	The Marches has some cyber assets from which it aims to grow its base.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skylon Park, Anon AI, University of Wolverhampton Telford, Harper Adams University, and an internationally recognised cyber cluster in Malvern. There has been investment in the University of Wolverhampton's Midlands Centre for Cyber Security at Skylon Park (185 jobs, opening soon). 	Cyber Security SIA, 2018
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Digital and Creative 	The Marches' digital sector has an established base in the Marches and is growing in size and skills requirements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Although, The Marches is middling in size terms relative to comparator areas ~7,000 people are employed by inherently digitally businesses. Digital sector employment only grew by 5% from 2012 -17 compared to national growth of 29% digital (behind WM and Stoke Staffs) Digital Consulting accounts for over half of employment and hardware manufacturing has grown 135% in 2012-17 and now outperforms UK in specialisation terms 	Marches Digital Strategy, 2019
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visitor economy 	The visitor economy has a crucial role to play creating employment opportunities and showcasing the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The visitor economy supports a wide range of jobs and creates volunteering opportunities which introduce new career opportunities. 	Visitor Economy Strategy, 2020

Theme	Challenge	Evidence	Reference
	Marches to the rest of the UK but, is not growing in line with national trends.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visitors create a demand for local businesses which encourages business starts and reinforces quality of life values. Jobs decreased by 23% (7,025) from 2017, despite a national increase of 0.5%. 	Deep Dive Exec Summary, 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visitor economy 	The sector should present as 'world class' in order to compete nationally.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The sector needs to ensure it retains itself as a "go to" region after the Staycation boom subsides and attracts high spenders with budgets to be discerning 	Anecdotal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education 	Education is a critical enabling sector.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is a significant source of employment across the Marches. Part of the sell of the Marches region for those able to relocate is the availability of high-quality local education provision. There are risks around skills in this sector given the impact of COVID-19. 	Anecdotal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> COVID-19 Recovery 	COVID-19 risks intensifying barriers to participation for older and younger workers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Older workers are susceptible to covid-related unemployment risks such as age discrimination and caring responsibilities. Historical evidence of recessions shows people aged over 50 are more likely to become inactive in the labour market if unemployed. Young people are more likely to be working in precarious zero hours jobs that have been most affected by lockdown. And they have fewer resources/experiences to call upon to reengage in the labour market, which traditionally affects their long-term career development. 	Fuller Working Lives Bulletin
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> COVID-19 Recovery 	COVID-19 has created real demand for online learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools and colleges have needed to quickly establish online learning provision which could provide a real base for future expansion of learning and open opportunities for more flexible learning with greater reach, beyond the Marches. This flexibility could help support Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and learning for older workers with a requirement for flexibility around learning, but there may be barriers to employers funding online learning and to younger students who prefer to attend in person. 	Anecdotal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> COVID-19 Recovery 	The need for business management and leadership.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a need for change management, business recovery and resilience. It is also worth noting the impact of other events on the SME infrastructure e.g. floods in Winter 2020. 	Anecdotal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> COVID-19 Recovery 	The crisis presents opportunities for rebalancing of the Marches economy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Marches could re-establish itself as a leader in the staycation industry, attract higher skilled workers who are operating remotely, better promote its Health and Social Care strengths under an environment which has re- 	Anecdotal

Theme	Challenge	Evidence	Reference
		evaluated their importance and continue to build on digital skills which have been developed across the board.	

Skills Supply

Theme	Challenge	Evidence	Reference
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inspiring Young People 	Quality of Kickstart experience needs to lead to sustained ongoing employment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Marches has a good base of gateways and steps to allow businesses to now directly apply for <30 places provides a good basis for the Marches to build on a good start for kickstart. Business engagement in kickstart may be being held back by lack of recognition of the mentoring that is required for young participants 	Anecdotal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inspiring Young People 	Careers advice and experience is a critical tool in getting young people to appreciate local work options.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Marches is in the midst of a change in the way careers advice and guidance operates and there is a recognition that more can be done to deliver creative experience and to better record the experience of participants. Some of the most important sectors in the Marches are poorly perceived as career options. There is a lack of understanding of the roles available and misperceptions around the nature of work. In the short term, there is a risk that young people seeking high skills careers will leave the Marches for Higher Education and not return. Therefore, the need is to make young people aware of the options in the Marches and tackle demand side interventions to encourage more higher skill opportunities. 	Anecdotal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Barriers to Participation 	The Marches is currently taking steps to widen workforce participation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The local authorities in Herefordshire and Telford & Wrekin deliver adult and community learning through their adult education budget grant. Courses are aimed at widening participation by supporting adults back into learning, training, and employment, through community outreach provision delivered in local venues. This contributes to a wide range of outcomes for individuals and the wider community including personal and social, educational attainment, economic regeneration, and improved health and well-being. In Shropshire, the Adult Education budget is managed through FE providers. 	Anecdotal

