

Manifesto Launch Event Summary

March 2023



On 7th March 2023 we officially launched our manifesto for 2023. This is a dynamic strategic position of the Northern Skills Network and our priorities for the year ahead. We had over 40 people who attended our launch webinar and the feedback so far has been very positive and in support for the Northern Skills Network and our priorities.

The aim of this manifesto is to **take action** across our identified priorities that lead to **positive change**. Action may include **gathering real time evidence to underpin place-based responses** to critical issues and challenges faced by our members, **sharing practice and developments** in order to **understand a unified northern skills need**, and **using our united voice to advocate for change**.

The webinar was hosted by the NSN co-chairs Alex Miles and Anne Gornall, who both thanked the continued support to our strategic partners, NCFE & Northern Powerhouse Partnership.



Henri Murison
Director | Northern
Powerhouse Partnership
Programme

"We welcome the development of the Northern Skills Network manifesto for 2023, and look forward to working with the team on the important priorities that NSN have identified...We support all of the work NSN do all year round to ensure that the voices of **northern skills providers are heard** across these and other debates, and are grateful for the work NSN do in highlighting not just the challenges, but also the **opportunities in the North of England** – for learning providers, businesses and young people and those wishing to retrain."

"The manifesto of the Northern Skills Network is important for so many reasons, but not least the significant part it will play in making the levelling up agenda a reality, helping to rebalance the UK economy... Through the Northern Skills Network, they [training providers and businesses] are able to **come together and work in a cohesive way** to provide the **diverse skills needed to address a challenging economy and labour market** but importantly, to help **both people and businesses to realise their untapped potential.**"



David Gallagher
CEO | NCFE

We shared the 4 core priority areas and asked for audience response, using QR Codes on the key areas:

1 Future Skills Landscape - Challenges and Opportunities

This priority area allows the NSN to address any and all challenges that effect our regional networks, members and post-16 education system across the North. There are activities we know that will affect the sector and elements we are not yet aware of. The NSN responsibility is to identify, collaborate and respond on the key areas of affect. This priority includes, but not exclusive to:

- Apprenticeship Levy
- End Point Assessment
- Sustainable Development
- Accountability & Simplification
- Access Routes, Addressing Inequalities and Social Mobility e.g.
- Inclusion and supporting those with LLDD
- The removal of Traineeships
- 16-18 year olds being discouraged from taking up apprenticeships due to impact on parent/carers benefits

Is there anything missing from the Future Skills Landscape priority?

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2 Recruitment & staffing crisis in FE

The FE Further Education Sector is currently facing a staff recruitment and retention crisis, FE Providers are struggling to recruit new staff to the sector and retain them when in role. In order to deliver high quality vocational education and training, FE providers need high quality staff to be able to do so. There is also a need for greater alignment between industry and further education. NSN members are working on local initiatives to support the Further Education Sector to recruit and retain high quality staff. The best practice and learnings will be shared through NSN.

Through the NSN we will try to help find solutions, pilot different approaches and host roundtables to support the current crisis. In a recent meeting with college representatives from the YLP network, the principles share the staffing & retention crisis is the topic that is challenging & concerning colleges the most at the moment – so as the NSN and the regional networks who support the college and ITP members we want to help, and we want for to share your issues & potential collaborative solutions.

Do you have any solutions/best practice that could support the FE recruitment and staffing crisis?

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Fe boot camps. Evidence to Ofsted re quality impact.	Competitive salaries	Working with employers to release their staff 1 day per week to contract to us, working well in some areas
Do employers offer WFH, flexible working, potential 4 days weeks or condensed hours that colleges may not be able to compete with?	We have an industry to education program we have been running for last 10 years. Our biggest issue is assessment for suitability of applicants	Could we highlight sector employment opportunities to pwd representative bodies
Retraining from other sectors where crossover in skills, better rates of salaries.	Fe staff should be paid in line with the sector market , to attract the highly skilled experts . Raise the cap on levy	

3 Demand for Skills Across the North - Employers, Young People & Adults

Across the North we are inherently aware of the critical need to improve productivity, boost economic growth, encourage innovation, create good jobs, enhance educational attainment, and renovate the social and cultural fabric of our northern regions to ensure equality in our nation's opportunity & success.

