

Sport and physical activity sector local skills plan

Lincolnshire: 2026–2029

CREATED BY

Sport and Physical Activity Sector
Local Skills Accountability Board –
Lincolnshire





Contents

Photo credits:

CIMSPA would like to thank Active Lincolnshire and One NK Leisure Centre for their support in sourcing photographs for this skills plan.

Introduction and context

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

About the board

Chair: Nick Price, General Manager, One NK Leisure Centre

Board member organisations

- Activity Alliance
- Active Lincolnshire
- Boston College
- Department of Workplace and Pensions
- England Golf
- Federation of Small Businesses
- Grantham College
- One NK Leisure Centre
- Inspire Education Group
- JB Sport and Education
- Jubilee Park Woodhall Spa
- LeisureSK
- Lincoln City Foundation
- Lincoln College
- Lincolnshire FA
- Lincolnshire Cricket
- Magna Vitae
- Nacro
- Riseholme College
- South Kesteven District Council
- University of Lincoln

Lincolnshire – geographical area

This local skills plan is for the majority of the Greater Lincolnshire area. It includes the seven districts of the ceremonial county:

- Boston
- Lincoln
- East Lindsey
- North Kesteven
- South Holland
- South Kesteven
- West Lindsey

The county's two unitary authorities, North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire, are not included in this plan as they are more closely aligned with the priorities of the Hull and East Yorkshire area. As such, they have been included in skills planning for this region instead.



CIMSPA and local skills

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

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

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

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

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

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

Funding and support

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



Get involved

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

partners@cimspa.co.uk

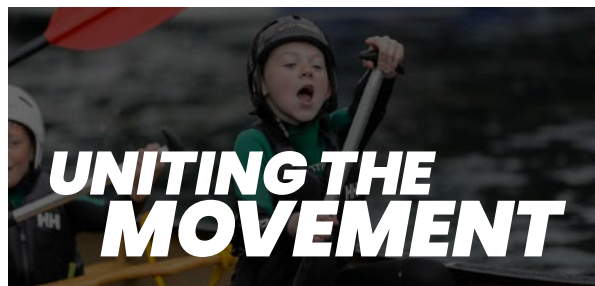
[LOCAL SKILLS ACCOUNTABILITY BOARD WEBSITE PAGE](#)

National context



DCMS strategy context

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



Sport England strategy context

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

Uniting the Movement strategic priorities include:

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

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



The Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022 context

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

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

Local context

Greater Lincolnshire and Rutland Local Skills Improvement Plan

The Greater Lincolnshire and Rutland Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) was launched in 2023 by the Federation of Small Businesses. Following extensive consultation with local employers and stakeholders across a wide range of sectors, the plan was created with the aim of addressing the region's key skills priorities.

Five themes were highlighted as essential for meeting employer needs:

- Building up essential skills
- Consistently good careers advice and guidance
- Helping micro and small businesses to work smarter
- Addressing core skill shortages
- Improving provision resource, funding and offering

Although not one of the Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership's priority sectors, the sport and physical activity sector has a vital role to play in supporting the aims of the LSIP, particularly in terms of careers guidance and building in-demand skills.

By highlighting inspiring career pathways in the sector and ensuring that entry routes to them are accessible, this local skills plan will support skills growth and employment in Lincolnshire.

The plan also promotes greater alignment with the priority health and care sector, which will support essential developments in healthcare services.

In aligning with the LSIP, the sport and physical activity sector positions itself as both a contributor to the region's health outcomes and a catalyst for building a work-ready workforce, complementing the priorities set out for Lincolnshire.

