Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership

Higher Education Strategy Evidence Base

Swindon&Wiltshire
LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP

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Executive Summary

This evidence base is intended to inform the development of a Higher Education Strategy for the Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership (SWLEP). Higher level skills are a key driver for increasing productivity and for improving social mobility. The need for more high level skills within the workforce will become increasingly acute in the future given that the number of jobs is expected to rise by 5% or 19,500 jobs by 2022 across the SWLEP area, with growth being especially focused on higher-level occupations.

The study has included:

- **An analysis of existing data sources** - data was obtained from numerous publicly available sources and local reports. A set of bespoke data was also obtained from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) to better understand student choices;
- **Primary research with employers** – in the form of an online survey which was launched on the 29th of November 2017 and closed on 5th February 2018. The survey was completed by 116 businesses; and,
- **Primary research with learners and potential learners** – in the form of two online surveys. One was targeted at young people (ages 15-18) and the other was targeted at adult learners (age 19+). Both surveys were launched on the 11th of December 2017 and closed on 29th of January 2018 and achieved 885 and 93 valid responses respectively. Please note that the survey of young people also included students from Cirencester as many of SWLEP's students study there.

All of the data used within the report has been set out within a series of appendices, and glossary below which should be read in conjunction with this document.

Key findings and recommendations emerging from the study have been grouped under four areas of focus which do have a degree of overlap. Priority actions and potential solutions for each will be developed under later phases of this work

Area One: Developing Local Talent – Adults and Employees

The study found a strong correlation between what adult learners study and career/work plans. Proximity and flexible ways of studying are especially important to adults. However, lack of support from employers and cost of study was also highlighted as a barrier to further study. Employers that took part in the survey (whilst a relatively small sample) most frequently used in-house provision as well as the private sector and professional bodies for their training needs. Although many employers would like to see more training courses delivered locally, their appetite to become involved in its design/delivery was lower. Employers favoured courses with

a strong vocational element including higher and degree apprenticeships but, overall, subject areas of interest for employers do not entirely align with those expressed by learners. This includes STEM based subjects. Recommendations therefore include:

- Focusing on supporting more adults to access higher level skills related to their work;
- Developing local and flexible options for adults as well as considering how to overcome the identified barriers around the lack of employer support;
- Building on the work of Higher Futures to broker linkages between employers and providers, including Further and Higher Education;
- Pro-actively engaging employers in any new design or delivery;
- Ensuring that new provision has a strong vocational element, including through the higher and degree apprenticeship offer;
- Developing careers advice for both adults and young people to help them understand what type of subjects employers are most interested in; and,
- Developing a clear approach specifically for STEM subjects.

Area Two: Developing Local Talent - Young People

The research found that Level 3 attainment is higher than the average in Wiltshire, but lower in Swindon and progression to Higher Education is lower than average in both areas. It is particularly low for certain groups of young people, but attainment is not the only factor affecting progression. Evidence suggests that some young people are more interested in employment options (including apprenticeships) than study although the area does not currently have large numbers of young people going into apprenticeships. Other young people do not think that further study is right for them and some are not willing or able to travel for study. For those who do choose to study there is some interest in STEM based disciplines but far more students from SWLEP opt for non-STEM based subjects. Recommendations therefore include:

- Prioritising efforts to increase educational attainment levels in Swindon;
- Focusing on encouraging more students (across both areas) to progress to Higher Education, particularly those in recognised low participation groups;
- Addressing issues around awareness and aspiration, ensuring that learners have a good understanding of the local and wider Higher Education offer and the options open to them;
- Showcasing the benefits of continued learning and addressing the barriers identified, for example ensuring a clear understanding of the financial implications;
- Enhancing work-based learning options for students and raising awareness of the employment opportunities;
- Focusing on apprenticeships especially at higher levels as an area for potential growth and development; and,

- Ensuring that local options are available for those less willing or able to travel for study, including in STEM based subjects.

Area Three: Attracting and Retaining Talent

National evidence indicates that students are more likely to stay and work locally if they have studied locally. A large proportion of students that grew up in the SWLEP area leave the area for study and do not come back for employment. This is particularly the case in Wiltshire. Although the area does attract graduates from elsewhere, SWLEP experiences a net loss of graduate talent. Many young people want to move away after they graduate and this is not entirely driven by the perception of the jobs market. More generally, net in-migration appears to be strongest in higher skilled occupations, which is positive but employers report that there are insufficient numbers of highly skilled people attracted to work in the area and see this as the top barrier to fulfilling their higher level skills needs. Recommendations therefore include:

- Focusing on developing more provision locally that is attractive to students;
- Developing an effective graduate retention strategy that also focuses on attracting graduates from elsewhere; and,
- Promoting the area to higher skilled individuals from elsewhere in order to help fulfil employers' needs, aligned with the 'place-making agenda.'

Area Four: Implications for Local Provision

The evidence base shows a very small (and declining) population of students that are actually studying within SWLEP, of which 60% are distance learners. There are some exciting developments locally and some niche provision particularly at postgraduate level but for undergraduates the main locally based providers are Oxford Brookes (Swindon) and the area's three colleges. Awareness of the Higher Education offer that is available within the colleges is mixed. There is a lower than average percentage of people studying for a foundation degree at the local colleges. There is a range of provision within commuting distance of all main SWLEP centres of population but there are also gaps in part-time provision. There is strong interest in local courses from adults and employers, although many young people wish to leave the area for study. Having a university within the area and a wider range of courses available is seen as important to both young people and older learners. For young people student accommodation is the second most important factor in choosing their institution of study. More broadly, there is some interest in degree apprenticeship models, particularly from adults. Recommendations therefore include:

- Growing the population of students studying within the SWLEP area;
- Increasing awareness and up-take of the Higher Education courses that are already available locally;

- Further developing the local higher level offer as a key focus for the strategy;
- Focusing on vocational courses for employers and adults but ensuring that younger learners who want (or need) to stay locally are also catered for;
- Developing more flexible and part-time options along with more progression pathways such as foundation degrees;
- Developing apprenticeship routes including degree apprenticeship options; and,
- Developing the wider 'student offer' such as student accommodation.

List of Abbreviations

AP	Alternative Provider
APS	Average Point Score
B&TV	Buckinghamshire and Thames Valley (LEP)
BSc	Bachelor of Science
BA	Bachelor of Arts
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
DfE	Department for Education
DLHE	Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education (survey)
EM3	Enterprise M3 (LEP)
ESFA	Education and Skills Funding Agency
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
Glos	Gloucestershire (LEP)
FEC	Further Education College
FD	Foundation Degree
FSM	Free School Meals
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
HESA	Higher Education Statistics Agency
HNC	Higher National Certificate
HND	Higher National Diploma
HotSW	Heart of the South West (LEP)
IoT	Institute of Technology
KS4	Key Stage 4
KS5	Key Stage 5
MSOAs	Middle Layer Super Output Areas
NCOP	National Collaborative Outreach Project
ONS	Office for National Statistics
OU	Open University
Ox	Oxfordshire (LEP)
JACS	Joint Academic Coding System
PCON	Parliamentary Constituency
PGCE	Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
POLAR	Participation of Local Areas
SIC	Standard Industrial Classification
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths
SWLEP	Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership
TTWAs	Travel to Work Areas
TV&B	Thames Valley and Berkshire (LEP)
UKCES	UK Commission for Employment and Skills
WoE	West of England (LEP)
WP	Widening Participation

Glossary of Terms

Alternative Provider Providers with designation to provide Higher Education courses but which do not directly receive annual funding from HEFCE or its equivalent bodies; do not receive direct annual public funding; and, are not a Further Education College

Apprenticeship Levy A levy on UK employers to fund new apprenticeships, charged at 0.5% of an employer's pay-bill for companies with pay-bills in excess of £3 million

Attainment 8 Attainment 8 measures pupils' attainment across 8 qualifications including: Maths (double weighted) and English (double weighted, if both English language and English literature are entered), 3 qualifications that count in the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) measure and 3 further qualifications that can be GCSE qualifications (including EBacc subjects) or technical awards from the DfE approved list

Domicile Describes the home location of the student (i.e. where they originated prior to their study, irrespective of their current residence)

Joint Academic Coding System A way of classifying academic subjects and modules, owned by the Higher Education Statistics Agency and the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service

Local Enterprise Partnerships Voluntary partnerships between local authorities and businesses set up in 2011 by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills to help determine local economic priorities and lead economic growth and job creation within the local area

Middle Layer Super Output Areas A Neighbourhood Statistics Geography with, on average, a population of 7,200

National Collaborative Outreach Project A national Widening Participation Initiative, delivered locally as the 'Study Higher Project' in Swindon and the 'Wessex Inspiration Network' in Wiltshire

Parliamentary Constituency	The United Kingdom is currently divided into 650 parliamentary constituencies, each of which is represented by one Member of Parliament (MP) in the House of Commons. Locally this included North and South Swindon as well as Chippenham, Devizes, North Wiltshire, Salisbury, South West Wiltshire
Participation of Local Areas	The Participation of Local Areas' (POLAR) classification describes the different areas across the UK based on the proportion of the young population that participate in Higher Education. The rate is defined as the proportion of young people (15 year olds) who entered Higher Education by the age of 19 during the 2009-10 to 2014-15 academic years. These rates are then used to assign Middle Layer Super Output Areas (MSOAs) into five groups known as the POLAR4 quintiles. Quintile 1 represents the MSOAs where participation rates fall into the lowest 20% nationally and Quintile 5, the highest participation rates nationally
Prescribed Provision	The Further and Higher Education Act (1992) specifies that HEFCE can only fund 'prescribed' courses of Higher Education in further education corporations. The definition of these courses is given in parliamentary regulations. The definition currently covers Higher National Certificates and Diplomas, foundation, bachelors and postgraduate degrees, among others. The course must be awarded by a UK provider with degree awarding powers, or by Pearson Education Ltd or the Scottish Qualifications Agency, in the case of Higher Nationals
Middle Layer Super Output Areas	A Middle Layer Super Output Area is a geographic area used by the ONS to administer the Census and other small area statistics. Middle Layer Super Output Areas are built from groups of contiguous Lower Layer Super Output Areas. The minimum population is 5,000 and the mean is 7,200
Russell Group	A self-selected association of twenty-four public research universities in the UK. The group is widely perceived as representing some of the best universities in the country
Skills gaps	A skills gap is the difference in the skills required on the job and the actual skills possessed by the employees

Skills shortages	A skill shortage exists when there are not enough people with a particular skill to meet demand
Standard Industrial Classification	A system for classifying industries by a four-digit code
Strategic Economic Plan	Sets out the main priorities of the Local Enterprise Partnership
Travel to Work Areas	Developed by the ONS to approximate self-contained labour market areas
UNISTATS	The official website for comparing UK higher education course data (covers undergraduate only)
Widening Participation	A component of government education policy consisting of an attempt to increase not only the numbers of young people entering Higher Education, but also the proportion from under-represented groups
Young Participation Rate	The proportion of young people entering Higher Education, i.e. the number of entrants to Higher Education divided by the population. These figures have been obtained from the POLAR 4 data set (see above description)

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Buckman Associates and Southern Horizons (UK) Ltd have been commissioned by the Swindon and Wiltshire Local Economic Partnership (SWLEP) to develop a detailed and up to date evidence base which will provide the data and analysis to inform the development of a SWLEP Higher Education Strategy.

1.1   Background to the Study

The Strategic Economic Plan[1], published in January 2016, set out SWLEP's ambition to ensure that by 2026 Swindon and Wiltshire would be "world-renowned for its innovation, entrepreneurialism and great quality of life." To achieve this vision it set out five strategic objectives and developed a clear priority to ensure that the area had an appropriately skilled and competitive workforce to achieve its growth ambitions. In May 2017, the SWLEP Board agreed to the development of a Higher Education Strategy and a *HE Direction of Travel document*[2] was prepared with a focus on:

- Meeting the skills needs of employers;
- Raising aspirations of learners/residents and increasing progression to Higher Education; and,
- Delivering fit for purpose Higher Education provision in the area.

The present study was commissioned to provide an evidence base for developing the comprehensive Higher Education Strategy.

1.2   Local Context

Work undertaken as part of the recent post 16 area review[3] indicates that SWLEP is a strongly performing LEP, ranked 12th out of 39 LEPs in England in terms of overall competitiveness.

1.2.1   The Population

SWLEP has a population of just under 700,000 people, making the sub-region one of the smallest LEPs in the country. Wiltshire accounts for the largest proportion of the total with a population of 483,100, with Swindon accounting for the remaining 215,800. Although the area's population has grown strongly over the past decade, much of this increase has been driven by the ageing of the population. Whilst further strong growth is forecast with an increase of 11.3% by 2024 (compared with a 7.1%

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[1] https://www.swlep.co.uk/strategiceconomicplan.pdf
[2] https://www.swlep.co.uk/board/document636306959173846000.pdf
[3] Swindon and Wiltshire Needs Analysis for the Post 16 Area Review, SWLEP, August 2016

increase in England) there will be a continuing decline in the 16-18 year old population in the short term. From 2019 onwards, however, the number of young people is expected to rise, and by 2024, projections suggest that there will be around 27,000 16-18 year olds – almost 1,400 more than there were in 2014. These projections do not take into account the population growth that will be brought about by planned housing growth. Neither do they account for the impact of the Army Basing programme which will bring 4,000 service personnel and 1,200 spouses to Wiltshire by 2020, transforming Salisbury Plain into the Army's largest training area in the UK.

Data also indicates that 36% of the LEP's population lives in rural areas, rising to 48% in Wiltshire including a number of rural hamlets and isolated dwellings where transport, affordability and accessibility can present real issues. Additionally, whilst SWLEP is one of the least deprived LEPs in the country, 45,000 people nevertheless live in areas which are considered to be amongst the most deprived 20% in England[4]. This is important because research has found that place matters and can shape educational outcomes in various dynamic and complex ways.[5] Locally, young people's attainment levels vary across the geography but participation in Higher Education is appreciably lower than the national average across the patch.

1.2.3 The Workforce

SWLEP has a broad business base and the number of jobs is expected to rise across the LEP by 5% or 19,500 jobs by 2022.[6] Growth is expected to particularly focus on higher-level occupations owing to good representation in sectors predicted to perform well. The Strategic Economic Plan identifies a number of key sectors and industries with good prospects for growth:

Priority Sectors	Sectors to Watch
• Advanced Engineering and High Value Manufacturing • Health and Life Sciences • Financial and Professional Services • Digital and Information and Communications Technology • Land-based Industries	• Visitor Economy • Adult Health and Social Care • Low Carbon Economy • Construction

However according to the SEP, local businesses have identified the lack of a ready workforce with higher level skills as a major barrier to future growth.

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[4] Swindon and Wiltshire Needs Analysis for the Post 16 Area Review, SWLEP, August 2016
[5] Rural and Coastal Disadvantage Working Group, Update Briefing, BRIDGE Group, May 2017
[6] Swindon and Wiltshire Needs Analysis for the Post 16 Area Review, SWLEP, August 2016

1.2.4 Building on Existing Initiatives

Against this backdrop, the *HE Direction of Travel* document highlights a common need to address the current and future demand for higher level skills across SWLEP but it also reflects on some key differences and approaches across the area:

- **Swindon** - has had a long-term ambition for a university presence and aims to 'secure a range of options to access Higher Education.' In 2016 bids were submitted for Local Growth Funding for a Higher Education Centre in Swindon and to develop facilities in Swindon College linked to sustainable technology; and,

- **Wiltshire** - has focused on developing Higher Education provision through Wiltshire College's Local Growth Fund 3 bids to develop facilities in Salisbury and Lackham. There have also been plans in the past to develop a university in Salisbury. In 2009, a bid was made to the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) by the University of Bath and partners for a university hub and spoke model centred in Salisbury and providing for 5,000 learners. The bid focussed on promoting higher level skills in Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) subjects but was unsuccessful.

A key joint piece of work between Swindon Borough Council and Wiltshire Council has been *SWLEP's Higher Futures*[7]. This programme works with employers to provide impartial advice and support to identify their current and future higher level skills needs and to broker solutions with relevant providers.

Both areas have also engaged with widening participation initiatives as part of the National Collaborative Outreach Project (NCOP) which aims to address this aspect of social mobility for young people in year groups 9-13. This takes the form of:

- A Study Higher Project[8] in Swindon; and,
- The Wessex Inspiration Network (WIN)[9] in Wiltshire.

Additionally, the LEP and its partners have submitted a bid for an Institute of Technology[10] (IoT) to meet the needs of residents and employers in Swindon and North Wiltshire. With the main base planned to be within the Swindon College campus, the IoT is a partnership between Further Eduction Colleges, universities and employers. The bid outlines plans for the delivery of university level, employer led provision focusing on Digital, Engineering/Manufacturing and Life Sciences.

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[7] https://www.swlep.co.uk/programmes/Swindon-and-Wiltshire-Higher-Futures
[8] https://www.studyhigher.ac.uk/study-higher-swindon
[9] http://www.won.ac.uk/win/what-is-the-win
[10] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/institutes-of-technology-prospectus

1.3　Approach and Research Methods

This evidence base has been informed by:

- **An analysis of existing data sources -** data was obtained from numerous publicly available sources and local reports. A set of bespoke data was also obtained from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) to better understand student choices;

- **Primary research with employers –** in the form of an online survey which was launched on the 29th of November 2017 and closed on 5th February 2018. The survey was completed by 116 businesses; and,

- **Primary research with learners and potential learners –** in the form of two online surveys. One was targeted at young people (in year groups 11, 12, and 13) and the other was targeted at adult learners (age 19+). Both surveys were launched on the 11th of December 2017 and closed on 29th of January 2018 and achieved 885 and 93 valid responses respectively. Please note that the survey of young people also included students from Cirencester as many of SWLEP's students study there.

The statistical significance of the different surveys is explained in the accompanying appendices.

Where possible, data is presented within this report for the LEP area as a whole and for Swindon and Wiltshire separately. Given the variations across the geography a breakdown is also provided by Parliamentary Constituency (PCON), where appropriate. Additionally, data from the employer survey is disaggregated where the sample sizes permit to reflect SWLEP's priority sectors (see above). However, it was not possible to present the secondary workforce data on that basis because the priority sectors do not easily map onto the Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) codes that are typically used within business data.

1.4　Structure of the Report

The remainder of the report is structured as follows:

Chapter 2 – provides a profile of the Higher Education provision that is available both within and immediately beyond the borders of the LEP, benchmarked, where appropriate, against a set of comparator LEPs. It also considers student and graduate flows.

Chapter 3 – draws on both primary and secondary data to provide a profile of SWLEP's learners, charting attainment and progression from GCSEs through to Higher Education.

Chapter 4 – draws on both primary and secondary data to provide a profile of SWLEP's learners at university and after graduation.

Chapter 5 – also draws on primary and secondary data to consider employers and the workforce, covering skills levels, current education/training practices and future requirements.

Chapter 6 – presents the conclusions and recommendations that have emerged from the study.

All of the data used within the report is included within a series of appendices as follows:

- Appendix A – Contains all secondary data from publicly available sources;
- Appendix B – Contains an analysis of the data obtained from HESA;
- Appendix C – Contains an analysis of the Young People's Survey results;
- Appendix D – Contains an analysis of the Adult Survey results; and,
- Appendix E – Contains an analysis of the Employer Survey results.

Chapter 2: Comparative Profile of Higher Education Within and Beyond SWLEP

2.1 Introduction

This chapter of the report provides an overview of the Higher Education that is available within SWLEP. It also considers the number and profile of students that study locally, benchmarked against the eight comparator LEPs that are being used within the Local Economic Assessment as follows:

- Buckinghamshire and Thames Valley (B&TV)
- Dorset
- Enterprise M3 (EM3)
- Gloucestershire (Glos)
- Heart of the South West (HotSW)
- Oxfordshire (Ox)
- Thames Valley and Berkshire (TV&B)
- West of England (WoE)

It goes on to consider university provision beyond SWLEP's borders that is accessible from key locations across Swindon and Wiltshire. The chapter concludes with an overview of student and graduate flows, again benchmarked against the eight comparator LEPs. This chapter sets the scene for the more detailed and geographically granular analysis that follows in the remainder of the report.

## 2.2 Higher Level Provision within Swindon and Wiltshire

Figure 1 overleaf maps the location of all Higher Education providers that are recognised by the HEFCE across England and shows proportionally the number of undergraduate entrants at each during the academic year 2014-15. Blue bubbles represent Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), orange bubbles represent Further Education Colleges (FECs) and green bubbles represent Alternative Providers (APs); with larger bubbles denoting larger volumes of students.

The map clearly shows that SWLEP (circled) is one of the few areas within the country without any HEIs. However, Oxford Brookes University does have a Swindon campus at the Delta Business Park which was officially opened in February 2017 (i.e. since the HEFCE map was produced); and a small number of FECs/APs also provide Higher Education courses. Those institutions with registered undergraduate students in 2014-15 were:[11]

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[11] Improve International Ltd is also shown on the map but did not have any undergraduate students registered in 2014-15

- New College Swindon;
- Swindon College;
- Wiltshire College;
- Institute for Children, Youth & Mission; and,
- Royal School of Church Music.