Theme	Challenge	Evidence	Reference
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Barriers to Participation 	Lots of Marches' lower skilled residents have little incentive to acquire new skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many lower skilled residents have jobs they can adequately undertake without additional training and, unless their employer is making use of the levy, are unlikely to be encouraged to invest time in learning. 	Anecdotal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Barriers to Participation 	Although the Marches economy has a strong track-record of generating employment opportunities, these are not evenly available/accessible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the Marches, 80% of the working age population are active, compared to 78.2% nationally. There is also a high employment rate of 76.7% compared to the UK average of 74.7%, however, Telford & Wrekin have lower levels of economic activity and higher unemployment rate than the UK average. 	SEP Evidence Base, 2018
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Barriers to Participation 	Providers need to capitalise on the opportunity for more digital course delivery.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More work is needed to understand capacity among providers to deliver more courses remotely for dispersed residents and to make learning more accessible to people with other commitments 	Anecdotal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Barriers to Participation 	Micro-credentialling provides an opportunity to demonstrate skills of a potential employee at a more detailed level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It can be difficult for employers and employees to communicate what skills they have/need. There may be a particular need for this around core skills which are often assumed but not accredited. This could help older unemployed people return to work, possibly in new sectors. Micro-credentialling, if properly accredited and recognised could demonstrate skills more precisely. Open University or bitesized FE/HE courses could also help to upskill employees, particularly who are out of work due to the pandemic. This could be supported by the Universal Skills Builder Partnership 	Anecdotal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vocational Pathways 	Apprenticeships in the Marches have been growing but there appears to be scope to ramp up the volume further across many sectors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The total number of apprenticeships in the Marches (across all sectors) increased to 6,360 in 2018/19 - up 5.5% compared to 4.7% nationally. A higher proportion of Marches residents have trade apprenticeship qualifications than in the UK (4% vs 3%). However, the balance of supply of and demand for apprenticeship qualified workers varies by sector and suggests there is a need for more apprenticeships. For example, some manufacturing skills shortages (metal work, furniture making, ceramics and glass) could be met with apprenticeships. There is scope for greater recycling of unspent apprenticeship levy funds. 	Sector Deep Dives, 2020 Anecdotal

Theme	Challenge	Evidence	Reference
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vocational Pathways 	There is a need for greater provision of vocational training.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A greater range of levels >4, including higher level technical training should be provided by the sector and supported by business. Access to high quality training services can be difficult and need to be considered. There is a need to work together to provide appropriate educational opportunities 	Anecdotal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vocational Pathways 	Creation of vocational pathways needs to be more accessible for employers and providers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apprenticeships standards require more flexibility to keep up with the pace of change in technology. It will become harder for employers to offer apprenticeships as a result of the pandemic and so more support or communication of benefits may be needed. FE colleges could meet demand with more capacity. T Levels require a high level of resources from employers and educators. Support may be required to enable this. 	Anecdotal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demand-Led Provision 	Too few Marches employers have training plans in place and too little in-work training is provided.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Colleges are using EMSI more to help design courses provision but it is unclear they have the capacity to understand demand and develop appropriate course programmes. This concern is particularly acute in relation to digital skills provision. Skills Support for the Workforce (ESF project) provides a platform service to help businesses develop training plans. 	Anecdotal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demand-Led Provision 	There is a need for significant investment in FE infrastructure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is needed to support the demand generated by the rising demography, the home building programmes and the potential for relocation to the Marches post-COVID. 	Anecdotal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supply-led provision 	There may be scope for supply led provision to anticipate future skills needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a need to invest in the infrastructure to support the skills needs identified which have limited financial viability in the short term in a demand led system. 	Anecdotal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Careers Advice & Guidance 	Too many young people are missing out on employer encounters.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 17% of young people (7,900 school and college students) in the Marches LEP are missing out on employer encounters. This is a medium level gap compared to other LEPs. 31% are missing out on workplace experiences. (3,800 school and college students. This is a medium level gap compared to other LEPs. 	Careers and Enterprise Company, Closing the Gap, 2019

Theme	Challenge	Evidence	Reference
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employers can find leavers lack the basic behaviours needed in the workplace. A lack of earlier interaction with employers contributes to this. The role of work experience also needs to be revisited. The Wolf recommendations, accepted by the government and still driving government policy, were for work experience to take place closer to the point of entry to the labour market. This is made very difficult by the competition for the limited number of placements because so many of these placements are several years from entry into the workplace. More support for businesses to take on work experience placements could help to increase numbers. 	Anecdotal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Careers Advice & Guidance 	Relationships between schools and FE could be used to support careers IAG.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are some good relationships between schools and FE that can be built on. The logistics are an issue as there are so many different schools and FE providers to link up. A centralised approach is needed (e.g. via The Marches LEP Careers Hub). 	Anecdotal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Careers Advice & Guidance 	There is a need for Independent Careers Advice and Guidance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It needs to be recognised that the lead time on changing perceptions and therefore behaviours is significant. Marches Skills Provider Network offer a comprehensive course finder online, which is updated by training providers twice a year, this could be better promoted if supported centrally. A 'Ladder for Shropshire' approach in the wider geography could help signpost opportunities. Chamber of Commerce visual projects on local occupations appear to be helpful. 	Anecdotal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Careers Advice & Guidance 	There is potential for entrepreneurship to be shown more prominently as a career option.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is potentially a major contributor to economic recovery – lots of displaced talent could be supported to create new enterprises. There is a need to encourage more social enterprises to tackle societal issues. Especially given Shropshire's Social Enterprise Place status. 	Anecdotal

