



2024–2025

Skills Bootcamps Impact Report Wave 5



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Contents

Executive Summary	3
Background of the Skills Bootcamps.....	4
Participants of Skills Bootcamps.....	5
The Impact of Skills Bootcamps within Berkshire’s Individual Local Authorities	6
Bracknell Forest Council	6
Reading Borough Council.....	7
Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead	8
Slough Borough Council.....	10
West Berkshire Council	11
Wokingham Borough Council	13
Impact Stories.....	15
References	19

Executive Summary

The Berkshire Skills Bootcamps programme delivered strong and measurable impact across the county, expanding access to high quality skills training while addressing employer defined skills needs during the funding year of April 2024 – April 2025. Delivered as part of the Department for Education's Skills for Life initiative, the programme continued its mission to close regional skills gaps, strengthen employability, and support economic growth through flexible, employer-led learning.

During the 2024/25 funding year, a total of 478 learners enrolled across 14 Skills Bootcamps. There was a high level of involvement from residents aged 35–64, people from ethnic minority backgrounds, unemployed individuals, and those returning to the workforce. Employer engagement was a key strength of Skills Bootcamps in 2024/2025. 47 employers worked with our local colleges and training providers to design the Skills Bootcamps curriculum ensuring the skills learnt through the training received aligned closely with current recruitment needs in priority sectors including construction & the built environment, engineering, sustainability, digital - including data analytics & digital marketing, education & early years, sales and screen production.

Berkshire exceeded the Department for Education's targets for Skills Bootcamp outcomes. The Department for Education required at least 80% of enrolled learners to achieve a positive progression outcome upon completion of the Skills Bootcamp, such as a job interview, offer of increased responsibilities at work, or - for self-employed participants - an action plan to grow their business. Berkshire surpassed this requirement and achieved 101% against the target required. For those who achieved these progression opportunities, the Department for Education set a target that 75% of those learners should secure a job outcome or new clients and contracts. Against this target, Berkshire achieved 105% against the target number, also exceeding the target set.

These strong results meant participants progressed into new employment, received promotions, or gained new contracts or business opportunities highlighting the programme's effectiveness in creating clear pathways to career development and advancement. Salary uplift was significant across multiple local authorities, with residents moving into roles in high-demand occupations such as software development, education, engineering, marketing, and technical trades. Self-employed participants also benefited, with many securing new clients and contracts thanks to the skills they gained.

The Skills Bootcamps initiative was delivered across all Berkshire local authorities generating impactful outcomes for individuals, employers and the local economy. Reading achieved strong progression into work and higher earnings; Windsor and Maidenhead saw high salary uplifts and exceptional outcomes for self-employed residents; Slough strengthened pathways into education and care roles; Bracknell residents achieved the highest Skills Bootcamps completion and progression rates in Berkshire; Wokingham residents experienced some of the most substantial individual salary increases; and West Berkshire benefited from employer-led engineering and technical training that directly addressed acute regional skills shortages.

Overall, the Skills Bootcamps delivered a well-coordinated, employer-led programme that supported residents from all backgrounds to gain industry relevant, in demand skills. By boosting local earning power, strengthening talent pipelines, and supporting business resilience, the Skills Bootcamps continue to make a meaningful contribution to Berkshire's long-term economic growth and workforce.

Background of the Skills Bootcamps

The Berkshire Skills Bootcamps form part of the Department for Education’s national Skills for Life initiative, designed to address skills shortages, improve employability, and support economic growth through flexible, employer-led training. Introduced in Berkshire in April 2023, the programme provides residents with access to intensive, sector-specific learning that responds directly to labour market demand while offering clear pathways into employment, career progression, or business growth.

Skills Bootcamps delivered during 2024 – 2025 build on the strong foundations established in earlier years of delivery, delivering training aligned to both local and national priorities. The programme focuses on equipping individuals with practical, industry-relevant skills in high-demand sectors such as construction & the built environment, engineering, green skills (including sustainability), digital, education & early years, sales and screen production.

Delivery this year was made possible through building and strengthening relationships with a network of new and returning delivery partners including local colleges and independent training providers. This expanding network enhanced the programme’s reach, broadened its expertise, and strengthened its ability to serve learners with diverse needs and backgrounds whilst maintaining a clear focus on the overarching purpose of the Skills Bootcamps to address local skills shortages within key sectors.

Employers based in Berkshire’s involvement remained central to the programme’s design, impact and overall success. Varying sized businesses contributed insight, designed the training programmes with the delivery partners, offered progression opportunities, and supported learners into work. This approach ensured that the Skills Bootcamps content reflected workforce and recruitment needs and that participants developed the specific skills employers in Berkshire are actively seeking.

