

WEST LINDSEY - LOCAL PLACE EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS DYNAMICS, DATA AND INSIGHTS



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The executive summary walks us through the journey from the 10 key insights we have arrived at as a result of this project, to highlighting those insights which are drivers for local skills change (both positive and negative), onto how these might be addressed or supported further through calls to action, and what a successful outcome for each would look like for West Lindsey.

Finally, the executive summary presents the 10 key insights in detail with selected supporting evidence and our comments.



KEY INSIGHTS



1

West Lindsey – a high performing local authority for employment and skills indicators

2

A growing economy with a stable working age population and increasing resident opportunities for outward commuting

3

A diverse, rural economy with notable strengths and growth potential in locally important sectors; and yet major skills shortages persist

4

Local employer consensus about skills and people shortages - particularly entry level and skilled 'trades'

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Three diverse skills geographies within West Lindsey with very different dynamics and needs



The importance of proximity and access to learning / job opportunities – in many cases out-of-district

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Travel, transport, and connectivity a key local issue

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High-performing adult skills participation and attainment including apprenticeships

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A low and reducing in-district profile for vocational skills and career pathways

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Gainsborough – a regional outlier in employment and skills outcomes

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West Lindsey – a high performing local authority for employment and skills indicators

INSIGHT I



Despite a rural, sparsely populated location lacking the largest employers, the district competes with and outperforms Greater Lincolnshire and national averages on a number of indicators such as qualifications and employment.

Our comments:

Our evidence:

- Only 0.1% of West Lindsey’s business base is classed as large (i.e., employing 250 people or more) compared to 0.3% across Greater Lincolnshire and 0.4% nationally.

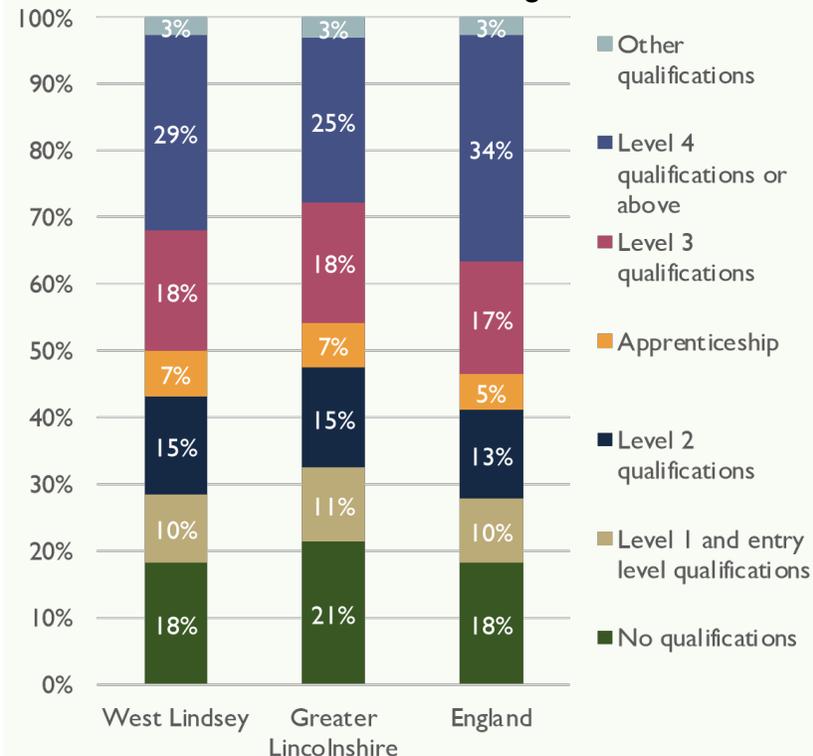
Average Claimant Count Aug22-Jul23 as a % of Those of Working Age



Levels of Economic Inactivity Amongst Those of Working Age (16-64yrs), 2021



Qualification Levels of Residents Aged 16 Plus, 2021



- Overall, West Lindsey has lower levels of unemployment, on-par economic inactivity, more highly qualified residents and less people with no or lower qualifications than regional and national comparators.
- There are limits to analysis at a pan-West Lindsey level as the three sub-geographies of the district perform quite differently.
- The lack of larger employers is significant in that such employers often fulfill a local ‘skills anchor’ remit with higher-profile, larger levy-driven apprenticeship and workforce development programmes.