Figure 1: Higher Education Profiles Map, 2014-15

Source: http://www.HEFCE.ac.uk/analysis/maps/lg/
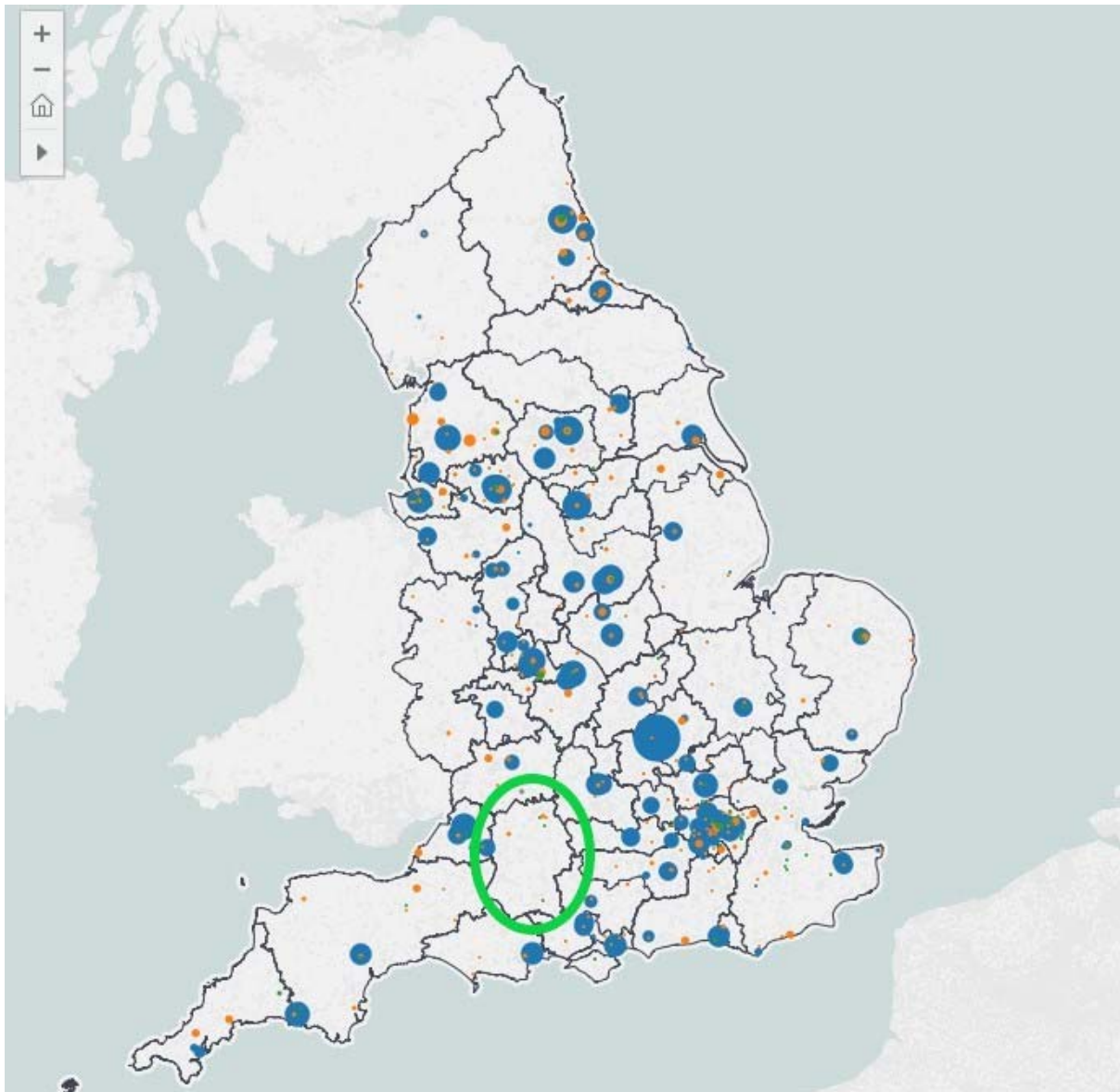
2.2.1 Number of Students

HEFCE data also shows the number of students in each LEP area that are registered and taught by the different types of provider. This covers all students that are taught in the area, not just SWLEP residents. As would be expected, Figures 2 and 3 shows far fewer students registered or taught within SWLEP overall than in the comparator areas but the number of distance learners was comparatively high.

Figure 2: Comparative Analysis of Students Registered and Taught Within Each LEP, 2014-15

	SWLEP	B&TV	Dorset	EM3	Glos	HotSW	Ox	TVB	WoE
HEI registered, HEI taught	0	7,115	16,810	24,830	7,085	36,165	26,965	10,485	52,405
HEI registered, FEC taught	510	105	440	235	270	2,005	595	640	810
FEC registered, FEC taught	695	190	420	1,810	1,460	1,855	415	485	1,225
HEI registered, AP taught	175	0	0	0	100	50	0	55	120
FEC registered, AP taught	0	0	0	0	0	20	0	0	0
OU distance learners	1,765	1,080	1,930	3,520	1,125	3,840	1,515	1,860	2,205
Other distance learners	220	165	200	460	150	355	285	220	240
% distance learners	59%	14%	11%	13%	13%	9%	6%	15%	4%
TOTAL	3,365	8,650	19,800	30,855	10,190	44,295	29,775	13,745	57,005

Source: http://www.HEFCE.ac.uk/analysis/maps/lg/

Figure 3: Comparative Analysis of Students Registered and Taught within Each LEP, 2014-15 (Graph Format)

Source: http://www.HEFCE.ac.uk/analysis/maps/lg/
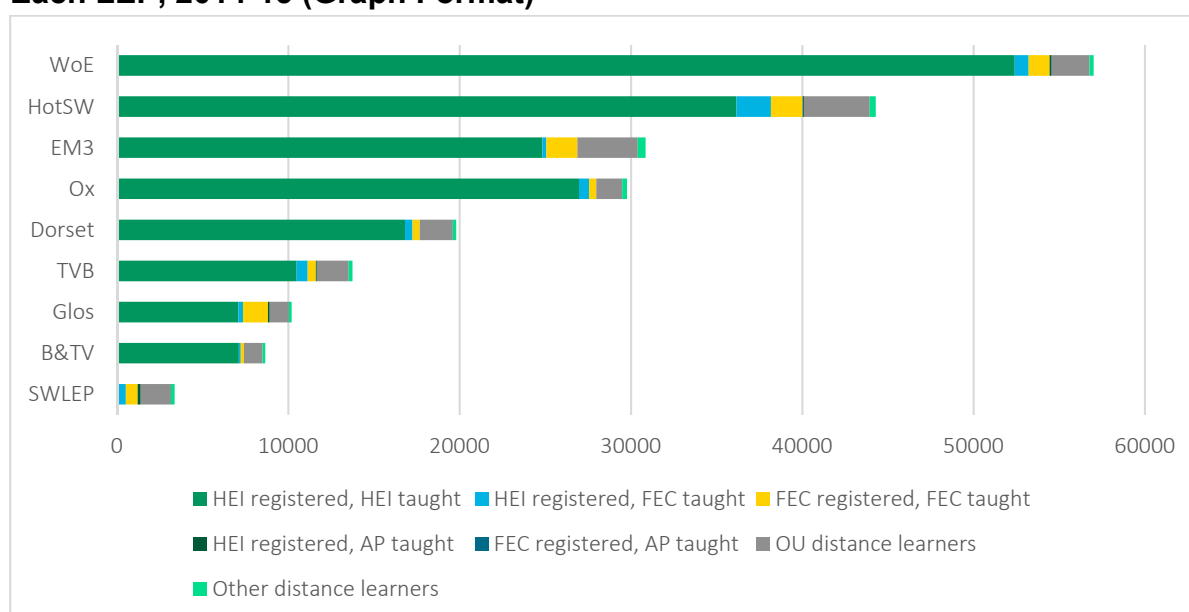
There have been some changes in this regard over time. In 2014-15 there were 675 fewer students studying in SWLEP than there were in 2012-13. In the absence of a university nearly 60% of these were distance learners in 2014-15 (compared to 7.7% for England) with the vast majority being registered with the Open University (OU). However, this is a slight decrease from the previous years. In 2014-15 15% of learners were registered at an HEI but taught at an FEC and over 20% were both registered and taught at an FEC, totalling 1,205 learners. The percentage of

students within SWLEP that were HEI registered but FEC taught steadily decreased over this timeframe but the percentage of students that were FEC registered but FEC taught increased which indicates that the Colleges have become increasingly responsible for their own provision. Whilst the number of learners that were taught by an AP was higher than within the comparative LEP areas the figures were nevertheless very small, totalling just 175 learners in 2014-15. These individuals were spread across two separate providers and are not referred to within this chapter of the report due to the small numbers involved.

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Key Findings

- In absolute and relative terms, there are considerably fewer students registered/taught within the SWLEP area than in any of the comparator LEPs
- The number of students studying within the LEP is declining
- Distance learning represents a much greater proportion of provision within the LEP area (60% compared to 8% for England)
- However, the proportion of students that are both registered and taught at a FEC is increasing

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More detailed comparative data is provided in Appendix A.5 and shows that both the age profile on entry; and the mode of study (Appendix A:7) varies considerably across the comparator LEPs. There is nothing that stands out as being particularly noteworthy for SWLEP on either of those indicators. Trend data for SWLEP does, however, show a slight increase in the percentage of students in the 21-24 age bracket; and a slight decrease in the 25+ age bracket over time. It also shows that the mode of study had changed from a 70/30 split in favour of full-time study in 2012-13 to 76/24 split in 2014-15. This is consistent with the national picture which shows that part-time study has decreased over the last decade. This reflects the introduction of undergraduate tuition fee reforms but is also thought to reflect the economic downturn – national evidence suggests that there has been a reduction in the number of students able to self-fund part-time study and also a reduction in the number of employers willing to support employees through part-time study over that period of time. As older age groups are more likely to study part-time, the age profile tends to reflect those trends.[12]

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Key Findings

- There has been a decrease in the proportion of older learners studying within the area
- There has been a decrease in the proportion of people studying part-time within the area

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[12] Patterns and Trends in UK Higher Education, 2017, Universities UK

- Both of these reflect the national profile following the introduction of undergraduate tuition fee reforms and the economic downturn

In terms of level of study, Appendix A.9 shows that when compared with the other LEP areas, SWLEP, along with Thames Valley Berkshire, had the highest percentage of students studying for an HND/HNC at a FEC, exceeding the National average (see Figure 4, below). It also had the lowest percentage studying for a foundation degree, which may have implications for people seeking to access Higher Education. The percentage studying for a first degree in SWLEP was comparatively high at 29%, slightly higher than the national average of 27%. The trend data shows that the level of study changed somewhat at the local level between 2012-2013 and 2014-15 and that it also differed from the national average when compared to all FECs in England. The percentage studying for a HND/HNC fluctuated over the years but had been higher in SWLEP when compared to the national average since 2013-14. Evidence presented in Chapter 5 shows that these are popular with employers, with almost 20% of employers supporting staff through HNCs. The percentage studying for a foundation degree was consistently lower within SWLEP and whilst the percentage studying for a first degree was consistently higher in SWLEP, it nevertheless steadily decreased since 2012-13.

Figure 4: Level of Study of Students Studying Within SWLEP FECs, 2012-13 to 2014-15

Source: http://www.HEFCE.ac.uk/analysis/maps/lg/
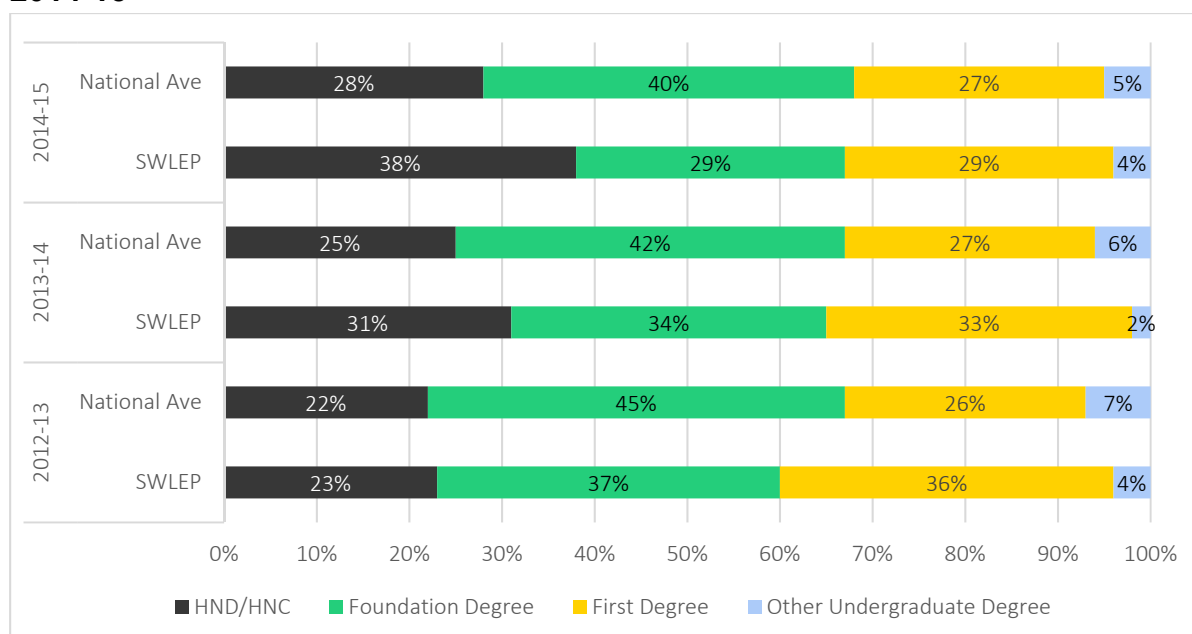
Key Findings
- SWLEP has a high percentage of students studying for an HND/HNC within its FECs, exceeding the national average for FECs

- The percentage studying for a foundation degree, however, is comparatively low which may have implications for people seeking to access Higher Education

2.2.2 Overview of SWLEP's Higher Level Providers

Moving on to consider the higher level courses that are currently offered and emerging within SWLEP, the Oxford Brookes Swindon campus features brand new facilities to enhance student learning, collaboration and research, including state-of-the-art clinical skills labs. It focuses purely on Subjects Allied to Medicine and offers both full and part-time BScs in Adult Nursing and Operating Department Practice.

There is also a range of specialist, sector based or niche provision available within the area. For example, for postgraduate study:

- Shrivenham is home to Cranfield Defence and Security which provides postgraduate education in Strategy, Leadership, Management & Technology. Cranfield Ordnance Test & Evaluation Centre (COTEC) is situated on the edge of Salisbury Plain near to West Lavington in Wiltshire and is one of the five Centres within the Department of Engineering and Applied Science (DEAS) at Cranfield University's Shrivenham Campus;
- The Corsham Court campus in Wiltshire hosts much of Bath Spa's postgraduate provision;
- Sarum College provides postgraduate level courses in Christian Spirituality, Theology, Imagination and Culture and Christian Liturgy; and,
- The University of Wales Trinity Saint David in partnership with Swindon Borough Council and Forward Swindon is to develop a postgraduate and continuous professional training hub in Swindon to support professional training for the cultural heritage industries.

Additionally, the Dyson Institute of Technology, based at the company's campus in Malmesbury, Wiltshire, has recently developed a four-year engineering degree in partnership with Warwick University, alongside a full-time role with Dyson; and the Swindon and North Wiltshire Health Care Academy offers a range of courses in clinical skills.

More generally the area's three colleges offer a range of university level provision.

The map overleaf (Figure 5) shows the location of the main providers, alongside other developments such as Science Parks which have university links.

Figure 5: Map Illustrating Local Provision
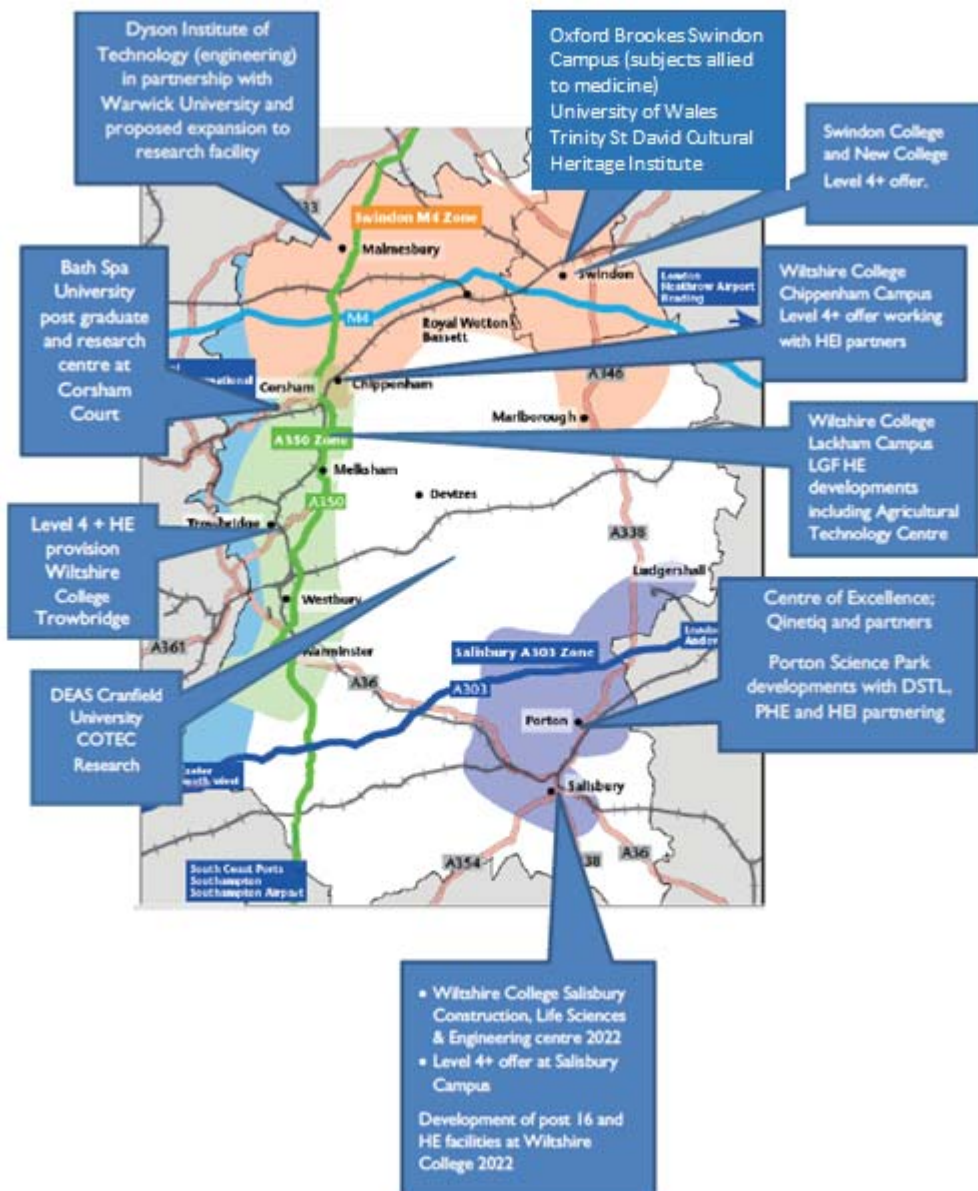
Source: HE Direction of Travel, SWLEP, 2017 (updated 2018)

As highlighted above, the area's three colleges offer a number of HEFCE prescribed courses and these are detailed in Figure 6 overleaf. This shows that there are a total of 26 HND/HNCs on offer across the three colleges but they are not all in unique subject areas. There is some overlap between them, for example in Business and Health & Social Care. There are eight foundation degrees currently on offer, again with some overlap in that all three colleges cover Early Years, however, the range of foundation degree courses will increase in the near future through Wiltshire College (described more fully below). At degree level there are currently four options available and three top-ups. The colleges also offer some 'other' provision including higher apprenticeships and PGCEs.

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Figure 6: HEFCE Prescribed Courses within SWLEP's Colleges

Level	New College Swindon	Swindon College	Wiltshire College
HND/HNC	• Art Textiles • Business • Creative Media • Criminology • Early Years • Health & Social Care • Media Make-up • Public Services	• Construction and Built Environment • Civil Engineering • Computing and Systems Development • Early Childhood Studies • Mechanical Engineering • Media Make-up • Operations Development • Performing Arts • Photography • Sport • 3D Design Ceramics	• Business • Computer Game Animation • Computing • Criminology (Public Services) • General Engineering • Health & Social Care • Sport Development
TOTAL	**8**	**11**	**7**
Foundation degree	• Early Years (in partnership with Bath Spa University)	• Creative Arts and Design Practice • Early Years • Educational Practice Health & Social Care	• Animal Science and Management • Computing • Early Years and Childhood Studies • Motorsport Engineering
TOTAL	**1**	**3**	**4**
Full degree		• Education and Lifelong Learning • Graphic Design and Illustration	• Film Production • Photography
TOTAL	**0**	**2**	**2**
Top-up degree		• Business, Management and Communications • Early Childhood Studies	• Animal Science and Management
TOTAL	**0**	**2**	**1**
Other	• Higher Apprenticeship Healthcare Practitioner (in partnership with the University of Gloucestershire)	• Higher Apprenticeships in Assistant Practitioner (Health) • Higher Apprenticeship in Health & Social Care • Post/Professional Graduate Certificate in Education	• Post Graduate Certificate in Education (in partnership with the University of Greenwich)
TOTAL	**1**	**3**	**1**

Source: UNISTATS website supplemented by data supplied by the Colleges

It is noteworthy that the majority of courses offered within the colleges are in non-STEM based subjects, particularly at full degree and top-up levels. At lower levels, Wiltshire College is the only one to offer STEM based foundation degrees. Whilst Wiltshire College and Swindon College both offer STEM based HNCs/HNDs, the balance across the area is nevertheless tilted in favour of non-STEM based subjects.

In considering the balance between full and part-time provision:

- **New College Swindon** – only offers full-time courses;
- **Swindon College** - offers five of its HNC/Ds on a part-time basis as well as its Post/Professional Graduate Certificate in Education; and,
- **Wiltshire College** - offers two of its HNC/Ds on a part-time basis as well as one of its foundation degrees, its Certificate in Education/PGCE and Animal Science and Management top-ups. From September 2018 Early Years, Computing and Business Management FD will be offered full and part-time as well as offering a Business and Management CMI Degree Apprenticeship.