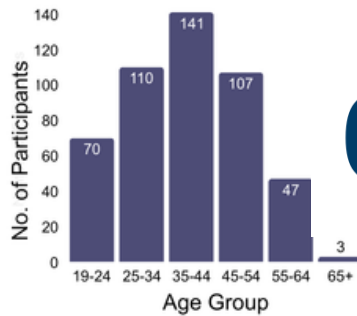
This report explores the impact of Skills Bootcamps across Berkshire’s six local authority areas. It presents learner outcomes, employer engagement, alignment with the workforce market needs, and the wider social and economic value generated. Through sharing key data insights, case studies, and labour market information, the report provides a comprehensive picture of how Skills Bootcamps are strengthening Berkshire’s skills pipeline in priority sectors, supporting residents into well aligned opportunities, and contributing to a more resilient regional economy.



Participants of Skills Bootcamps

Age Representation

Learners ages ranged from **19 to 66**
39 was the average age of participants



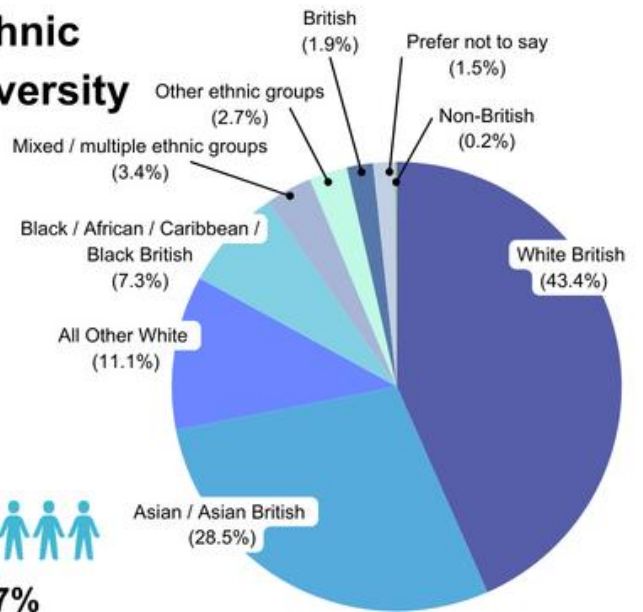
61

participants reported having a disability or SEND

Employment Goal



Ethnic Diversity



Gender Split



The Impact of Skills Bootcamps within Berkshire's Individual Local Authorities

Across Berkshire, delivery partners, employers, and participants across each local authority have played a role in the success of Skills Bootcamps. The local outcomes have combined to create a powerful regional impact supporting residents of Berkshire into opportunities for employment and career progression and helping businesses meet evolving skills needs. The following pages outline the contribution of each local authority area, showing how delivery at a local level fed directly into the overall success of the programme for learners, businesses and the wider economy.

Bracknell Forest Council

Job market data (2) in Bracknell showed 17,344 unique job postings between April 2024 and April 2025, pointing to a thriving labour market with strong opportunities. 19 Bracknell residents enrolled in Skills Bootcamps, achieving the highest conversion rate across Berkshire: 100% completed training, 89% progressed to securing an interview for a new role, and 68% were successful in achieving a new role or increased responsibilities in their current role. This demonstrates the direct connection between the availability of vacancies and the positive impact of the Skills Bootcamps pipelines, which identify the skills employers needs and equip learners with those skills to reliably fill these roles.

Residents engaged in 8 different Skills Bootcamp pathways, gaining skills in areas such as data analytics, leadership and management, green skills, electrical installation, and ventilation, all aligning with Bracknell's most in demand skills. For example, project management, customer relationship management, and data analysis all appear prominently in local job postings. The presence of SQL, Agile Methodology, and Computer Science further reflects the area's growing digital and technical skills demand, all of which are skills taught within Skills Bootcamps programmes such as High Performance Full Stack Software Development. Every High Performance Full Stack Software Development learner progressed to interview or job offer stage, including those previously unemployed for over a year, placing Skills Bootcamp learners into some of the 400 postings for programmers and software development professionals locally.

Bracknell's labour market (5) profile showed that sales related occupations are the single most posted job category, and selling techniques appeared in 439 postings which are taught within the Sales Skills Bootcamp. This Skills Bootcamp supported both self-employed and employed learners to secure new clients, contracts, and aided career progression through using a coaching-based methodology to build sales confidence using a variety of core sales and negotiation skills and learning to tackle real-world challenges in today's competitive markets.

These targeted employment pathways result in positive and effective job outcomes reducing long term unemployment, and injects skilled, motivated talent back into the local economy, creating a ripple effect of social value that strengthens communities and drives inclusive growth.

Participants in the Electrical Installation and Ventilation Skills Bootcamp also achieved strong results, with self-employed learners winning new work contracts and co-funded learners upskilling in their roles. These outcomes are well matched to Bracknell's demand for technical and construction related roles, including Electricians, Gas Engineers, and other skilled trades, which feature prominently in Bracknell's advertised vacancies.