Theme	Challenge	Evidence	Reference
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agri-Tech 	Agri-tech generates very low apprenticeship numbers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Just over 100 agri-tech related apprenticeships start each year. Animal Care and Veterinary Science account for the largest portion of agri-tech apprenticeships 45% of agri-tech apprenticeships are advanced, but not are higher i.e. degree level 	Agri-tech deep dive, 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agri-Tech 	Provision of agri-apprenticeships is not large, but there is some clustering around Marches.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 17 organisations provide agri-apprenticeships nationally and 6 are within 50 miles of Marches and they offer 7 of the 12 standards associated with the sector. Herefordshire, Ludlow and North Shropshire College is largest training provider with Reaseheath and South Staffs following Harper Adams University, with specialisms in agricultural and rural affairs offers Degree Level Apprenticeships. 	Agri-tech deep dive, 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agri-Tech 	There are issues around ability of courses in order to boost apprenticeship numbers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The sector generates low apprenticeship numbers because there are no higher level agri-tech apprenticeships, only at Level 3. More needs to be done to drive the development of this opportunity. 	Anecdotal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agri-Tech 	Agri-tech sector shows signs of upskilling existing staff to meet evolving needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Half of Marches' agri-tech staff get some training (cf 56% for all sectors) and on average they receive 3.7 days of training when given (cf 2.1 for all sectors locally) 55% of Marches' agri-tech employers expect to need new skills from employees in next 12 months, much of which might be doable through upskilling existing staff 	Agri-tech deep dive, 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advanced Manufacturing (Adv Mfg.) 	Staff training levels are low, and this may be driven by cost and the time required to train staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Across the Marches, 56% of all staff get some training, compared to 62% in England. But, just 47% get training in the advanced manufacturing sector. However, for those in the sector that do get training the average number of training days is 7.3 which is double the overall Marches overage of 3.7 	Adv Mfg. Deep Dive, 2020 Adv Mfg. Sector Needs Assessment, 2017

Theme	Challenge	Evidence	Reference
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advanced Manufacturing 	Capital equipment costs are a barrier to skills provision in Advanced Mfg.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is difficult to provide training where the specialist equipment and knowledge of that equipment is needed. Often requires public intervention. 	Adv Mfg. Deep Dive, 2020 Adv Mfg. Sector Needs Assessment, 2017
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advanced Manufacturing 	The number of Advanced Mfg. Apprenticeships in Marches is static overall and very reliant on the RAF.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Despite UK and Marches growth of around 5% pa in apprenticeship numbers, mfg. apprenticeships have not grown between 16/17 and 18/19. Shropshire accounts for 75% of Marches mfg. apprenticeships (and the fall in number overall is attributable to Shropshire – Herefordshire (up) & and T&W (static) There appears to have been a switch to Engineering from Manufacturing Technologies apprenticeships over the 3 years period. 10 providers account for 84% of starts and one (RAF) accounted for over half (1,060 in 28/19) 	Adv Mfg. Deep Dive, 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advanced Manufacturing 	The Marches appears to do well on higher level manufacturing apprenticeships, but the range of apprenticeships offered locally appears to be narrow.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two thirds of all Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies starts are in Advanced Apprenticeships (akin to NVQ Level 3) New degree level apprenticeships have been developed at University of Wolverhampton and Harper Adams University There are 61 providers offering apprenticeships in the advanced manufacturing sector within 55 miles of the (central postcode of) the Marches. Across West Midlands (WM), 35 out of the 94 apprenticeship standards are offered. 28/94 are offered by a sole provider and 10 providers of these are in the WM. 26 of the adv mfg. courses were not being catered for anywhere in England, and a further 11 were only available outside WM 	Adv Mfg. Deep Dive, 2020

Theme	Challenge	Evidence	Reference
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advanced Manufacturing 	The Marches have a growing base of HE Engineering provision in its area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> University of Wolverhampton has a well-established campus in the Marches, located at Priorslee in Telford, specialising in engineering which has recently seen significant investment in its facilities and overall Wolverhampton has 1,445 students enrolled on advanced manufacturing subjects. The new NMITE institute in Hereford is developing an innovative offer in technology and engineering courses. 	Adv Mfg. Deep Dive, 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advanced Manufacturing 	Training opportunities need to be more attractive to learners and more relevant modules need to be offered that more closely matched the needs of employers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HVM Catapult believes some of the growing demand can be met by re-channelling learners interested in digital roles towards digital manufacturing roles. More modular and flexible training courses are needed to upskill and reskill the existing workforce with together with a responsive teacher training system, ensures that content and pedagogy can promptly accommodate changes in skills needs. 	Adv Mfg. Deep Dive, 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advanced Manufacturing 	Experiences of advanced manufacturing employers could support development of advanced manufacturing skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More engagement with large, advanced manufacturing employers in the Marches around their high-tech capabilities could help to inspire people to gain engineering skills. 	Anecdotal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advanced Manufacturing 	Specialist education can be difficult to deliver due to dispersed employment opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specialist education is difficult to fund / develop without a critical mass of employment opportunities. Could FE provide high quality generic skills that can be applied to individual settings? 	Anecdotal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business & Professional Services (BPS) 	The Marches BPS sector could make better use of apprenticeships at all levels. These should be co-designed with the sector to meet local needs to ensure local people can engage with and benefit from growth in the sector.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The sector has hosted ~1,600 apprenticeship starts in BPS related subjects pa 16/17 to 18/19. Just over 80% are in Business Management or Administration with a handful in Law and Marketing. One third of the BPS apprenticeships in 18/19 were delivered by Telford College (250), Riverside Training Limited (150) and Herefordshire, Ludlow, and North Shropshire College (140) 76 out of the 102 apprenticeship standards associated with the sector are being offered within 55 miles of the Marches. The gaps in provision 	BPS Deep Dive, 2020

