



Unlocking everyone's potential  
to share the benefits of growth

SKILLS, EMPLOYMENT AND  
PRODUCTIVITY STRATEGY  
2018 – 2023



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# FOREWORD



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "S. Curran".

Cllr Steve Curran, Chair of the West London Skills and Employment Board and Leader of Hounslow Council



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "P. Stannet".

Paula Stannet, Vice-Chair of the West London Skills and Employment Board and Chief People Officer, Heathrow Airport Ltd.

West London is thriving, with one of the highest levels of productivity per worker of any part of the UK, a highly strategic location between Heathrow Airport and the City of London, and a large base of over 100,000 businesses of all sizes.

The sub-region is home to a range of major international enterprises including Glaxo-SmithKline, Diageo, L'Oréal and British Airways to name but a few. West London is home to the UK's largest business park and industrial estate, Park Royal.

Yet 15% of our residents have low or no skills and 31% of 19 year olds leave full time education without a level 3 qualification. Intergenerational poverty in some areas remains entrenched and employers report a range of skills shortages that have potential to hinder West London's their future growth prospects.

There is much we can do, then, to ensure that people from all backgrounds are able to benefit from the proceeds of growth, and that we deliver at scale the skills that businesses and the wider economy need to continue succeeding in the years ahead.

By working across a broad partnership that brings together local government, Health Service providers, schools, colleges, universities, large businesses and

Small and Medium Enterprises (SME's), as well as the Greater London Authority (GLA), department of Work and Pensions (DWP) and Job centre Plus (JCP), we will ensure that we target our collective efforts at those groups and industries that need it most. By working together we are able to do this on a scale and pace not achievable by any one organisation acting alone.

Our approach focuses on four priorities that have been developed following an extensive process of evidence gathering, engagement and research:

- 1. A truly joined-up system**
- 2. Supporting inclusion**
- 3. Working with employers from all sectors**
- 4. Getting the basics right**

Responsiveness is key, locally and globally. We will keep this Strategy under constant review so that it can adapt to changes in worldwide circumstances, and innovate in response to new policy developments, opportunities and opportunities from Government and elsewhere as they arise.

# 1. OUR VISION FOR LONDON'S 21ST CENTURY WORKFORCE



We will create the conditions for a skills and employment system that delivers greater economic growth, with opportunities for all local people and employers.

It will become easier for employers in West London to find employees with the right skills and people from all backgrounds will have a greater choice of appropriate, meaningful work that pays well and allows them to progress.

We will do this by ensuring that the West London skills system, including local government, schools, further education and universities, businesses including SME's and other training & skills providers have a shared understanding about provision that is responsive, inclusive and efficient. Courses will be designed to deliver maximum productivity, accessible to all and shaped and delivered in coordination with employers.

# OUR VISION FOR GROWTH



## 2. THE WEST LONDON ECONOMY: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES



### OPPORTUNITIES

West London's labour market comprises a working age population of 1.5 million people, which is projected to grow by 8% in the coming years to 1.62 million by 2025. Half a dozen industrial sectors account for about 60% of all employment in west London and all are forecast to experience growth going forward. These sectors are:

- Wholesale and Retail
- Transportation, Logistics and Storage
- Administrative and Support Services
- Human Health and Social Work Activities
- Professional, Scientific and Technical Activities
- Construction and Engineering

Employment in Transportation and Storage shows particularly high levels of concentration in West London with more than twice the national average partly due to the strategic presence of Park Royal and Heathrow Airport.

Information, Communication and creative industries are also particularly significant in West London with high growth prospects in the future. This is important. Creative industries are amongst the most likely to avoid large-scale automation in the coming years.

Furthermore, creative and intellectually-based industries such as software and professional services tend to have higher income levels and therefore the potential to continue to be key drivers of wealth creation and income growth.

Nearly half of west London employment is dominated by a small number of (higher volume) occupations. These include ;

- Elementary Administration and Service Occupations
- Business and Public Service Associate Professionals
- Administrative Occupations
- Corporate Managers and Directors
- Sales Occupations.

Together with Caring Personal Service Occupations these jobs are expected to experience significant growth between 2015 and 2022 and will account for about 44% of annual job openings by then.