From the Delivery Partner – Windsor Forest Colleges Group, who delivered Electrical Installation and Ventilation Skills Bootcamp:

"I think the freedom to design it with the employers, as the employers require, is also a plus—because we work with a lot of small to medium-sized companies and small traders so just giving them the ability to be involved in the design of the programme. I think that's also really good"

9 self-employed participants secured new contracts or clients, while one learner was co-funded by a local employer. Other participants were supported by employers elsewhere in Berkshire or secured roles outside the borough. 89% of learners in Bracknell completed their Skills Bootcamp despite barriers such as unemployment, part time work, or long-term health conditions demonstrating that Skills Bootcamps are both in demand and valued, and that learners are willing to complete the Bootcamps because the benefits outweigh the barriers to completion.

Reading Borough Council

Prior to delivery of Skills Bootcamps in 2024 - 2025, according to the Office of National Statistics, in 2023 unemployment in Reading rose slightly to 3.5% (1), highlighting the continued need for reskilling and supporting individuals into employment. Between April 2024 and April 2025, employers in Reading posted 72,552 job vacancies (2), with the strongest demand in skills related to project management, marketing, data analysis, selling techniques, and Python. The 2023 Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) (3) identified urgent digital skills gaps in software development, cyber security, and data roles. In response, Skills Bootcamps were designed with employers to equip Skills Bootcamps learners with the skills and career support needed to move into sustainable digital careers. Delivery in Reading was shaped directly by employer demand and aligned to businesses with high numbers of vacancies across the Digital sector.

Reading demonstrated the highest level of engagement across Berkshire, with 84 residents completing a Skills Bootcamp. 77% of these individuals secured a job interview or offer of increased responsibilities in their current job and for those self-employed, clear action plans were devised to improve their businesses. Of the group of learners attending interviews, 55% secured a job offer or promotion in their current jobs or won new contracts or clients using the skills learnt on the Skills Bootcamp.

For participants who began the programme unemployed, those who provided salary data reported a new average salary of £27,729 which aids in closing the unemployment gap as well as showing strong progression in local earning power. In addition to this positive outcome, 13 participants were receiving Universal Credit prior to joining the Skills Bootcamp and of those; 4 secured a job offer upon completing the programme demonstrating the positive impact a Skills Bootcamp can have on individuals in varying situations.

Employer engagement in Reading was particularly strong with 8 local employers collaborating with delivery providers on the design of the programmes across many sectors. The Plumbing, Heating and Ventilation, and Marketing Skills Bootcamps were developed by delivery partners in close collaboration with Berkshire businesses experiencing current skills gaps in these sectors. The input of the local businesses in these sectors ensured the

Skills Bootcamps programmes focused on the exact skills they were struggling to recruit for and produced candidates who matched their real workplace needs reducing recruitment time and cost.

In addition to shaping delivery, Reading based employers hired from Skills Bootcamp graduates, or supported their own staff through the programmes to upskill their current workforce. This strong employer pipeline meant that participants were not only trained but also connected directly to real opportunities, significantly increasing their chances of achieving aligned and relevant employment outcomes. When employers are at the heart of the process, from design through to recruitment, Skills Bootcamps become more effective by ensuring that participants finish their learning with industry-relevant skills, and genuine prospects for career progression.

Skills Bootcamps delivered significant value for self-employed residents and those launching new business ventures. In Reading, 20 self-employed individuals participated in Skills Bootcamps to address critical skills gaps in their own enterprises supporting both business development and future growth. The Digital Marketing Skills Bootcamp was the most in-demand option among this group, equipping participants with practical knowledge to market their services more effectively, reach new audiences, and secure additional contracts. Other self-employed residents strengthened their capabilities through Retrofit, Sales, Data Analytics, and Plumbing, Heating & Ventilation Skills Bootcamps broadening their service offer and improving their competitiveness. 80% of Reading's self-employed participants went on to win new clients or contracts directly because of the skills gained on the programmes. This demonstrates how Skills Bootcamps not only helps individuals thrive but also stimulates local economic growth, diversifies the services they can offer and supports Reading's self-employed workforce across multiple sectors.

An independent participant from The Curious Academy's Digital Marketing Bootcamp shared:

“A skills bootcamp is a great opportunity to showcase to employers that you are serious and passionate about securing a job in your area. If you are looking for a career change or better career prospects, a [Skills] Bootcamp provides you with skills that employers are looking for in applicants. I highly recommend the course to anyone considering levelling-up their career prospects.”

Skills Bootcamps boosted local earnings, engagement and collaboration with local employers and helped resident progress into high-value opportunities. With a combined earning uplift of over £310,000 and residents accessing training across all Skills Bootcamps, the programme has supported Reading with notable achievements. It has helped businesses retain and upskill staff, enabled self-employed residents to diversify and expand their market reach and supported unemployed learners into employment.

Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead

During the 2024 – 2025 Skills Bootcamps delivery year Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (RBWM) recorded 27,957 job postings (2). Some of the highest demand skills in these postings like marketing, working with children, data analysis and project management aligned directly to the content delivered in the most popular Skills Bootcamps to RBWM residents – which included Sales, Data Analytics, Digital Marketing, and Education and Early Years. Skills Bootcamps were crucial in upskilling residents in the key areas identified in the Local Skills Improvement Plan 2023, ensuring they met the requirements of these roles and helping to create a pipeline of jobseekers that aligned with local labour market needs.

With 1 in 4 RBWM participants being co-funded by their employer to upskill in their roles, the curriculum needed to be relevant to the needs of the industry. A standout example of employer collaboration was the partnership between an RBWM-based company in the electrical sector and a local college group. Together, they designed the content for the Electrical Installation and Ventilation Skills Bootcamp to ensure the training pathway reflected real-time industry requirements. By shaping the content of the programme, and enrolling their own staff, employers can shape their workforce with the talent and skills they need. Notably, this business went on to enrol one of their own employees who subsequently took on increased responsibilities as an Electrician. This Skills Bootcamp delivered positive results across Berkshire, supporting 30 residents to develop new skills and progress in their careers. It proved valuable for employed participants, all upskilling and taking on greater responsibilities in their current role. 7 Self-employed individuals also reaped the benefits of the content, gaining new clients and contracts as a direct result of the skills they learned on the programme. Of all learners who completed the training, 65% achieved a positive outcome. Among these, 30% secured employment, another 30% obtained new contracts, and the remaining 40% were co-funded learners who gained additional responsibilities or received promotions.

For Small to Medium Enterprises (SMEs), the Skills Bootcamp model can be highly cost-effective, with SME employers paying 10% of the training costs, and the Department for Education funding the rest (co-funding). For each learner enrolled in 24/25 through co-funding, SMEs saved on average £3,420 when upskilling their staff with industry-relevant knowledge. Upskilling existing teams strengthened their technical capabilities and reduced the reliance on external contractors, so employers no longer needed to outsource the skills. Staff who progress into more skilled roles, typically experience increased job security and sometimes higher earnings, benefiting their household and the wider local economy. There are wider benefits than the direct economic uplift of upskilling staff, for example, 9 RBWM employees were upskilled in their current roles, which showed long-term commitment from their employers. With 100% of these employees being offered promotions or increased responsibilities at work, this helped to support their career development, which can lead to increased financial stability and job security, an important factor in overall wellbeing. By creating workplaces where people feel encouraged to grow, Skills Bootcamps help build healthier, more resilient teams as well as more productive businesses.

As well as supporting staff within organisations, Skills Bootcamps in RBWM have had a significant impact on self-employed residents, whose training is fully funded by the Department for Education. The majority of self-employed RBWM participants enrolled onto the Sales Skills Bootcamp, representing a wide range of local business sectors including Coaching, Retail, and Marketing, 100% of these entrepreneurs achieved a positive outcome by securing new clients or contracts directly from the skills gained on the programme. Accessing fully funded training removes a substantial financial barrier for new business owners, who may not have the capacity to invest in professional development during the early stages of growing their business. By reducing these upfront costs, the Skills Bootcamp model enabled 9 entrepreneurs living in RBWM to develop essential skills sooner and grow their client-base faster. Looking at the wider economic and social value of supporting local businesses strengthening the local supply chain creates a more self-sustaining economy. This means more work was secured and delivered within RBWM, allowing money to circulate locally rather than flowing to external providers. For residents, it also resulted in more accessible services in a range of sectors like Plumbing, Electrical Installation, and Coaching, delivered by local self-employed professionals who understand their community and its needs.

A Berkshire Growth Academy's Sales Skills Bootcamps participant reflects on how the Skills Bootcamp has equipped them with the skills needed to develop new business ventures, who went onto win new contracts as a result:

“One of the specific reasons why I wanted to address my sales skills is that I've got a new area of business that I want to develop... The Sales Skills Bootcamp has made me look at how I bring that to market in a different way and it's given me a lot of good input as to how we need to position this, and to whom I should be positioning it... It's equipped me, not just in pure sales terms, but also in the wider sales marketing and product development.”

While self-employed individuals strengthened the local supply chain by winning new contracts, other residents contributed to economic growth through increased earnings and progression into higher-paid roles. RBWM achieved the highest average salary uplift in Berkshire, with learners increasing their annual earnings by £4,998.16 on average after completing their Skills Bootcamp. Among participants, 34% were unemployed at the start, and of these, 69% progressed into job interviews and 46% gained employment after completing their Skills Bootcamp. Those who secured work reported an average post Skills Bootcamp salary of £27,645, evidencing the programme's success in supporting individuals furthest from the labour market to enter employment. This uplift is particularly significant when compared to RBWM's median advertised salary of £30,000 demonstrating the programme's effectiveness in boosting earning potential and closely aligning with the area's average income. Skills Bootcamp graduates moved into the roles most in demand locally. The labour market data showed high volumes of vacancies in RBWM for Early Years Practitioners, Programme and Software Developers, and Marketing positions, and these are the same occupations many of the local graduates progressed into, demonstrating a strong match between Skills Bootcamps outcomes and local employer needs.