Theme	Challenge	Evidence	Reference
		appear to be in quite niche subject areas (e.g. actuary, public sector compliance).	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business & Professional Services (BPS) 	The Marches has only a small base of local HE provision in BPS relevant subjects, however larger numbers of students are studying relevant courses on nearby campuses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> University of Chester at Shrewsbury specialises in business and education, and the University of Wolverhampton's University Centre Telford in Southwater delivers education, marketing, and business management courses. Across all its campuses Wolverhampton University has 4,000 students studying subjects relevant to BPS and Chester University 3,000 (Anecdotal) Harper Adams University is also a major supplier of rural surveyors. 	BPS Deep Dive, 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enviro-Tech 	There appears to be huge scope to increase the number of enviro-tech apprenticeships and amount of HE provision to drive growth and stronger specialisms.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The sector has started just 10 apprenticeships in the Marches. There are 16 relevant providers within 55 miles. HE provision is very limited 20 students at Harper Adams and a further 370 at University of Chester (not necessarily in Marches) NB there may be courses which offer transferable relevant skills) 	Enviro-Tech Sector Needs, 2017 Envirotech Deep Dive, 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food Manufacturing & Processing 	Food and drink apprenticeship numbers are decreasing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food and drink related apprenticeships (Hospitality and Catering) decreased 6.7% in 2018/19 to 250. Telford and Wrekin recorded an increase of 14.3% or 9 apprenticeships in absolute numbers. ABP (major employer and meat processor company) struggle to recruit and train apprentice butchers. There are fewer L2 apprenticeship programmes available as apprenticeships are encouraged at higher levels 	Food and Drink Deep Dive, 2020 Anecdotal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food Manufacturing & Processing 	Effort is needed to make the sector a more attractive destination for learners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perceptions of the industry are seen as a deterrent for recruitment, creating competition for labour. This is led by issues around image and pay. 	FMP Sector Needs Assessment, 2017 Anecdotal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health and Social Care 	The care sector and education providers in the Marches have already	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Councils and partners across the LEP area are active in promoting the role of technology to make some care roles more attractive. 	Innovative Healthcare

Theme	Challenge	Evidence	Reference
	begun to work together on tackling skills shortages.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The care sector is working with Skills for Care to identify future skills needs and develop shared apprenticeships between workplaces and FE colleges. There are a range of skills providers: FE colleges, Shropshire Partners in Care, Royal Shrewsbury Hospital Centre of Excellence in Nursing, University Centre Shrewsbury, University of Wolverhampton Telford, Wye Valley NHS Trust, Robert Jones Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic Hospital UCS - new access degree in nursing. Wye Valley NHS Trust - Alternative Route to Specialist Accreditation 	Analysis, 2019
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health and Social Care 	The COVID-19 crisis is leading to increased mental health challenges. There is evidence of over-supply of labour in related skills, but supply and demand of specific skills may need to be monitored.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is nationwide evidence of increasing mental health and wellbeing challenges post COVID-19. The Marches should be aware of the additional requirement this may pose of the Health and Social Care sector. 	Anecdotal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construction 	The Marches has a base of HE provision relevant to the construction sector which could be built upon to offer more degree apprenticeship programmes to help meet higher level skills gaps with the right employer involvement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HE providers in the Marches delivered graduates in the following courses in 2017/18: Civil engineering > 680; Building > 500; Architecture > 210; Planning (urban, rural and regional) > 90; and Landscape and garden design < 50. Some provision for higher level training for professional roles is available as degree apprenticeship programmes. Expansion requires support from employers to recruit at age 18 rather than 21 (graduate). 	CITB Skills Gap Analysis, 2019
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construction 	Construction training has been in decline and could increase supply of trainers by making better use of older workers in the sector.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Around 20 training providers have delivered construction related training (including apprenticeships) over the last five years. A core network of eight providers has delivered around 90% of that. Provision of training reduced between 2012/13 and 2016/17, with new starters decreasing by 25%. Apprenticeships have increased slightly (23% from 2012 to 2016, driven in Shropshire). CITB suggests there are difficulties recruiting trainers and that retirees could provide Vocational Education Training to provide up to date skills. 	CITB Skills Gap Analysis, 2019

Theme	Challenge	Evidence	Reference
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visitor economy 	There may be a need for greater accreditation of visitor economy skills to encourage long term careers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For example, good customer service makes a difference to the strength of the visitor economy and its wider benefits. However, the skills required are not often formally recognised. 	Anecdotal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education 	Education providers require capital investment in order to provide a comprehensive set of technical qualifications.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capital investment for growth is required to fully develop the capacity for teaching/accommodation and expansion into diversified courses such as apprenticeships and higher technical qualifications. 	Anecdotal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education 	There is scope for further collaboration between skills providers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marches providers need to collaborate with other providers who are already successfully delivering level 4 and 5 curriculum in the region. 	Anecdotal

Skills Demand

Theme	Challenge	Evidence	Reference
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Digital 	<p>Digital skills are regularly identified as a core employee attribute. A lack of digital capability poses a significant threat to social inclusion and the ability for people to improve their quality of life and employment prospects and Marches will need to focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retraining existing employees with the skills needed for changing and new roles. Realigning skills and training provision to the needs of digitised employers Increased emphasis on continued professional development and acumen that will enable employees to adapt to changes in the future 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All parts of the Marches have fewer people with Basic Digital Skills than the national average. Local residents in The Marches are trailing in terms of basic digital skills competency, which presents challenges in ensuring that all residents and businesses have the capacity to benefit from digital opportunities. 	Marches Digital Strategy, 2017
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ageing Workforce 	The Marches' workforce is ageing and needs to accelerate its attraction and retention of younger skilled people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The share of over 65s is growing. And the workforce aged 50-64 has the highest proportion of low/no qualifications. 	SEP Evidence Base, 2018
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inspiring Young People 	Apprenticeships need to be positioned as a route to recovery for businesses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apprenticeship numbers are expected to fall during COVID and narrative needs to be reoriented to their value for helping businesses refresh and upskill out of the COVID crisis. Signs of displacement from apprenticeships onto kickstart needs to be monitored and managed 	Anecdotal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inspiring Young People 	Young people should be supported in understanding the opportunities available to them in the Marches' priority sectors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a need to improve communication of roles and progression routes available to parents, careers guidance teams and young people. For example, in relation to the strength of the Food Manufacturing and Processing industry since COVID-19 and the 	Anecdotal

