Adult Learning strategic evidence base

COVID-19 and the local labour market

1a London's economy before COVID-19

In 2019 Central London Forward[1] analysed London's labour market as part of their Skills strategy[2]. At that point, London's economy was experiencing significant growth. More than £1 out of every £10 generated in the UK was attributable to Central London's economic success. Central London's job growth was predicted to continue to outpace the rest of London as a whole. The highest employment growth across London was expected to be concentrated in the East End of Inner London, in particular the boroughs of Tower Hamlets, Hackney and Newham. Self-reported dissatisfaction with part-time and temporary work was higher in London than the national average, and has grown alongside the increase in atypical forms of work.

There were, and are, however structural challenges to the shape of London's labour market. Many jobs in mid-tier categories such as manufacturing and wholesale have either disappeared from the labour market or were growing at a much slower rate, leaving people with mid-level skills or qualifications at a growing disadvantage. This can also be described as the 'hourglass' model of London's economy. Secondly, many of the new jobs created in recent years come with significant risks of low pay and lack of progression within the industry. These roles (e.g. hospitality and retail) are also reliant on spending by people in high skilled jobs. This creates a precarious labour market if there is a macroeconomic downturn.

1b The impacts of COVID-19 on the labour market

The pandemic has had a significant impact on the economy.

ONS data from July shows that UK GDP was 11.7% below where it was in February. Current projections that the UK is not 'bouncing back' quickly from the economic downturn earlier in the year, and international forecasts lean towards a global recession. GLA economics[3] estimates that most London sectors will experience historic downturns in 2020 - most notably for Accommodation & foods; Arts, entertainment & recreation; Education[4]; and Construction.

The overall employment rate for London continues to be high at 76.5% and the full impact of COVID-19 on unemployment isn't visible in these numbers yet[5]. In January 2020 there were

[1] Sub-regional partnership of the 12 boroughs in inner London focused on driving inclusive growth.
[2] Skills Strategy, Central London Forward, 2019
[3] London Recovery Board, Overview of COVID-19 impacts to date, 15 Sept 2020
[4] There are particular difficulties in measuring output in the education sector under lockdown which means GDP figures are hard to compare to previous years and subject to larger than normal revisions.
[5] London Recovery Board, Overview of COVID-19 impacts to date, 15 Sept 2020

12,395 people on universal credit in Hackney and 13,125 in February 2020. By September 2020 this had risen to 31,522[6]. This figure for employment includes people on the furlough scheme, many of whom are likely to become unemployed as the scheme ends. The Institute for Employment Studies found that nationally employers were planning to make double the number of redundancies than were made at the height of the financial crisis (380k from May to July 2020 versus 180k from January to March 2009)[7].

Across London as per 31 October, 431,200 employments were furloughed (10% of eligible jobs), in Hackney this was 13,700 people (10%)[8]. Nationally, the highest percentage of jobs furloughed (full-time or part-time) are in the accommodation and food services (27%); arts, entertainment and recreation sector (24%); ; and other service activities (18%). This last one includes personal services such as beauty treatments. The highest number of jobs furloughed are found in again accommodation and food services (601,400); but then in wholesale and retail (356,400); and administrative and support services (213,400)[9]. Notably, accommodation and food services, and retail are the lowest paying sectors in the UK economy.

The Resolution Foundation has analysed the impacts of the pandemic on workers[10]. They've found that in September, 17% of those who were in work before the crisis were either no longer working, were furloughed, or had lost hours and pay due to the coronavirus crisis. Workers in hospitality, leisure and other sectors affected by lockdown are much more likely in September to have stopped working, to have been furloughed, or to have lost hours and pay.

Meanwhile there are significantly fewer job opportunities. Nationally, vacancies are running at 25% lower than in the same week a year ago, and at 20% lower than in the week before the lockdown began. There has been a modest recovery in the number of vacancies in recent months. The IT, healthcare and teaching sectors had the highest number of vacancies amongst all profession types from March until July. Job opportunities have increased in almost all categories since July - apart from teaching; customer services; and legal related professions. However there has been a significant decline in advertised teaching jobs in August compared to previous months. This recovery in vacancies in the last few months also means that for three job types there are now more vacancies than in March – namely for logistics and warehouse; manufacturing; and domestic help and cleaning[11].