Data drawn from the HEFCE interactive website and presented in Appendix A.15 shows the subjects studied by the undergraduates at the three FECs compared to national averages for both FECs and HEIs (respectively). Although this data represents a single snapshot in time and will of course reflect what was available within each area at that time, it is nevertheless useful to see the comparison. SWLEP has a broadly similar profile to the national average in terms of the subjects taught within FECs but with a much higher percentage of students studying Mass Communications and Documentation (this includes subjects such as Publishing, Journalism and Media Studies, but in consideration of the profile highlighted above, most likely reflects the area's Media related courses). The percentage studying Social Sciences and Education were also noticeably higher whereas the percentage of students studying Business and Admin were lower. The percentage studying Agriculture & Related Subjects was also lower which may be significant in terms of SWLEP's focus on Land Based Industries as one of its priority sectors. However, this may change in the future as Wiltshire College is currently working to increase its offer further with the introduction of six Life Sciences foundation degrees and new Agri-tech provision. From September 2019 the offer will include the following, all of which will delivered on both a full and part-time basis:

- Foundation Year in Life Sciences;
- Foundation Degree in Applied Science;
- Foundation Degree in Biomedical Science;
- Foundation Degree in Environmental Science and Sustainability;
- Foundation Degree in Forensic Science; and,
- Foundation Degree in Pharmaceuticals.

Wiltshire College is also developing degree apprenticeship in Engineering which will be offered in September 2019.

Unsurprisingly the national profile of subjects studied at HEIs is generally much broader with Business and Admin, followed by Subjects Allied to Medicine and Biological Sciences being the most popular in 2014-15.

Key Findings

- SWLEP has a much higher percentage of students studying 'Mass Communications and Documentation' (primarily Media Studies) than the average for FECs across the country
- It also has a comparatively low proportion of students studying 'Business and Admin' and 'Agriculture and Related Subjects' within its colleges, though this may change with new provision coming on stream
- There are relatively few foundation degrees currently on offer within SWLEP currently and they are all in non-STEM based subjects, however this is expected to change as new provision from Wiltshire College goes live
- The offer within the colleges, more generally, is tilted in favour of non-STEM based subjects
- The part-time offer is also variable

The number of undergraduate entrants (as opposed to the total number of learners across all years) for each subject can also be broken down by FEC and this is shown in Figure 7 overleaf. This illustrates that the largest volume of undergraduate entrants was studying at Wiltshire College and the smallest number at New College Swindon. Rows highlighted in gold are STEM subjects.

N.B. more recent data supplied by New College during the course of this study shows that the number of their undergraduate entrants on HEFCE designated courses had grown to 152 by the academic year 2016/17. This was concentrated in three subjects: Subjects Allied to Medicine, Social Sciences and Creative Art and Design. It has not been possible to source comparable data from the other colleges.

Figure 7: Number of Undergraduate Entrants by Subject and FEC, 2014-15

Subject	New College Swindon	Swindon College	Wiltshire College
Engineering & Technology	0	65	60
Education	10	65	25
Creative Arts & Design	5	55	25
Social Sciences	40	0	25
Business & Admin Studies	0	25	35
Mass Communications & Documentation	0	0	45
Initial Teacher Training	0	15	25
Subjects Allied to Medicine	5	25	5
Computer Sciences	15	0	20
Biological Sciences	0	0	25
Architecture, Building & Planning	0	25	0
Agriculture & Related Subjects	0	0	15
Law	0	0	10
Medicine & Dentistry	0	0	0
Veterinary Sciences	0	0	0
Physical Sciences	0	0	0
Mathematical Sciences	0	0	0
Languages	0	0	0
History & Philosophical Studies	0	0	0
Geographical Studies	0	0	0
TOTAL	75	275	315

Source: http://www.HEFCE.ac.uk/analysis/maps/lg/ Note : those highlighted in Gold are STEM subjects.

It should be noted that these figures only account for courses recognised by HEFCE and do not include the other Level 4+ education that is provided by the colleges. The subject coverage and number of students studying non-HEFCE prescribed provision for the academic year 2016/17 can be summarised as follows for each college:

New College

- Accounting and Finance – 27
- Business Administration – 12
- Counselling – 20
- Education and Training – 23
- Human Resources Management – 17
- Laboratory and Associated Technical Activities – 1
- Leadership and Management – 3

Swindon College

- Accounting and Finance – 35
- Beauty – 12
- Quality Assurance – 7

Wiltshire College

- Level 4 Diploma in Accounting - 51
- Level 4 Award in Quality Assurance of Assessment Practice - 7
- Level 4 Diploma in Therapeutic Counselling - 20
- Level 5 Certificate in Leadership and Management skills - 5
- Level 5 Certificate in Leadership and Management skills - 4
- Level 5 Diploma in Human resources -16
- Level 7 Diploma in Human Resources - 19
- Level 7 in Strategic Management - 13

A small amount of Level 4+ training and higher apprenticeships is also delivered by Independent Training Providers and other organisations including the Councils (see Appendix A.17) though it has not been possible to access details on the subjects covered by these providers. Appendix A.18 also provides a list of providers from outside the area who deliver higher level apprenticeships to SWLEP residents.

Further, as mentioned in the introductory chapter, Higher Futures enables businesses to collaborate with providers to access to higher level courses which meet their needs and delivery requirements. The network has 47 providers including SWLEP's FECs alongside a range of universities and Alternative Providers throughout the country to ensure that employers have a choice of training provider. Provision is typically delivered on employer's premises or through blended learning/day release options. The brokerage has covered a variety of subjects and levels from higher apprenticeships through to PhDs and it has so far enabled training to be brokered for 270 learners. An example of this is Swindon Borough Council which has a bespoke programme delivered to16 ILM Level 5 learners (through the University of the West of England). More detail is provided at Appendix A.22

2.3 Higher level Provision within Commuting Distance of Swindon and Wiltshire

In order to complete the profile it is also important to understand which universities are within commuting distance for SWLEP's students. Research has shown that in areas where there is insufficient access to Higher Education, aspirational pupils are left with no choice but to leave the area to pursue education and careers. In other areas where there is access to Higher Education, those from lower socio-economic

backgrounds are more likely to participate at institutions closer to home, with high attaining pupils from lower socio-economic groups travelling on average 71km (44 miles) to attend university, whereas their more affluent peers travel on average 100km (62 miles).[13] Therefore, availability of provision within a commutable distance is a key social mobility issue.

Figure 8 overleaf shows the universities offering undergraduate courses that are accessible from four specific locations within the SWLEP area: Swindon, Chippenham, Salisbury and Trowbridge. This data has been drawn from the UNISTATS website by searching for provision within a 25 mile and 50 mile radius of each of those touch points. However, because the UNISTATS data is based on actual distance as opposed to commuting distance, some 'outliers' have been excluded because they are located up to 80 miles away by road and would therefore take considerably more than an hour to commute to. Please note that this Figure excludes any Further Education Colleges or Alternative Providers that are delivering higher level courses. On this basis Swindon and Chippenham are the best served locations across the LEP with 5 and 7 HEIs within a 25 mile radius and 13 and 9 within a 50 mile radius respectively. In contrast, Salisbury and Trowbridge are served by 2 HEIs within a 25 mile radius and 15 and 14 within a 50 mile radius respectively. However, each of the touch points is within commuting distance (50 miles) of at least 16 HEIs including two Russell Group universities. It should also be borne in mind that there are a range of distance learning options available, not just from the Open University, but also from a growing number of providers which adds to this picture.

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[13] Rural and Coastal Disadvantage Working Group, Update Briefing, BRIDGE Group, May 2017

Figure 8: Universities within Commuting Distance of Four Key Locations Across the LEP Area

	Swindon	Chippenham	Salisbury	Trowbridge
Arts University Bournemouth			50	50
Bath Spa University	50	25	50	25
Bath, University of	50	25	50	25
Bournemouth University			50	50
Bristol, University of*	50	25	50	50
Buckingham, University of	50			
Buckingham New University	50			
Cardiff Metropolitan University		50		50
Cardiff University*		50		50
Chichester, University of			50	
Creative Arts, University For The	50		50	
Gloucestershire University	25	50		50
Oxford Brookes University	25	50		
Oxford Brookes University (Swindon campus)	25	25	50	50
Oxford University*	25	50		
Portsmouth, University of			50	
Reading, University of	50	50		50
Roehampton University, Bristol Centre	50	25	50	50
Royal Agricultural University, The	25	50	50	50
South Wales, University of		50		
Southampton Solent	50		25	50
Southampton, University of*	50		25	50
UWE	50	25	50	50
Wales, Trinity St David, University of		50		50
West London, University of (Reading campus)	50	50	50	
Winchester, University of	50		50	50
Number of institutions within a 25 mile radius	5	7	2	2
Number of institutions within a 50 mile radius	13	9	15	14

Source: UNISTATS, 2017. * = Russell Group university

Code to table ▮ = 50 miles ▮ = 25 miles

Key Findings
- All four touch points are served by at least 16 HEIs within 50 miles
- Swindon and Chippenham are the best served locations
- All four locations are within a commuting distance of at least 2 Russell Group Universities

There is a broad range of subject choices available within those universities (see Appendix A.20 and A.21) that are in commuting distance with the exception of Veterinary Sciences but this is to be expected given that there are only 11 providers offering Veterinary Sciences courses throughout the country. However, there is much less choice for part-time study. Whilst Oxford Brookes has a fairly comprehensive set of part-time courses available, they are not easily accessible from either Salisbury or Trowbridge. Other providers such as UWE, Southampton University and Southampton Solent, which are more accessible depending on a student's location, also offer a number of part-time courses but there are some clear gaps where no part-time provision is available from anywhere within SWLEP including for Medicine and Dentistry and Initial Teacher Training. There is only one university in commuting distance that offers a part-time course in Mathematical Sciences and only a handful that offer part-time courses in subjects such as Computer Sciences, Physical Sciences and Geographical Studies. The subjects with the greatest degree of part-time coverage are Business and Administration and Creative Art and Design.

Key Findings
- There is a broad range of subject choices available within the HEIs in the wider area
- There is much less choice for part-time study

2.4   Student and Graduate Flows

Against this backdrop the final section of the chapter presents data on the flow of first degree students and graduates between home LEP, study LEP and eventual employment location for the years 2010 - 2015 Inclusive.[14]

Figure 9 overleaf and the following graphs (Figures 10 and 11) show that, unsurprisingly given the limited Higher Education provision within SWLEP, 84.1% students moved away to study, although SWLEP was not the highest of the comparator LEPs in this respect, with Buckinghamshire and Thames Valley and Thames Valley Berkshire having fractionally higher rates. This is significant because nationally it has been found that students who study in their home area are much more likely to remain there for work after graduation.[15] Additionally, because of its profile SWLEP attracted far fewer students into the area than is true for the comparators, some of which (such as Dorset, Heart of the South West, Oxford and West of England) were actually net importers of students.

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[14] The data is drawn from the HESA Student Record, the Education and Skills Funding Agency's Individualised Learner Record (ILR) data and the Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education survey (DLHE) and covers the period from 2010-11 to 2014-15 inclusive
[15] http://www.hefce.ac.uk/analysis/maps/mobility/

Figure 9: Comparative Analysis of Student Flows, 2010 -2015 Inclusive

|	SWLEP	B&TV	Dorset	EM3	Glos	HotSW	Ox	TVB	WoE
Total students who grew up in the LEP	20,585	20,715	21,495	57,800	17,920	48,710	22,100	30,220	30,575
Of which stayed in the LEP to study	3,270	3,225	6,960	11,890	4,400	21,845	5,485	4,295	13,775
Left to study elsewhere	17,315 (84.1%)	17,490 (84.4%)	14,535 (67.6%	45,910 (79.4%)	13,515 (75.4%)	26,865 (55.2%)	16,615 (75.2%)	25,920 (85.8%)	16,800 (55.0%)
Total who studied in the LEP	3,885	11,250	24,645	37,695	13,805	56,205	29,635	15,695	65,800
Of which students who studied in the LEP but grew up elsewhere	615 (15.8%)	8,020 (71.3%)	17,690 (71.8%)	25,800 (68.5%)	9,400 (68.1%)	34,360 (61.1%)	24,150 (81.5%)	11,395 (72.6%)	52,025 (79.1%)

Source: http://www.HEFCE.ac.uk/analysis/maps/mobility/

Figure 10: Comparative Analysis of Student Flows 2010 -2015 Inclusive, Students who Grew Up in the LEP and Study Location
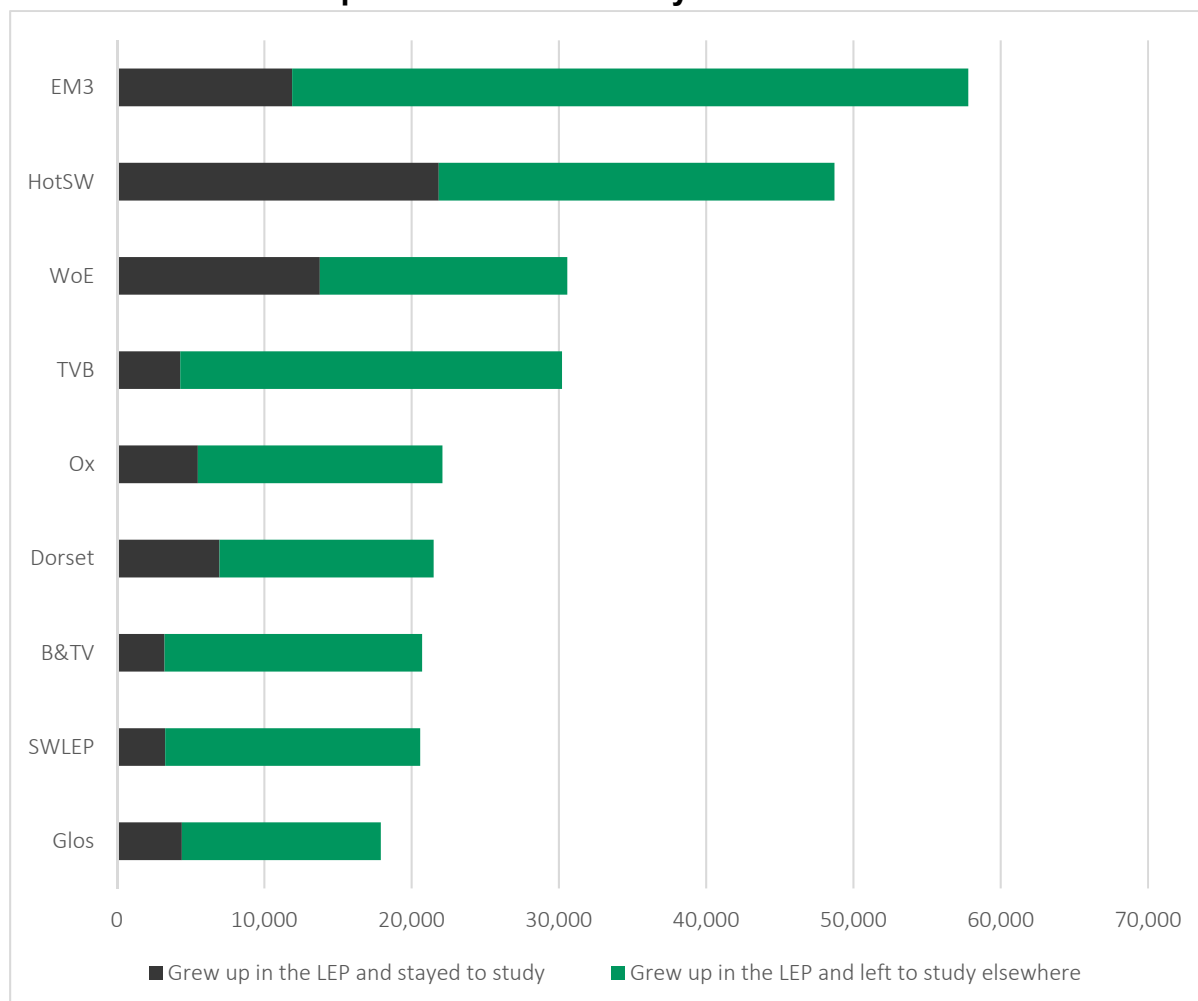
Legend: ■ Grew up in the LEP and stayed to study ■ Grew up in the LEP and left to study elsewhere

Figure 11: Comparative Analysis of Student Flows 2010 -2015 Inclusive, Students who Studied in the LEP and Home Location
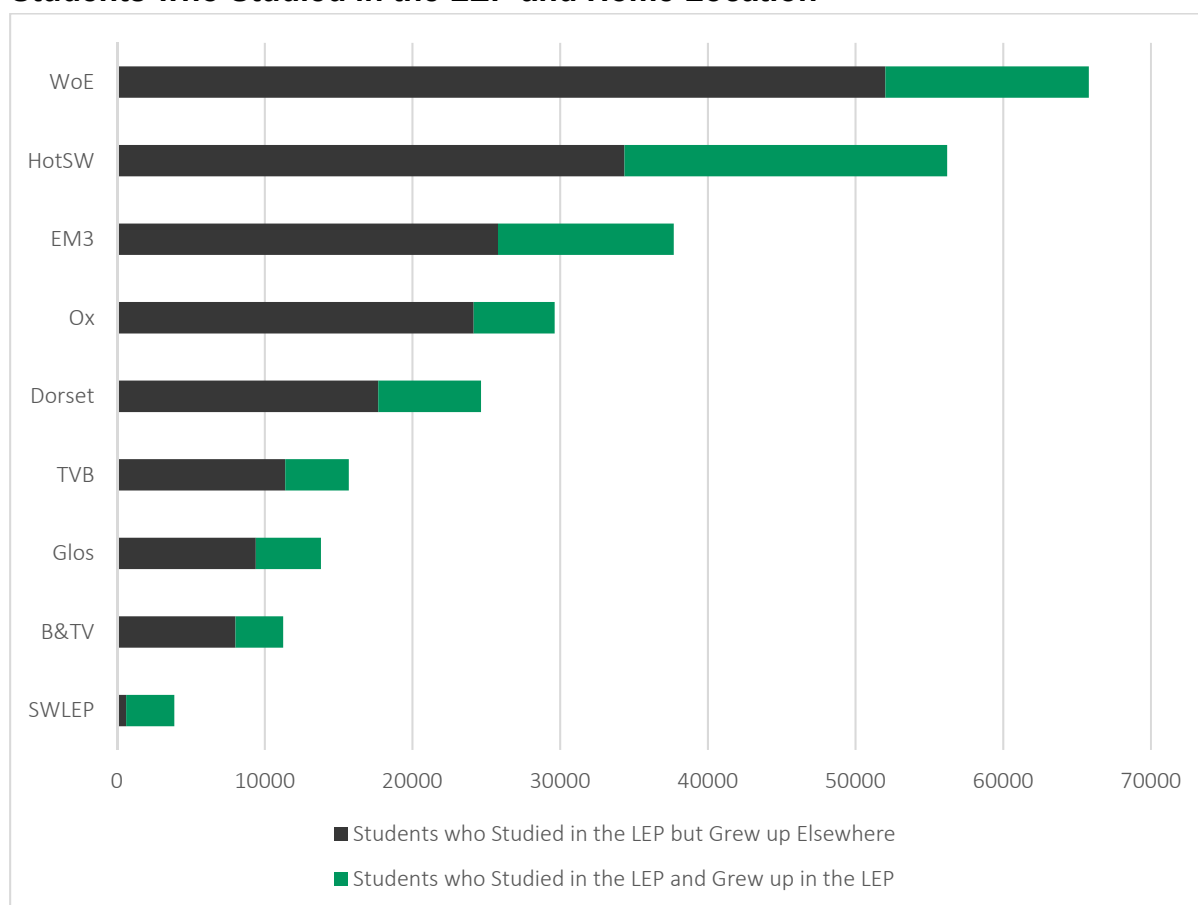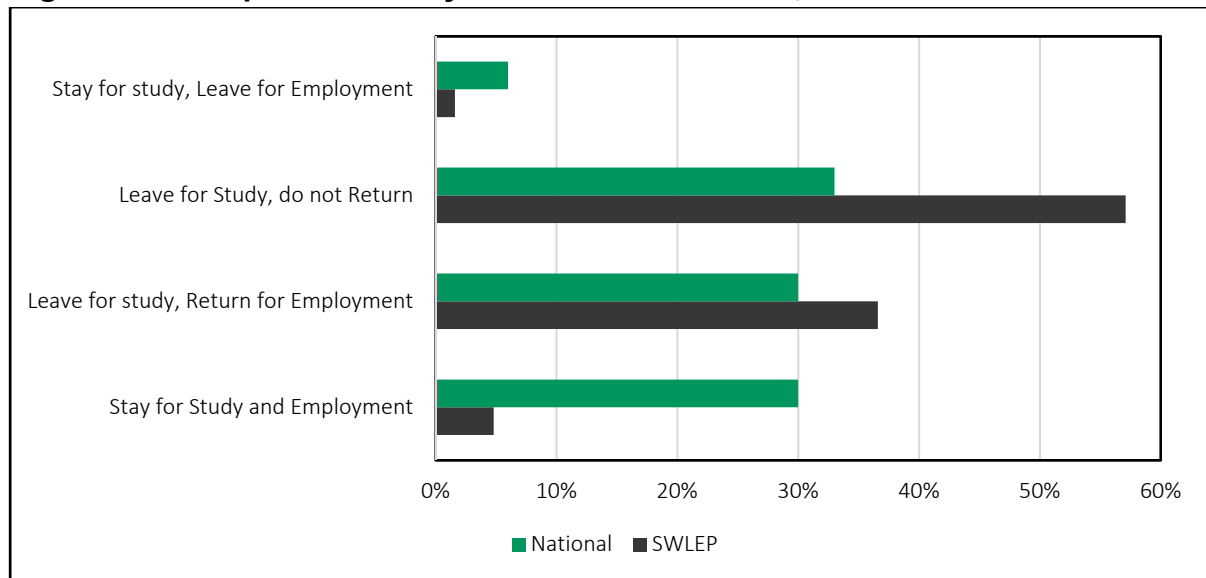
Figures 12 -13 go on to explore the relationship between home and employment locations. They show that SWLEP had the lowest percentage of students that stayed for both study and employment within the comparator group. The percentage of students who left for study and did not return is the second highest within the comparator group at a little over 57%. Nationally, 33% of students leave their home LEP to study and do not return. Chapter 3 explores student flow data in more detail utilising the bespoke data purchased from HESA, which whilst not directly comparable, does allow more granularity in relation to geographical areas of the SWLEP.

