

esp

EMPLOYMENT, SKILLS AND  
PRODUCTIVITY PARTNERSHIP

East Midlands Employment,  
Skills and Productivity Partnership

prospectus for action

The Employment, Skills and Productivity Partnership (esp) is committed to ensuring:

# “More people into better jobs in better businesses”

This is a big opportunity for the East Midlands, and partners are delighted to work together to deliver it. By working together, we believe we can achieve more than just the sum of the individual partners and deliver the best possible outcomes for the region. In 5 years time this would mean major improvements in both economic prosperity and social inclusion and it would result in:

- A more knowledge orientated regional economy with employers creating more successful and sustainable businesses and better quality employment
- More employment opportunities for people without work
- More people of all ages equipped with the skills to take up jobs and aspire to better jobs.
- The public sector punching its weight in the drive to more skilled employment.



Jeff Moore, Chief Executive,  
East Midlands Development Agency



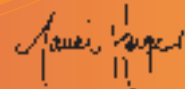
David Hughes, Regional Director,  
Learning and Skills Council



Roger Townsend, Acting Regional Director,  
Jobcentre Plus;



Jane Todd, Regional Director,  
Government Office East Midlands



Tansi Harper, Regional Consultant,  
Higher Education Funding Council for England

Peter Huntington, Chief Executive,  
GoSkills for the Skills for Business Network

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# Issues

**This is a long-term agenda for action. The employment, skills and productivity issues faced by the East Midlands are deep-rooted and will take time to change.**

The fundamental problem is that employment levels are high, but too many jobs and people in the region are low paid and unskilled. Businesses wanting to improve face acute shortages of skilled people and a piecemeal system of business support that is not linked with action on skills and employment. Even though average employment levels are high there are still areas in the region where there are high levels of worklessness and acute deprivation. More of our young people and adults gain skills and qualifications each year but we still lag behind other regions in the UK and in Europe. We need to accelerate the pace of change and make sure that opportunities to benefit are available to everyone.

The esp believes that together we can deliver more than the sum of individual partners to improve employment, skills and productivity for the region. We do not underestimate the size of this task. The agenda is complex and responsibilities shared across several organisations.

We know that aligning these agendas and working effectively together will take time and patience but we are committed to making a change and to creating improvements that benefit the region.

# Aims

## We want to

- Develop an economy based on higher skills levels and knowledge
- Support employers to create more successful and sustainable businesses and better quality employment
- Create employment opportunities for people without work and for the most disadvantaged groups of people
- Ensure that more people of all ages are equipped with the skills to take up jobs and to aspire to better jobs
- Supporting the public sector to work with us to bring about a change to more skilled employment.





# key principles

All our work will be underpinned by four key principles. These are:

## Employer Engagement

Engaging employers is crucial to our success. We want to offer a simple, intelligent and accessible service to all businesses in the region. To do this we must create an environment where customers are referred to the most appropriate source of information, support or advice, regardless of the initial point of contact - the 'No Wrong Door' approach.

Businesses will be able to choose the support services they need. We will guarantee the quality of these services and use customer feedback to ensure that what is on offer continues to meet customer needs.

## Listening to Customers

The esp Partnership has four main customer groups:

- Large employers
- Small and medium employers, and microbusinesses
- Individuals
- Communities.

A 'No Wrong Door' service will be provided to all these customers. We will ensure that all members of the esp speak and act for the Partnership as a whole and that information flows to and from customers in a consistent manner.

We will identify the most effective way to let customers know that we want to hear their views and create ways of making this happen. Representatives of the four customer groups will oversee the process and meet with us to review and agree changes.

## Priority Sectors

We need to target our resources effectively and so have identified the sectors that are the most significant in terms of employment, skills and productivity in the region.

A sector approach will be used sensitively so as not to exclude successful and growing businesses in any sector.

The priority sectors are:

- High Performance Engineering and Manufacturing
- Health and Social Care
- Medical, Pharmaceutical and Biotechnology
- Clothing and Textiles
- Food and Drink Manufacture
- Creative Industries
- Construction
- Retail
- Logistics and Distribution
- Tourism, Leisure and Hospitality
- Environmental Technologies.