1c Impacts across and beyond specific industries:

The pandemic and particularly the period of lockdown in spring 2020, has shown the importance of 'key workers' in providing essential goods and services. There has been a growing recognition of the importance of other roles such as care workers, supermarket

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[6] DWP Stat-Xplore, data retrieved 21 Oct 2020
[7] Institute for employment studies, On Notice: Estimating the impact on redundancies of the Covid-19 crisis, Sept 2020
[8] https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/coronavirus-job-retention-scheme-statistics-december-2020
[9] Ibid
[10] Jobs, jobs, jobs • Resolution Foundation, 28 October 2020
[11] Institute for employment studies, Monthly vacancy analysis: Vacancy trends to week-ending 13 September 2020

check-out staff, delivery drivers and refuse collectors. Many of these roles are traditionally low paid and often described as low skilled. Views may be changing about how those jobs are and should be valued, although that hasn't yet translated into better contracts and working conditions; although the Council and wider public sector anchor institutions have an opportunity to provide leadership in a number of these areas, in line with the inclusive economy strategy.

According to Resolution Foundation research[12], certain groups that have been more affected by the crisis include those who were working an 'insecure' job in February; younger and older workers; those working in the lowest-paid jobs; and those working for smaller employers. While this crisis has had a big impact in all parts of the county, the employment effects of the crisis so far have borne down particularly hard on London. Over 21% of workers in the most deprived quartile of the country were either not working, furloughed, or had lost hours (and pay) in early September because of coronavirus: of this group, more than 28% live in London. These are people with the least financial resilience to changes in their income.

There is clear evidence that high unemployment has a significant and long-term impact on the career prospects of school leavers and graduates. "There is significant evidence that being unemployed when young leads to a higher likelihood of long-term 'scarring' in later life in terms of subsequent lower pay, higher unemployment and reduced life chances according to much research. There is also evidence of greater mental health problems in their 40s or 50s. So the impacts of current high levels of youth unemployment will be felt by society for decades"[13]. This statement was made in February 2017, but applies just as much to the current prospects for unemployed young people.

The OBR has forecast that the unemployment rate will increase by 6.1 percentage points between quarter 2 of 2019 and quarter 2 of 2020. The Resolution Foundation estimates that in that scenario there is 13% less chance that a recent graduate will be in employment three years after leaving education. For those with mid-level (some higher education or an A level equivalent education) and lower-level (GCSE-equivalent or below) qualifications, these figures are 27 and 37% respectively. In other words, the current crisis may reduce the employment chances of lower-skilled young adults leaving education by more than a third. In addition, the most affected sectors are ones where a large proportion of non-graduates end up working after leaving education, such as non-food retail[14]. This will make it even harder for young people to find employment.

The pandemic, with its restrictions on social life, the economic impacts and for some experience of trauma, has had a significant negative impact on overall wellbeing and mental health. This becomes particularly relevant in a strategy on adult skills development because of the links between employment, training and mental health. "The relationship between employment and health is close, enduring and multi-dimensional. Being without work is rarely good for one's health, but while 'good work' is linked to positive health outcomes, jobs that are insecure, low-paid and that fail to protect employees from stress and danger make

[12] Jobs, jobs, jobs • Resolution Foundation, 28 October 2020
[13] Prof Ronald McQuaid, LSE British Policy and Politics blog, Youth unemployment produces multiple scarring effects | EUROPP, Feb 2017.
[14] Resolution Foundation, Class of 2020, May 2020

people ill"[15]. Improved skills open opportunities to 'good work', but training can also have positive impacts on people's mental health in and of itself[16].

Finally, the pandemic has significantly increased the need for digital skills as well as access to digital devices and the internet. Digital skills make people able to replace face-to-face social interactions (to an extent at least). These skills are also critical in being able to work from home in jobs where that is a possibility.

1d Economic outlook

The pandemic has had a significant impact on the economy.

ONS data from July shows that UK GDP was 11.7% below where it was in February. Current projections that the UK is not 'bouncing back' quickly from the economic downturn earlier in the year, and international forecasts lean towards a global recession.