A growing economy with a stable working age population and increasing resident opportunities for outward commuting

Projected demographic changes, despite present and projected growth some younger age cohorts, are likely to mean that the labour market will remain competitive for local employers (demonstrated by wage levels) and perhaps intensify as new exciting opportunities develop around the Freeport and low carbon sectors in Northern Lincolnshire.

Our evidence:

Employment Growth 2015-2022

West Lindsey	7.0%	▲
Greater Lincolnshire	4.8%	▲
England	7.8%	▲

Working Age (16-64) Population Growth 2011-2021

West Lindsey	0.0%	▬
Greater Lincolnshire	1.0%	▲
England	3.7%	▲

Projected Working Age (16-64) Population Growth 2021-2031

West Lindsey	-1.4%	▼
Greater Lincolnshire	0.2%	▲
England	1.8%	▲

'Local employers describe a tight labour market with unfilled vacancies and retention challenges that could be a risk to realising the evident growth potential in sectors such as manufacturing and engineering'.

Average workplace gross annual pay, 2020 - 2022



INSIGHT 2



Our comments:

- West Lindsey workplace pay levels have overtaken UK-wide comparators suggesting continuing competitiveness locally and regionally for experienced, skilled staff.
- This competitiveness probably relates both to a growing local and regional economy whilst the local working age population remains relatively static.
- The likely acceleration of skilled opportunities in northern Lincolnshire particularly suggests that challenges faced by local employers will not go away, and the need to both 'develop local people' and attract more inward commuters may only increase.

A diverse, rural economy with notable strengths and growth potential in locally important sectors; and yet major skills shortages persist

INSIGHT 3



Growth and career opportunities exist across the local economy although these are challenged by low visibility of local pathways, a static working age population and increasing ‘competition’ from areas such as northern Lincolnshire.

Our comments:

Our evidence:

Total Employment, 2022 (% of Total)	Employment Growth 2015-2022	Projected Employment Growth 2022-2030	Replacement Demand (by 2030)
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	Agri-Food	3,525 (11.5%)	7.0%	-300 jobs	600 jobs
	Health, Care & Wellbeing	3,200 (10.5%)	7.0%	+600 jobs	800 jobs
	Visitor Economy	3,150 (10.3%)	7.0%	0 jobs	600 jobs
	Engineering & Manufacturing	2,900 (9.6%)	7.0%	+200 jobs	700 jobs
	Construction	2,500 (8.2%)	0%	+200 jobs	700 jobs

- Agri-Food is reported as the largest employment sector, if reducing in size, although this includes Food Manufacturing employment (approximately 500 jobs) which is often categorised within Engineering & Manufacturing.
- Replacement Demand from people leaving the sector workforce (e.g., retirements) is a major issue and concern across each sector.
- Health, Care and Wellbeing projects the largest demand increases for both new jobs and replacements.
- Despite the evident job demand challenges, the level of vocational education and skills initiatives in the district has reduced – to employer concern.

Local employer consensus about skills and people shortages - particularly entry level and skilled 'trades'

Evidence confirms the relative 'tightness' of the labour market across the board, although employers anecdotally reflect that it has eased post-covid. Demand is focused upon entry level roles, sometimes with qualification progression, and also skilled practitioners / trades in areas such as healthcare and manufacturing.

Our evidence:

"Recruitment is currently a nightmare - it's really difficult to be competitive, including with less skilled occupations, and also out of area."

Manufacturing Employer, Oct 2023

Substantial care home challenges of skills shortages / staff recruitment and retention – particularly the registered nursing workforce and also frontline care in rural settings. With high useage of agency workers and an example of a local nursing home recently deregistering due to an inability to recruit nurses.'

Healthcare Stakeholder, Oct 2023

Unique online vacancy numbers in West Lindsey, Sep 2018 – Aug 2023



INSIGHT 4



Our comments:

- Employers in different sectors reflected on 'standing vacancies' for certain skilled positions or front-line operatives – the latter often with upskilling prospects.
- Many national reports reflect on the likely future shortages of higher level (Level 4+) and/or contemporary skills for sectors such as Low carbon, although this was not reflected in local employers' priorities which emphasises entry level and Level 3 practitioners.