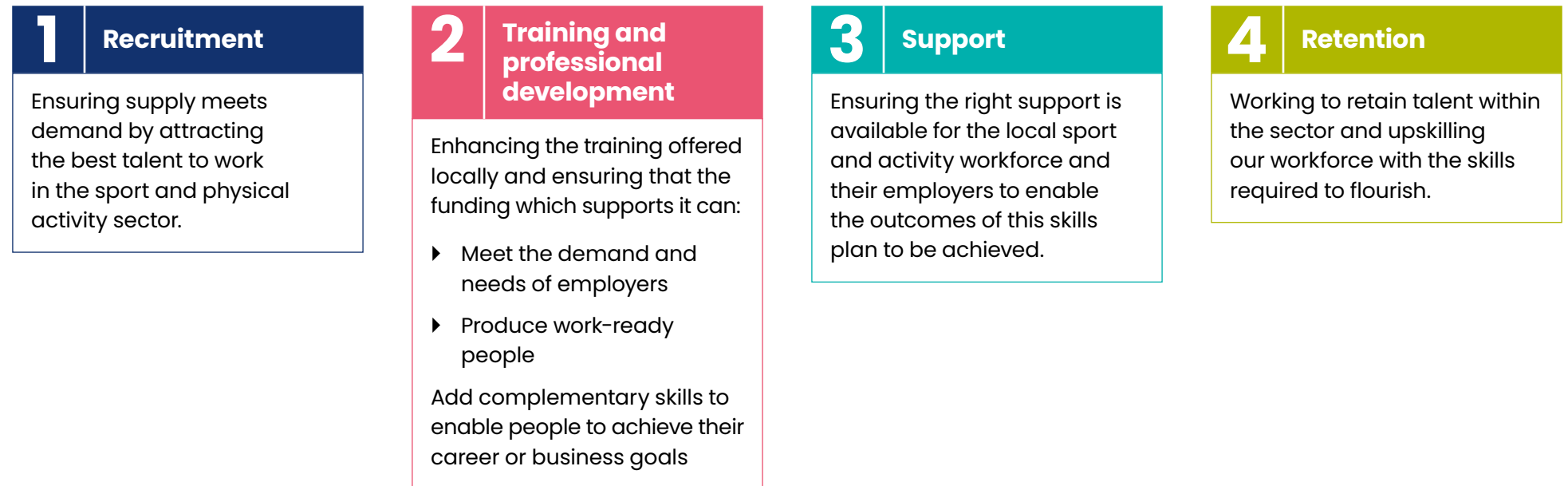
GREATER LINCOLNSHIRE LSIP [↗](#)



Themes, recommendations, partners and stakeholders

Themes

This plan has four themes.



Recommendations

This plan has three headline recommendations:

1 Align education with industry

Develop and implement career pathways in Lincolnshire that upskill our workforce to support community and employer needs.

2 Inspire careers in sport and physical activity

Extend the knowledge of career opportunities and pathways available at all entry points and provide support to the workforce to drive their own career and business development.

3 Strengthen work placements

Ensure close collaboration and alignment across Lincolnshire to develop quality work placements that meet sector needs.



Partners and stakeholders

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

These include:

Education and training providers

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

Skills and sector partners

Those with knowledge and understanding of the sport and physical activity sector, with expertise to support both employers and training providers, Active Partnerships, national governing bodies of sport and other system partners.

Employers and deployers

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

Recommendations and actions

RECOMMENDATION 1

Align education with industry: Develop and implement career pathways in Lincolnshire that upskill our workforce to support community and employer needs.

Theme(s)	No.	2026–2029 actions	What does success look like?	How will it be measured?*
SUPPORT TRAIN	1a	Use data and insight to inform training and fill skills gaps.	▶ More employers, including micro and SME businesses, recording data using the Workforce Development Tool ▶ Workforce Development Tool data is used to identify skills gaps in the region ▶ Education providers use Workforce Development Tool data on skills gaps to inform learning opportunities and curricula ▶ The workforce and career starters have skills better aligned with industry demand ▶ Employers report fewer skills gaps	▶ Number of employers using the Workforce Development Tool ▶ Education provider curriculum data ▶ Workforce Development Tool data
SUPPORT TRAIN	1b	Ensure that workforce development is aligned with local health needs.	▶ Employers use Active Lincolnshire regional health data to align staff development planning with community needs ▶ Employers use the CIMSPA Careers Hub and Active Skills Hub to access needs-aligned training ▶ The local workforce is trained to offer services that meet community healthcare needs	▶ Active Skills Hub Resources webpage traffic data ▶ CIMSPA Training Academy data ▶ Workforce Development Tool data
SUPPORT	1c	Improve professional standards across the workforce by sharing best practice and fostering sector-level engagement.	▶ Businesses of all sizes and individual professionals in the sector use networking events to understand training, development and collaboration opportunities ▶ CIMSPA professional status is used as the benchmark for workforce standards across the sector ▶ More local employers use CIMSPA Employer Partnership to demonstrate their quality to education providers, participants and potential employees	▶ Networking event data (attendance) ▶ CIMSPA Employer Partnership data ▶ CIMSPA professional status data

*See glossary below for more information on specific terms.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS

RECOMMENDATION 2

Develop sector career pathways: Develop awareness of, access to and progression within sector career pathways to enable the retention and growth of a skilled sport and physical activity workforce.