Projections by GLA economics, based on the Bank of England's August scenario point to a long recession, with output and employment not returning to pre-crisis levels before 2023. Government support schemes (especially CJRS or furlough scheme) are pushing most of the employment impacts into 2021. GLA economics estimates that most London sectors will experience historic downturns in 2020 - most notably for Accommodation & foods; Arts, entertainment & recreation; Education[17]; and Construction. There is significantly reduced travel into central London and intention to visit is low. This is also described as the 'donut effect'[18]. For Hackney this means businesses in Shoreditch, specifically those relying on footfall, are in a comparatively worse position than businesses in Dalston and Hackney Central.

The most recent ONS Business impact of coronavirus survey[19] indicates that across all UK industries, 71% of businesses said they were at no or low risk of insolvency. In the accommodation and food services industry however, 17% of businesses were at a severe risk of insolvency. 75% of businesses in arts, entertainment and recreation are experiencing a decrease in turnover, compared to 31% in IT. Across all industries the figure is 48%. In the week ending 18 October 2020, overall footfall decreased to below 70% of its level in the same period of the previous year, with footfall dropping across high streets, shopping centres, retail parks. This happened across all 10 featured countries and regions.

Potential for economic growth and job opportunities

Some sectors of the economy have clearly been more severely impacted than others. This also leaves a situation where new economic opportunities are likely to be concentrated in those sectors where business insolvencies are least likely. As mentioned above, vacancies have been highest in the IT; health and care; and education sectors.

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[15] Fair Society, Healthy Lives: The Marmot Review, Feb 2010
[16] Government Office for Science, What are the wider benefits of learning across the life course?, 2017
[17] There are particular difficulties in measuring output in the education sector under lockdown which means GDP figures are hard to compare to previous years and subject to larger than normal revisions.
[18] London Recovery Board, Overview of COVID-19 impacts to date, 15 Sept 2020
[19] ONS, Coronavirus and the latest indicators for the UK economy and society, 22 Oct 2020

Health and care

As well as introducing new changes and opportunities the pandemic has also accelerated some trends. For example, the nature of the crisis has created more demand for skills in health and care. In fact, in the immediate aftermath of the crisis social care and healthcare and nursing were two of only three sectors (the third being domestic cleaning) with positive growth for job vacancies in both central London and at a UK level. This trend in job growth and skill demand in these sectors is expected to rise on account of the aging population long after the pandemic and the expected impact of new immigration policies. Currently, 24% of workers in health and social care were born abroad. In London, 45% of key workers, and 53% of workers in health and social care, were born abroad[20]. The government's proposed new immigration rules mean many essential social care roles will not qualify for a Health and Social Care visa or Skilled Worker visa[21]. This will lead to increased vacancies in social care.

IT and digital

The IT sector has the least percentage of businesses at risk of insolvency. It's also the sector where the least amount of businesses have experienced a decrease in turnover and has one of the highest numbers of vacancies. The move to a more online way of working across large parts of the economy will increase the need for skills in IT and digital technologies. It seems reasonable to expect the IT sector to be one the most reliable industries for jobs and growth in the coming year at least.

Public sector and education

Demand for jobs in the public sector is holding up. As with most recessions, public sector spend and demand for jobs becomes more important as a proportion of the economy. Although the education sector has shrunk significantly early in the year, this may be explained to a large degree by difficulties in measuring educational output in the normal way with schools having to revert to online teaching. It is also worth repeating that education was one of the sectors with the highest number of vacancies between March and July, although this dropped significantly in August. There have been particular concerns about the economic prospects for nurseries and early years provision, as forced closure earlier in the year significantly impacted income for these businesses[22]. The need for employees with child care qualifications may therefore be slow to recover.