Figure 12: Comparative Analysis of Graduate Flows, 2010 -2015 Inclusive

	SWLEP	B&TV	Dorset	EM3	Glos	HotSW	Ox	TVB	WoE	National
Stay for study and employment	4.8%	6.2%	16.6%	8.4%	14.7%	29.6%	12.6%	5.0%	33.1%	30%
Leave for study, return for employment	36.6%	25.1%	32.8%	30.8%	34.0%	24.8%	35.1%	41.0%	29.4%	30%
Leave for study, do not return	57.1%	65.2%	44.8%	56.0%	47.9%	39.2%	47.5%	52.2%	30.8%	33%
Stay for study, leave for employment	1.6%	3.5%	5.7%	4.8%	3.5%	6.3%	4.8%	1.8%	6.6%	6%

Source: http://www.HEFCE.ac.uk/analysis/maps/lg/

Figure 13: Comparative Analysis of Graduate Flows, 2010 -2015 Inclusive

Source: http://www.HEFCE.ac.uk/analysis/maps/lg/

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FROM CHAPTER 2

- SWLEP is one of the few areas in the country without its own HEI. The Open University is the largest provider of courses. Although it has some interesting niche provision, especially at postgraduate level, at undergraduate level the Oxford Brookes Swindon campus and the area's three Further Education Colleges are the main locally based (i.e. excluding distance learning provision) providers of Higher Education. Provision is therefore more limited locally for undergraduates than elsewhere in the country.

- Unsurprisingly against this backdrop the number of students studying within the LEP area is small and it is also declining. Almost 60% of them study via distance learning. However, the proportion of students that are both registered and taught at a FEC is increasing.

- The profile of the higher level provision offered by the Colleges varies somewhat when compared to the national picture. For example, there appears to be lower than average volumes of foundation degree students. It is not possible to tell the extent to which this issue reflects supply or demand but it may point to a gap in terms of progression routes. The colleges do offer some foundation degree courses and have plans to expand their offer, but there may be scope to broaden this offer further in order to enable participation, particularly from adults who do not have the right qualifications to access Higher Education. However, higher and degree apprenticeships could also fulfil this function and are discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.

- Of note, the current offer form the colleges is tilted in favour of non-STEM based subjects and the part-time offer is variable.

- There are a number of universities within commuting distance of the LEP but choices vary depending on location, with fewer close proximity HEIs serving the Salisbury and Trowbridge areas. This is a key social mobility issue, as students from lower socio-economic backgrounds often prefer to study closer to home than their better off counterparts.

- There is a broad range of subject choices available within universities in the wider area but significant gaps in terms of part-time options.

- Against this backdrop SWLEP has a comparatively high percentage of students that leave the area to study and do not return after graduation. Nationally it has been found that students who study in their home area are much more likely to remain there for work after graduation. This could hamper efforts to address employer's highly skilled roles in the future.

Chapter 3: Learners from SWLEP, Attainment and Progression to Higher Education

3.1 Introduction

This section of the report describes the attainment levels of young people from Swindon and Wiltshire and their progression through the education system (up to Key Stage 5). It also explores the findings from both the survey of young people and the survey of adults in terms of the motivations and attitudes towards studying further.

3.2 Educational Attainment and Progression

3.2.1 Student Population

Before the report discusses educational attainment and progression to Higher Education, it is useful to briefly cover the attributes of the student population. Department for Education (DfE) data (see appendix A.28) shows that in Swindon, 12.3% of young people in the state educated sector were in receipt of Free School Meals aged 15, compared to 6.3% for Wiltshire and 14.9% nationally. Further, 27.1% were identified as having Special Educational Needs (SEN), in Swindon, compared to 16.5% for Wiltshire and 20.9% for England.

3.2.2 Key Stage 4 Performance Statistics

Attainment, along with awareness and aspiration, can be a key indicator of progression hence it is important to understand how pupils perform at school. There have been some changes in the DfE's Key Stage 4 (KS4) performance measures. Since 2016 the 5+ A*- C including Maths & English indicator has not been the headline measure of performance. New measures have been designed to hold schools to account for all of their pupil's progress across a broader range of subjects. The new 'attainment 8' score shows pupils' average achievement from a suite of 8 qualifications[16]. Additionally, the threshold measures have changed to 9-5 and 9-4 passes in Maths and English following the introduction of the new grading system; and, the percentage of pupils achieving an English Baccalaureate has been added. It is therefore difficult to compare the most recent data with previous years hence Figure 14 overleaf represents a snapshot in time only. The Figure shows that the average attainment 8 score per pupil in Wiltshire was higher than either the South West or national averages in 2016-17 but in Swindon it was lower. The same pattern

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[16] Attainment 8 measures pupils' attainment across 8 qualifications including: Maths (double weighted) and English (double weighted, if both English language and English literature are entered), 3 qualifications that count in the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) measure and 3 further qualifications that can be GCSE qualifications (including EBacc subjects) or technical awards from the DfE approved list

can be observed for the 9-5 pass in Maths and English. However, whilst the results were slightly more variable on both the 9-4 passes and the English Baccalaureate measures, the results for Wiltshire were consistently higher than Swindon's.

Figure 14: Performance Statistics at KS4, 2016-17

	Swindon	Wiltshire	South West	England
Average attainment 8 Score per pupil	42.9	46.6	46.2	46.4
% of pupils who achieved a 9-5 pass in Maths and English	35.7%	43.5%	42.2%	42.9%
% of pupils who achieved a 9-4 pass in Maths and English	60.0%	64.8%	64.1%	64.2%
% of pupils who achieved all components in the English Baccalaureate including a 9-5 pass in Maths and English	13.3%	20.3%	19.5%	21.4%
% of pupils who achieved all components in the English Baccalaureate including a 9-4 pass in Maths and English	15.3%	22.1%	21.7%	23.9%

Source: Department for Education, 2016-17 (revised). Note: Data covers state schools only

Because it has not been possible to consider trend data on these performance statistics, Figure 15 focuses on the old headline measure – the percentage of pupils who achieved 5+ A*-C in including English and Maths – where relatively consistent data is available from 2013-14 to 2015-16. This shows that, from a similar starting point in 2013-14 the attainment in Wiltshire increased considerably to a position much higher than the average for either the South West or for state funded schools across England. The starting point for Swindon was much lower and it continued to perform worse on average, however, the data does show some improvement for Swindon between the academic years 2014-15 and 2015-16.

Figure 15: Trends in 5+ A*-C Including English and Maths, 2013-14 to 2015-16
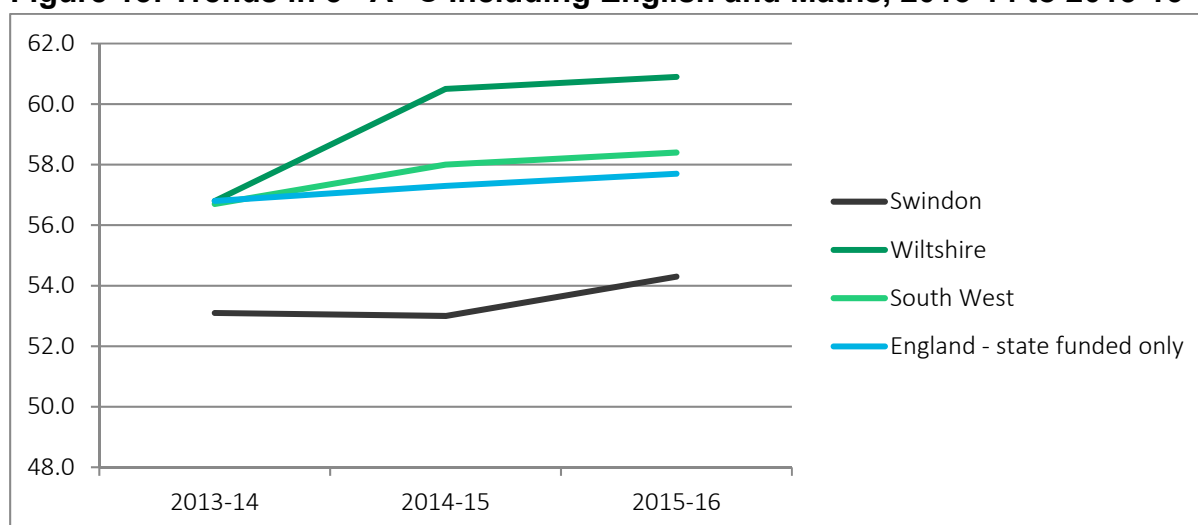
Source: Department for Education, 2015-16 (revised)

Key Findings
• Under the new measures, KS4 results are consistently higher in Wiltshire than Swindon • Wiltshire exceeds the national averages for some, but not all measures • Under the old measures, Wiltshire has shown a rapid rate of improvement from a high starting point between 2013-14 and 2015-16, whereas Swindon has shown a more marginal improvement from a lower starting point • As research by HEFCE shows that GCSE-level attainment is a (but not the only) dominant factor in determining progression to Higher Eduction, improving educational attainment should be an important priority in driving participation

3.2.3 Key Stage 4 Destinations

The Government's policy to raise the participation age means that, since 2013 when it was introduced, more young people have stayed in education or training throughout the country. Locally, it is clear from DfE data that the percentage of KS4 pupils who progressed to some form of education or employment/training destination in 2015-16 was in line with (or in the case of Wiltshire, slightly above) the South West and national averages. Further, the percentage of KS4 pupils who progressed to any *sustained education* destination was above the South West and national averages in both Swindon and Wiltshire. However, the actual destinations differed markedly as can be seen from Figure 16. Whilst in Wiltshire the percentage that progressed to a Further Education provider was in line with the national average it was considerably higher in Swindon which reflects the make-up of post 16 provision in the area. N.B. this does not necessarily mean that those individuals are studying at Further Education level - it simply means that they are studying with a Further Education provider. Conversely, a much higher percentage of Wiltshire's young people attended a School Sixth Form. Please note that the DfE destinations data is based on the number of pupils attending the schools within the area, rather than on the residence of the pupil and could therefore be skewed by pupils attending a SWLEP school from outside of the area or vice versa.

Figure 16: KS4 Destinations, 2015-16

	Swindon	Wiltshire	South West	England
Overall education or employment/training destination	94%	95%	94%	94%
Any sustained education destination	93%	92%	91%	90%
- **Further Education or other FE provider**	60%	38%	45%	38%
- **Sixth Form College**	14%	5%	5%	13%
- **School Sixth Form**	18%	48%	41%	39%
- **Other provider**	1%	1%	1%	1%
Apprenticeship	6%	5%	7%	6%
Sustained employment and/or training destination (excluding apprenticeships)	3%	3%	3%	3%
Destination not sustained	3%	4%	5%	5%
Activity not captured	1%	1%	1%	1%

Source: Department for Education, 2015-16 data (revised). Note: state funded mainstream schools only

The PCON breakdown (see Appendix A.32) shows that the percentage of young people that progressed to any sustained education destination was highest in Chippenham and lowest in Salisbury. The percentage that went to a Further Education College was much higher in North Swindon than anywhere else, as was the percentage of young people that attended a Sixth Form College. South West Wiltshire had the highest percentage of young people going to a School Sixth Form post KS4.

Overall, research undertaken as part of the Swindon and Wiltshire Needs Analysis for the Post 16 Area Review (August 2016) found that 81% of Swindon's 16-18 learners learned in Swindon, 12% went to Gloucestershire (mainly Cirencester College) and 3% to Wiltshire. Wiltshire, however, was found to be less self-contained and reflecting its size, transport routes and geography, the review found that 67% of its 16-18 learners learned in Wiltshire, with 14% travelling to Swindon (800), 12% to Bath and North East Somerset (City of Bath College) (700), 10% to Winchester (600) and 5% to Cotswold (Cirencester College) (300).

> **Key Findings**
> - The percentage of KS4 pupils who progressed to any sustained education destination was above the South West and national averages in both Swindon and Wiltshire
> - In Swindon a much higher proportion of KS4 students progressed to Further Education Colleges than the national average, reflecting the importance of the Further Education sector in Swindon
> - Post 16, 84% and 81% of Swindon and Wiltshire's learners stayed within the LEP area respectively

3.2.4 Key Stage 5 Performance Statistics

As with the KS4 statistics there have been changes to the way in which Key Stage 5 (KS5) performance is measured with the introduction of Average Point Scores (APS) by entry for cohorts of Academic, Tech and Applied General Studies students alongside A levels students. Figures 17 and 18 show that across all indicators, attainment in Swindon is lower than Wiltshire, South West and national averages. Whereas in Wiltshire, attainment is comparable to or higher than regional and national averages for A-Level and academic indicators, but lower than national averages for technical indicators.

Figure 17: Average Point Scores at Level 3, 2016-17 and 2015-16

	Swindon State Funded		Wiltshire State Funded		South West State Funded		England State Funded	
	2015-16	2016-17	2015-16	2016-17	2015-16	2016-17	2015-16	2016-17
APS at Level 3	28.88	27.46	32.14	32.31	31.45	32.06	31.42	32.33
APS at A Level	26.67	25.65	32.26	32.32	30.72	31.07	30.44	31.13
APS for Academic students	26.83	25.82	32.40	32.43	30.95	31.31	30.63	31.32
APS for Tech students	25.82	27.19	27.35	29.66	30.04	31.59	30.76	32.25
APS for Applied General students	31.33	31.44	35.04	34.30	34.39	34.94	34.66	35.69

Source: Department for Education, 2015-16 (revised) and 2016-17 (revised)

**Figure 18: Average Point Scores at Level 3, 2016-17**
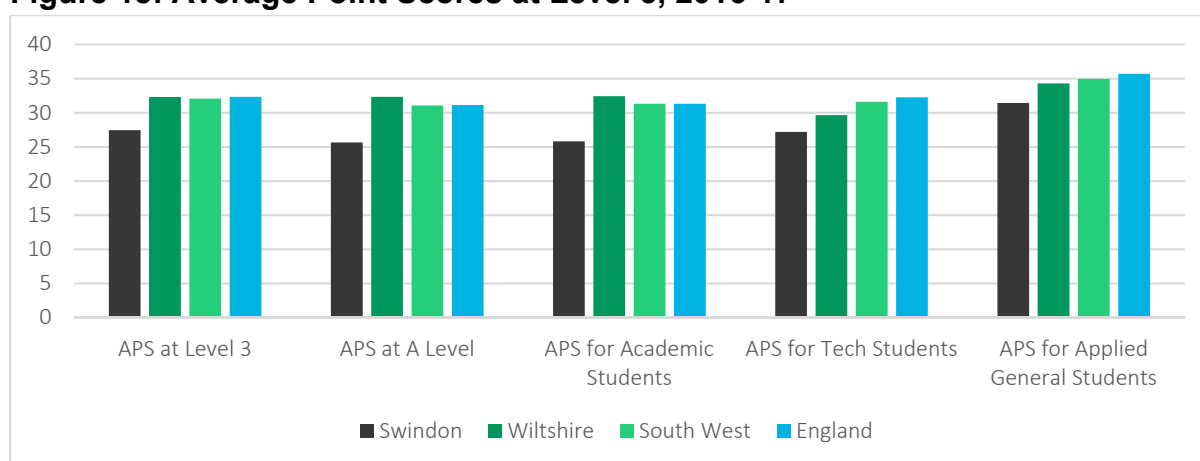
Source: Department for Education, 2015-16 (revised) and 2016-17 (revised)

Figure 19 shows the APS change between 2015-16 and 2016-17. This shows that whilst in England the APS per entry improved the picture was more mixed at a local level. Whilst Wiltshire showed some improvement in all but one indicator (APS for Applied General students), the improvement was lower than that seen in the South West and England, except for Tech students, where the rate of improvement has exceeded the regional and national rate. In Swindon the position worsened overall

from an already lower starting point. However, Swindon did see an improvement in its APS for Tech and Applied General students.

Figure 19: Average Point Scores at Level 3, APS Change Between 2015-16 and 2016-17
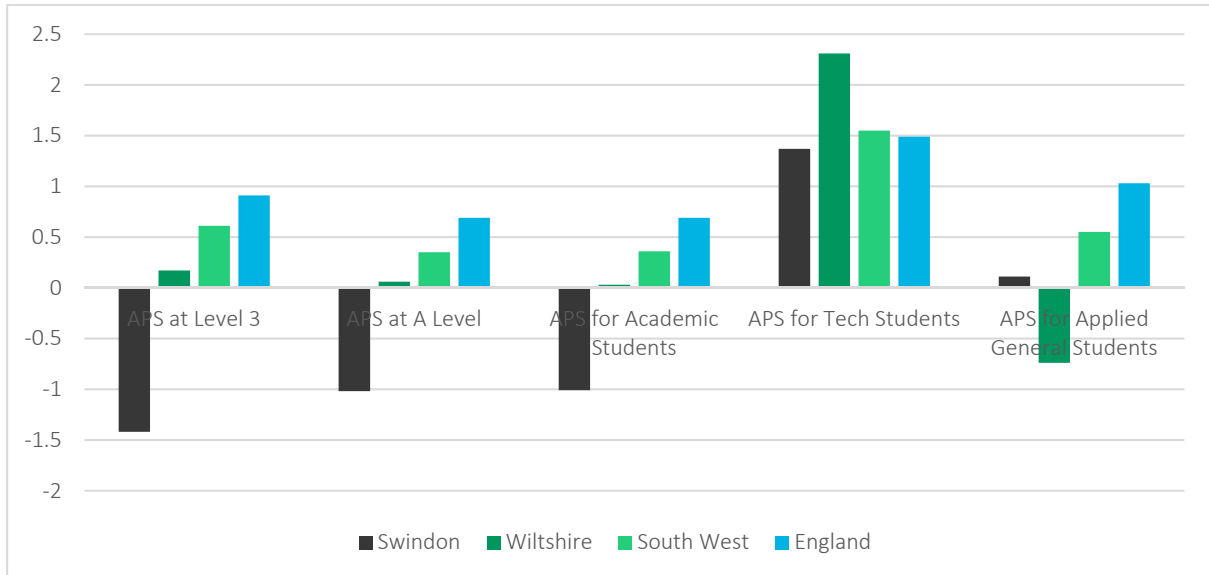
Source: Department for Education, 2015-16 (revised) and 2016-17 (revised)

Following the same pattern, Figure 20 presents the A Level results within the different areas which fluctuate from year to year but whereas Wiltshire's results improved between years, Swindon's worsened. For 2016-17 it is also possible to see the percentage of students who achieved at least two A Levels and these are shown on the bottom row of the table indicating that Wiltshire's performance on this measure was considerably higher than all others; and that Swindon's was considerably lower.

Figure 20: A Level Results, 2015-16 and 2016-17

	Swindon		Wiltshire		South West		England	
	2015-16	2016-17	2015-16	2016-17	2015-16	2016-17	2015-16	2016-17
% of students who achieved grades AAB or better at A Level	11.1	7.0	21.3	21.8	19.2	19.2	18.5	19.3
% of students achieving grades AAB or better at A level, of which at least two are in facilitating subjects	8.3	5.5	16.4	16.6	14.4	14.2	13.9	14.3
% of students who achieved 3 A*-A grades or better at A Level	5.7	3.4	11.8	13.7	11.0	11.0	10.5	11.1
% of students who achieved at least 2 A levels	N/A	58.4	N/A	79.7	N/A	73.9	N/A	75.4

Source: Department for Education, 2015-16 (revised) and 2016-17 (revised)

Figure 21 below shows Level 2 attainment by the age of 19. The first indicator shows that the proportion of 19 year old qualified to Level 2, is slightly higher than regional and national averages for Wiltshire, but lower for Swindon, following the same broad pattern highlighted previously.

The second indicator shows that the proportion of 19 year olds qualified to Level 2 with English and Maths is the same as the regional average for Wiltshire, but lower than the national average, suggesting that performance is lower than expected for English and Maths if the overall attainment pattern is followed. In Swindon, the proportion is lower than Wiltshire, regional and national averages, suggesting that there is scope to improve attainment at Level 2 English and Maths as well as broader attainment.

The final indicator looks at the percentage of young people attaining GCSE Grades A*-C or other Level 2 qualifications in English and Maths at the age of 19 for those who had not achieved this level by the age of 16. For this indicator, Swindon performs more strongly than Wiltshire, regional and national averages, potentially indicating successful provision in this area.