By helping residents secure higher-paid roles and supporting business growth among SMEs and self-employed individuals, the programme strengthened recruitment pipelines, increased local earning power, and improved business resilience all contributing to local economic growth in Windsor and Maidenhead and the surrounding areas.

Slough Borough Council

Residents in Slough upskilled across a range of priority sectors, including education and early years, construction, sales, digital marketing, retrofit and green skills. Notably, nearly half of Slough's participants enrolled onto the Education and Early Years Skills Bootcamp, reflecting both employer demand and resident interest. This Skills Bootcamps directly aligned with labour-market data (2), which shows that Slough's top posted roles include Secondary Teaching Professionals, Teaching Assistants, and SEND Education Professionals, as well as one of the most in-demand skills requested by employers being working with children. This programme delivered strong social impact by opening pathways into essential public-facing education roles and providing unemployed individuals with a clear route back into work or career progression. The high participation rate of 28 learners in this Skills Bootcamp shows that these programmes are not only meeting employer needs but are also equipping residents with the exact skills required to move into stable, in-demand occupations in the local area. By

working with local employers to design the Skills Bootcamps, a reliable pathway for newly skilled candidates to transition directly into employment is created. Among learners who were unemployed before training and went on to provide salary data, the average salary upon job offer was £28,819 per year, evidencing the significant economic uplift generated for individuals who were previously out of work. A key delivery partner in the education sector's model of engaging employers early and offering guaranteed outcomes and job interviews significantly increased transitions into employment, ensuring that learners received the wrap-around careers support necessary to secure opportunities quickly.

A participant on the Education and Early Years Skills Bootcamp explained how this opportunity supported their employability, utilising the skills in real-work scenarios:

“Completing the programme significantly enhanced my employability by equipping me with practical skills and a deeper understanding of SEN learners... I highly recommend it to others. The programme provides valuable, practical training that directly supports professional development and career readiness.”

Skills Bootcamps in Slough delivered strong economic and social returns directly addressing persistent labour-market challenges in the area. According to the Office for National Statistics (4), in 2023, it was reported that 5.3% of residents were claiming unemployment-related benefits and 14.2% of residents were economically inactive, the programme provided vital re-engagement for those furthest from work. Among the 23 of Slough's Skills Bootcamp participants on Universal Credit, 6 moved into employment and 9 progressed to interviews, reducing reliance on welfare and improving financial stability. At a collective level, total salaries for Slough participants rose from just over £900,000 before the Skills Bootcamps to more than £1.08 million afterwards. By supporting those furthest from the labour market while enabling others to progress within their roles, the Skills Bootcamps significantly boosted Slough's overall earning potential. This uplift not only benefited individuals but also strengthens the wider local economy by driving increased spending power, supporting business growth, and contributing to a more skilled, productive, and resilient workforce across Slough.

From a Tutor at Windsor Forest Colleges Group who delivers the Skills Bootcamp for many of Slough's self-employed residents upskilling in Retrofit:

“We've got guys that come in with existing businesses and for example domestic ventilation adding another string to their bow that they can offer. Now if they're doing new build projects or social housing projects they can add that on as an enhancement to their business. It's been going down very well with the guys because they look at it as you know well, why can't we package and offer more?”

West Berkshire Council

In West Berkshire, Skills Bootcamps played a significant role in strengthening the local workforce and supporting employer-led growth with a total of 62 residents taking part in a range of Skills Bootcamps from Engineering and Welding to Sales and Data Analytics. West Berkshire employers posted 28,003 job vacancies throughout 2024 - 2025 (2), with high demand skills including mechanical engineering, data analysis and marketing.

The employer-led design approach to Skills Bootcamps has been particularly successful in West Berkshire, where strong partnerships between a local further education college and a major national employer have resulted

in a highly impactful Engineering Skills Bootcamp. By co-designing the programme with the employer, the Skills Bootcamp ensured that the existing workforce could be effectively upskilled while new recruits were equipped with the skills needed for specialist roles. This approach strengthened the employer's confidence in new recruits' skill sets and helped reduce recruitment and onboarding costs associated with sourcing candidates with niche technical competencies and abilities.

Newbury College highlighted the value of their collaboration:

“That ability of being able to properly work with an employer, to design something from scratch that they want and they need... is the benefit of the Skills Bootcamp model...”

Through this partnership, 30 participants were upskilled in West Berkshire on the Engineering Skills Bootcamp, all co-funded by their non-SME employers. With a 97% success rate, 29 out of 30 of these participants went onto secure promotions or increased responsibility, or career progression as a direct result of completing the Skills Bootcamp.

“I’m very happy in my current job and not looking to move. I am, however, now allowed to operate additional machinery at my work thanks to the [Skills] Bootcamp, and have had my salary increased.”