A greener economy

Another trend in the economy accelerated by the pandemic has been the move to a greener economy. This is a broad term but generally means jobs and economic processes where natural assets are managed sustainably. This applies to both new jobs, such as developing new and greener products, and jobs that improve existing work to make it 'greener'. Similar to digital skills the skills for a greener economy are not limited to low carbon and environmental skills but cut across many sectors of the economy including SMEs and manufacturing as well as energy, waste and transport. Some skills demand will be met by a new response but others can be met by existing routes with a refocus on environmental

[20] ONS, Coronavirus and non-UK key workers, 8 October 2020
[21] Welsh Centre for LPublic Policy, UK migration policy and the Welsh NHS and social care workforce, 28 Sept 2020
[22] Survey of Childcare and Early Years Providers and COVID-19, Department for Education, survey conducted between 2-20 July

technologies. For example, plumbing and electrical skills will remain in demand with retrofitting of more efficient technologies. Other business systems such as resource efficiency will create demand for skills such as business management and project management. Additional demand for skills in general infrastructure and construction can also be expected connected to some additional central government funding (e.g. home insulation).

Other sectors of the economy

In addition to the sectors of the economy discussed above, the pandemic has created additional skills demand in logistics (e.g. driving, warehouse operatives). In addition the financial and insurance sectors in London are associated sectors that will continue to create well paid and attractive employment opportunities.

1e Economic uncertainty

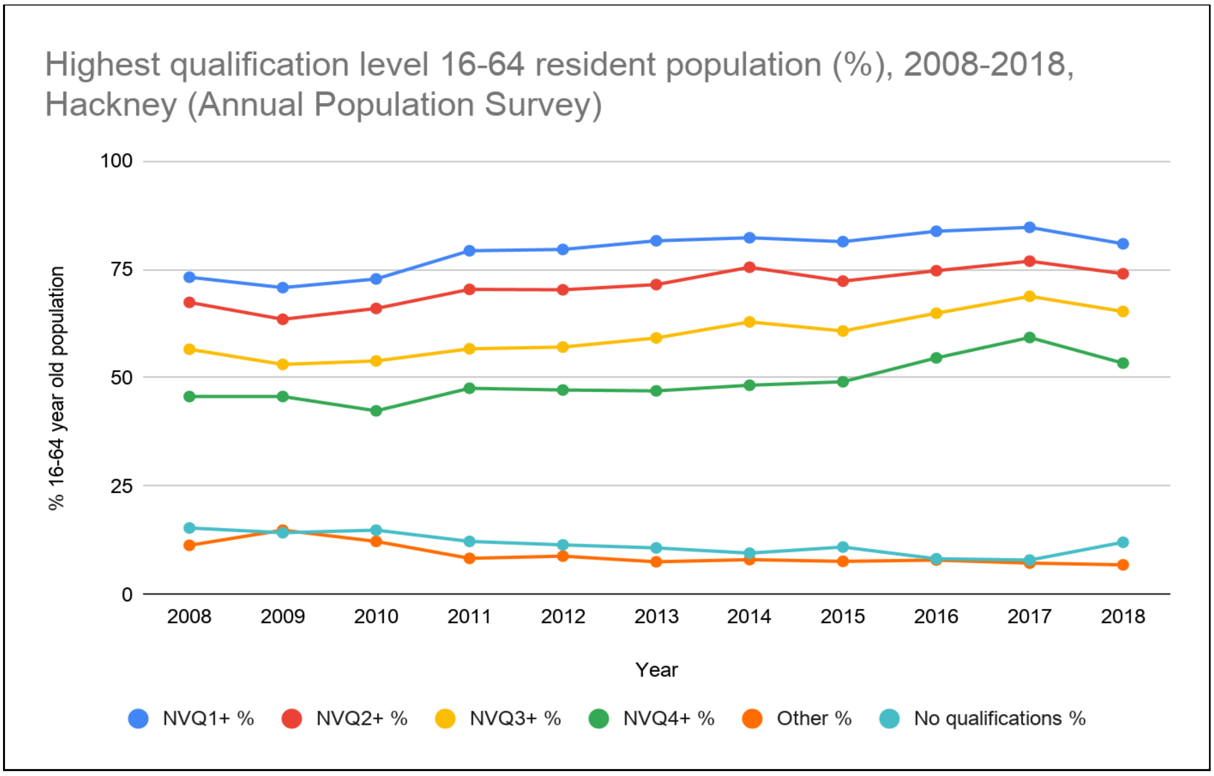
The economic situation is currently uncertain - much more so than in recent years. The combination of the global pandemic, restrictions on ‘normal daily life’ and the impacts of Brexit all mean significant changes - particularly for businesses. It is also worth noting that this recession is unusual because the negative impacts are so concentrated in specific sectors of the economy.