Figure 21: Level 2 Attainment by Age 19

	Swindon	Wiltshire	SW	England
Percentage of 19 year olds qualified to Level 2	81.6	85.6	84.9	85.3
Percentage of 19 year olds qualified to Level 2 with English and Maths	69.2	71.7	71.7	72.6
Percentage attaining GCSE A*-C or other Level 2 qualifications in English and Maths at age 19, for those who had not achieved this level by age 16	26.1	25.6	25.9	24.1

Source: DFE, 2016. Note: State sector only

Key Findings

- At Key Stage 5, attainment in Swindon is below regional and national averages on all indicators, whereas attainment in Wiltshire is above average on most (but not all) KS5 indicators
- Whilst nationally state funded schools are showing consistent improvement across all measures, in Swindon and Wiltshire the trend is more mixed

3.2.5 A Level Entries in STEM Subjects

Improving participation in STEM subjects has been prioritised both nationally in the Industrial Strategy [17] as well as locally within the Strategic Economic Plan[18], reflecting the importance of these skills to the economy and in particular within the priority sectors. In the academic year 2015-16 30% of Swindon's A level entries were in a STEM subject and in Wiltshire the figure was 33%. This compares with 32% in the South West and 33% in England. The pass rates were remarkably similar to national averages except for subjects with very small cohorts such as Design and Technology in Swindon and ICT in Wiltshire. More detail can be found at Appendix A.38. Findings from the survey of young people which explored attitudes towards STEM subjects are presented later in this chapter and data on the take-up of STEM related degree courses in Chapter 4.

Key Findings

- Participation in STEM A-levels is broadly comparable with national averages
- Approximately one third of students are taking STEM A-levels. The strategy could consider actions to 'nudge' these students with an aptitude for STEM to take STEM subjects at a higher level

3.2.6 Key Stage 5 Destinations and Higher Education Participation

The DfE produces a set of statistics on young people's education and employment choices after KS5. The measures only relate to Level 3 learners and they are based

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[17] Industrial Strategy, Building a Britain Fit for the Future, HM Government
[18] Swindon and Wiltshire Strategic Economic plan. January 2016, SWLEP

on where the pupil goes to school[19], rather than where they live but they do provide the most consistent source of information on what young people do at age 18. The most recent release is shown in Figure 22 and 23 which illustrate that a higher than average percentage of young people went on to a sustained education or employment destination in 2015-16 post KS5 in both Swindon and Wiltshire. However, a slightly lower percentage of them went on to a sustained education destination, although the figures were nevertheless comparatively high for the South West. Beyond this there were marked differences between the areas in terms of where the post KS5 students went. Fewer students in either Swindon or Wiltshire went on to a Higher Education provider than the national average, although the percentage in Wiltshire was higher than the South West average. However, whereas Swindon saw a much higher number progressing on to a Further Education provider Wiltshire saw a higher number taking employment as opposed to further study.

Figure 22: KS5 Destinations, 2015-16

	Swindon	Wiltshire	South West	England
Overall education or employment destination	91%	92%	89%	89%
Any sustained education destination	65%	63%	60%	66%
- **Further Education provider**	28%	15%	15%	13%
- **Higher Education provider**	36%	46%	42%	51%
(of which Russell Group)	6%	15%	11%	12%
- **Other education**	1%	2%	3%	2%
Apprenticeship	9%	6%	8%	7%
Employment	26%	29%	29%	23%
Destination not sustained	7%	6%	8%	8%
Destination not captured	2%	2%	3%	3%

Source: Department for Education, 2015-16. Note: state funded mainstream schools and colleges only

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[19] Wiltshire figures will therefore be slightly distorted as the county is a net exporter of post 16 students. Destinations of students who study out of county are not able to be tracked

Figure 23: KS5 Destinations, 2015-16
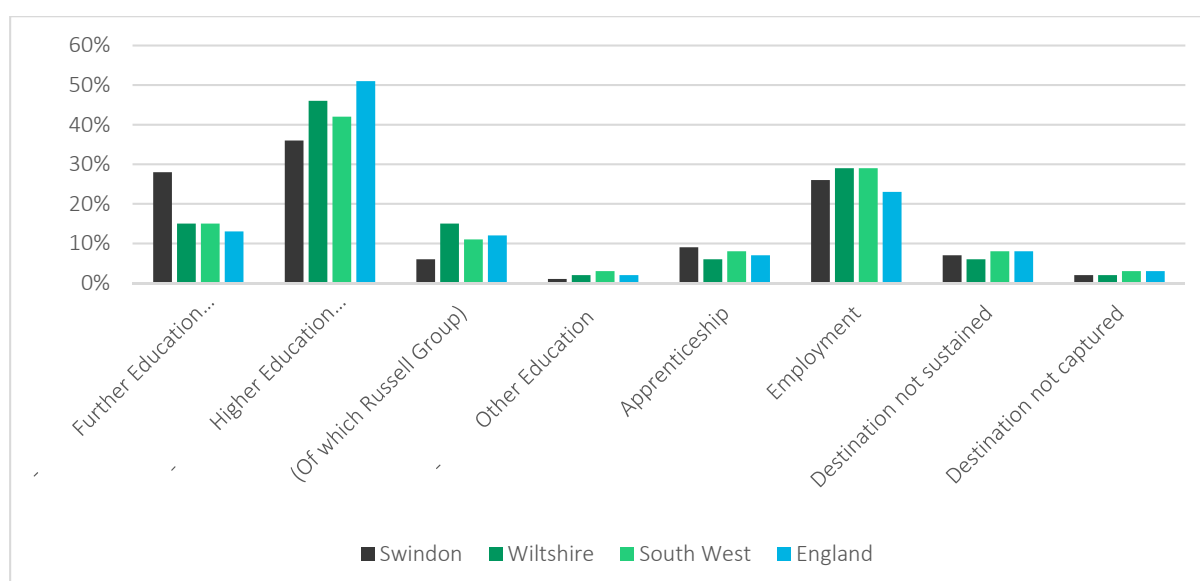
Source: Department for Education, 2015-16. Note: state funded mainstream schools and colleges only

The PCON level breakdown of this data shows that South Swindon had the highest percentage progressing on to any sustained education destination post KS5 and that North Swindon had the lowest, as can be seen from Figure 24. North Wiltshire and Salisbury had a much higher percentage of young people going on to Higher Education (56% each), over double that seen in North Swindon (27%). Salisbury had by far the highest percentage studying at a Russell Group university (34%, exceeding the national average by some margin) which is to be expected given the numbers of students educated at the grammar schools in Salisbury.

Figure 24: KS5 Sustained Education Destinations by Type and Parliamentary Constituency, 2015-16

|	North Swindon	South Swindon	Chip'ham	Devizes	North Wiltshire	Salisbury	South West Wiltshire
Any sustained education destination	53%	73%	62%	59%	68%	65%	65%
Further Education provider	25%	30%	24%	9%	10%	7%	11%
Higher Education provider	27%	42%	37%	48%	56%	56%	51%
(of which Russell Group)	X	9%	10%	11%	18%	34%	13%
Other education	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%	2%	3%

Source: Department for Education, 2015-16

- At KS5, progression to Higher Education destinations is considerably higher in Wiltshire than in Swindon, although progression rates in Wiltshire are still below the average for England
- Progression rates to employment are high, reflecting the strong employment demand in the area
- Progression rates to Higher Education vary considerably across the PCONs, with the lowest in North Swindon and the highest in Salisbury and North Wiltshire

The DfE also produces 'widening participation' data which matches the National Pupil Database to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) Individualised Learner Record and the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) Student Record. This allows pupils to be tracked from English schools at age 15 to Higher Education by age 19 and shows the difference between those in receipt of Free School Meals (FSM) and the wider population. This data is also based on the location of the school rather than the residence of the pupil and, due to the methodology used provides estimates only. In Swindon it can be seen that overall participation had increased from 27% in 2013/14 to 30% in 2014/15, moving from 9% to 12% on the FSM indicator, as shown in Figure 25. In Wiltshire overall participation had increased from 38% to 39%, moving from 14% to 17% on the FSM indicator. Overall participation stood at 34% in the South West in 2014/15 and 38% in England. On the FSM indictor in the same year participation stood at 15% in the South West and 24% in England (see Appendix A.41). Therefore, whilst participation amongst those in receipt of Free School Meals has improved in both areas, both areas still lag behind the national average on this measure.

**Figure 25: % Participation Amongst Those in Receipt of Free School Meals**
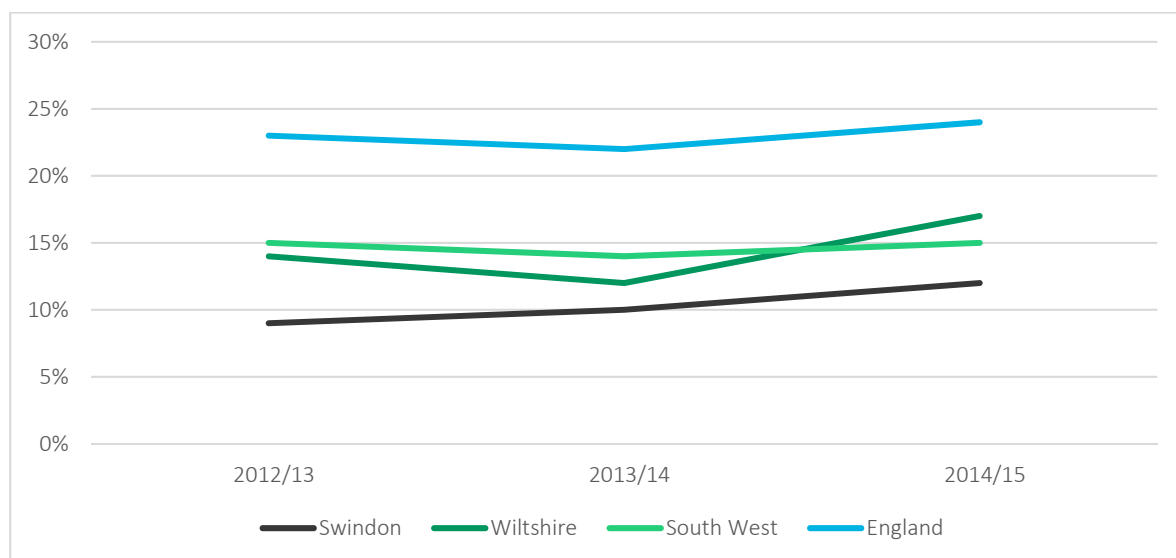
Source: Department for Education, released 2017

Finally, HEFCE has produced a very granular 'Participation of Local Areas' (POLAR) classification to describe the different areas across the UK based on the proportion of the young population that participate in Higher Education. The rate is defined as the proportion of young people (15 year olds) who entered Higher Education by the age of 19 during the 2009-10 to 2014-15 academic years. These rates are then used to assign Middle Layer Super Output Areas (MSOAs) into five groups known as the POLAR 4 quintiles. Quintile 1 represents the MSOAs where participation rates fall into the lowest 20% nationally and Quintile 5, the highest participation rates nationally. Unlike the previous data presented, the POLAR analysis is based on the residence of the pupil. Figure 26 below shows this data mapped by MSOA.

Figure 26: Participation by Local Areas
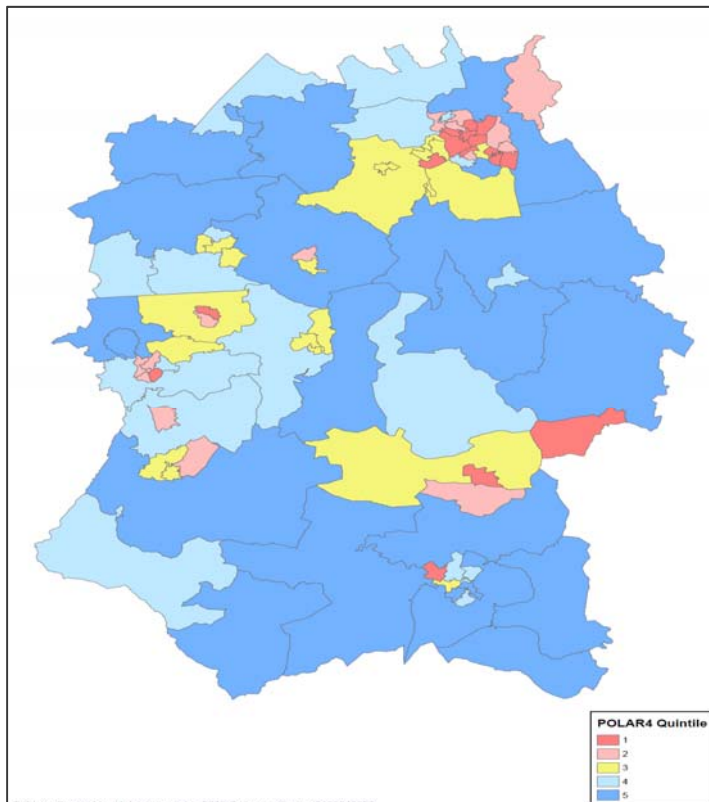
Source: HEFCE, POLAR4, 2009-10 to 2014-15 academic years, Quintile 1 is lowest participation and quintile 5 is the highest participation

Figure 27 below shows the proportion of MSOAs in each quintile within each PCON. This shows that in North Swindon, 41.7% of MSOAs fall into the worst 20% in England, whereas in North Wiltshire no MSOAs fall into this group. In Salisbury, 50% of MSOAs fall into Quintile 5, where participation rates are in the highest 20% in England.

Figure 27: Proportion of MSOAs within each Quintile by PCON
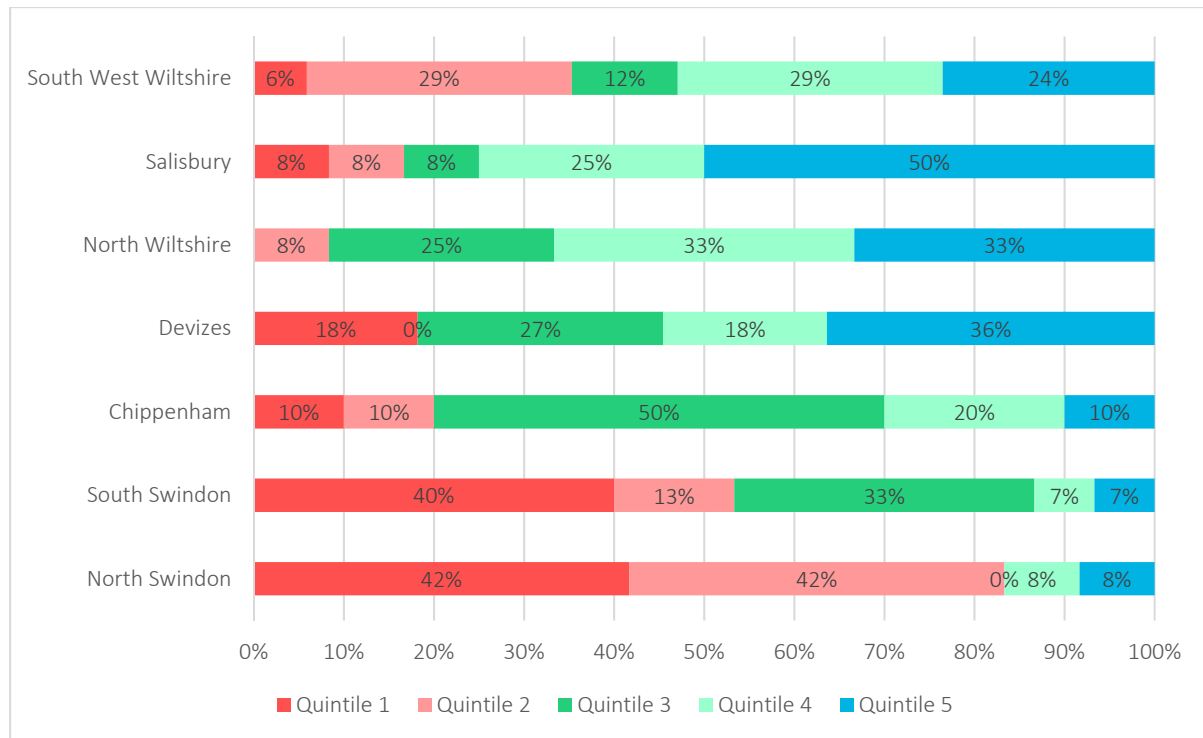
Source: HEFCE, POLAR4, 2009-10 to 2014-15 academic years

As the POLAR data includes a numerator and a denominator for each MSOA, it is possible to sum the MSOAs within PCON in order to calculate a 'Young Participation Rate' i.e. the number of entrants to Higher Education divided by the population. This data is shown in Appendix A.45 and A.46 and shows that the Young Participation Rate ranges from 24.6% in North Swindon to 43.6% in North Wiltshire. The lowest MSOA is in the Penhill and Upper Stratton area of North Swindon, where the participation rate is just 9.9%.

Key Findings
- POLAR 4 data shows that the participation rate varies significantly at a local level, with a number of 'cold spots' across the area
- North Swindon has lowest young participation rate and the most wards in the worst quintile in the UK
- North Wiltshire has the highest young participation rate and no wards in the worst quintile in the UK, however in Salisbury, 50% of wards are in the highest performing quintile

In addition to the POLAR 4 data, HEFCE has produced another tool (Gaps in Young Participation in Higher Education) which explores young participation by area in the context of attainment and other factors to identify where the level of young participation is higher or lower than to be expected. The 'Gap analysis' tool is not directly comparable with the POLAR 4 data above, as it:

- Uses Census 2001 ward boundaries rather than MSOA as geographical units;
- Only covers England, rather than the UK;
- Is based on pupils from state schools only, rather than all schools; and,
- Is based on a cohort of those aged 18 between the academic years 2006-07 and 2010-11.

The 'gap analysis' tool applies a statistical model to pupil data to assess to what extent selected factors predict the probability of pupil participation in Higher Education. The model explores nine scenarios:

- No factors (baseline);
- Key stage 4 attainment;
- Key stage 4 attainment AND ethnicity;
- Key stage 4 attainment AND free school meals;
- Key stage 4 attainment AND driving time to nearest Higher Education provider;
- Key stage 4 attainment AND ethnicity AND free school meals;
- Key state 4 attainment AND ethnicity AND driving time to nearest Higher Education provider;
- Key stage 4 attainment AND free school meals AND driving time to nearest HE provider; and,
- Key stage 4 attainment AND ethnicity, AND free school meals AND driving time to nearest Higher Education provider.

Like the POLAR 4 data, the analysis assigns local wards into quintile groups. Those wards in quintile 1 are those with the most significant negative participation gaps. Those in quintile 5 are those with the most significant positive participation gaps and those in quintile 3 have no significant gaps.

The following graphs (Figures 28 - 29) show the proportion of wards in each local authority area falling into each quintile group for the scenarios listed above.

These figures show that under the baseline gap analysis (i.e. with no adjustments made), 45% of Swindon's wards fall into worst performing quintile, compared to a national average of 20%. However, when the model adjusts for attainment, the results shows 64% of wards fall into this category. This indicates that when adjusted for attainment, participation in Higher Education is worse than expected (i.e.

compared to other areas with similar levels of attainment, young people from wards in Swindon are less likely to go to Higher Education). Equally, across all the scenarios, participation is worse than expected. This implies that another factor, not modelled by HEFCE is influencing participation rates in Swindon. This is explored further later in the report.

Figure 28: Proportion of Wards in each Quintile by Gap Analysis Scenario - Swindon
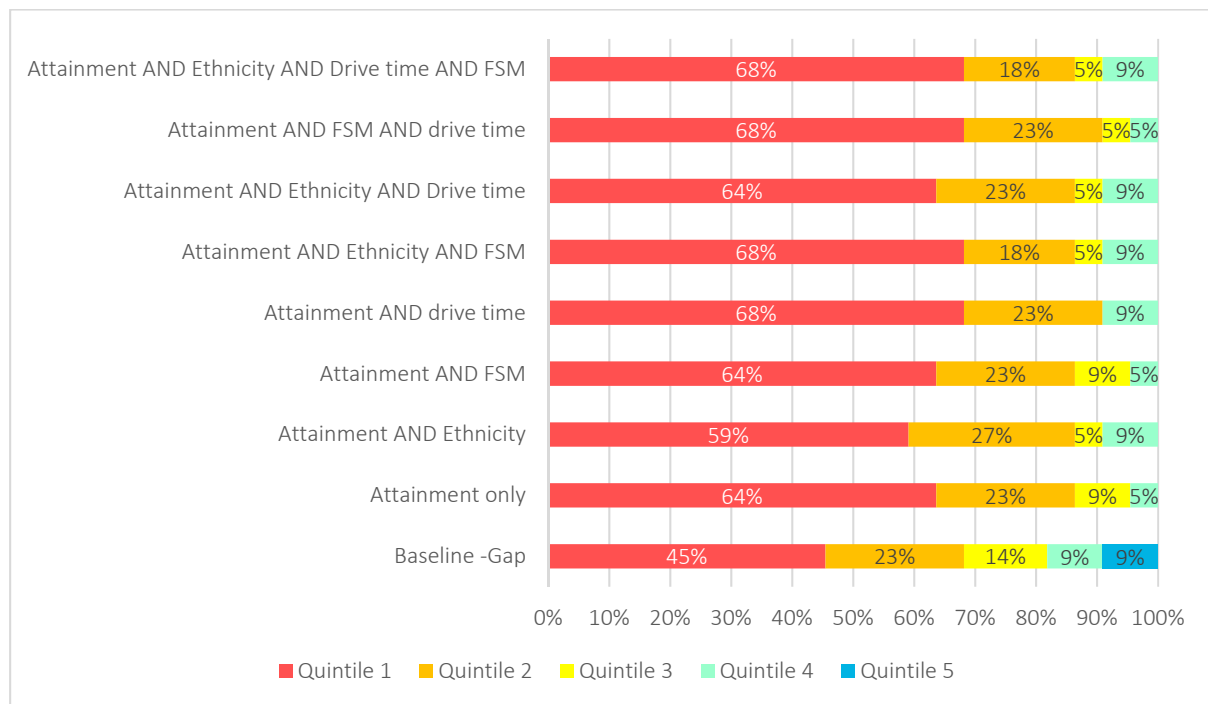
Source: HEFCE, Gaps in Young Participation into Higher Education, 2016

The analysis of wards in Wiltshire (overleaf) shows a slightly different story. The baseline analysis shows that 3% of wards fall into the worst performing quintile, much lower than national average of 20%. Under the baseline scenario, a much higher proportion of Wiltshire's wards fall into quintile 3, indicating that for many wards, participation is similar to the national average – which is consistent with the DfE data explored previously. However, when the model adjusts for attainment, as was the case in Swindon, the proportion of wards falling into the worst quintile increases. The proportion in the top quintile drops from 12% to 0%. This indicates that when adjusted for attainment and other factors, participation is worse than expected in Wiltshire also.