Theme	Challenge	Evidence	Reference
		opportunities that will arise from greater attention being paid to domestic food supplies.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agri-Tech 	Agri-tech's future skills needs will become more tech-focused and need to draw from outside traditional sources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agri-tech sector needs to open itself up to more people to secure the needed skills in new cutting-edge technology like artificial intelligence, gene-editing, and robotics, which require engineers, chemists, geneticists, and data analysts. There is also a growing focus on low carbon farming, reshoring and sustainability driving the sector that will further re-shape sector drivers and needs. 	Agri-tech deep dive, 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agri-Tech 	There are growing opportunities for Agri-Tech employment in the Marches, which should be harnessed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is some clustering of Agri-tech delivery capacity around the Marches to build on with a brand-new opportunity of the NI-Park in Newport seeking to bring employers to the region. The Marches engineering and digital capacity could be better supported and harnessed to make the most of this. 	Anecdotal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advanced Manufacturing 	The challenges in Advanced Manufacturing may be specific to the subsector.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is a very broad definition that should be narrowed by sector. There may be a need for better understanding of the individual skills needs. The demand is for the right skills, not for more general provision where there is an oversupply 	Anecdotal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advanced Manufacturing 	Manufactures recognise they need to up-skill and the focus needs to be on technical skills with an innovation and/or commercial focus.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Marches manufacturing has a relatively youthful profile compared to benchmarks but still needs to consider the implications of replacing skills ageing workers (8,800 people by 2014 -2024). The skills profile for the Marches manufacturing sector shows higher levels skills are under-represented. The biggest increases in job roles from 2018 to 2022 are expected to be in Engineering activities and related technical consultancy (302) and Manufacture of metal structures and parts of structures (107) Just over half of Marches manufacturing employers expected to need new skills in the next 12 months (compared to 62% for all sectors) Future drivers of skills demand are expected to be business development among senior managers; highly skilled graduates to 	Adv Mfg. Deep Dive, 2020 Advanced Mfg. Sector Needs Assessment

Theme	Challenge	Evidence	Reference
		<p>undertake collaborative R&D; low carbon agenda around energy-efficient technologies and lightweight materials; and exporting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The sector needs both detailed subject knowledge and transferable skills to be part of vocational qualifications. • Sector needs highly skilled workforce operating in lean and continuous improvement cultures. Growth is also expected in 3D printing, composites, and robotics 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advanced Manufacturing 	There appears to be a reasonably high level of job vacancies and staff turnover in the sector, and at higher skills levels.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were just under 10,000 unique vacancies (against ~30,000 jobs) in Advanced Manufacturing jobs in year to January 2020 in the Marches, roughly evenly split between the three authorities. The top ten recruiters all appear to be agencies. • The top requested skill was mechanical engineering (as expected given the number of jobs it accounts for). Two of the top three job roles with higher numbers of openings are relatively highly skilled and have low vulnerability to automation i.e. Production managers and directors in Manufacturing (580) and Metal working production and maintenance fitters (306). 	Adv Mfg. Deep Dive, 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enviro-Tech 	The Marches enviro-tech labour market seems to be active with vacancies advertised >10% of total jobs. Lots of the roles are lower wage/ skill but there is a tier of professional roles tied to public sector that will continue to create employment opportunities in higher skill enviro-tech roles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment data suggests there were 485 vacancies in 2019 (vs 3,000 jobs). The Environment Agency accounted for 21 with T&W Council seeking a further 9. Other top ten slots include agencies and some consulting companies. Looks like a lot of small companies advertised small numbers of roles. • The sector's workforce base is ageing. • The top titles being recruited were Architectural Technicians and Gardeners, with Environmental Officers and Planners present (in teens). • The top enviro-tech skills being sought were in professional roles i.e. Planning Permission, CAD, and Risk. • The big numbers forecast for future opening by 2022 relate to lower value roles such as Gardeners and Groundsmen. Openings for 	Enviro-Tech Sector Needs Envirotech Deep Dive, 2020

Theme	Challenge	Evidence	Reference
		Environmental Professionals, Town Planning Officers/Technicians are likely to be in the teens.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food Manufacturing & Processing 	Food and drink sector job adverts are increasing, although this was mainly in catering rather than manufacturing. Still there are more annual job openings in food and drink manufacturing than graduates of food and drink manufacturing courses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number of adverts increased from 319 in January 2016 to 531 in January 2020. This is an increase of 66.5%. Top 10 jobs advertised (48% of adverts) were bar and restaurant workers. 	Food and Drink Deep Dive, July 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defence and Security 	Consideration is required regarding the need for skills growth and coverage across a large geographical LEP region.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The sector is small and geographically specialised. 	Anecdotal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defence and Security 	Development of skills and talent is a priority issue for SME cyber security firms.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The report finds hundreds of unfilled vacancies, due to a City of London pull effect, gap in availability of accredited skills, strong sector growth outstripping supply. This is causing inflated salary costs which prohibit new innovative start-ups. 	Cyber Security SIA, 2018
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health and Social Care 	The ageing population of the Marches is creating growing demand for people qualified in care and is a driver of GVA and jobs for the economy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The sector accounts for 8.3% of GVA, 14.1% of jobs and 4.8% of establishments in the Marches. The proportion of jobs and GVA is above the national base and the sector has increased its GVA by £123m (the second highest sector increase in real terms, after BPS) Overall specialisation index is at 1.1 with deeper specialisms in residential care (1.87), veterinary (1.76), residential nursing care (1.62), residential care for the elderly and disabled (1.48) and residential care for learning disabilities, mental health, and substance abuse (1.46). 	Health and Social Care Deep Dive, 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health and Social Care 	Although not a high paying sector, it is expected to grow in employment terms along with the wider care industry.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The average wage is £21,500, but wages range between industries from £13,600 to £28,700. There are expected to be an additional 1,023 jobs in caring, leisure and other service occupations. 	Health and Social Care Deep Dive, 2020