“The machining and bench fitting course [as part of the Engineering Skills Bootcamp] honed my precision, problem-solving, and hands-on skills, directly enhancing my ability to perform technical tasks in my job... I was on the course as part of my job and has helped me develop in my current role.”

Employer engagement extended across multiple sectors, with 9 West Berkshire employers hiring directly from Skills Bootcamps and 3 West Berkshire based employers chose to upskill their staff using Skills Bootcamps. This level of employer engagement highlights the Skills Bootcamps' role not just as a training initiative, but as a strategic workforce solution, empowering employees to gain in-demand skills while enabling employers to retain and grow talent from within and provide a pipeline of job-ready talent for recruitment. For employers, Skills Bootcamps helped them access a cohort of individuals trained to a level employers could have confidence in their abilities, especially in a labour market where technical skills such as machinery operation and mechanical knowledge are among the top requirements of candidates.

AWE echoed the value of this model in their approach to upskilling their workforce:

“The quality of the course in all aspects has been exceptional and enabled these early careers staff to work more efficiently across the business... We have also taken the opportunity to roll this boot camp out to established staff to upskill them as a part of career development.”

There were also West Berkshire residents claiming Universal Credit, and among those, 1 in 4 moved into employment as a result of participating in the Skills Bootcamps. Within a group of unemployed learners who progressed into work, the average salary post completion of the Skills Bootcamp was £29,000 whilst West Berkshire's median advertised salary at the time was £28,900. Learners who completed the Skills Bootcamp are

securing roles with salaries comparable to the local average, indicating the programme's effectiveness in supporting progressions into stable, long-term employment rather than temporary or low-value work.

The outcomes also contribute to increased local earning power and helps reduce long-term reliance on financial support. Economic uplift was marked, with the combined estimate annual salary increasing from £1,459,753 to £1,576,753 generating nearly £117,000 in additional local earnings for West Berkshire.

Overall, with major employers such as AWE among the top job-posters in the area, the Skills Bootcamps played a crucial role in helping residents' step into roles that directly match regional employer needs. In total, learners from Berkshire filled 44 vacancies at AWE, making a meaningful contribution to reducing local skills shortages and strengthening the region's workforce pipeline.

Wokingham Borough Council

Skills Bootcamps provided a crucial pathway back into employment for residents of Wokingham where there were 4000 fewer residents in work in 2024/2025 than the previous year causing unemployment rates to rise to 2.6% (6). In an area where employer demand remains high Wokingham recorded 14,367 unique job postings (2), with a demand in areas such as project management, marketing, finance, working with children and risk analysis. These employer needs align closely with the Skills Bootcamp pathways most popular among Wokingham residents, including Data Analytics, Digital Marketing, High Performance Full Stack Software Development, Leadership and Management, and Sales.

Data Analytics training proved particularly valuable for unemployed residents, with 61% progressing to a job interview and 87.5% of these learners were successful upon interview in gaining new employment. Results like these demonstrate the value of designing Skills Bootcamps with local employers in response to their skills needs, and in this case with the demand for data extraction, cleansing and analysis, amongst other skills. This shows that the skills gained from the Skills Bootcamps are aligning with local employer needs and demands, ensuring that the Skills Bootcamp graduates are meeting the job criteria and requirements well and filling vacancies in the area.

Digital Marketing delivered the highest average post Skills Bootcamp salary of all Berkshire Skills Bootcamps. In Wokingham, 6 Independent learners took part in the Skills Bootcamp, and 5 progressed to interviews with 4 achieving employment, and 4 out of the 7 self-employed learners who took part achieved new work contracts. These outcomes closely align with the local labour-market demand as employers posted 108 vacancies for Advertising and Marketing Associate Professionals and broader Marketing skills, which appear in 633 job postings (2) across Wokingham. Together, this indicates that the Digital Marketing Skills Bootcamp is tightly matched to employer needs and is generating market-average salaries for the learners and employment outcomes for nearly all learners who took part from Wokingham. For Wokingham residents who completed the Digital Marketing Skills Bootcamp, the average pre-training salary was £12,480, rising to £61,550 after completion which is an increase of £49,070. Wokingham had the highest single salary increase of any local authority with one learner who took part in the Digital Marketing Skills Bootcamp securing a salary of £100,000 in the role as a Global Customer Experience Marketing Manager.

The High Performance Full Stack Software Development Skills Bootcamp supported 7 unemployed individuals from Wokingham with 244 postings (2) for Programmers and Software Development Professionals, there is a clear demand for the necessary skills and demonstrates how Skills Bootcamps opened doors for the unemployed learners who were seeking to enter high growth digital sectors, with 4 Wokingham learners from the High Performance Full Stack Software Development Skills Bootcamp gaining job interviews in the sector.

Residents from Wokingham who participated in the Leadership & Management Skills Bootcamp were primarily supported by their local employers to upskill to take on more responsibilities in their current role and progress further in their professional development. All of these participants came from local GP Practices and were supported to step up with leadership and management responsibilities within their existing roles in the public health sector. These employers confirmed that 75% of their staff took on increased responsibilities as a result of the skills gained on the programme.