Figure 29: Proportion of Wards in each Quintile by Gap Analysis Scenario - Wiltshire

Source: HEFCE, Gaps in Young Participation into higher Education, 2016

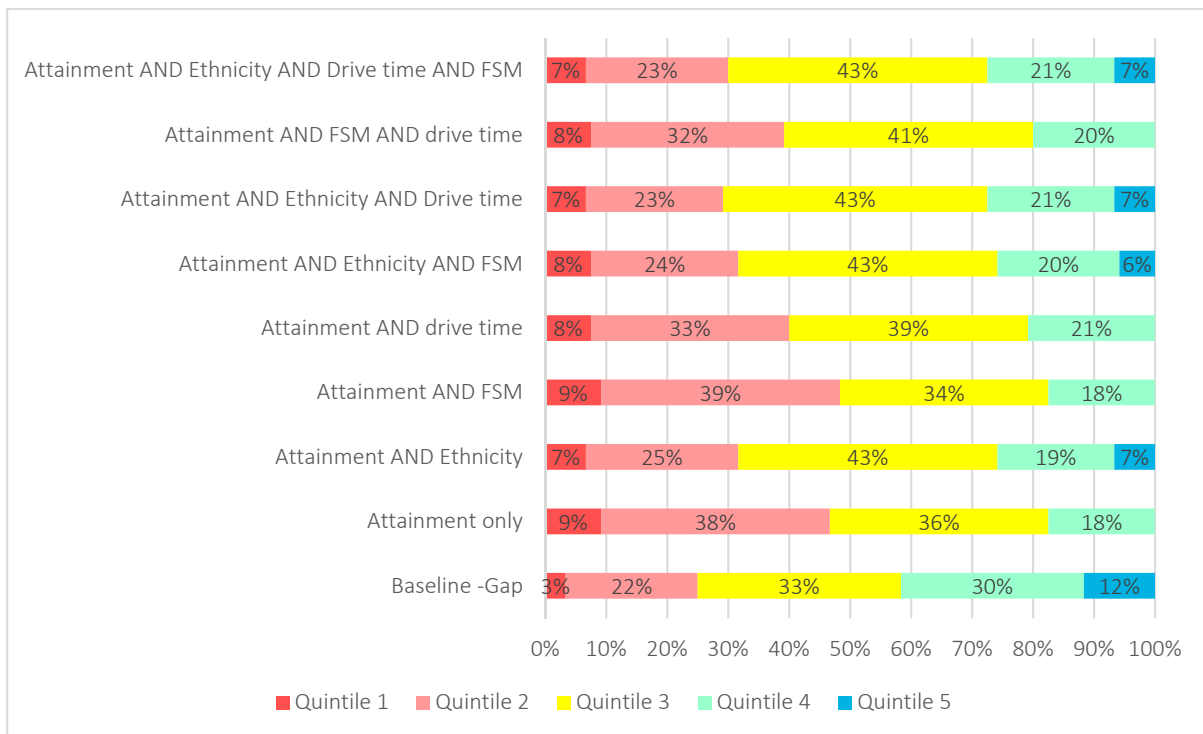| Key Findings |
| --- |
| • The HEFCE gap analysis shows that when participation in Higher Education is adjusted for attainment, free school meals, ethnicity and drive time to the nearest Higher Education provider, participation is worse than expected in both Swindon and Wiltshire
• This implies another factor not modelled by HEFCE is influencing progression in both areas |

3.2.7 Insights on Participation from the Surveys

The young people's survey undertaken for the present study explored their future plans. When asked what they expected to do after completing their current course, 74.8% of young people said that they planned to continue in some form of education (including apprenticeship options), with 43% indicating that they wished to go on to study at a university (see Appendix C.13). The remaining respondents were asked a subsequent question, exploring whether they were considering Higher Education (in its broadest sense) as part of their future plans. Of this group, 48.2% responded 'yes' and 31.4% responded 'maybe' (see Appendix C.14). The results from these two questions are combined to allow an overall analysis of those considering Higher Education as part of their future plans (either immediately after their current course or later on) and are presented at Figure 30.

Figure 30: Proportion Considering Higher Education as Part of their Future Plans
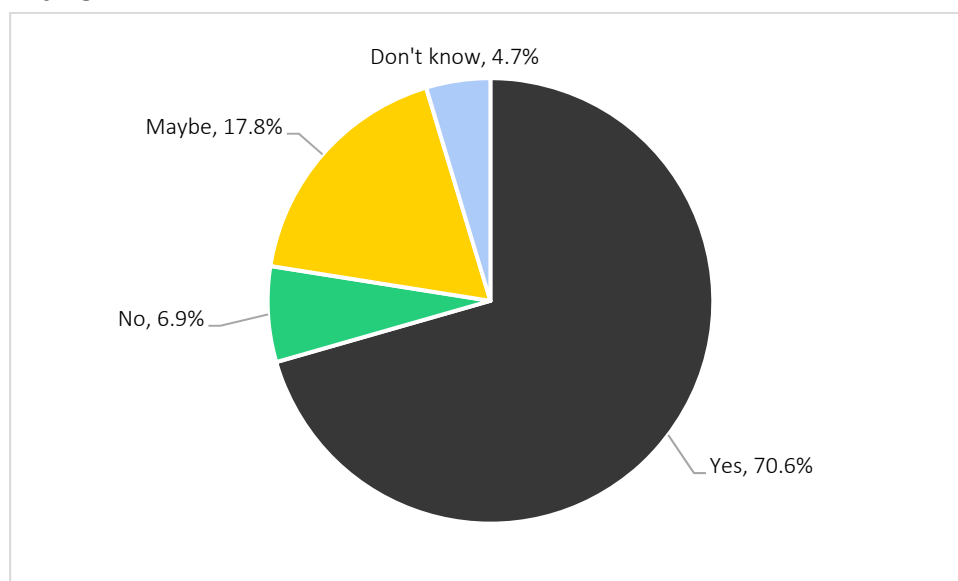
Source: SWLEP Survey of Young People, January, 2018. Base = 880

As shown in Appendix C.15, the percentage of young people that were definitely considering Higher Education was highest amongst respondents from Cirencester[20] (80.0%, followed by Wiltshire 73.3% and Swindon 61.9%) which is consistent with the findings from the participation data, although clearly actual participation rates achieved are much lower, potentially reflecting some optimism bias in the survey.

Appendix C.16 also shows the proportion considering Higher Education as part of their future plans by a range of different groups within the sample. Those groups that are more likely than average to be considering Higher Education include:

- High achievers[21] (93.6%);
- Those with at least 5 GCSE grades A-C (78.2%);
- Those in year 13 of study (77.8%);
- Those in year 12 of study (76.0%);
- Females (73.8%);
- Those with a part-time job (72.5%); and,
- Those that had achieved vocational qualifications (72.7%).

Those groups less likely to be considering Higher Education include:

- Males (67.6%);
- Those in year 11 (59.7%);

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[20] Note, students from Cirencester College were also invited to take part as many students from Swindon chose to study there.
[21] Young people who have already achieved 8 or more GCSEs grades A/A* or 7,8,9

- Those who care for a parent or relative (57.6%);
- Those who are disabled (53.1%);
- Those with an Education, Health and Care Plan or Statement of Educational Need (52.4%);
- Those who care for a child/children (46.7%); and,
- Those who are living in care (44.4%) (note: the sample size is particularly small for this group).

These results align with both participation rates and national trends.

Key Findings
- The proportion of young people considering Higher Education varies between groups within the sample
- High achievers, those with at least 5 GCSEs grades A-C, those in year 12 and 13 of study and young women were more like to consider Higher Education
- Young men, young people with caring responsibilities, young people with disabilities and those living in care are all less likely to consider Higher Education as part of their future plans. The strategy should consider how these groups could be engaged

When asked about their reasons for considering Higher Education, 69.1% of young people that responded to the question indicated that they felt it was necessary in order to achieve their career goals, as shown in Figure 31 below.

Figure 31: Reasons for Considering Higher Education – Young People
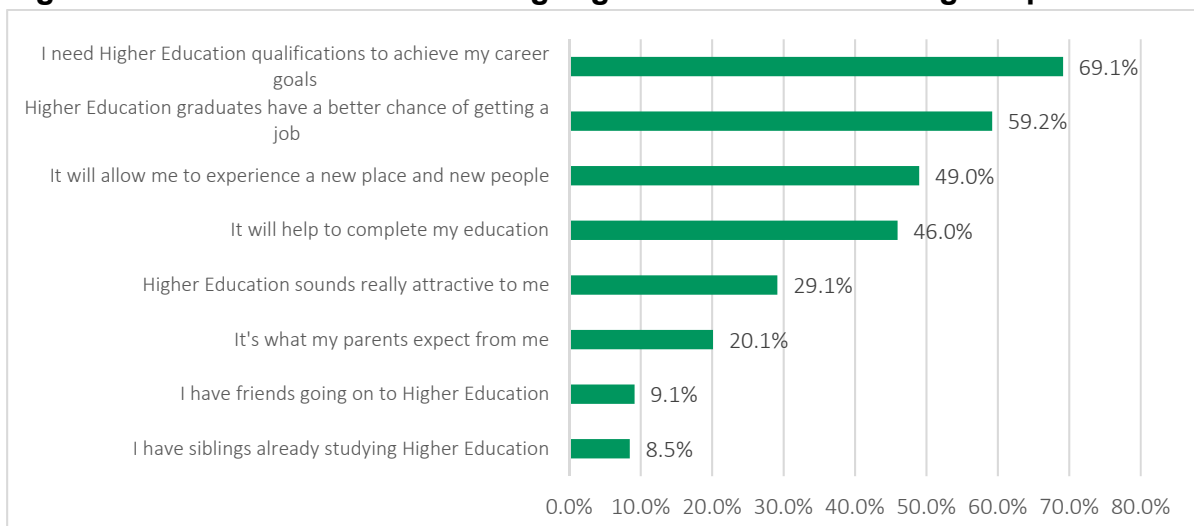
Source: SWLEP Survey of Young People, January, 2018. Base = 775 Note: Respondents could select more than one option

Figure 32 also shows the reasons provided by those young people for whom Higher Education did not feature in their plans. The most popular response reflected their desire to take a job (55%). This aligns with progression rate data presented previously and reflects the strong labour market in the area. A significant proportion (31%) of young people would prefer to undertake an apprenticeship or other training. For others, barriers included cost (28%), lack of information to decide (26%), did not think they would get the right grades (22%), not wishing to leave the home/area (14%) and commitments which mean that they have to stay in the area (7%). This highlights the importance of ensuring sufficient provision within the area.

Figure 32: Reasons for not Considering Higher Education – Young People
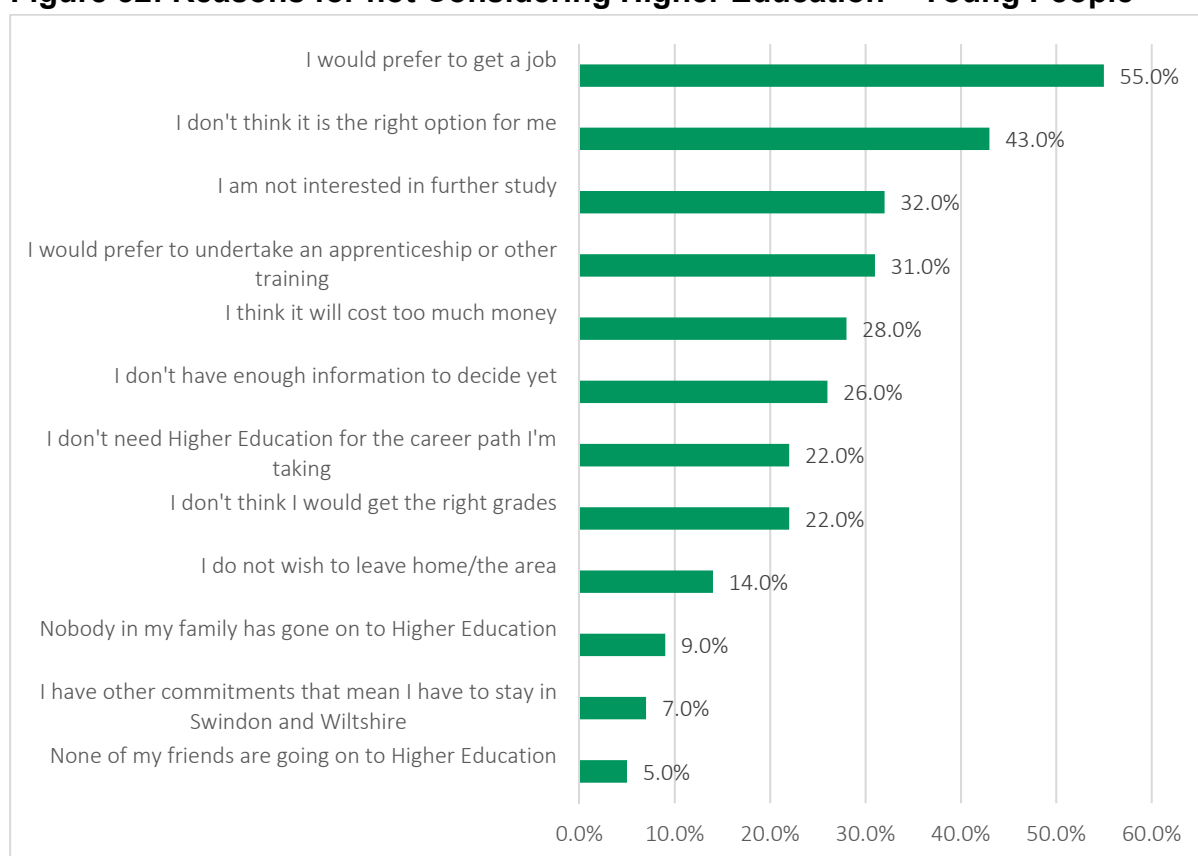
Source: SWLEP Survey of Young People, January, 2018. Base = 100 Note: Respondents could select more than one option

The analysis also explored the reasons for not considering Higher Education by different sub-groups within the population (full data can be found in Appendix C.18). However, it should be noted that this analysis has been limited to comparisons of two sub-groups where the sample size was sufficiently robust to allow further analysis. These were:

- Males/female; and,
- Those that had achieved 5 GCSEs grades A-C or not.

For young men not considering Higher Education, the top reasons given were:

- I would prefer to get a job (67.5%);
- I don't think it's the right option for me (37.5%); and,
- I am not interested in further study (35%).

The reasons for young women were broadly similar:

- I would prefer to get a job (46.2%);
- I don't think it's the right option for me (44.2%); and,
- I would prefer to undertaken an apprenticeship or other training (28.8%).

When analysed on the basis of prior achievement, the results show that young people with 5 GCSEs had a similar profile to the main sample, with the top reasons including:

- I would prefer to get a job (67.5%);
- I don't think it's the right option for me (37.5%);
- I would prefer to take an apprenticeship or other training (39.6%).

However, those who had taken GCSEs but not achieved 5 GCSEs had different reasons for not choosing Higher Education, with the top reasons being:

- I am not interested in further study (53.3%);
- I don't think it is the right option for me (53.3%);
- I would prefer to get a job (46.7%); and,
- I don't have enough information to decide yet (46.7%).

However, it should be noted that this sub-group is a very small sample of just 15 young people. It is therefore suggested that further qualitative research is conducted to better understand the reasons why Higher Education is not seen as an attractive option for particular sub-groups, particularly those where the sample size in this survey has been too small to analyse, such as people with disabilities, caring responsibilities and Special Educational Needs.

Key Findings

- Young people are motivated to study at higher level to achieve their career goals or to get a better job
- Those not going to university would prefer to get a job (55%) or explore other options including apprenticeships (31%). This indicates the need for the strategy to showcase the benefits of continued learning in the workplace and to enhance work-based learning pathways
- Other barriers include cost, lack of information and not wishing/or being unable to leave the area. This highlights a need for the strategy to address career advice and guidance as well as improving the local offer to ensure that local options are available for those less willing or able to travel for study
- Further research is required to better understand the reasons why Higher Education is not seen as an attractive option for particular sub-groups

Adults were also asked about their plans for Higher Education. Appendix D.12 shows that 46.7% of respondents to the adult survey are currently taking, considering or in the process of applying for a Higher Education course, with 23.9% indicating that they may consider it in the future and only 26.1% not currently considering. However, it should be noted that the sample included a high proportion (53.9%) of respondents who had already achieved a Level 4+ qualification. When the response to this question is broken down by people with/without Level 4 qualifications (Appendix D.13), it can be seen that a higher percentage (61.9%) of respondents without a Level 4+ qualification were either studying or planning to study. Further, when analysed by occupational group (Appendix D.14), the findings show a slightly higher percentage of respondents in a lower skilled occupation were currently taking, considering or applying for a Higher Education course (51.5%) than people in higher skilled occupations (40.0%). For those studying or planning to study, the most common higher level qualification aims were degree (26.8%), followed by a masters (24.4%) or HND (22.0%) as shown in Appendix D.15. Whilst these findings suggest a strong appetite for higher level study amongst adults, the survey was a small sample and shows signs of bias towards those who were either studying already or had already achieved high level qualifications. Therefore, care should be taken when interpreting these findings.

Key Findings

- Appetite to study higher level qualifications was highest in people without an existing higher level qualification and those from lower skilled occupational groups

For adults, the most popular reason for choosing Higher Education by far was to improve their career prospects/ambition, with 80.5% selecting this reason (see Figure 33, overleaf). Although over half indicated an interest in the subject area and

39% selected 'an intellectual challenge'. Other options also indicate a strong link with work and careers suggesting some employer involvement (to change career/reskill 22%; suggested by my employer 12.2%; to achieve promotion at work 12.2%; a requirement for my job 4.9%). Equally, many respondents were motivated to keep-up/maintain their skills (to keep up to date with my skills 22%; avoid getting left behind 14.6%). For others their motivations were around 'completing/catching up' (to complete my education 14.6%; I missed out on education when I was younger, so I want to do it now 9.8%).

The relationship between study and careers and employment is explored in more detail in Appendix D.19, which shows that 65.9% of older people were studying or planning to study with a particular career in mind. The type of career varied considerably from person to person but Nursing and Teaching related occupations featured reasonably strongly within the data. This is important from an economic development perspective as people looking to change their careers provide an opportunity to align supply with demand.

82.9% of adult respondents expected to be able to use their learning within their work (Appendix D.21). Interestingly, 36.6% of adult respondents also said that they receive, or expect to receive, support or supervision for their studies at work and a further 22.0% said that they partially did (Appendix D.22). Whilst a large percentage (43.9%) of adults was funding their studies through a student loan, 26.8% stated that their employer was funding them (see Appendix D.23).

Figure 33: Reasons for Considering or Applying for a Higher Education Course – Adults

Source: SWLEP Adult Survey, January 2018. Base = 41. Note: Respondents could select more than one option

Figure 34 shows the reasons provided by the adults for whom Higher Education did not feature in their plans. Work/family commitments featured most strongly within the data, mentioned by 41.3% of respondents and unsurprisingly, already having higher level qualifications was the second most selected response (34.8%). Aside from time and commitment, other barriers to higher level study included: cost (23.9%), can't find right course locally (15.2%) and lack of support from employer (10.9%).

Figure 34: Reasons for not Considering Higher Education – Adults
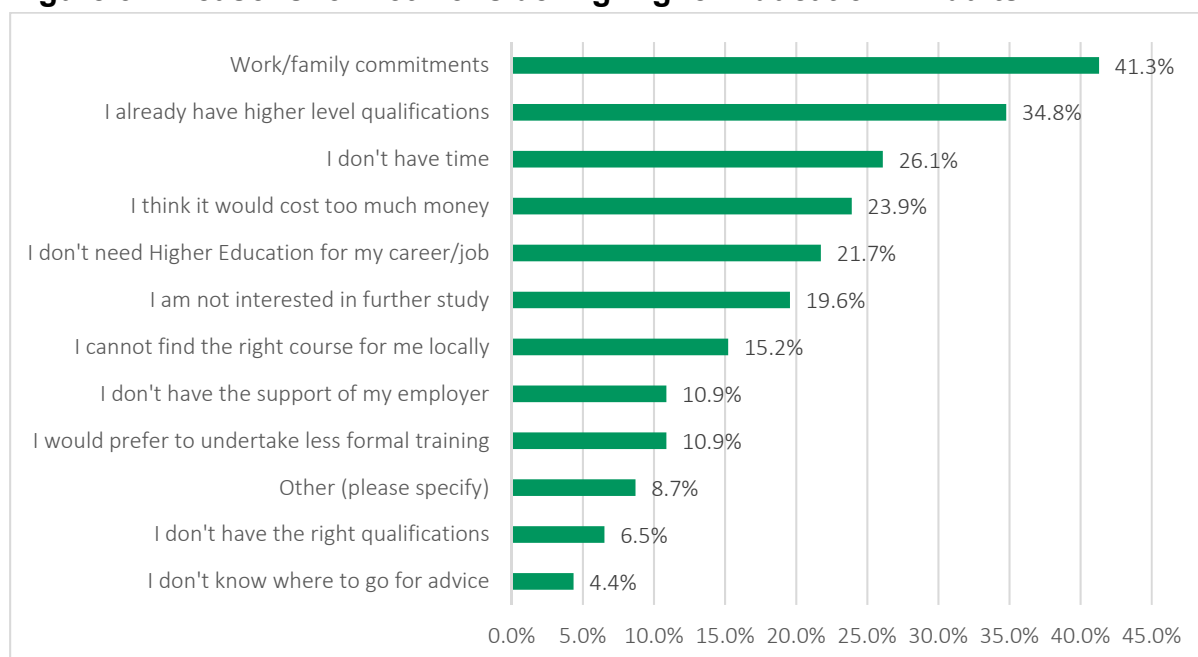
Source: SWLEP Adult Survey, January 2018. Base = 46. Note: Respondents could select more than one option

3.2.7 Apprenticeships

As highlighted in Figure 22 (earlier in this chapter) in 2015-16 an above average number of young people from Swindon took an apprenticeship route post KS5 but in Wiltshire the percentage was lower than average. Considering apprenticeships in a little more detail, it is clear from the data that that there were 8,190 'apprenticeship starts' across SWLEP in 2016/17 which was a decrease from 2015/16 in line with the national trend following apprenticeship reforms. Figure 35 below breaks this down by level and age band. In both areas the decrease was seen at intermediate levels, with a slight growth at advanced and higher levels. Interestingly, when broken down by age, there was a slight decrease in starts among the under 19s, but more significant decreases seen in the older age groups in both areas. It has been noted that the colleges have plans to increase the breadth and depth of their apprenticeships but that poor attainment in English and Maths at age 16 affects the ability of young people to progress to higher levels.[22]

Appendix C.13 shows that 5.4% of young people are considering doing an apprenticeship after completing their current course, with a slightly higher proportion in Swindon than Wiltshire. However, of those not considering Higher Education (see Figure 32, previously), 31% indicated that they would prefer to undertake an apprenticeship or other training, suggesting that apprenticeships are an important alternative route for some people.