Theme	Challenge	Evidence	Reference
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a need (and potential opportunity) for better perceptions of the sector 	Deep Dive Exec Summary
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health and Social Care 	Nurses and care workers dominate job postings in the Marches in 2020.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 14% of all vacancies as of Dec 2020 	Emsi data
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health and Social Care 	The Marches health & care sector has growing numbers of employment opportunities and there is demand for more training provision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number of job adverts in Health and Social Care in the Marches has increased 151% between 2016 and 2020. The top requested skill is nursing, followed by communication. Management and leadership appeared in 17% of postings. The area's provider base offers a range of courses already but there may be room to grow to meet demand from vocations allied to medicine, nursing, medicine and dentistry, care, optical services. There is a need to invest in training for digital health roles to enhance career development and retain staff. 	Health and Social Care Deep Dive, 2020 Anecdotal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construction 	The Marches has a growing construction sector and demand for qualified construction labour is expected to increase.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Between 2011 and 2016, the construction sector was the largest growing sector in the Marches. Jobs increased 100% in architectural and engineering activities from 2011 to 2016. The Marches LEP construction workforce has experienced a substantial increase of 32% in the last 7 years. Labour demand in The Marches is expected to grow from 20,590 people in 2019 to 21,370 people by 2023. 	SEP Evidence Base, 2018 CITB Skills Gap Analysis, 2019

Mapping Skills Supply and Demand

Theme	Challenge	Evidence	Reference
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Digital 	<p>There is a potential mismatch between the skills requirements of key sectors and the supply of skills within the local labour market, with the evolving shape of the local economy and digitisation of all industries a key driver of change.</p> <p>There is more to be done in terms of increasing the role that vocational employment pathways play in delivering a strong supply of digitally skilled people to local labour market, including raising the availability and take-up of apprenticeships.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whilst schools, further and higher education institutions are actively working to embed digital skills within the curriculum and deliver an expanded online learning experience, there is a sense that collaboration with businesses has not always been optimal and a new engagement vehicle is needed. There is some uncertainty as to whether the current digital skills offer is best aligned with business needs and whether it is best configured to drive business adoption of digital processes /tools. Skills providers do not have strong evidence to help them re-align digital programmes to meet business needs or latest industry practice /technology. There is a need to rebalance the emphasis between academic and vocational employment pathways, with an expanded role for apprenticeships helping to address skills gaps and recruitment challenges. The demand for digital skills is not isolated to firms which are the most digitally dependent, rather businesses trading across different sectors require a certain baseline of digital skills proficiency. Labour market constraints are a tangible challenge for local businesses, with access to digital skills being a prominent factor, meaning firms are forgoing opportunities to deliver better, more efficient services and generate value from online markets. 	<p>Marches Digital Strategy</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demand-Led Provision 	<p>FE colleges are very driven by demand but are not confident they are asking the right questions to ensure their provision meets business needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 50% of employers in The Marches have a training plan or budget for training in place, this is lower than the England average of 54%, and 34% of employers have no budget or training plan, compared to 31% nationally. On average, staff receive 3.69 training days a year, compared to 3.99 across England. 62% of employers in The Marches expect they will need new skills in the next 12 months, this is the same as national levels. 	<p>Deep Dive Exec Summary, 2020</p>

Theme	Challenge	Evidence	Reference
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demand-Led Provision 	More could be done to improve communication on skills needs with SMEs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is difficult to access SMEs to understand their skills demands. The education sector requires employers to be more visible with their needs for trainee, apprenticeship or Graduate level Jobs and work towards talent attraction to keep the available students in the region. 	Anecdotal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supply-led provision 	There is a need for better collaboration between supply and demand of skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A multi-agency and cross-sector approach needs to have clear roles, accountabilities, and target outcomes in place. A smart procurement toolkit could help to lift employment and apprenticeships including by helping to transfer apprenticeship levy funds. 	Anecdotal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agri-Tech 	There are signs of skills shortage in the sector even though 1) the sector is not reporting current staff lacking proficiency in their work and 2) the overall number of vacancies advertised is small.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 133 vacancies (out of 6,000 jobs) were advertised last year, mainly seeking farm workers and owners plus skills in poultry, welfare, and agriculture. The proportion of vacancies that relate to skills shortages (48%) far exceeds the national and the Marches all sectors picture (22%), however the sector does not report high levels of staff not being proficient in their current role. The sector can struggle to recruit as roles are in competition with those offered by employee-valued large employers 	Agri-tech deep dive, 2020 Anecdotal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agri-Tech 	The Marches provides training to people who are likely take up roles in the rest of the UK, but does not meet all its own agri-tech training needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The supply-demand balance of agri-tech skills overall is good but this masks an under-supply of agriculture skills and an over-supply of Animal Care and Veterinary Science and Horticulture and Forestry provision. 	Agri-tech deep dive, 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advanced Manufacturing 	Recent growth in advanced manufacturing employment is expected to come to a halt, and there needs to be a real focus on upskilling the existing workforce to stay competitive in the face of technological change and drivers emerging from smart tech and Industry 4.0 and low carbon agenda.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Although the sector has grown in some sub sectors and in terms of value exports, further expansion in job numbers is expected to be limited over coming years 2022 (just 119 jobs to 32,692). Nearly half the 120 job roles in the sector are expected to reduce in size by 2022. The local sector spans food processing, defence/security, and cuts across enviro-tech The Marches performs modestly on innovation indicators across AI sector 	SEP Evidence Base, 2018 Adv Mfg. Deep Dive, 2020