Theme(s)	No.	2026–2029 actions	What does success look like?	How will it be measured?*
SUPPORT TRAIN	2a	Increase awareness of sector career pathways that are inclusive and accessible to all.	▶ Careers advisers better understand sport and physical activity sector career pathways ▶ Careers advisers are confident in highlighting sector opportunities to career explorers ▶ The CIMSPA Careers Hub is used to direct career explorers to guidance on sector career pathways ▶ Sector employers attend careers events ▶ Career explorers understand the range of sector career pathways available	▶ CIMSPA Careers Hub data ▶ Event data (employer attendance) ▶ Qualitative data
RECRUIT SUPPORT TRAIN	2b	Improve access to sector careers by increasing employer confidence in and use of inclusive recruitment practices.	▶ Employers share best practice for inclusive recruitment ▶ Employers use inclusive recruitment guidance to review and update their recruitment processes ▶ More diverse applicant pools for job vacancies ▶ The sector workforce is more representative of the local population	▶ CIMSPA Careers Hub data ▶ Workforce Development Tool data ▶ Local documentation and reporting
SUPPORT TRAIN RETAIN	2c	Foster a culture of continuing professional development among both professionals and employers to retain a skilled sector workforce.	▶ Employers have workforce development programmes ▶ Employers use the CIMSPA Careers Hub and Active Skills Hub by Active Lincolnshire to plan and promote workforce development ▶ CIMSPA professional status is seen by employers and professionals as important for career development ▶ Case studies that demonstrate the impact of upskilling in the sector are shared and celebrated ▶ More professionals are retained in sector roles	▶ CIMSPA professional status data ▶ CIMSPA Careers Hub data ▶ Active Skills Hub data ▶ Workforce Development Tool data ▶ CIMSPA Data Lens ▶ Qualitative data

*See glossary below for more information on specific terms.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS

RECOMMENDATION 3

Strengthen work placements: Ensure close collaboration and alignment across Lincolnshire to develop quality work placements that meet sector needs

Theme(s)	No.	2026–2029 actions	What does success look like?	How will it be measured?*
RECRUIT SUPPORT	3a	Enable employers and voluntary organisations to offer work placements that promote the diversity of roles within the sport and physical activity sector.	▶ Education providers build curricula around employer work placement needs ▶ Local employers, education providers and learners use the CIMSPA Careers Hub and Active Skills Hub to advertise and find work placements ▶ More work placements available in Lincolnshire ▶ A wider range of work experience is available in Lincolnshire ▶ Education providers and students understand the variety of work experience opportunities available ▶ More learners completing work placements	▶ Number of courses developed using employer feedback and insight ▶ Workforce Development Tool data ▶ CIMSPA Careers Hub data ▶ Active Skills Hub data ▶ Number of work placements advertised ▶ Education provider work placement data ▶ Local documentation and reporting
RECRUIT SUPPORT	3b	Use sector work placement guidance to ensure that education providers, employers and learners have clear and aligned expectations of work placements.	▶ Sector work placement guidance is signposted to at careers events ▶ Employers use the CIMSPA Careers Hub and Active Lincolnshire Active Skills Hub to access work-based and placement guidance ▶ Strong collaboration between education providers and employers to align expectations for work experience ▶ Employers embed best practice in their work placement structure ▶ Work placements are seen as valuable by education providers, employers and learners	▶ Active Skills Hub data ▶ CIMSPA Careers Hub data ▶ Local documentation and reporting ▶ Qualitative data

*See glossary below for more information on specific terms.