Figure 35: Apprenticeship Starts by Level and Age Band

	Swindon			Wiltshire		
	Breakdown by Level					
	Intermediate	Advanced	Higher	Intermediate	Advanced	Higher
2013/14	1,050	500	10	3,090	1,340	40
2014/15	1,060	680	50	3,240	2,050	100
2015/16	1,120	760	70	3,170	3,170	140
2016/17 (provisional)	890	800	130	2,940	3,170	260
	Breakdown by Age Bands					
	Under 19	19-24	25+	Under 19	19-24	25+
2013/14	450	590	530	950	1,880	1,640
2014/15	450	580	760	990	1,990	2,410
2015/16	540	550	860	1,290	2,450	2,730
2016/17 (provisional)	530	470	820	1,270	2,380	2,810

Source: Department for Education Apprenticeships Data Tool, 2017

The surveys with young people and adult learners that were undertaken for the present study specifically asked about degree apprenticeships. As detailed in Appendix C.29, 65.7% of young people had heard of them prior to taking the survey and 27.7% would consider a degree apprenticeship route. The adult survey results

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[22] Swindon and Wiltshire Needs Analysis for the Post 16 Area Review, August 2016

showed that 56.3% of respondents had heard of them and 32.2% would consider a degree apprenticeship route (Appendix D.33). There was more interest in this option from adults with qualifications under Level 4 (36.8%) compared to those respondents with qualifications above Level 4 (25.5%) as shown in Appendix D.34.

A full breakdown of apprenticeship subjects studied locally is provided at Appendix A.52 but the most popular subjects across the LEP in 2015/16 were Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies, followed by Retail and Commercial Enterprise. Previous local research[23] has noted in that there is a good fit between key employment growth sectors and the subjects of apprenticeship starts.

<table>
<tr><td>Key Findings</td></tr>
<tr><td>

- Take-up of apprenticeship varies across the area, but there is evidence that apprenticeships are an important route for young people not considering traditional routes to Higher Education. Given that the area does not currently have large numbers of young people going into apprenticeships at either KS4 or 5 (or higher) this is a potential area for growth and development
- There is some awareness of degree apprenticeships amongst both young people and adults, and it is important for the strategy to increase the awareness of degree apprenticeships as an alternative route to achieve a higher level qualification
- Adults were more likely to consider degree apprenticeships, with almost a third indicating that this is something they would consider
- English and Maths skills may be a barrier to take-up of higher level/degree apprenticeships

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SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FROM CHAPTER 3

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[23] Swindon and Wiltshire Needs Analysis for the Post 16 Area Review, August 2016

- Attainment is one of the key indicators of pupil progression to Higher Education. Pupil attainment levels at KS4 and 5 are above average in Wiltshire but below average in Swindon on most indicators.
- Despite this, participation in Higher Education is comparatively low across the patch. It is particularly low in Swindon and also for a number of 'groups' of young people including those with caring responsibilities; those who live in care; those with a disability; and, those who have an Education, Health and Care Plan or Statement of Educational Need.
- When attainment levels are accounted for the position worsens which means that there are other factors at play. Evidence from this research shows that there appears to be a strong attraction for employment (including apprenticeships) as opposed to academic options amongst some young people.
- Given that the area does not currently have large numbers of young people going into apprenticeships at either KS4 or 5 higher level apprenticeship routes are a potential area for growth and development.
- There is also a need for the strategy to showcase the benefits of continued learning in the workplace and to enhance work-based learning pathways.
- Other barriers to Higher Education include cost, lack of information and not wishing/or being unable to leave the area.
- This highlights a need for the strategy to address career advice and guidance and ensure that financial implications are understood, as well as improving the local offer to ensure that local options are available for those less willing or able to travel for study.
- Lack of support from their employer is an additional barrier highlighted by adult survey respondents which could be addressed by the Higher Education Strategy through actions to promote employer involvement in in higher level skills provision within the workforce.

Chapter 4: Learners from SWLEP: Patterns of Engagement with Higher Education and Employment

4.1 Introduction

This chapter considers the demographic profile of the young people from SWLEP that progress to Higher Education including student choices, qualifications and destinations. Unlike Chapter 2 which focused purely on provision and study patterns for learners within, or close to, the LEP this chapter profiles SWLEP's domiciled[24] learners, wherever they study. It also provides a more granular geographic analysis, distinguishing between Swindon and Wiltshire's learners and breaks the data down by Parliamentary Constituency (PCON) where appropriate. Data has principally been sourced from HESA through a bespoke analysis. Where possible, comparisons with national HESA data have been made through the Higher Education Student Statistics, 2016/17 (SFR). The chapter goes on to explore patterns of employment of SWLEP domiciled students as well as graduates employed in the area who were domiciled elsewhere.

4.2 National Trends

Nationally, the total number of students at UK universities in 2015–16 remained broadly the same as it was in 2006–07, at around 2.3 million, though there was a shift in the nature of the student body[25]. This period saw a growth in the number of younger students, female students and students from a non-UK domicile. This period also saw full-time, first degree and postgraduate taught courses making up a larger proportion of provision compared to 2006–07. The data clearly shows that demand for non-degree, part-time study from mature students continued to decline.

Against this backdrop, the next sections of this chapter draw on the bespoke data provided by HESA and the results from the learner surveys to understand more about SWLEP's students and graduates.

4.3 Student Numbers and Characteristics

The HESA data show that in the academic year 2015-16 there were 18,240 Higher Education learners who were originally domiciled in the SWLEP area. This had dropped very slightly (-0.2%) from 18,285 in the academic year 2013-14, compared to a national drop of -0.8%. Figure 36 shows that the percentage from Swindon increased over that timeframe, particularly from North Swindon whereas the

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[24] Students from Swindon or Wiltshire
[25] Patterns and Trends in UK Higher Education, Universities UK, July 2017

percentage from Wiltshire decreased, with the most significant changes being in Chippenham and South West Wiltshire.

Figure 36: SWLEP Student Population 2013-14 and 2015-16

Domicile	2013-14	%	2015-16	%	% Change
North Swindon	2,075	11.4%	2,205	12.1%	6.3%
South Swindon	2,505	13.7%	2,565	14.1%	2.4%
Total Swindon	4,580	25.0%	4,765	26.1%	4.0%
Chippenham	2,915	15.9%	2,765	15.2%	-5.1%
Devizes	2,670	14.6%	2,705	14.8%	1.3%
North Wiltshire	2,785	15.2%	2,710	14.9%	-2.7%
Salisbury	2,865	15.7%	2,920	16.0%	1.9%
South West Wiltshire	2,470	13.5%	2,370	13.0%	-4.0%
Total Wiltshire	13,705	75.0%	13,470	73.9%	-1.7%
Total SWLEP	18,285	100.0%	18,240	100.0%	-0.2%
UK	2,299,355	100.0%	2,280,830	100.0%	-0.8%

Source: HESA Destinations of Leavers Survey and Student Record 2016/17. Note: Figures rounded to the nearest multiple of 5

Key Findings
- There has been a small drop in the number of students from the SWLEP area between 2013-14 and 2015-16 which is consistent with national trends
- There has been a growth in the number of students from Swindon (4%), but falls from Chippenham, South West Wiltshire and North Wiltshire

Appendix B provides a detailed overview of student characteristics. In summary:

- **Age Profile** - The age profile of SWLEP's learners on entry shifted very slightly over that timeframe. In keeping with the national profile, numbers increased in the under 21 age bracket (42.9% in 2013-14 compared with 44.7% in 2015-16) and decreased in the 25+ age bracket (33.3% in 2013-14 compared with 31.7% in 2015-16). The percentage of learners in the 21-24 age bracket remained consistent over time. When compared with UK figures for 2015/16, SWLEP had a slightly higher proportion of learners under the age of 21 in 2015-16 (41% for UK compared to 44.7% for SWLEP), and a lower proportion in the 25+ age bracket (33% UK compared to 31.7% for SWLEP).[26] There were also some differences across the LEP geography. Swindon has a greater proportion of older learners than Wiltshire (35.5% and 31.7% respectively), particularly North Swindon, where 38% of all learners were 25 years or older. Conversely, Wiltshire has a higher proportion of younger learners than Swindon (46.4% and 39.9% respectively).
- **Gender Profile** – The gender profile of SWLEP's learners remained fairly consistent over time with a 43.5% to 56.5% male/female split in 2015-16.

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[26] Higher Education Student Statistics: UK 2016/17 Student Numbers and Characteristics. Data

This is comparable with the national split of 43% to 57%. Swindon had a higher proportion of females (58.9%) than Wiltshire (55.6%). The PCON with the highest proportion of female domiciled students was North Swindon. The PCON with the smallest gap between males and females was Devizes at 47.2% and 52.8% respectively.

- **Socio-economic Background** – The socio-economic profile of SWLEP's learners did not change a great deal between 2013-14 and 2015-16 with the highest percentages across the LEP (that are known and have been classified) found within the Managerial and Professional occupations. Figure 37 below shows the predominance of Managerial and Professional occupational backgrounds was much more pronounced in students from Wiltshire. Swindon, on the other hand had proportionally more learners from Routine and Semi-routine occupational backgrounds.

Figure 37: Socio-Economic Classification by SWLEP, Swindon and Wiltshire, 2015-16
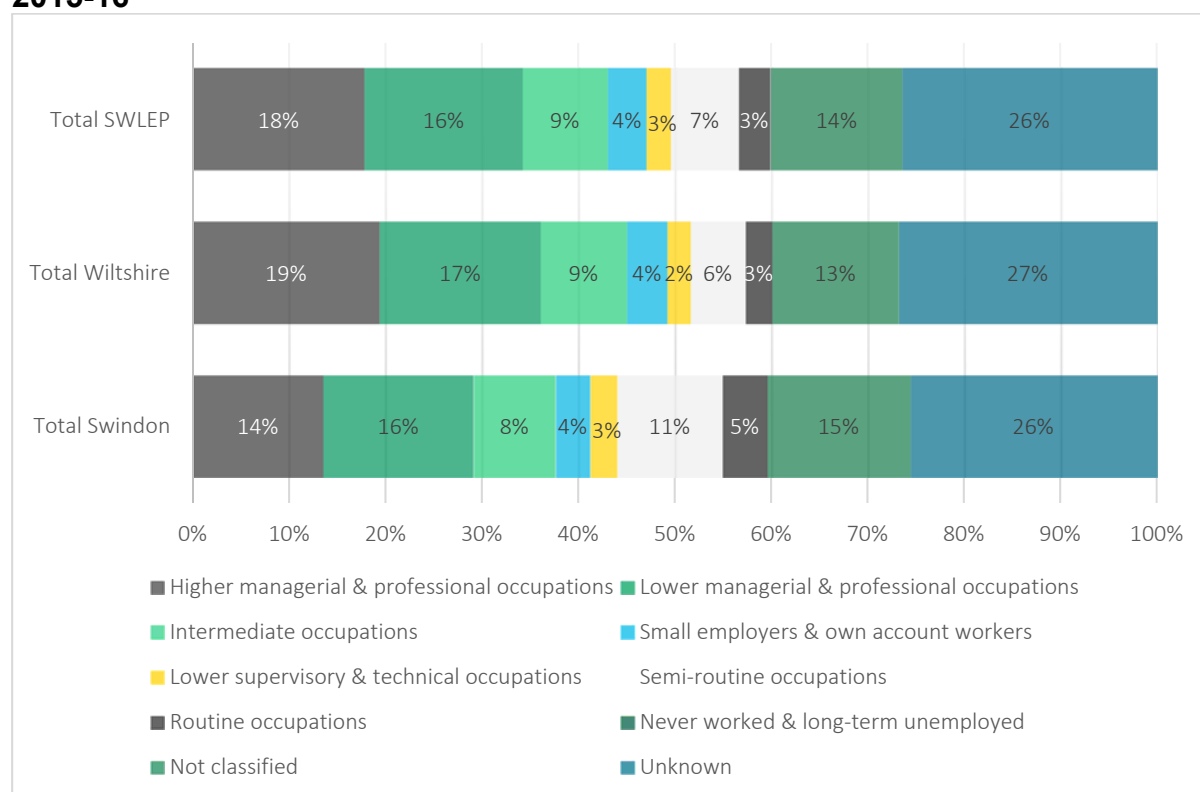
Source: HESA Destinations of Leavers Survey and Student Record 2016/17. Note: Rounded base = 18,240

This is consistent with the sectoral and occupational profiles of the two areas. When compared with UK figures, there is a much higher proportion of people from an 'unknown' classification which distorts the comparison, meaning that it is not possible to make comparisons with the national data.

- **Highest Qualification on Entry** – As would be expected, for around two-thirds of learners the highest qualification on entry was a Level 3 qualification and this figure increased very slightly from 66.7% in 2013-14 to 68.4% in

2015-16. There were also marginally more entrants with a first degree and/or a postgraduate qualification in 2015-16 and marginally fewer entrants with no qualifications. Geographically, Wiltshire showed a higher proportion of learners entering with a degree or postgraduate qualification than Swindon. Swindon on the other hand saw a slightly higher percentage of learners entering with a Level 2 qualification. Unsurprisingly, the majority of those students that entered with a degree or postgraduate qualification were enrolling on a postgraduate course.

Key Findings

- The profile of learners from SWLEP overall is similar to the national picture but there are geographical differences within the area

4.4   Student Choices

4.4.1   Course Aim/Level of Study

Figure 38 shows that three-quarters of the Higher Education learners from SWLEP were studying for a first degree in 2015-16, which is very slightly higher than in 2013-14 and is higher than the UK average. The percentage of postgraduate learners also increased marginally over that period of time, although the proportion of learners within this group is lower than the UK average. By contrast the percentage studying for a foundation degree decreased, but is still slightly higher than the UK average. This is interesting to note, as Chapter 2 highlights that there is limited foundation degree provision within the SWLEP area. Further analysis confirms that only 25% of these learners are studying with a provider within the area. The profile is consistent with national trends. A more granular profile of the area is provided at Appendix B.12, showing that Swindon (and North Swindon in particular) has a higher proportion of foundation degree students than Wiltshire. Wiltshire (and Salisbury in particular) on the other hand, has a higher proportion of postgraduate students.

Figure 38: Course Aim, 2013-14 and 2015-16, SWLEP Domiciled Students

	SWLEP	UK

| | 2013-14 | | 2015-16 | | UK |
Course Aim	Count	%	Count	%	%
Postgraduate	2,950	16.1%	3,045	16.7%	23%
First degree	13,660	74.7%	13,750	75.4%	69%
Foundation degree	670	3.7%	490	2.7%	2%
Higher National Certificate (HNC)	20	..	35	0.2%	1%
Higher National Diploma (HND)	40	0.2%	20	..	0%
Other undergraduate	955	5.2%	900	4.9%	6%
Total	18,285	100.0%	18,240	100.0%	100.0%

Source: HESA Destinations of Leavers Survey and Student Record 2016/17. Note: Figures rounded/supressed, as per the HESA methodology. '..' denotes supressed figures

Key Findings

- The proportion of learners studying for a foundation degree has declined slightly, whereas the proportions studying for first degrees and postgraduate qualifications has increased slightly in line with national trends, albeit from a lower starting point

4.4.2 Mode of Study

In 2015-16 72.7% of SWLEP domiciled students were studying full-time, up slightly from 70.7% in 2013-14. This is consistent with the national trend, where full-time study has risen from 74% to 76% over this timeframe. It is noteworthy that SWLEP domiciled students are more likely to study part-time.

There were also some slight geographic variations here. The percentage of Swindon students studying full-time was lower overall at 71.3% and especially low in North Swindon at 68.4%. In Wiltshire the figure was 73.2% and was highest for students in South West Wiltshire at 75.1%. More detail is provided at Appendix B.15. This is expected given the higher proportion of older learners in Swindon and the correlation between part-time study and age of learners.

Key Findings

- The number of part-time students has fallen slightly, consistent with national trends, although SWLEP has a higher proportion of students studying part-time
- Swindon has a higher proportion of part-time students

4.4.3 Subject Choices

The subject choice analysis that is presented within this section of the chapter has been drawn from HEFCE's student mobility work rather than from the bespoke HESA data request and is only available at SWLEP level. Please also note that the subject headings differ somewhat to those presented in Chapter 2 because in the following analysis, HEFCE made a choice to split out a selection of the Joint Academic Coding System (JACS) principal subject codes in order to produce a more

detailed analysis of particular areas of interest or popular subjects that would otherwise have been 'hidden'. They have also amalgamated some subjects with others, because of the small numbers involved. This data, presented in Figure 39, covers first degree students that grew up in SWLEP and graduated in the years 2010-11 to 2014-15 inclusive. Rows coloured in gold denote STEM subjects. The Figure shows that Humanities and Language Based Subjects were particularly popular, along with Creative Arts and Design and Business and Administrative Studies. In total 38% of students took a STEM[27] based subject over this timeframe. It is not possible to find a direct national comparison for this data. However, other data produced by HESA (using a slightly different breakdown of subject areas) shows 48% of UK students studying science subjects[28] in 2016-17.

Figure 39: SWLEP Domiciled Students, Subject Choices, 2010-11 to 2014-15 Inclusive

	Count	%
Humanities and Language Based Subjects	3,180	15.7%
Creative Arts and Design	2,445	12.1%
Business and Administrative Studies	2,060	10.2%
Social Studies	1,765	8.7%
Nursing and Subjects Allied to Medicine	1,760	8.7%
Education	1,080	5.3%
Engineering and Technology	1,050	5.2%
Psychology	970	4.8%
Computer Science	865	4.3%
Biological Sciences	705	3.5%
Sports Science	640	3.2%
Combined[29]	570	2.8%
Geographical Studies	560	2.8%
Media Studies	540	2.7%
Mathematical Sciences	470	2.3%
Medicine and Dentistry	360	1.8%
Architecture, Building and Planning	340	1.7%
Earth, Marine and Environmental Sciences	335	1.7%
Agriculture and Forestry	**250**	1.2%
Physics and Astronomy	230	1.1%
Pharmacology, Toxicology and Pharmacy	70	0.3%
Anatomy, Physiology and Pathology	0	0.0%
Chemistry	0	0.0%

Source: http://www.HEFCE.ac.uk/analysis/maps/mobility/mobdata/

Findings from the surveys undertaken as part of this study found that Social Sciences was the most popular subject area amongst young people, mentioned by 25.9% of respondents, followed by Biological Sciences, mentioned by 23%. For adults, Social Science was also the most popular subject mentioned by 34.2% of

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[27] As defined by HEFCE, personal communication
[28] https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students/what-study
[29] Combined is used for courses that cover a range of subjects, such as modular courses offered by the Open University

respondents, followed by Business and Admin Studies (28.9%). See Appendix C.22 and D.37 respectively for full details.

The young people were also asked whether, if more STEM courses were available locally and involved local employers, it was something they would be interested in. The largest proportion of respondents (50.6%) said they would not be, as shown in Appendix C.26; however, 30.8% said 'yes' and 18.6% said they did not know. A follow up question (Figure 40 below) identified that 38% of the young respondents would like to work in Science, Technology, Engineering or Maths, 50.3% are interested in STEM and 68.8% like the idea of courses that involve local employers. Appendix C.28 shows that the proportion agreeing with all of these statements is higher in Wiltshire than Swindon.