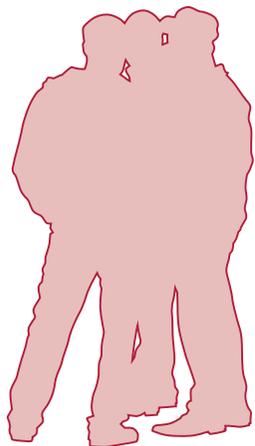
## CHALLENGES

We also recognise that, as with many other areas, there are a range of strategic challenges that have been identified nationally and internationally that will impact disproportionately on a number of the sectors and occupations outlined above.

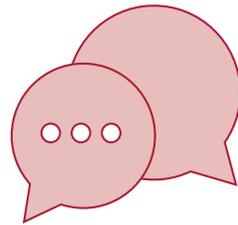
This strategy will help us to respond to these challenges in a flexible way as they develop:

- Technological change and automation challenging a growing range of higher-value roles in the years ahead.
- London's increasingly "hourglass-shaped" labour market makes it difficult for individuals to progress in a chosen career.
- Real wages failing to keep pace with rises in the cost of living result in poorer living standards.

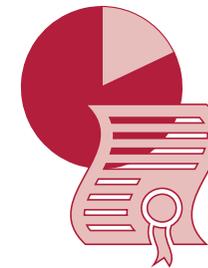
- Huge variations in the rates of employment being achieved for people with learning disabilities or physical or mental ill health
- A structural undersupply of basic employability skills (English, mathematics, digital, languages) leading too many people to experience unemployment or underemployment unnecessarily.
- An end to free movement of EU citizens is likely to make it harder for employers to recruit lower skilled employees and some specialist knowledge workers.
- The current activity of 16-18 year NEETs is underreported as 50% current activity is unknown well above the England average of 9.0% (Source: Middlesex University)



**350,000**  
young people in  
West London have  
no qualifications or  
qualifications below  
NVQ Level 2



**88,000**  
West London  
residents could  
not speak English  
well or at all



**18%** of West  
London employees  
have only basic  
qualifications  
(or none at all)



**22%** of West London  
employers report a skills  
shortage vacancy or skills gap,  
higher than for London as a whole

# 3. OUR PRIORITIES AND APPROACH



This strategy focuses on four priority areas that will support individuals from all backgrounds to engage with the labour market, progress and thrive.

Alongside our priorities, we have also agreed a set of joint principles setting out how we will work with the Mayor and the rest of London Government to establish a coherent, locally relevant and deliverable skills strategy for London. This strategy will form the basis of that relationship.

The priorities are shaped by the best available evidence about the shape of the West London labour market, how it is changing over time, and draw on recommendations from the Area Review of post-16 skills provision, published in February 2017, and discussions with the West London Skills and Employment Board.

West London's four priorities are to create a skills system which is:

- **A truly joined-up system**
- **Supporting inclusion**
- **Working with employers from all sectors**
- **Getting the basics right**

This strategy provides the basis for west London's commissioning intentions for adult skills, has been developed in alignment with the Mayor's Skills for Londoners strategy and will provide sub-regional skills priorities, based on a robust and up-to-date evidence base, that will inform and underpin the Skills Funding Statement for the Adult Education Budget from 2018.

This Strategy aligns with and fully supports the West London Adult and Community Learning Strategy as part of our holistic approach to supporting people of all ages to succeed in work.

We will work with City Hall and London's other sub regional partnerships to hold providers to account, recognising that learners and employees travel across administrative boundaries. This strategy will focus on responding practically to the future changes in the economy at the scale and pace required.

## 4. DELIVERING AN IMPROVED SKILLS SYSTEM

Our focus for action in this Strategy is divided into the four priorities developed following an extensive process of engagement and academic research during 2017, and building on the recommendations from the post-16 Area Review in 2016.





### **PRIORITY 1: A TRULY JOINED-UP SYSTEM**

We will work together with all partners to shape our approach to developing a skilled and competitive workforce across the whole economy, rebalancing provision towards vocational pathways and ensuring we are reflecting not just skills the economy currently needs, but accounting for longer term trends such as technological change, automation and an ageing workforce.

This strategy cannot sit in a silo, and external factors such as access to affordable housing and high travel costs will affect an individual's access to learning and employment opportunities too. We will align our approaches to these through this strategy and our wider vision for growth and wellbeing in west London.