Theme	Challenge	Evidence	Reference
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advanced Manufacturing 	The Adv Mfg. sector has been broadly defined and skills promotion efforts need to be relevant to, and reach, businesses and jobs at higher and lower ends of the spectrum, including business that are only partly using advanced processes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The sector has an overall LQ of 1.3 (based on 2015 employment in Sector Needs Assessment). There are some local specialisms in metals, machinery, office equipment and automotive incl. military vehicles, particularly light weighting and composites. The 10 ten biggest employing subsectors account for 44% of all adv mfg. employment and include Printing, plus the manufacture of carpentry and joinery, office machinery and equipment, plastic products, metal structures, motor vehicle parts, machining, plus technical testing and consultancy 	Adv Mfg. Deep Dive, 2020 Sector Needs Assessment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advanced Manufacturing 	Skills gaps are not a major driver of vacancies even though the sector faces a major uplift in its higher skills and softer skills requirements if it is to compete in advanced subsectors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 17% of vacancies in the manufacturing sector are due to skills shortages this is much lower than some other sectors in the Marches and below the figure for all sectors in the Marches (23%) and nationally (22%) Skills shortages are reported at all levels of occupations. Consultations point to a shortage of soft skills, such as attitude and teamwork, for example. Technical skills, machine operatives and elementary occupations are also in short supply. Looking ahead employers recognise an increased demand for higher level skills capable of implementing new technologies and ways of working. 5% of staff in manufacturing in the Marches are deemed to not be proficient which mirrors the national all sectors figures 	Adv Mfg. Deep Dive, 2020 Advanced Mfg. Sector Needs Assessment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advanced Manufacturing 	The Marches is training more engineers than the economy is expected to absorb.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Across relevant manufacturing subjects, Engineering is the largest subject area and is also the most oversupplied, by around 2,000 positions against the number of openings expected over the coming year. On the other hand, Manufacturing (which may be transferable skills set) has an undersupply but this is only around 300 positions pa and so not expected to absorb much of the area's surplus. 	Adv Mfg. Deep Dive, 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business & Professional Services (BPS) 	The Marches' BPS sector appears to have a high proportion of vacancies given the number of jobs locally.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There were ~28,000 vacancies in 2019 for BPS roles (against 55,000 jobs) roughly split equally between the three local authorities. The major sources of recruitment are agencies and the NHS, and the top roles being recruited are accounting, sales, surveyors administrators, 	BPS Deep Dive, 2020

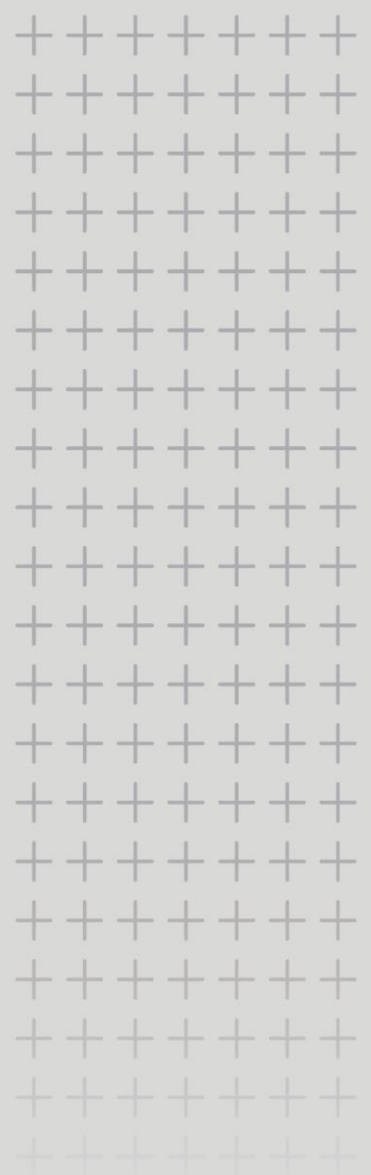
Theme	Challenge	Evidence	Reference
		<p>account managers, credit managers, receptionists, and business process consultants.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The most common skills being requested are sales, management, communication, customer services and IT (incl. high rating for Excel) 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business & Professional Services (BPS) 	<p>The BPS sector in the Marches is facing greater skills shortages than other sectors and may struggle to address these gaps through upskilling staff at the relatively low levels of training currently provided by employers. Low rates retention of high qualified young people contributes to the issue.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skills shortages account for 31% of vacancies in the Marches BPS sector (cf 23% of all sectors locally) and 74% of employers expect to need new skills in the next 12 months. 5% of staff in the BPS staff are deemed to be not proficient, mirroring the overall level for Marches and nationally. Training is provided to 46% of BPS staff in Marches cf 56% for all sector and those that get training receive 2.9 days cf 3.7 for all Marches sectors. Important to consider the loss of talented and qualified young people at 18 in the light of this sector's demands and the general lack of L4+ qualifications in the Marches. 	BPS Deep Dive, 2020 Anecdotal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business & Professional Services (BPS) 	<p>Training provision for BPS in the Marches is misaligned with expected openings and could be re-balanced by a shift from Media and Communication training to Marketing and Sales courses.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Marches appears to be undersupplying Marketing and Sales course provision and over supplying Media/Communication and more general Preparation for Work provision (although this may be an issue with the categories). There is also scope to increase provision of management, property, accounting publishing/info service courses. 	BPS Deep Dive, 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enviro-Tech 	<p>The sector appears to have the right skills now, but has a growing need for new skills which it may not generate through upskilling given the amount of training currently undertaken.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working future suggests that to in the 10 years to 2024 the sector has a requirement for 83,000 L4 workers (to address growth and replacement) Nearly half of all advertised vacancies are due to a skills gap – much higher than the average and other sectors, however only 2% of staff are currently seen as not fully proficient in their job. Half of staff in the Marches enviro-tech sector get training (cf 56% all sectors) and they get 2.1 days training (cf 3.7 all sectors) 62% of enviro-tech employers expect to require new skills in next 12 months. The analysis of supply and demand involves such small numbers and roles that it cannot really help identify mismatches. 	Enviro-Tech Sector Needs Envirotech Deep Dive, 2020 Anecdotal