These sectors will be reviewed at regular intervals to take account of labour market changes.

## Diversity and equality

The esp Partnership is committed to enabling all learners, businesses (including social enterprises) and communities to benefit from publicly-funded provision. Everyone, regardless of age, sex, race, disability, sexual orientation or any other characteristic, can expect to learn successfully in an environment that is free from discrimination. Realising the potential of the region's diverse communities is a key challenge for all partners and a statutory obligation for organisations that are accountable to the esp.



# key actions

Following consultation with our regional partners on the priorities for action, a detailed plan has been developed which sets out what will be done and by when. This plan will be regularly monitored, reviewed and updated and is available on the website: [www.esppartnership.org.uk](http://www.esppartnership.org.uk)

To achieve the change we want will take time and we are working to a five-year timescale.

There are six main priority areas for action in the region. These are intended to balance action to improve business demand and productivity with improvements in skills and employment supply.

## **On the demand side:**

1. We will improve the productivity of businesses through investment in management development, innovation and enterprise.

**Headlines:** we want to increase the proportion of businesses in the region trading in the upper end of the knowledge economy, to do this we will offer management and leadership support to a further 5000 businesses in the region, and we will invest £40 million in improving knowledge transfer and supporting business innovation. We will also continue to encourage new business start ups and support new businesses.

2. We will provide integrated business support that is driven by and responds to the needs of customers.

**Headlines:** we want to see more businesses taking advantage of the support the esp partners can offer. We will invest £40 million to establish and manage a regional network of business brokers offering general information, diagnostics and brokering specialist support on skills (through the National Employer Training Programme), employment and innovation.

3. We will use public sector planning and procurement as a lever for improving employment, skills and business productivity.

**Headlines:** we will ensure that local people (particularly those most disadvantaged) gain employment and training as part of major capital building and developments and we will jointly fund support projects linked to major developments in the region. We will support regional businesses seeking to enter the public sector supply chain.

## **On the supply side:**

4. We will increase the involvement and achievements of people aged from 14-19.

**Headlines:** we will reduce the number of young people not engaged in education and training (currently 6.4%) by a further 2% and ensure that 90% of young people take part in education and training.

5. We will target employment and skills support at all levels for adults in the region. **Headlines:** we will reduce the skills gaps and shortages reported by employers by investing in the training of adults and by creating better and simpler routes for them to gain skills and qualifications. We will increase levels of employment (to 80%) by an improved offer to unemployed people and through support for redeploying skilled people made redundant to areas where the labour market is growing.

6. We will improve the infrastructure and responsiveness of skills supply and the co-ordination of provision.

**Headlines:** we will take an uncompromising approach to the provision of high quality education and training, investing only where there is evidence of good quality and creating sector specialist skills provision for the region.





# Impact

**The results of our actions and the work of the esp Partnership will be measured in three ways:**

- Customer Satisfaction – by measuring the responses of our four customer groups (see Listening to Customers on page 06) to the actions we take. These groups oversee this process and we will create a website where customers can feedback their views.
- Regional indicators - we have developed a set of eight 'healthy labour market' indicators. This scorecard method balances measures of supply and demand and will be used to measure the overall progress of the esp Partnership.
- The strategic added value of the esp Partnership will also be measured. While the scorecard uses quantitative data from standard national and regional sources, strategic added value will use more qualitative data. This work will be undertaken by an independent, external evaluator.

# Structure

The esp Partnership is led by the Strategic Forum.. The Forum's role is to provide strategic direction to the esp Partnership.

The esp Executive Board is responsible for aligning funding, managing actions on the six priorities and monitoring progress through the healthy labour market indicators, customer satisfaction monitoring and strategic added value reviews.

The esp Operations Group reports to the Executive Board and provides day-to-day management of the actions.

For each of the counties in the region there will be a County Employer Service Delivery Group (CESDG) which will build on the work already started by the County Employer Engagement Groups and will ensure that all the actions are implemented in each county.