#### **Outcomes**

- Local people are attracted to a more balanced mix of academic, vocational and hybrid pathways better meeting the diverse demands for talent across the west London economy
- The west London education, training and skills provider system – as well as employers' in-house provision – understands and is agile in its response to emerging trends
- Lifelong learning and progression in work is accessible to all
- The skills system, including funding, is increasingly responsive to local needs
- Our partnership to improve west London's skills system is visible to all key stakeholders and allows them all to continue to participate in this strategy's development and implementation.

# PRIORITY 1: A TRULY JOINED-UP SYSTEM

## OBJECTIVE 1.1

Supporting parity of esteem between academic and vocational and hybrid pathways

### WHY?

Many jobs either do not require a degree or need higher-level vocational skills or a hybrid approach. These skills need urgent investment to avoid a constraint on growth

### ACTIVITIES

- Careers Education Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) e.g. graduate-level pathways that do not require degrees.
- Schools promoting vocational pathways outcomes and adopting relevant T-levels
- Work-based learning and work-related learning delivered to all young people, to inform their CEIAG and subject choices

## OBJECTIVE 1.2

Understanding sector trends and connecting them to commissioning and delivery priorities

### WHY?

Because the “offer” of the whole system will need to reflect both the key current sectors and those likely to grow or contract most strongly in the future

### ACTIVITIES

- Labour market and economic insight connected to sector strategic planning and ACL, FE and HE syllabus content to reflect delivery priorities.
- Engagement with employers, research institutions and local authorities to explore and emerging trends and major employment opportunity areas

## OBJECTIVE 1.3

Responding to the challenges and opportunities of technological change

### WHY?

Many occupations across all skills levels will become obsolete due to automation in the coming years. The skills system needs to respond to this

### ACTIVITIES

- Incorporating digital and advanced manufacturing into course provision
- Employer engagement in course content to ensure cutting-edge provision e.g. advanced construction and web design

## OBJECTIVE 1.4

Reduce barriers to participation in lifelong learning and progression in work

### WHY?

Ongoing learning, development and training is essential in a modern economy

### ACTIVITIES

- Ensuring that all cohorts and age groups have access to high quality and relevant adult and community learning
- Employers champion and resource training and development of their staff

## OBJECTIVE 1.5

Local influence over the skills system

### WHY?

Decisions about how best to meet local skills and employment needs are best taken locally

### ACTIVITIES

- The West London Skills and Employment Board will continue to lobby for further devolution of the skills system in London, including e.g. 16-18 provision, unspent apprenticeship levy, vocational capital investment etc



## PRIORITY 2: SUPPORTING INCLUSION

It's essential that all learning is inclusive and adapts to meet the needs of every individual. The greatest returns on investment in skills for both workers and employers come at the lower-skills end of the spectrum, where things like basic literacy, numeracy and customer service or English language skills can have a big impact on an individual's earning prospects and life chances whilst also boosting productivity and competitiveness in the wider economy.

### Outcomes

- We will promote inclusion for all and make sure that we support those furthest from the labour market including priority groups e.g. those leaving care, young offenders and people with learning disabilities, mental ill health or where English is not their first language.
- We will reduce the level of 16-18 year olds Not in Education Employment or Training (NEET) and increase the proportion of 19 year olds with level 2 and 3.
- Provide sufficient access to an effective and high quality SEND curriculum, offering a range of outcomes-focused and person-centred programmes for those with special education needs and disabilities (SEND), and enabling effective preparation for adulthood: employment, community inclusion, independent living and good health.

## PRIORITY 2: SUPPORTING INCLUSION

### OBJECTIVE 2.1

English Language (ESOL) training delivered at sufficient scale to meet demand

#### WHY?

Language barriers are one of the top reasons preventing many West Londoners entering the labour market and progressing in work

#### ACTIVITIES

- Determine level of ESOL undersupply in the market
- Joint commissioning of ESOL at West London level to increase volume and reduce learner cost / entitlement to deliver a step change in availability of high quality ESOL courses

### OBJECTIVE 2.2

Improve access to supported Internships, Inclusive Apprenticeships and other interventions for those with special educational needs

#### WHY?

To enable all individuals to progress and engage in a full working life, improving their economic and health prospects and reducing dependency on other public services

#### ACTIVITIES

- Continued roll out and expansion of supported employment programmes, e.g. with the health and care sector incorporating digital and advanced manufacturing (as stated in 1.3)

### OBJECTIVE 2.3

Targeting interventions at those groups of people furthest from the labour market

#### WHY?

It is important that people from all groups and areas can find quality, meaningful work, and that this is based in the best quality evidence about "what works"

#### ACTIVITIES

- Scaling-up WLA & borough-led employment and skills programmes showing positive evaluation outcomes
- Engaging employers and providers in our employment programmes for priority groups, including the West London Work & Health Programmes using a range of engagement and outreach approaches.