All this means that the impacts of these changes on the labour market and demand for specific skill sets are developing and at times difficult to predict. This means the Council can’t make robust plans for adult skills for the medium to long term. The Council’s approach to its own adult skills provision and its leadership role across the borough therefore have to be adaptable as impacts of 2020 become clearer over time, and as predictions about the future become less uncertain.

2 The skills of local residents

2a Skills - Highest qualification level

Skills and qualifications are not the same thing although the latter are a common proxy for skills since it is hard to measure skills directly.



The graph above shows that in 2018, the vast majority of Hackney residents of working age had a qualification at NVQ1 level 1 (81%) and NVQ2 level 2 (74%). Almost two-thirds of working age adults have a qualification at NVQ3 level 3 (65%) and over half have a qualification at NVQ4 level 4 (53%). Just over 10% of residents had no qualification (12%) and 7% had other qualifications.

The graph shows that between 2008 and 2018 Hackney has experienced an increase in the proportion of residents with higher qualifications and a decrease in the proportion of residents with no qualifications.

In 2008 46% working age residents had a NVQ4 level qualification and by 2018 this rate had increased to 53%. In contrast, in 2008 15% of working age residents had no qualifications but by 2018 this had reduced to 12%.

Increases in the number of working age residents with a qualification at NVQ1 level, NVQ2 level and NVQ3 level have also taken place over the last decade as has a decrease in the number of people with other qualifications.

Despite these changes it is important to note that 19% of working age residents still have either no formal qualification or a highest qualification of NVQ1. This accounts for just under 40,000 residents (38,600). With almost a fifth of the working age adult population falling into this category, there is evident need for the Council and local education partners to continue to support this group to improve their skill level from a relatively low base.

As noted at the beginning of this document developments in the London economy have created patterns of high skilled and high paid jobs accompanied by lower paid and lower skilled employment - i.e. the ‘hourglass’ effect. This has left people whose skills remain at mid-level at a disadvantage in terms of finding high quality employment; and with this group having limited progression routes aside from into relatively lower paid and lower skilled occupations.

2b Functional skills[23].

Literacy and numeracy

Basic skills amongst the adult population remains a significant area of focus for adult learning provision and is a foundation for much wider employment and skills provision. Basic skills typically refer to literacy and numeracy skills. In London literacy levels at Level 2 and above are relatively low compared to the rest of the country (44% compared to around 59% at a national level). When controls are put in place for adults who do not speak English as a first language, London’s adult literacy levels improve but are still significant at around 55%. London also has slightly lower rates of adult numeracy compared to the rest of the country with 20% compared to 20% of adults at Level 2 or above although this gap disappears when controls for adults who do not speak English as a first language. This evidence supports a maintained focus on the provision of basic skills in English and Maths.

English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)

Hackney is home to many different migrant communities and continues to be a popular destination for new migrants, asylum seekers and refugees. According to Census 2011 just over 6% of Hackney residents could not speak English or could not speak English well. This is much higher than the national average 1.3% and higher than the London average of 4.1%. As a result, Hackney has considerable demand for English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) provision which acts as both a foundationboth foundation for social cohesion as well as enabling access to education, employment and skills training. The range of residents in need of ESOL provision is broad and can include refugees, new migrants, people joining family and long-term residents with a range of personal histories and educational backgrounds. Some or many of these will have high quality language skills but in languages other than English, such as general literacy and oral communication.