Data and insight that have informed this work

Qualifications

- Only 34.5% of Greater Lincolnshire residents aged 16–64 are qualified to RQF4 and above (degree level or above), compared with 41.1% across the East Midlands and 48.7% across Great Britain.¹
- 8% of Greater Lincolnshire residents aged 16–64 have no qualifications, compared with approximately 6.3% nationally.¹
- In East Lindsey, more than 1 in 10 residents have no qualifications at all.¹

Economic inactivity

- 21.7% of working-age residents in Greater Lincolnshire are economically inactive.¹
- 33.8% of economically inactive people in Greater Lincolnshire are long-term sick – higher than regional and national proportions.¹

Physical inactivity

- 42.7% of adults in Lincolnshire fail to meet the Chief Medical Officer's physical activity guidelines, and many are almost completely inactive.²
- There is a major discrepancy between activity levels across the districts of Lincolnshire. In South Holland, 35% of adults are inactive, whereas in West Lindsey the figure drops to 25%.²

Data sources

1. Labour Market Profiles, Office for National Statistics, 2025

[LABOUR MARKET PROFILES](#) 

2. Active Lives Online Adult Data, Sport England, 2025

[ACTIVE LIVES ONLINE ADULT DATA](#) 



Understanding the Economic Impact and Future Potential of Greater Lincolnshire's Sport, Physical Activity and Leisure Sector – key report findings

This report is built on a five month investigation led by the Lincolnshire Open Research and Innovation Centre (LORIC) for Active Lincolnshire, Active Together and Active Humber, drawing insight from over 100 organisations across the region. Its purpose is simple: to reveal the sector's true economic weight, spotlight the pressures shaping its future and set out what's needed to unlock its full potential.

Some of the report's key findings have helped to inform and shape this local skills plan:

- There is growing number of people of pensionable ages and a declining number of children in the UK which will have an impact on the service provision for the sector.
- Skills in demand included digital skills, mental health first aid, specialist skills for working with different groups of clients, elite coaching and more.
- Recruitment and retention were a serious challenge for the sector, with demand being driven by a shortage of skilled workers, a shortage of training and a shortage of support for early career workers.
- Workforce capacity and recruitment challenges are major constraints on service delivery.
- There are significant opportunities for future provision of sport, physical activity and leisure in Greater Lincolnshire and Rutland, particularly as part of a wider health strategy, a strategy for early provision and provision of atypical active leisure.



UNDERSTANDING THE ECONOMIC IMPACT AND FUTURE POTENTIAL OF GREATER LINCOLNSHIRE'S SPORT, PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND LEISURE SECTOR [↗](#)

The scope of the sport and physical activity sector

Sector and industries definitions

The sport and physical activity sector:

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

Sector industries

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

Paid/voluntary workforce

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

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

Occupations

Introduction

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

Definitions

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

Frontline occupations

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

*Occupations supported directly by other professional bodies

Support chain occupations

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

Extended workforce

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

Glossary

Business skills diagnostic

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

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

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

In 2026, the Workforce Development Tool replaced the local workforce skills diagnostic and business diagnostic surveys.

CIMSPA Data Lens

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

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

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

[DATA LENS](#)

Local documentation and reporting

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

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

Local skills accountability board (LSAB)

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

LSABs are co-ordinated and managed by CIMSPA, enabled by Sport England and National Lottery funding.

Local skills improvement plan

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

LSIPs:

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

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

This document is **NOT** an LSIP.

Local workforce skills diagnostic data

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

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

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

In 2026, the Workforce Development Tool replaced the local workforce skills diagnostic and business diagnostic surveys.

Professional status

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

Qualitative data

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

Sport and physical activity sector local skills plan

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

The plan has been created by key stakeholders from the local area and coordinated and managed by CIMSPA.

Workforce Development Tool

The Workforce Development Tool, based on the sector's employer-led professional standards which are managed by CIMSPA, is an employer-focused online suite of surveys.

The tool has been developed by CIMSPA to capture workforce insights from organisations operating in the sport and physical activity sector. It explores and supports recruitment, retention, training and workforce planning by gathering data on current workforce structure; skills gaps; recruitment practices; training and development needs; diversity and inclusion; and volunteer engagement.

Local workforce development managers use the Workforce Development Tool to collect data from sport and physical employers across each region of the UK.

This data will help inform each region's local skills plan, identifying current skills within the workforce and gaps that need to be filled based on demand in the area.



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