### OBJECTIVE 2.4

Supporting vulnerable groups into employment

#### WHY?

Disability employment group has barely moved in over an decade and now stands at 26.5% across London

#### ACTIVITIES

- Devolution of the Work and Health programme will allow London boroughs to work more flexibly with employment support providers, and coordinate a wider range of services around the individual.
- Advancement of the Inclusion offer in West London



### **PRIORITY 3: WORKING WITH EMPLOYERS FROM ALL SECTORS**

This priority reflects the ever more holistic approach to skills development that we will increasingly need to take, moving away from the traditional model where schools, colleges and universities are the main providers of pre-employment, skills development towards one where large businesses and SME's work in close partnership with local education & training providers from primary school right the way through to upskilling in the workplace or employers becoming training providers. This will ensure the positive impact of businesses' investment in skills, including the Adult Skills Budget and Apprenticeship levy, is maximised.

#### **Outcomes**

- We will ensure a high quality, high volume offer, across the sub-region, in sectors characterised by high employer demand, in particular:
  - > Construction, engineering, manufacturing, IT
  - > Health and social care, teaching, nursing, medical and dental care support
  - > Business management, administration, marketing and sales
- We will increase access to higher level skills (L4+) through specialisation by colleges (in collaboration with employers) including in
  - > Business – management, administration, sales and marketing
  - > High tech. transportation, storage and distribution
  - > High tech. food manufacture
  - > Broadcasting and associated industries
- We will increase the take-up of apprenticeships.

## PRIORITY 3: WORKING WITH EMPLOYERS FROM ALL SECTORS

### OBJECTIVE 3.1

Increasing the number of high quality apprenticeships across West London

#### WHY?

The Levy is an opportunity for all large employers to work together to invest in the vocational skills the economy needs

#### ACTIVITIES

- Coordinated programmes of engagement with levy-paying organisations across west London to ensure levy funding is not being lost from the system
- Establishing employer hubs to better match supply and demand for apprenticeships in priority sectors
  - Greater volume of apprenticeship completions with meaningful work secured afterwards.

### OBJECTIVE 3.2

Working with different sectors to better match their training offer with their business needs

#### WHY?

The skills system must be responsive to the needs of west London employers to ensure the sub-region remains competitive in its areas of comparative advantage

#### ACTIVITIES

- West London schools, colleges and universities tailoring and coordinating their provision to reflect the skills needs of the sub-region and key sectors
- Specialisation by providers in higher-level skills e.g. high-tech and other sector subject areas

### OBJECTIVE 3.3

Ensure T-Levels provide high quality pathways to productivity in west London

#### WHY?

T-levels provide a radical reform to improve vocational and technical ensuring that the 14-19 curriculum offer supports positive destinations at the ages of 16, 17 and 18

#### ACTIVITIES

- Scaling-up WLA & borough-led employment and skills programmes showing positive evaluation outcomes
  - Engaging employers and providers in our employment programmes for priority groups, including the West London Work & Health Programmes using a range of engagement and outreach approaches.

### OBJECTIVE 3.4

Supporting modern working practices

#### WHY?

Employers across all sectors in west London supporting flexible working that allows them to succeed and for employees to thrive

#### ACTIVITIES

- Ensure that programmes delivering essential/ employability skills to young people, from primary to HE, reflect modern working practice and utilise best practice learning resources
  - Ensure adoption of new technology allowing flexible working practices
  - Support for part-time and job sharing work that enable a balance between family and work life.
    - Scaling effective modern management practices to ensure businesses can maximise their productivity

### OBJECTIVE 3.5

Influencing supply chains and large scale developments

#### WHY?

Shaping supply chains to be a responsive employer offering the London Living Wage and modern working practices

#### ACTIVITIES

- Leveraging supply chains to deliver at scale



#### **PRIORITY 4: GETTING THE BASICS RIGHT**

This priority is about ensuring we are focused on enabling those individuals and groups who are further from the labour market, or who are excluded from it altogether, to find employment and to boost their earning power. It is also about both the private and public sector jointly making a long-term commitment to education and training as part of their business model.