Two regional networks across the NSN are delivering the **Engaging SMEs in the apprenticeship project**, with funding from DfE. This project is designed to help inform SMEs of the benefits of employing apprentices and support them to do so. Knowledge gained from this project will be shared across the North.

Several NSN regional networks are supporting their **Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP)** which have to truly represent the views, experience and problems that employers are facing when it comes to recruiting staff, as well as upskilling their existing workforce. There are a range of issues and collectively we know that things can improve. The LSIPs are the best way yet that these issues can be resolved. By working with both employers and providers together we can, with the use of data, intelligence and evidence, iron out the problems, identify the areas that need to be improved and plan ahead for the future.

Four of our regional networks deliver the DfE funded **Apprenticeship Support and Knowledge (ASK) Programme**, which provides impartial apprenticeship and T Level information to students in years 10-13, teachers and parents in schools and colleges across the North.

4 Advocate, Exchange & Meet

The NSN will lead, utilising regional networks and partners, in a series of policy pieces as set by the board, covering key priorities and addressing skills needs, gaps, analysis and developments to ensure our network & its members are a key partner in developing & influencing skills for the North. We are delighted to join the Northern Powerhouse Partnership, Northern Skills Taskforce to ensure the training provider community across the Northern Powerhouse is a critical ally in the work they do to support apprenticeships, and the wider vocational skills agenda.

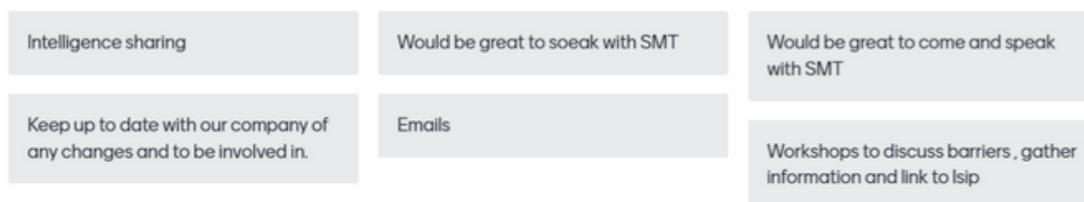
We also look forward to continue growing our relationship with strategic partner, NCFE, and working collaboratively to arrive at solutions which will benefit our member providers, employers and the wider FE landscape.

We also want to ensure the excellent work taking place within the regions to support providers and policy at a regional level is promoted & shared – across the North our networks do a fantastic job with supporting their members, advocating for positive change and showcasing the great post016 programmes and pathways on offer – so we will continue to share and shout about the work that is taking place.

Our Comms approach includes - Online Conference, F2F Conference, quarterly newsletter, dedicated webpage for the manifesto, our strategies and comms

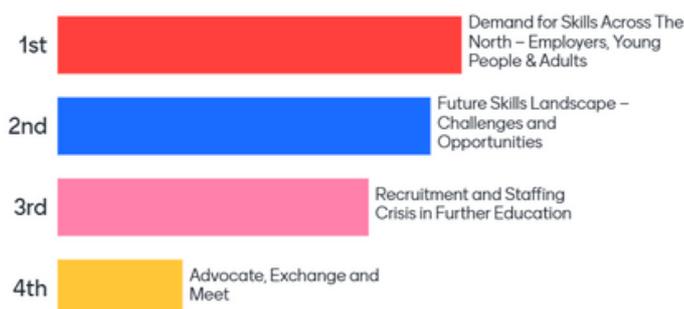
Are there any other ways you want NSN to engage with you?

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Rate the NSN Priorities...

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Next Steps

Wherever possible we want to work with key stakeholders and policy changers and over the past year we have worked with some great people and partners to further demonstrate the value of post-16 education across the North and the impact of the Northern skills Network.

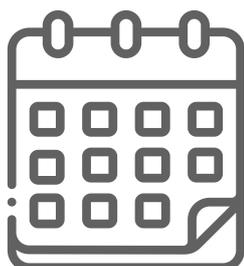
This slide shows just some of the organisations we have worked with and have expressed interest in supporting the NSN and our workstreams.

Key Stakeholders



Please keep in touch with the Northern Skills Network and our ongoing progress with the manifesto either by your regional network lead or the chairs email – chair@northernskillsnetwork.co.uk.

Dates for your diary!



NSN Online Green Conference
20th July 2023

NSN Face-to-face Conference
12th October 2023