Three distinct employment and skills geographies within West Lindsey with different dynamics and needs

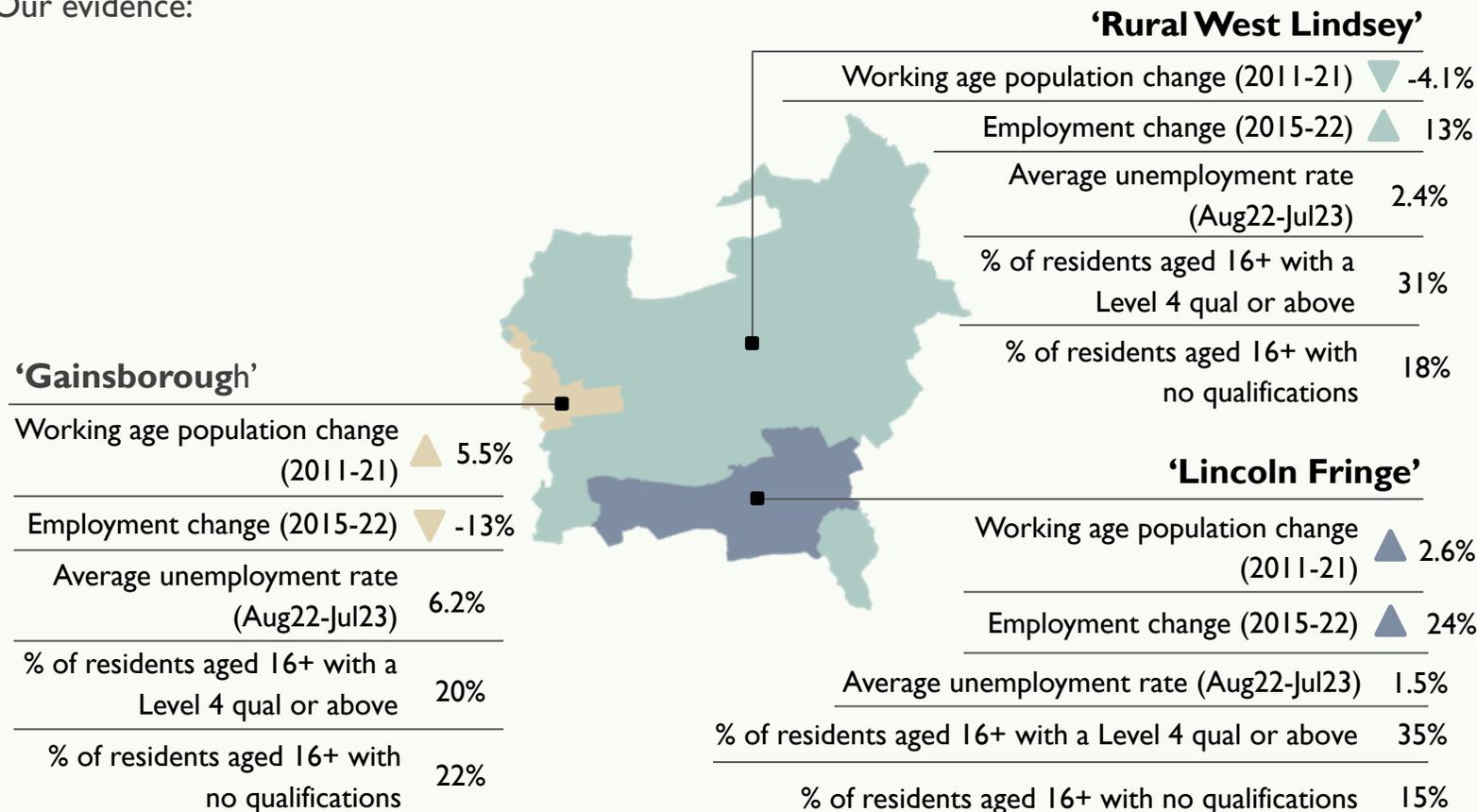
INSIGHT 5



High overall performance particularly from the Lincoln Fringe risks the challenges faced by Gainsborough and Rural West Lindsey being 'under the radar'. Skills planning needs to reflect those differences at a local level.