#### **Outcomes**

- We will develop a locally accessible offer of foundation skills for all West London residents covering Entrepreneurialism; Resilience; English, Maths and Digital Literacy; STEM and Employability skills
- We will improve Information, Advice and Guidance, relating to future employment opportunities, for adults, parents and young people

## PRIORITY 4: GETTING THE BASICS RIGHT

### OBJECTIVE 4.1

Career Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) delivered at scale

### WHY?

To ensure every child has an excellent introduction to work and appropriate aspirations and ambitions

### ACTIVITIES

- Schools and employers coordinating CEIAG activity to help all students and adult workers from all backgrounds to make informed career and work choices, building towards achieving the “Gatsby Benchmarks” afterwards.

### OBJECTIVE 4.2

Embedding English, Maths and digital skills across the school, FE and adult learning curricula

### WHY?

To put in place the fundamental building blocks the workforce needs to succeed and to drive economic growth

### ACTIVITIES

- Greater focus on basic and intermediate digital literacy across all courses, including adult learning
- Numeracy and Literacy skills featured across all course provision

### OBJECTIVE 4.3

Improve low and no skilled adults’ educational attainment, enhancing resilience and independence, social, economic, physical and emotional wellbeing

### WHY?

To ensure all adults have pathways open to them to learn and to develop, building on the west London strategy and principles for Adult Community Learning ACL to help all people progress into employment

### ACTIVITIES

- Alignment of ACL services with our wider approach to skills and employment alongside schools, advice and guidance, FE, HE and the employer community
- Ensure Adult Community Learning provision is able to stay rooted in local communities and responsive to local needs

### OBJECTIVE 4.4

Basic and more advanced Employability Skills development built into the curricula of all providers

### WHY?

Schools, FE, HE and other providers need to demonstrate the importance of core employability skills across all subjects

### ACTIVITIES

- Employability skills embedded as part of all curricula, linked to appropriate & high quality employer-led work experience & IAG alongside academic content
- Explore the establishment of a West London Employability Skills Framework as recommended in the 2017 Taylor Review



## 5. MEASURING SUCCESS

We will know we are delivering this strategy through a rigorous focus on monitoring performance against a range of hard indicators, combined with engagement with the business community and employers to assess the extent to which skills shortages are being addressed and people from all backgrounds are able to access the labour market.

We will establish outcome agreements to reflect the role of all partners in delivering our priorities for the skills system and monitor our progress against key outcomes including those highlighted in section 4. These will allow us to monitor progress in areas such as:

- Unemployment rate
- Employment rate for key cohorts further from the labour market
- Employer-reported skills gaps
- Level of take up of ESOL
- Changing net disposable income levels, especially among the lower paid
- Reduction in benefits and support costs for those entitled and in receipt
- Qualifications & progression



# 6. GOVERNANCE



It is important that everything we do happens within a clear governance framework that allows decisions to be made quickly and effectively, to allow resources to be corralled, and to strengthen the voice of West London in London and nationally.

Led by the West London Skills and Employment Board with the ongoing engagement of skills and employment commissioners, colleges, universities, businesses, and adult and community learning services, accountable to the West London Economic Prosperity Board joint committee, we will work in partnership with the Mayor and GLA to ensure:

- **Effective governance and accountability structures** to ensure appropriate use of public funds and capability to act if strategic objectives are not met.
- **Employer and Skills Sector engagement** to bring invaluable insight into the interpretation of and response to local labour market intelligence.
- **Data and analytical capability** – this includes some purchased data and capacity to interpret it as well as local qualitative and quantitative knowledge of regeneration-led demand and learner demand. Demand will be matched against supply to understand gaps.
- **Capacity to coordinate and commission** - WLA provides the secretariat capability to support the West London Skills and Employment Board, coordinate input from stakeholders and monitor delivery to support commissioning decisions.

Progress delivering this overall strategy will be reported on an annual basis.