Hackney has good ESOL provision provided by a variety of organisations, in the voluntary, statutory and private sectors taking place in a number of settings. This is supported by London level analysis which found ESOL provision to be concentrated in Inner London boroughs and with greater involvement of third sector organisations[24]. Previous research has suggested that despite provision being good, some barriers remain and the needs of all learners are not being met[25]. For example, people that work high numbers of hours to provide for their families will struggle to find the time for courses and some vulnerable

[23] Skills strategy for Londoners: Evidence base, GLA, July 2018
[24] Mapping ESOL Provision in Greater London, Learning and Work Institute, 2017
[25] Understanding vulnerable migrants and how they access services in Hackney, Policy and Partnerships Hackney Council, 2017

migrants are unaware of the range of services on offer. At a London level research carried out in 2017 reported that general demand is predominantly at pre-Entry and Entry Levels and this provision was frequently oversubscribed[26]. This research identified the need for better strategic links and planning for ESOL provision, improved availability of information, the development of progression routes from informal and non-formal learning, and routes for learners with specific needs (e.g. employment and vocational needs). This has been supported by Hackney research identifying the need for provision linked to employment and the need for provision to be offered outside of regular working hours[27].

2c Skills of residents across London

The London Adult Community Learning Review[28] identified young people and care leavers as missing out on training and job opportunities. It reported that middle aged groups will require more retraining as people are spending longer in work over their lifetimes. It also highlighted that the number of people with a disability is increasing, resulting in a growing Learning Difficulties or Disabilities (LLDD) and that learners with LLDD aged 19- 24 years old will require provision that supports their educational progress.

The evidence base for the GLA's Skills Strategy[29] identifies at a London level a number of groups who may benefit most from specific interventions, either because they have poor skill levels (as proxied by qualification level, and also by one specific skill - English language ability) or because they experience poor labour market outcomes.

These groups include 'Black' and 'Mixed' ethnic groups who are more likely to have lower level qualifications. A total of 43% of Black Londoners and 41% of Mixed ethnicity Londoners had a highest qualification at NVQ Level 2 or below, compared to 37% for all Londoners. Employment rates are also lower among White Gypsy/Travelers and the Arab, Bangladeshi, Pakistani, White and Black Caribbean and 'Other Black' ethnic groups.

The evidence base shows that people with disabilities on average have lower level qualifications. In 2011 18% of Londoners with a disability had a qualification at NVQ Level 4+ in 2011, compared to 42% of those without a disability. People with disabilities have much lower employment rates and are more likely to be working part time, if in employment (36% compared to 21% of those without).

Certain industrial sectors and occupations also tend to have higher above average rates of people working in them with lower qualifications. These include: transport and storage, manufacturing, utilities, construction, retail and wholesale, accommodation and food services, and administrative services.

Finally, the evidence base for London suggests that low qualification is more prevalent among lone parents than other groups with 39% of lone parents (both with and without

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[26] Mapping ESOL Provision in Greater London, Learning and Work Institute, 2017
[27] Understanding vulnerable migrants and how they access services in Hackney, Policy and Partnerships Hackney Council, 2017
[28] London Adult Community Learning Review Report, London Government, 2017
[29] Skills strategy for Londoners: Evidence base, GLA, July 2018

dependent children) having qualifications at Level 1 or below, compared to 28% of all Londoners.

3 Skills demand

3a General skills high in demand

In 2018 Hackney's Skills, Economy and Growth scrutiny commission (previously, Working in Hackney) carried out a review[30] to explore the implications of the changing world of work and skills. The report identified the policies and practices that could contribute to overcoming the challenges of a changing world of work and highlights the skills support that would be needed to enable Hackney residents to prepare, progress and/or change career paths to adapt to the future world of work and skills. The recommendations from the report highlight that as the jobs of the future are not yet known, the skills system should be designed to facilitate resilience in people so that they can effectively adapt to changes in their employment status. As a result, the skills training in the adults skills system should be transferable across sectors, enabling people to adapt and be flexible in the workplace.

A report by the Local Government Association identified the skills and resilience needed for a world of change. A responsive skills system needs to recognise the importance of providing digital training beyond basic IT skills to enable employees to transition to new sectors in the economy. The report states that with the rise in automation, there is increasing demand for skills like creativity, interpersonal skills and an increase in requirement for skills in the AI sector. It also finds that with more training and development support is required for those people that are 'under employed' and older workers who want to retrain or seek better working opportunities.The skill demands of specific sectors are explored in more detail later in this section.