Our comments:

Our evidence:



- The specific challenges faced in the Gainsborough area stand out, with a lower qualification base, higher unemployment and a local reduction in the number of jobs, despite working age population increases. Stakeholders describe a Gainsborough cultural reluctance to travel to job/learning opportunities likely to be further afield.
- The Lincoln Fringe outperforms both regionally and nationally in terms of qualification levels and also self-employment numbers.
- The contrast between 'supply' and 'demand' is most obvious in Rural West Lindsey with a decreasing working age population aligned with significant job growth – probably exacerbated by rurality and competition with jobs in northern Lincolnshire.

The importance of proximity and access to learning and job opportunities – in many cases out-of-district

INSIGHT 6



Many, although not all, West Lindsey residents enjoy good access to high quality jobs and further / higher education opportunities in Lincoln, Scunthorpe, and Grimsby.

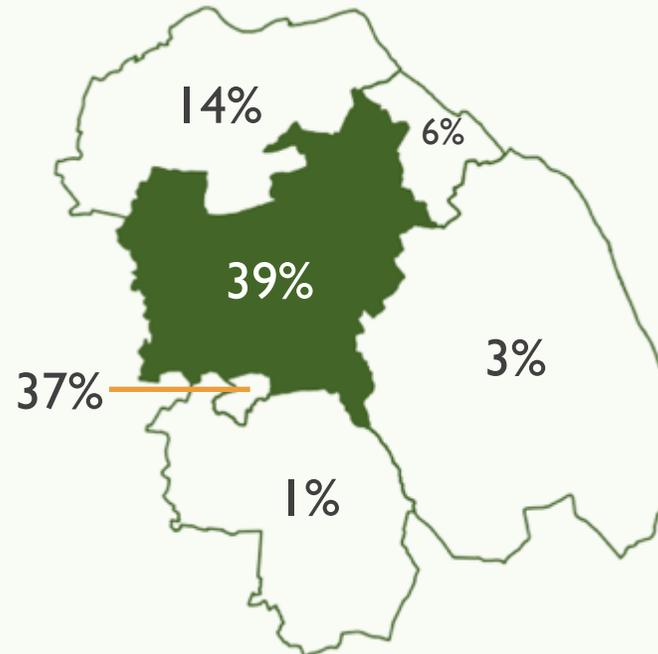
Our comments:

Our evidence:

Number of people that commuted out of West Lindsey into neighbouring areas to work on the day of the 2011 Census. (2021 results awaited)



School and Further Education destinations of West Lindsey resident Year 12 and 13 as of August 2023



- The settlement patterns of West Lindsey which tend to be around the boundaries of the district mean that many residents have excellent access to high quality job and learning opportunities ‘over the border’ in Lincoln and northern Lincolnshire.
- The district has a total outflow of 19,919 workers, which is over a third (36%) of the local working age (16-64) population. There is also a daily inflow of 9,180 workers, meaning that on the day of the 2011 Census, it had a net outflow of 10,739 workers.
- There remain isolated parts of West Lindsey however, where travel is either logistically or culturally difficult – for example Gainsborough communities; and employment sites in Hemswell and Market Rasen – the latter both struggling to recruit in-commuters.
- The dispersal of young people post-16 is also particularly marked with a very low retention rate of young people able to pursue vocational (i.e., rather than academic/A Level) learning opportunities in West Lindsey.

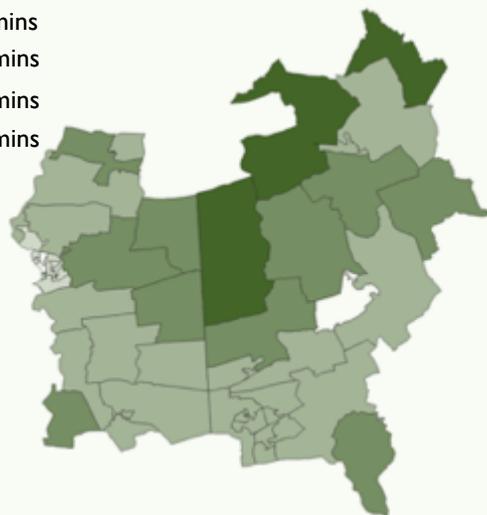
Travel, transport, and connectivity a key local issue

A strength and a weakness! Some parts of the district benefit from excellent transport links to jobs and learning, although areas such as Hemswell (particularly) and Gainsborough cite travel as a key barrier to economic and community development.