From Code Institute, the provider of one of Wokingham's most popular pathways, High Performance Full Stack Software Development:

“As a training pathway, it [Skills Bootcamps] is a live transformation pathway for people to move from unemployment into gainful employment and good work. Within Berkshire, it really is very powerful.”

Learners from Wokingham achieved some of the strongest outcomes compared to learners from other Local Authorities. Every participant completed their training, and 77% progressed to a job interview or increased responsibilities. More than half (28 learners) secured a job offer, promotion or new contracts, demonstrating the programme's effectiveness in promoting substantial career growth for individuals from all career backgrounds and varying levels of education.

2 Wokingham based businesses in the digital marketing sector engaged directly with the Digital Marketing Skills Bootcamp contributing to course design and delivery through pinpointing the current skills needs and designing the curriculum to reflect these. Outside of digital marketing, 6 additional employers operating within a variety of business sectors also supported learners into work. Their involvement helped 8 participants move into employment, evidencing the value of strong employer partnerships in placing learners into vacant roles. This not only enabled participants to enter work more quickly with the defined skills employers required but also reduced training time required for new recruits and lowered recruitment costs in both time and money.

Impact Stories

The following impact stories highlight the real experiences behind our Skills Bootcamps delivery – from learners transforming their careers to delivery providers reshaping how training meets employer's needs. Together, they demonstrate how responsive, industry-aligned skills development is opening new opportunities for individuals and strengthening local workforce capability.

Staying relevant: How Daniel upskilled for a renewable future

Retrofit Skills Bootcamp - The Windsor Forest Colleges Group



Before joining the Skills Bootcamp, Daniel was already running his own heating and plumbing business, working independently and relying on years of hands-on industry experience. But after recently moving to Twyford in Wokingham, he found himself wanting to understand the new technologies emerging in the sector—especially renewables. He explained it simply: “I’m self-employed in the heating and plumbing industry, and I was interested in new technologies... this came up at exactly the right time.”

He discovered the Retrofit Skills Bootcamp run by Windsor Forest Colleges Group through an online search and immediately felt it could offer exactly what he needed which was a chance to stay relevant in a rapidly evolving field. With renewable energy growing fast and

customer expectations shifting, he wanted to ensure he could continue to offer the highest standard of service.

From the moment Daniel arrived at Langley College, the experience exceeded expectations. He described how seamless and organised everything felt: “The organisation has been great—from turning up and parking your car to getting your badge and being navigated through the many doors and corridors.” Once settled in, the real value began. “And then just getting into some learning, the content is great, it’s relevant, it’s what I’m here for and what I’m interested in.”

For Daniel, the most valuable part wasn’t a single skill but the updated knowledge he gained especially around renewable technologies. As he put it: “The skills are really the updated knowledge we’re receiving on these renewables courses and staying relevant.” The programme gave him access to the latest industry standards, practical insights and the confidence to speak with authority about new systems and servicing requirements.

At this stage of his career, that relevance means everything. “I’m in my 50s now,” he shared, “and I’m looking to upskill, get up to date, and potentially move into areas like renewable servicing so less tools and plumbing.” The Bootcamp provided exactly that path, opening new options for lighter, more specialised work. He feels it has equipped him to approach customers with confidence: “It’ll give me opportunities to turn up at someone’s door and go, ‘Hey, I’ve done this. I’m up to date.’”

Beyond the technical learning, the social aspect also stood out. Having attended similar courses over the years, he said one of the best parts was simply meeting others in the sector: “The great thing is talking to other guys and girls on the course in the industry—that’s the best part of it.” The shared experiences, challenges and discussions added an extra layer of insight that he valued immensely.

When thinking about how the Skills Bootcamp has affected his prospects, he's clear about the impact: it's expanded the types of work he can pursue. "It just opens up new avenues of work, especially in the renewables area." With demand for renewable servicing growing, these new qualifications give him a competitive edge and a way to adapt his business to a changing market.

When asked, Daniels' advice to anyone considering a Skills Bootcamp is enthusiastic and straightforward: "I'd say go for it. It's a learning opportunity. It's what we're interested in and it's well worth it." He also gave special praise to the location and team: "Especially come to Langley College—the staff are great. I've had a great time here."

Training with purpose: How Newbury College responds to real skills shortages

Jo Houghton, Vice Principal Higher Education and Skills (Wave 1-6) - Newbury College

When speaking with Jo Houghton at Newbury College, it becomes immediately clear that Newbury College's approach to delivering Skills Bootcamps is built around one core principle: designing programmes that directly address the skills gaps employers are grappling with right now. Jo doesn't describe the Skills Bootcamp as a static course or a fixed curriculum, she sees it as a responsive, evolving programme shaped by constant dialogue with industry and the real needs of the workforce.