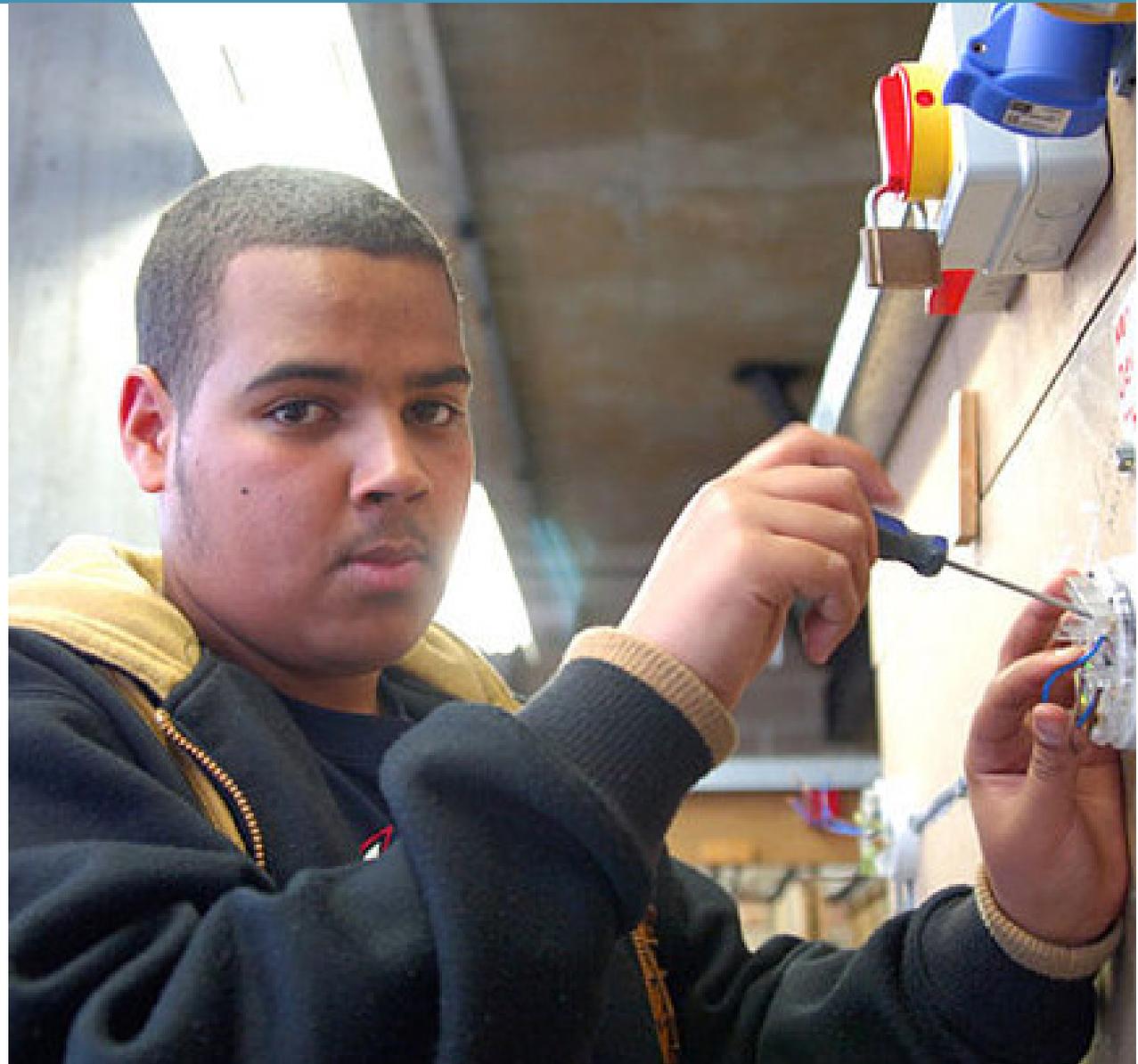
## 7. HOW WE WILL DELIVER THIS PLAN

**This is a five year strategy, and there is much to be done.**

An annual mobilisation and delivery plan will be produced setting out how we will work across all sectors of the economy to deliver the best employment outcomes and greatest productivity gains for people in West London.

This plan will include a risks and issues matrix that will be actively monitored and updated, allowing us to maximise our impact whilst minimising the risks.

Throughout the life of the strategy there will be an emphasis on deep and ongoing alignment with both the pan-London skills system, and the Government's approach to boosting growth and productivity through the UK Industrial Strategy.





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