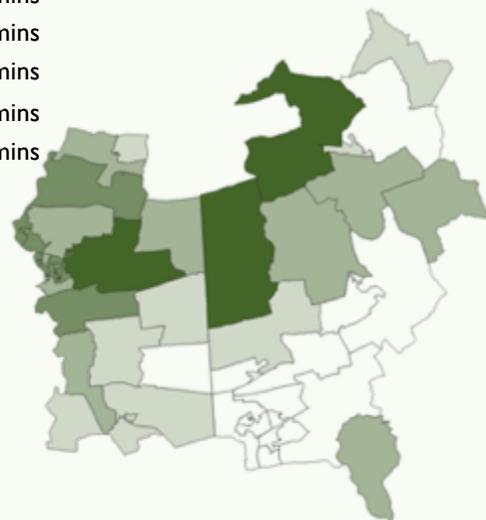
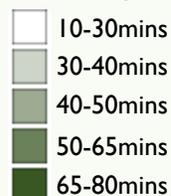
Our evidence:

“Hemswell is a really difficult rural location to attract staff to with rurality meaning a lack of local resident footfall and challenges competing with the larger conurbations where local jobs are also plentiful. Public transport routes and scheduling are currently not at all helpful for work-commuting.” **Local Stakeholder, Oct 2023**

Average time taken to travel to nearest town centre using public transport



Average time taken to travel to nearest FE college (inc. sixth form colleges / school sixth forms) using public transport



INSIGHT 7



Our comments:

- Travel, transport and connectivity is a long-term challenge facing many rural areas, but with particular challenges faced in West Lindsey in Gainsborough, and the rural central areas.
- The lack of local FE provision within Gainsborough means that many young people now have no option other than, to travel to FE campuses in Lincoln, Scunthorpe or Grimsby – this has been a major concern for local stakeholders fearing that some commuting learners will find it difficult to complete courses, increasing the likelihood of young people becoming ‘not in employment, education or training’ (NEET).

High-performing adult skills participation and attainment including apprenticeships

INSIGHT 8



An evident continuing appetite for post-school learning with apprenticeship numbers holding up well so far, although concerns that this may be at risk following further education provision and apprenticeship initiatives no longer available in and from Gainsborough.

Our comments:

Our evidence:

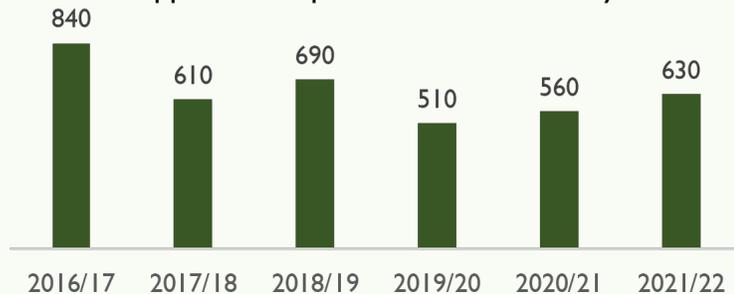
No. of Further Education & Skills participants per 1,000 residents aged 19-64 years, 2016/17 – 2021/22



“The evident commitment to apprenticeship pathways in sectors such as manufacturing and engineering is impressive and may connect to the engineering heritage of the area, with a number of small manufacturing employers committing to a significant intake of apprentices annually.”

- Apprenticeship starts proportionally have continually outstripped both regional and national comparators – this being matched by Adult Further Education and Skills participants.
- There is evidence however that adult learning tends to be at lower qualification levels than other areas.
- The data also does not reveal whether there are any differences in participation levels across West Lindsey or whether the recent reductions in the availability of local provision in Gainsborough has had local impact.