From the outset, Jo explained how every Skills Bootcamp begins with listening. Newbury College regularly consults with local employers, industry bodies and sector partners to uncover emerging skills shortages and understand where workforce capability is falling behind technological change. As Jo put it, "There's no point delivering training for what was needed five years ago. We tailor everything based on what employers genuinely need today and what they will come to need tomorrow."

This employer first approach shapes both the structure and content of the course. Jo and her team don't simply pick topics, they actively redesign modules, introduce new technologies, and refine exercises based on what businesses tell them is missing within their teams. If a new energy system becomes standard, they integrate it. If employers flag that technicians are lacking confidence in a particular area, they build in additional practice. Jo explained it simply: "Our job is to plug the gaps – and that means constantly adapting the model".

Learners feel this responsiveness the moment they arrive. Jo Highlighted how Newbury College goes beyond technical content to ensure the whole learner experience supports progression. From clear signposting on arrival to hands on workshops with trainers who understand regulatory and technological changes, everything is designed to replicate real working environments and expectations. As Jo described "People need to leave not just with knowledge, but with the ability to apply it straight away. That's what employers care about."

One of the strengths of Jo's approach is the dual focus on employer insight and learner aspiration. She makes sure each cohort is understood as a unique group. Some learners want to futureproof their careers, others are aiming to transition into renewable energy, and some are looking to diversify the work they can offer to clients. By mapping these goals against employer needs, Jo and her team make sure every participant feels their learning



has direct relevance and value. “Training only works if it works for both sides,” she said. “If businesses can see the gaps closing and learners can see the opportunities opening, then we’ve done our job”.

Throughout the Skills Bootcamp programme, Jo ensures that the content remains grounded in real world application. Practical demonstrations, scenario-based activities and refreshers on new technologies help learners understand not just the ‘what’ but the ‘how’ of modern industry practices. She believes this practical focus is what makes Skills Bootcamps so effective: “You can know something in theory, but until you’ve practiced it, you’re not work ready. We build confidence through doing, not just listening”.

The result of this responsive and intentional design is being seen in their outcomes, for example, employers consistently report that Skills Bootcamp participants arrive with up-to-date knowledge, a strong understanding of new technologies and the ability to work safely and effectively from day one. Many go on to secure contracts, transition into growing sectors such as renewables, or modernise their services to meet new standards.

When asked what motivates her ongoing commitment to shaping the Skills Bootcamp so carefully, Jo didn’t hesitate: “We’re part of the solution. Local employers need skilled people, and learners need opportunities, so we design our Skills Bootcamps to close that gap. It’s that simple.”

Jo’s work at Newbury College demonstrates what happens when a delivery partner doesn’t just teach but actively partners with industry to build a future-ready workforce. Through Jo’s leadership the Skills Bootcamps have become more than training courses; they are targeted, intelligent interventions that strengthen local skills, support employer growth and help people build meaningful career pathways in a rapidly changing sector.

Upskilling for opportunity: Faris’ path to a full-time marketing role

Digital Marketing Skills Bootcamp - The Curious Academy

When Faris joined the Digital Marketing Skills Bootcamp at The Curious Academy, he was working part-time in visitor services within the heritage sector. With a background in English Literature and Art & Design, he had always been creative, but he struggled to find a stable career path that allowed him to use those strengths. Returning to traditional education didn’t feel realistic, so when he saw an advertisement for the Skills Bootcamp, it struck him as an accessible, affordable route into a modern, in-demand field.

Faris entered the programme hoping to upskill and transition into a new industry that had career options and progression, and the Digital Marketing Skills Bootcamp was key in helping him start on this journey. From the first week, he and his team were given a real client brief, which set the tone for the practical, hands-on learning ahead. They reviewed the client’s digital marketing activity, carried out audits and analysis, and spent the next 16 weeks building data-driven recommendations. By the end of the course, they were confidently presenting their findings back to the client.

Across the programme, Faris developed a broad toolkit of digital marketing skills. He learnt SEO, keyword research, branding, competitor analysis, social media strategy, content creation and web design. He gained practical experience with tools like SEMrush, Screaming Frog, Google Analytics, Canva and Mailchimp, and built websites using WordPress, SquareSpace and Wix. He particularly enjoyed working with keyword analytics and using data to understand customer behaviour and connect it to real business needs. Alongside this technical learning, he grew stronger in communication, teamwork and problem solving through the collaborative nature of the client project.

The impact of the Skills Bootcamp was significant, Faris built a strong portfolio of work, gained interview confidence and received one-to-one careers support that helped him articulate his strengths clearly to employers. Shortly after completing the programme, he secured a full-time role as a Marketing Coordinator at the University of Reading. He credits the Skills Bootcamp with giving him both the practical skills and the belief he belonged in the digital marketing sector.

Looking back Faris sees the Skills Bootcamp as the turning point that allowed him to build meaningful skills, access new opportunities and move confidently into a career with long-term prospects.



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