Theme	Challenge	Evidence	Reference
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Energy infrastructure is increasingly becoming digitalised, and skills will be required in this area. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food Manufacturing & Processing 	<p>There may be scope for high levels of training in the food and drink sector to improve proficiency with a focus on</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> customer service and communication skills digital science and engineering skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 48% of staff are trained compared with 60% nationally. 7% are not fully proficient in their role compared with 5% nationally. Increasing use of technology and automation will generate a need for more scientific and engineering skills at professional and technical levels in the food and drink industry. Customer service which accounted for 21.5% of jobs in the sector across the Marches. In the Marches food and drink sector 7% of staff are not fully proficient, compare to 5% nationally. New working practices are increasing the emphasis on team working and employee flexibility within teams 	Food and Drink Deep Dive, 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food Manufacturing & Processing 	<p>There are local and national food industry skills shortages, and this is likely to be worsened by Brexit and rapidly evolving technology. Locally the skills gap in this sector is not as great as other sectors.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Marches Growth Hub Brexit Preparation Report suggests over half of food and drink sector businesses have taken steps to prepare for Brexit. The Food and Drink Federation Industry Report 2020 highlights a shortage of workers across all occupations and industries within the sector, estimating an additional 140,000 recruits needed by 2024. Many positions currently go unfulfilled due to a lack of labour supply. It is estimated that 12% of workers across the entirety of the food and drink sector are from the EU. Analysis of food and drink job vacancies in the Marches (January 2019 to January 2020) reveals 3,905 unique vacancies. 46.6% were in Shropshire, 28.8% Herefordshire and 24.6% in Telford & Wrekin. The Marches Food and drink sector has 21% of vacancies due to skills gaps. Many of the skills gaps are likely to be around L1 and L2. There are issues around perceptions of the industry. The sector needs to be facilitated by other skills first e.g. advanced manufacturing 	Food and Drink Deep Dive, 2020 Anecdotal

Theme	Challenge	Evidence	Reference
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food Manufacturing & Processing 	All workers need to get upskilled in order to stay relevant to the evolving needs of the sector.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Food and Drink sector is likely to increase use of technology and automation, technical skills, and team working. Increasing regulation will require greater knowledge of food safety issues in all categories of employee. Working Futures data indicates that the proportion of people working at higher skilled levels in the Marches FMP sector will increase over the period 2014 to 2024 but not to the same extent as the national average for the FMP sector and not to the same level as the all-sector average in the Marches. Harper Adams University provides specialist research and some HE provision but there is a small pool of graduates and difficulties attracting and retaining new ones. 	Food and Drink Deep Dive, 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defence and Security 	The sector faces many similar challenges to the rest of the advanced mfg. sector i.e. need to innovate, upskill, and replace ageing employees.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sector employed ~11,000 people with focus on defence activities, military vehicle manufacture, private security and cyber/IT Local D&S Sector is concentrated around Telford & Wrekin 	Defence & Security Sector Needs Assessment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Digital and Creative 	Digital sector demand for skills is growing and expected to extend the digital skills shortage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anecdotal evidence from employers suggest it is increasingly difficult to find people locally with the requisite digital skills to fulfil business needs, leading to recruitment from farther afield through a mobile global workforce. Advanced IT and Software Basic computer literacy/using IT are both identified as commonly lacking among application in the Marches than they are nationally. There were ~4,000 Information and Communication Technology (ICT) apprenticeships across the West Midlands (circa 4% of total) and growing (18%) 2012 – 2017, albeit marginally slower than nationally (20%). 	Marches Digital Strategy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construction 	The construction sector already has skills gaps in skilled trades and professional and managerial roles and emerging technologies involving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Priority skills gaps include Wood trades & interior fit-out; Electrical trades & installation; and Painters and decorators. High demand occupations are Wood trades & interior fit-out (which already has high levels of training underway); Electrical trades and 	CITB Skills Gap Analysis, 2019

Theme	Challenge	Evidence	Reference
	modern methods of construction will further increase demand for particular skills.	<p>installation; Plumbing and HVAC; Painters and decorators; Senior, executive, and business managers; Other construction managers professionals and technical staff; and non-construction staff.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At risk occupations in the Marches are Scaffolders; Plasterers and dry liners; Bricklayers – uncertain training supply; Glaziers; Architects (demand likely to be met from graduate level recruitment outside of the Marches area) and Non–construction operatives. • Significant investment in training provision is needed. Enrolments at Shrewsbury Colleges Group have increased 50% in this area in September 2020 with further increased demand for September 2021. 	Anecdotal

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