Apprenticeship starts in West Lindsey



No. of apprenticeship starts per 1,000 employees, 2016/17 – 2021/22



A low and reducing in-district profile for vocational skills and career pathways

In contrast to the diverse range of educational and job opportunities accessible around the district borders, stakeholders expressed concern about the reducing availability of in-district occupational provision and, thereby, the low profile of local vocational pathways for young people and adults around Gainsborough and in Rural West Lindsey.

Our evidence:

Within West Lindsey, important in-district Learning Providers include:

- Riseholme FE College, a rural location close to the southern boundary and supporting a county-wide, quite specialist learning community for the agricultural sector plus sports / leisure and Higher Education access programmes.
- ACIS Housing-led learning providers Riverside Training (Gainsborough) and CLIP (Market Rasen). Community-led learning provision funded through DWP and LCC Adult Education Budgets. The overall focus of this offer is on first steps education and training covering general employability, wellbeing and basic skills rather than specific occupational qualification pathways. Recent changes in national skills policy have also reduced the capacity to offer local opportunities such as Traineeships for young people.

*“If you can't see it,
how can you be it”,*

Skills Infrastructure Stakeholder, Oct 2023

‘Several local employers and stakeholders expressed strong views that the cessation of Made in Gainsborough locally, and the loss of a local FE Campus, was a major “backward step” for the Gainsborough community in particular, with less employer collaboration, less in-kind skills investment, less visible career opportunities and apprenticeships, and increased employer competition over staff.’

INSIGHT 9



Our comments:

The availability of West Lindsey-based further education and vocational learning opportunities has reduced in recent years with:

- The closure of the Gainsborough campus of Lincoln College on grounds of sustainable learner demand and viability. Until 2021, the campus offered a range of first steps occupational provision in areas such as health and care, engineering, hair and beauty, construction career college providing post-16 options for young people in and around Gainsborough.
- Additionally, the Made in Gainsborough (MiG) initiative provided locally accessible engineering training and Apprenticeships for those where travel out of the district was less of a sustainable choice for financial, logistical, or cultural reasons. MiG enabled local engineering education and training in and for West Lindsey (especially but not solely Gainsborough) as part of a local industry collaboration. It achieved impressive engineering apprenticeship numbers for local people. This Gainsborough-based partnership initiative (and the wider FE campus) was relocated to Lincoln in 2021.

Gainsborough – a regional outlier in employment and skills outcomes

INSIGHT 10



The local stakeholder consensus is that there are specific geographic, socio-economic, and cultural barriers faced within the Gainsborough area that stand out, not only within West Lindsey, but across Greater Lincolnshire and beyond.

Our comments:

Our evidence:

‘There was a consensus about an ‘island’ or insular mentality sometimes prevailing around Gainsborough, with people committed to their own locale and reluctant to consider opportunities further afield to either study, work, or develop a career. Such ‘insularity’ may be compounded by a lack of access to a car or other affordable transport.’

‘How do we future proof Gainsborough in terms of access to exciting local opportunities and an area of increasing population?’
Healthcare Stakeholder, Oct 2023

- Stakeholders emphasise the importance of stronger local education-business partnerships with the three Gainsborough schools to support greater awareness of and connectivity with exciting local and accessible out-of-district career opportunities.
- The Gainsborough Aspirations Project (GAP) provides a high potential vehicle to tackle the perceptions / realities of low community aspirations generally and specifically around travel, jobs and skills.
- In this environment of crippling skills shortages cited by many employers as a barrier to growth, the Gainsborough area has both a growing working age population (particularly younger people), and higher levels of unemployment and economic inactivity, providing an untapped talent pool if combined with the right entry level skilled opportunities.

	Average Unemployment Rate Aug22-Jul23 as a % of Those of Working Age	Average Unemployment Rate Aug22-Jul23 of those aged 18-24 as a % of Total 18-24 population	Average rate of 16-17-year-olds Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) Jun22-May23	% of Residents Aged 16 Plus with Level 2 Qualifications or below, 2021
Gainsborough	6.2%	10.1%	4.3%	51%
West Lindsey	3.1%	5.3%	2.1%	43%
Greater Lincolnshire	3.3%	4.7%	3.4%	47%
England	3.7%	4.7%	2.4%	41%