3b Demand for skills in London's economy before the pandemic[31]

Before the pandemic demand for skills was expected to continue in London despite a slight slowing of demand compared to the previous two decades. The GLA forecast that there would be 6.8 million jobs in London in 20 years' time (a significant but smaller rate of growth compared to recent decades). Over the next 20 years jobs growth is forecast by GLA Economics to be highest in Professional, Real Estate, Scientific and Technical services (17,000 jobs per year), Information and Communication (7,000 jobs per year), and Administrative and Support Services, Education, and Health (6,000 jobs per year each).

Before the pandemic there was some evidence at the England level (for which data is available) skill shortages and gaps were most prevalent, as a proportion of employment, in hospitality (hotels and restaurants), public administration, and manufacturing. Other sectors with high levels of unmet skills demand on this measure are Public Administration and Manufacturing.

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30 The Future World of Work and Skills in Hackney - A report of the Working in Hackney Scrutiny Commission (2018)

31 Skills strategy for Londoners: Evidence base, GLA, July 2018

3c Skills demand looking ahead

The structural changes to the labour market discussed earlier in this document make it clear that these skills shortages, particularly in sectors like hospitality, will no longer be the case. This is supported by feedback from our own employment and skills services reporting that many residents with a job history in the hospitality sector are looking to leave the sector.

Ways of working and transferable skills

As set out in the Future World of Work report there needs to be a balanced approach to technical skills and qualifications as well as transferable skills such as good communication skills, critical thinking and problem solving. For example, the Local Government Association has identified increasing demand for skills like creativity and interpersonal skill. The LGA report[32] identified the following as key competences for the future world of work: critical thinking, creativity, communication and collaboration. It identified the following as key mindsets and talent for the future world of work: curiosity, intuition, persistence, empathy and adaptability. It is important to note that these skills are not only in demand from employers but will support people looking for work, making a career change and adapting to a changing economy.

This focus on a range of skills and competencies is supported by research carried out by Nesta on behalf of the City of London Corporation into what transferable skills are most valued by employers[33]. This is a key component of their broader work on ‘fusion skills’. These skills are defined as transferable across different contexts and they are themselves a ‘fusion’ because they blend of skills, knowledge, behaviours and attitudes. It is important to note that this research found that 74% of employers prioritise transferable skills equally or above technical skills. The Department for Education’s Employer Skills Survey in 2017 found that 41% of UK skill-shortage vacancies were because of a lack of complex problem solving skills in job applicants demonstrating the need for transferable as well as technical skills[34].

The top twelve transferable skills identified by employers are:

1. Oral communication/presentation skills
2. Collaboration and teamwork
3. Initiative
4. Problem solving
5. Organisational skills (planning, time management, deadlines, prioritisation, multi-tasking)
6. Adaptability/flexibility
7. Written communication
8. Independent working/autonomy
9. Critical thinking
10. Resilience
11. Creativity
12. Analysis and evaluation skills

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[32] Work Local, LGA, 2017 - referenced in Future World of Work and Skills in Hackney, Hackney Council
[33] Transferable skills in the workplace, Nesta, 2019
[34] Employer skills survey 2017, Department for Education, 2018

These skills can emerge from multiple sources and are not contained in any one subject or curriculum area and can be found in formal and informal learning environments[35]. It is therefore possible for all learning to align itself to incorporate this approach and consider how it can develop and reinforce these skills for learners.

Sector specific skills

There is the potential for economic growth in the health & care sector, IT & digital sector, and jobs that contribute to a greener economy, as explained in the section on economic outlook. These sectors will each have specific demands for skills.

Specific health and care qualifications are obviously important to many roles in the health sector, such as medicine, nursing, and social care qualifications. There are also many roles in the health and care sector that don't require this clinical expertise. This can range from providing customer support to back office services such as admin, finance, HR, project management and IT. .

In the IT industry, there is an obvious need for technical and specifically digital skills. Examples include training and/or skills in software development, technical infrastructure and day-to-day management of software and applications. Creative and design skills are also important to improve the look and feel of software, particularly when creating apps or computer games for the general public. There are also jobs that focus less on the technical aspects and rely more on skills such as project management and being able to work with clients on a daily basis. Furthermore, there are job opportunities in administrative support, financial work and data analysis requiring skills in those particular areas.