# Background

The esp Partnership is an important new force for change in the East Midlands. It brings together a group of organisations led by the East Midlands Development Agency (emda). Partners include Jobcentre Plus, the Learning and Skills Council, the Skills for Business Network, Government Office East Midlands, the Higher Education Funding Council for England, employers, and Trade Unions.

The creation of Regional Skills Partnerships was announced in the National Skills Strategy in July 2003. This set out the challenges of ensuring employers have the skills to support successful businesses and that individuals have the skills to be employable and personally fulfilled, and it proposed the creation of Regional Skills Partnerships to implement the Strategy to meet local needs. In the East Midlands, we have developed our Employment, Skills and Productivity Partnership (esp) from the successful Framework for Employment and Skills Action (FRESA).

Since the Skills Strategy was published, Government has assigned Regional Development Agencies additional funding and responsibility for managing Business Links. The Learning and Skills Councils have created new Regional Directors and the Skills for Business Network has

nominated a chief executive of a Sector Skills Council to lead for the whole network in each region. A new Skills White Paper 'Skills: Getting on in business, getting on at work' was published in March 2005. This further emphasises the role of Regional Partnerships and invites them to take on responsibilities, for the operation of integrated business support, the deployment of the National Employer Training Programme, supporting the reforms set out in the 14-19 White Paper and improving the integration of higher education into the regional partnerships. emda is also in the process of revising the Regional Economic Strategy, and the development of the esp will have an impact on this work.

In response to these changes, the East Midlands has built upon the success of the Framework for Employment and Skills Action (FRESA) to create the partnership for Employment, Skills and Productivity - the esp.

Between them, the esp partners spend around £1 billion a year on supporting employment, skills and productivity in the region and have the power to influence a further £1 billion of regional funding. This prospectus outlines what the esp Partnership proposes to do (full details are in the separate action plan) and how our progress and success will be measured.

## ESP Strategic Forum Membership

Mary Alys	Learning Services Co-ordinator, TUC Midlands
Richard Beamish	Chief Executive, Asset Skills, representing the Skills for Business Network
Adrian Bell	Chief Executive, Northamptonshire Connexions
Dr. Cheryl Berry	Director of Education and Cultural Services, Lincolnshire County Council
John Bonham	Policy Advisor, EMRLGA
Phil Derges	Director, Resource Centres, Rolls-Royce plc
John Elliott	Managing Director, Artillus, representing the FSB
Phil Fone	Principal and Chief Executive, North Notts College, representing the Association of Colleges, East Midlands
Sam Gemmill	Employer Chair and MD of Creative Media Matrix
Denise Haslam	Economic Policy Advisor - Skills, emda
Gavin Hubbard	Regional Director Ufi East Midlands
David Hughes	Regional Director, LSC
Sue Kirby	Director, Policy and Communications, emda
Tina McEwen	Chief Executive Officer, Business Links, Lincolnshire and Rutland
Jan Sensier	Deputy Director, Industry and Education, Government Office East Midlands
Harry Skidmore	Managing Director, Easibind International
Prof. Freda Tallantyre	Pro Vice Chancellor, University of Derby
Roger Townsend	Regional Director, East Midlands Region, Jobcentre Plus
Paul Williamson	Executive Director, Lincolnshire and Rutland LSC
Stuart Young	Head of Economic Development, East Midlands Regional Assembly

## The Employment Skills and Productivity Executive Group

Michael Carr	Director, Business Services, emda
Karen Foulds	Deputy Regional Director, East Midlands Region, Jobcentre Plus
Sam Gemmill	Employer Chair and MD of Creative Media Matrix
Tansi Harper	Regional Consultant, Higher Education Funding Council for England
David Hughes	Regional Director, LSC
Peter Huntington	Chief Executive GOSkills, representing the Skills for Business Network
Sue Kirby	Director, Policy and Communications, emda
Jeff Moore	Chief Executive, emda
Jan Sensier	Deputy Director, Industry and Education, Government Office East Midlands
Jane Todd	Regional Director, Government Office East Midlands
Roger Townsend	Regional Director, East Midlands Region, Jobcentre Plus
Paul Williamson	Executive Director, Lincolnshire and Rutland LSC

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