Central London Forward's Skills Strategy 2019[36] notes that digital capabilities are not just for 'digital jobs', but are increasingly necessary for almost all jobs with digital skills expected to be a requirement in 90% of jobs in the next 20 years. It also explains that basic digital skills are frequently insufficient to meet employer demand. Digital skills therefore need to expand its general offer to go beyond basic digital skills to a minimum standard for almost all learners as well as exploring specifically digital jobs such as data analytics, user experience and software development.

3d Supporting wellbeing and access to learning

The GLA's Skills Strategy recognises the links between engagement in learning and improved health and wellbeing[37]. This was recognised in the work of the Hackney Young Futures Commission as one of their recommendations was 'establishing accredited learning opportunities for young people to support meaningful/ non-academic qualifications'[38].

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[35] Fusion Factor: White paper, City of London Corporation, 2019
[36] Skills Strategy, Central London Forward, 2019
[37] Mayor of London's Skills for Londoners Strategy. Ref 86 in text refers to New Economics Foundation (2008) Five ways to wellbeing
[38] Hackney Young Futures Commission report, 2020

Adult and community learning can provide residents with to build confidence, engage with learning, develop new skills and consider progress to more formal courses[39]. This kind of learning can involve creative and cultural opportunities and delivery of non-accredited learning[40]. It not only supports employment and education outcomes but has considerable benefits for the personal and family wellbeing of learners as well as supporting social cohesion. For example, in relation to physical health adult learning has been linked to greater life satisfaction, weight loss and smoking cessation[41]. In relation to mental health adult learning has also been shown to support a sense of identity, ability to cope and general wellbeing and life satisfaction[42]. Adult learning has also been shown to support social cohesion with those engaged reporting higher levels of interpersonal skills and social trust as well as greater tolerance of diversity in communities[43].

There is potential for adult and community learning to take a more strategic approach to how it supports the broader health and wellbeing priorities in Hackney. During the lockdown learners stressed how much they looked forward to their regular online classes and the interaction with their classmates, as an “escape”.

3e Support for older residents

The Council’s recently published Ageing Well strategy has flagged a number of specific challenges older residents face in the labour. These challenges have been exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic. From November 2019 - November 2020, ONS data showed that the number of unemployed people aged over 50 in the UK had increased by a third.

Research by the Centre for Ageing Better and the Learning & Work Institute in August 2020 found that 1 in 10 male and 8 in 10 female workers in their 50s and 60s face a significant risk of losing their jobs when the government’s furlough scheme is wound down.[44] Earlier research by the Centre for Ageing Better and the Learning and Work Institute found that about 377,000 extra older workers – one in 10 male, and eight in 10 female workers in their 50s and 60s – face a significant risk of losing their jobs when the government’s furlough scheme is wound down next year.

Within Hackney, the Council’s 2018 Residents’ Survey found that only 31% of residents agree that access to job opportunities are available to everyone equally in Hackney. Residents aged 55-64 years and 65 years or older were among the least optimistic about this. Local residents aged between 50-64 years have a lower employment rate than residents of the same age across London, and they are more likely to be unemployed and to be economically inactive.

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[39] Adults skills strategy, GLA, 2018
[40] Ibid
[41] What are the wider benefits of learning across the life course?, Government Office for Science, 2017
[42] Ibid
[43] What are the wider benefits of learning across the life course?, Government Office for Science, 2017
[44] A mid-life employment crisis: How Covid-19 will affect the job prospects of older workers, Centre for Ageing Better and Learning and Work Institute, 2020

In particular, we know that some residents in their 50s are struggling to get support to retrain in their existing job or to change careers and find decent, fulfilling work. The Council, working with partners, has an important role to play in engaging and supporting older residents to re-train and re-skill; and providing pathways and stepping stones into high quality employment, for example via work placements and traineeship programmes. As well as providing vocational and functional learning opportunities, the Council has an important role to play in continuing to provide community learning opportunities to address social isolation as well as enhancing wellbeing, including as part of integrated health-led approaches to social prescribing.