Figure 40: Agreement with Statements Relating to STEM Courses
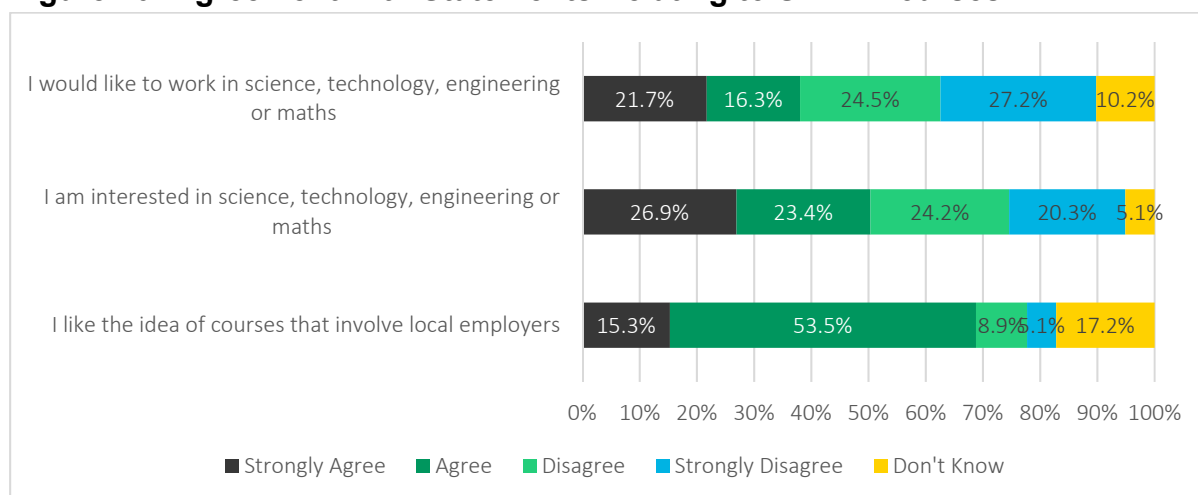
Source: SWLEP Survey of Young People, January, 2018. Base = 820

Key Findings
• Secondary data shows that Humanities and Language Based subjects along with Creative Art and Design and Business and Administrative Studies are popular with students from SWLEP • 38% of students from SWLEP studied STEM subjects. It is not possible to produce a direct comparison, but for context, HESA data suggests that 48% of students nationally study 'science subjects' • Surveys found that Social Sciences and Biological Sciences were most popular amongst young people. For adults, Social Sciences and Business and Administration were the most popular • Almost a third of young people were interested in taking a STEM subject and more would like to work in STEM

4.4.4   Awareness and Interest in Local Courses

A relatively high proportion of young people (61.9%) were aware that the local colleges offer Higher Education courses and an even higher proportion of the adult

respondents (81.4%) were aware - especially respondents from Swindon (See Appendix D.29).

When asked whether they would consider studying the following types of higher level courses at a local college, 20.9% of young people said that they would be interested in studying for a degree locally as shown in Figure 41 below, and to a lesser extent a range of other qualifications. Adults on the other hand were much more likely to consider professional qualifications (55.6%) and higher level vocational qualifications (44.2%).

Figure 41: Interest in Courses with Local Providers

	Young People		Adults	
	%	Count	%	Count
Foundation degree	15.1%	119	43.4%	33
HNC/HND	4.9%	38	37.3%	28
Degree	20.9%	116	43.6%	34
Post-graduate qualifications	14.2%	111	41.0%	32
Professional qualifications	16.9%	132	55.6%	45
Higher level vocational qualifications	13.8%	107	44.2%	34

Source: SWLEP Survey of Young People, January, 2018. Base = Variable

Key Findings

- Adults were more likely to be aware of the higher level courses available in local colleges
- Young people were more interested in studying for a degree at the local colleges, whereas adults were more interested in professional and higher level vocational qualifications

4.4.5 Institutional Choices

According to the HESA bespoke data request, the top 10 Higher Education providers for students from SWLEP remained fairly consistent between 2013-14 and 2015-16 as illustrated in Figure 42 below. The Open University had the largest share in both years, although the percentage did decrease over time whereas the University of the West of England's share increased. It is interesting to note that with the exception of The Open University (which is a distance learning provider) and Plymouth University, the remaining eight institutions all lie within commuting distance of parts of the SWLEP area (see Figure 8 in Chapter 2).

Figure 42: Top 10 Institutions by Share of SWLEP Students, 2013-14 and 2015-16

Institution	2013-14		Institution	2015-16	
	Count	%		Count	%
The Open University	2,215	12.1%	The Open University	1,825	10.0%
University of the West of England	1,430	7.8%	University of the West of England	1,535	8.4%
Oxford Brookes University	930	5.1%	Oxford Brookes University	920	5.0%
Bath Spa University	760	4.2%	Bath Spa University	660	3.6%
Bournemouth University	580	3.2%	University of Plymouth	575	3.2%
University of Plymouth	580	3.2%	Bournemouth University	570	3.1%
Cardiff University	535	2.9%	The University of Southampton	550	3.0%
The University of Southampton	515	2.8%	Cardiff University	550	3.0%
University of Gloucestershire	465	2.5%	University of Gloucestershire	500	2.7%
The University of Bath	420	2.3%	The University of Bristol	435	2.4%
Other institutions	9,855	53.8%	Other institutions	10,120	55.5%

Source: HESA Destinations of Leavers Survey and Student Record 2016/17. Note: Figures rounded/supressed, as per the HESA methodology

Appendix B.17 and B.18 show the breakdown of top 10 choices by PCON. The top three choices by area differ as follows:

- **For Swindon** – The most popular choice was University of the West of England followed by The Open University and, Oxford Brookes University; and,
- **For Wiltshire** – The most popular choice was The Open University, followed by University of the West of England and Bath Spa University.

At the PCON level, preferences can be seen for institutions that are within a commuting distance of the four touch-points highlighted previously.

As shown in more detail in Appendix B.19 and B.20 the top 10 choices also varied by course aim and age profile. Across SWLEP as a whole:

- **For Postgraduate Students** – The most popular choice was University of the West of England, followed by Bath Spa University and Cranfield University;
- **For First Degree Students** – The most popular choice was the Open University, followed by University of the West of England and University of Plymouth;
- **For Foundation Degree Students** – The most popular choice was Oxford Brookes University, followed by The Open University and Bath Spa University;
- **For HNC/HND Students** – The most popular choice was Teesside University (which is distance learning) followed by Southampton Solent University and University of South Wales;
- **For Students Age 25+** - The most popular choice was The Open University, followed by University of the West of England and Oxford Brookes University;

- **For Students Aged Between 19 and 24** – The most popular choice was University of the West of England, followed by the Open University and Oxford Brookes University; and,
- **For Under 21s** - The most popular choice was University of the West of England, followed by University of Plymouth and Cardiff University.

Overall, 96.5% of SWLEP's domiciled learners chose to study with a non-franchised provider in 2015-16. Just 635 learners were studying with a totally or partially franchised provider[30]. The top 10 choices for totally or partially franchised provision are shown in Figure 43. Swindon College attracted the highest number of these students at 190, followed by Wiltshire College at 75.

Figure 43: Top 10 Teaching Providers Teaching with Fully or Partially Franchised Courses by Share of Students, 2015-16

Teaching Providers	Count
Swindon College (10006463)	190
Wiltshire College (10007527)	75
Other public body in the UK	25
Basis Training (UK) Limited (10010683)	25
The University of Manchester (10007798)	20
New College Swindon (10004579)	15
Royal Air Force (10033441)	15
Other private body in the UK	15
City of Bristol College (10001467)	10
Action on Addiction (10032035)	10

Source: HESA Destinations of Leavers Survey and Student Record 2016/17. Note: Figures rounded/supressed, as per the HESA methodology.

Key Findings
- 8 of the top 10 institutions attended by students from the SWLEP area are within a commuting distance of the SWLEP and the Open University is a distance learning provider
- When examined by PCON, there is a continued preference for institutions that are within a commuting distance of the relevant touch point

Survey data found that, when choosing a Higher Education provider, 'the courses on offer' was the most important factor for both young people and adults as shown in Figure 44 below. Similarly, 'reputation and academic standing' were important to both groups as well as the 'city and town where it is located'. However, distance from home was more important to adults as well as flexible ways to study, whereas these were less important to young people. For young people the likelihood of getting a job after graduation and the cost of living were important.

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[30] Franchised provision is where a student is taught by a teaching provider, under a collaboration/franchising agreement with an HE provider

Figure 44: Factors of Importance in Choosing a Higher Education Provider (Descending Order)

Young People		Adults	
Courses offered	84%	Courses offered	68%
Reputation and academic standing	65%	Distance from home	50%
The city or town where it is located	55%	Reputation and academic standing	48%
Likelihood that I will get a job after graduation	55%	Flexible ways to study (e.g part time or distance)	48%
Cost of living (e.g. accommodation and travel)	54%	The city or town where it is located	43%
Courses have good links to employers	41%	Ability to study while living at home	40%
Social life offered	39%	Likelihood that I will get a job after graduation	25%
Distance from home	36%	Courses have good links to employers	23%
Flexible ways to study (e.g. part time or distance)	18%	Cost of living (e.g. accommodation and travel)	18%
Ability to study while living at home	12%	Social life offered	0%
They offer apprenticeships	8%	Family connection with institution	0%
Family connection with institution	2%	They offer apprenticeships	N/A

Source: SWLEP Survey of Young People, January, 2018. Base = 750; SWLEP Adult Survey, January 2018. Base = 40. Note: Respondents could select more than one option

Adults were also asked to what extent their choice of study was influenced by the courses available in Swindon and Wiltshire. As shown in Appendix D.16, 34.2% said that it was influenced a lot, 19.5% said that it was influenced a little and 46.3% said that it was not at all influenced by the availability of courses in Swindon and Wiltshire. This indicates that for approximately half of adults, supply is influencing demand.

Key Findings
- Adults and young people are both interested in the courses offered when making their choices, along with reputation and academic standing
- However, adults were more interested in the distance from home and flexible ways to study and distance than their younger counterparts

Survey respondents were asked where they would prefer to study assuming the right course was available. As shown in Figure 45, 61.8% of young people would prefer to study at a university outside of Swindon or Wiltshire. This was most pronounced for students that were currently studying in Cirencester or Wiltshire as shown in Appendix C.31. The most popular response for adults was a university in Swindon or Wiltshire (if there was one), mentioned by 27.1% of adult respondents and this was particularly pronounced for those from Swindon, where 42.1% of adults selected this option, as shown in Appendix D.36. Just 10.4% of young people stated that they would prefer to study at a university in Swindon or Wiltshire if there was one, although 12.7% of young people from Swindon and 17.6% of young people from Cirencester selected this option.

Figure 45: Where Students Would Prefer to Study, Assuming the Right Course was Available
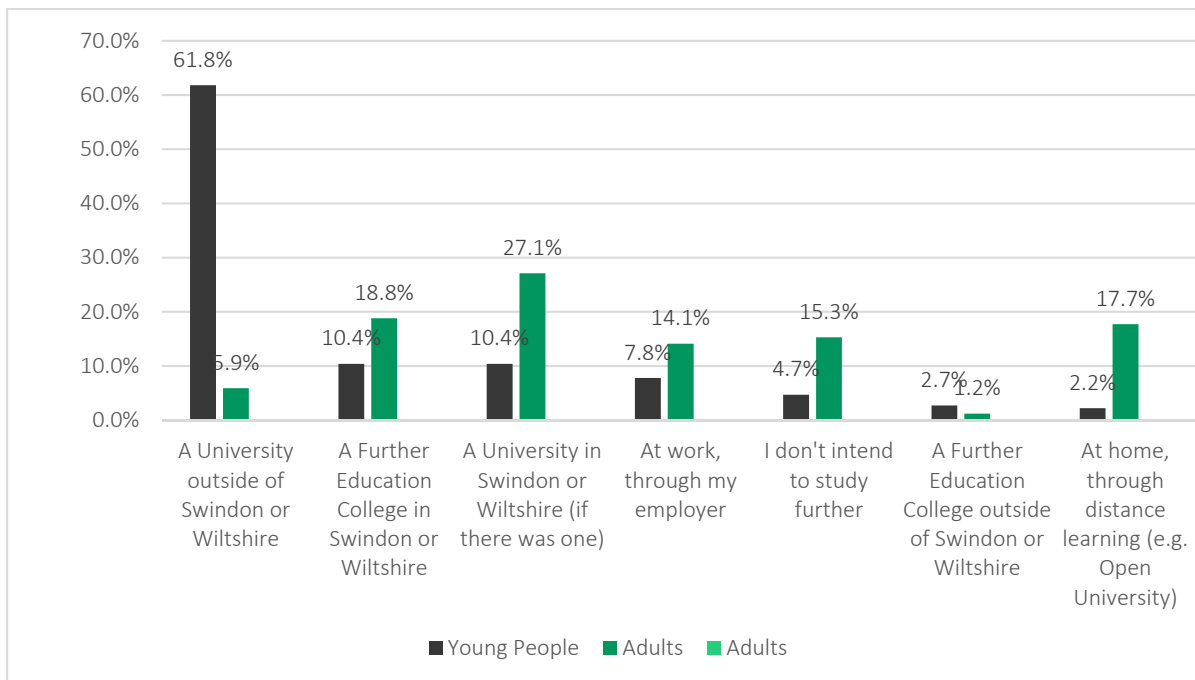
Source: SWLEP Survey of Young People, January, 2018. Base = 808. SWLEP Adult Survey, January 2018. Base = 85

Key Findings
• The majority of young people would prefer to study at a university elsewhere
• 27.1% of adults would prefer to study at a university in Swindon or Wiltshire (if there was one)
• Interest in studying at a university in Swindon or Wiltshire was stronger from adults and young people from Swindon than Wiltshire

When asked what would make local Higher Education options more attractive, the largest proportion of both young people and adult respondents identified help with the costs (53.8% and 61.9% respectively) as shown in Figure 46 and presented in more detail in Appendix C.32 and Appendix D.38. For young people the second most important factor was student accommodation. For older learners the second most important factor was having a university within the area.

Figure 46: What would make Local Higher Education Options More Attractive? (Descending Order)

Young People	%	Adults %	Count
Financial help with the costs	54%	Financial help with the costs	62%
Student accommodation	42%	A university in the area (with own campus)	49%
A university in the area (with own campus)	39%	Courses that involve local employers	45%
A wider range of higher education courses available	38%	More flexibility so I could fit study around other commitments	42%
Better transport links	31%	A wider range of higher education courses available	39%
Courses with work placements or sandwich year options	27%	Online or virtual courses	33%
More flexibility so I could fit study around other commitments	25%	Courses located near my home	32%
If I could study part-time locally, whilst also working	23%	If I could study part-time locally, whilst also working	31%
Courses that involve local employers	21%	Degree apprenticeship courses	25%
Degree apprenticeship courses	21%	Nothing would make local courses more attractive	25%
Nothing would make local courses more attractive	16%	Courses with a strong vocational element	24%
Courses located near my home	15%	Better transport links	20%
Online or virtual courses	12%	Courses with work placements or sandwich year options	17%
Courses with a strong vocational element	12%	Better access for students with disabilities/health problems	10%
Better access for students with disabilities/health problems	8%	Student accommodation	8%
Better childcare or other support for students with caring obligations	3%	Better childcare or other support for students with caring obligations	5%

Source: SWLEP Survey of Young People, January, 2018. Base = 785 SWLEP Adult Survey, January 2018. Base = 84. Note: Respondents could select more than one option

Key Findings

- For both adults and young people, important factors that could make local Higher Education more attractive included:
    o Financial help with the costs
    o A university in the area (with its own campus)
    o A wider range of Higher Education courses available

4.4.6 Location of Study and Term Time Location

Appendix B.24 and Figure 47 show that in 2015-16 82.9% of SWLEP's domiciled learners studied with a provider or a partner for the whole year and 13.3% were distance learners. A very small percentage were either abroad for whole or part of the year; or were on an industrial placement for whole of part of the year. Overall, the percentage of students that were with a provider or a partner for the whole year was slightly higher in Wiltshire than in Swindon; and the percentage of distance learners was slightly higher in Swindon than in Wiltshire. The data also shows that amongst learners aged 25 years and over, 35.2% study via distance learning, compared to 1.1% of those in the under 21 age bracket.

Figure 47: Location of Study, 2013-14 and 2015-16, SWLEP Students

Location of Study	2013-14		2015-16	
	Count	%	Count	%
Distance learning - UK based student	2,680	14.6%	2,435	13.3%
Distance learning - non-UK based student (funded)	15	..	10	..
On industrial (or other) placement for the year as a whole	270	1.5%	320	1.8%
On industrial (or other) placement for a proportion of the year	25	0.1%	40	0.2%
Abroad for the whole year	170	0.9%	190	1.0%
Abroad for a proportion of the year	85	0.5%	130	0.7%
At provider or a partner for the whole year	15,045	82.3%	15,120	82.9%
Total	18,285	100.0%	18,240	100.0%

Source: HESA Destinations of Leavers Survey and Student Record 2016/17. Note: Figures rounded/supressed, as per the HESA methodology. '..' denotes supressed figures

Figure 48 shows their term time location. Note, that this represents the student's address while studying, not the location of the institution in which they are studying. Well over half of the learners had a term time location outside of the SWLEP area. The percentage increased from 67% in 2013-14 to 70.4% in 2015-16.

Figure 48: Term Time Location, 2013-14 and 2015-16, SWLEP Domiciled Students (Excluding Distance Learners)
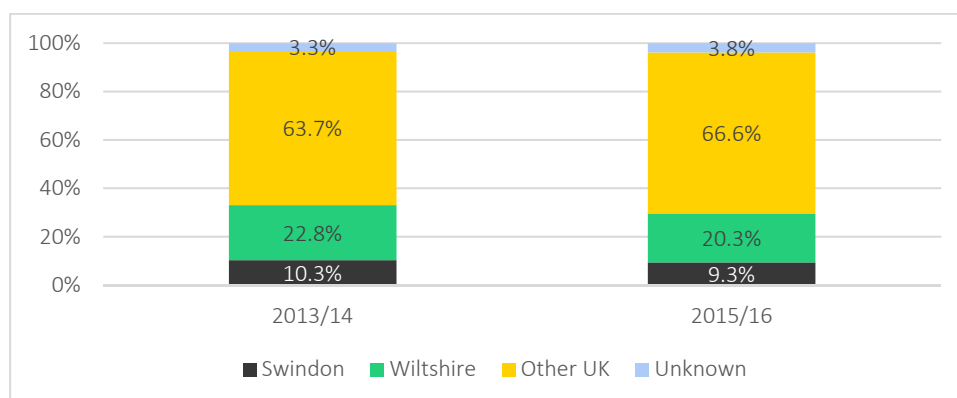
Source: HESA Destinations of Leavers Survey and Student Record 2016/17. Note: Rounded Base 2013/14 = 18,285, 15/16 = 18240

As shown in more detail in Appendix B.25, in 2015-16 35.9% of Swindon's domiciled learners had a term time location in the SWLEP area, compared to 27.2% for learners from Wiltshire. The highest percentage of SWLEP domiciled learners with a SWLEP term time location could be found in North Swindon at 38.2% and the lowest could be found in South West Wiltshire, both at 25.4%.

The figures also vary significantly by age bracket. Whereas 75.7% of SWLEP domiciled learners in the 25+ age bracket had a term time location in SWLEP, this drops to 24.8% of learners in the 19-24 age bracket and 10.6% in the under 21 age bracket. This is consistent with the results from the adult survey which found that although 48.8% of respondents were planning to study or were currently studying on campus, 87.8% of respondents had not moved (or did not expect to move) from their home address to access Higher Education (see Appendix D.25 for further details).

The survey also sheds light on their travel patterns. As shown in Appendix D.26, the largest majority of adult respondents (32.5%) were travelling (or expected to travel) 6 - 25 miles from their term time address to participate in their course and a further 30.0% were travelling (or expecting to travel) 26 - 50 miles. Figure 49 shows the top 10 providers for SWLEP domiciled students with a term time location in either Swindon or Wiltshire in 2015-16 which also helps to provide a profile of travel to learn patterns. Excluding The Open University, the highest percentage of term time located learners from Swindon travelled to Oxford Brookes University, followed by University of the West of England. For Wiltshire's learners, it was University of the West of England followed by Bath Spa University.

Figure 49: Top 10 Institutions for SWLEP domiciled Students with a Term Time Location in Swindon or Wiltshire, 2015-16

Term Time Location - Swindon	Count	Term Time Location - Wiltshire	Count
The Open University	1,030	The Open University	2,640
Oxford Brookes University	825	University of the West of England	1,400
University of the West of England, Bristol	745	Bath Spa University	905
University of Gloucestershire	260	Bournemouth University	495
Bath Spa University	165	Oxford Brookes University	360
The University of Reading	80	The University of Bath	310
The University of Bath	60	The University of Southampton	265
The University of Bristol	55	The University of Winchester	240
The University of Wolverhampton	55	Cranfield University	165
Bournemouth University	45	The University of Bristol	160

Source: HESA Destinations of Leavers Survey and Student Record 2016/17. Note: Figures rounded/supressed, as per the HESA methodology

- 13.3% of SWLEP domiciled learners study via distance learning. Amongst older learners this proportion increases
- A large proportion of SWLEP domiciled learners continue to live in the area during term time and either study locally or commute to providers outside the area. This is highest in Swindon and for learners that are 25 or older (75.7%)
- The proportion is much lower amongst younger learners at just 10.6% which is consistent with both the adult and young people survey findings
- 62.5% of adult learners indicated that they travel up to 50 miles to participate in their course

4.5   Student Progression, Qualifications and Destinations

4.5.1 Continuation Status

Data available for 2013-14 only shows the continuation status[31] of first year first degree students from SWLEP. As seen in Figure 50, 82.1% of SWLEP's students continued with a Higher Education provider at the end of their first year and 5.6% left with no award. The percentage of Swindon's students that left with no award was very slightly higher (5.7%) than Wiltshire's (5.5%). There were also some differences by qualification level. The continuation status was highest for those students that were studying for a first degree at 82.1%, followed by those studying for a foundation degree at 77%. Just over a third (36.1%) of students that were studying for a postgraduate qualification continued with a Higher Education provider at the end of their first year. This is shown in more detail at Appendix B.34.

Appendix B.35 also provides more detail on their reasons for ending but in summary, for those that left with no award the primary cause was 'personal reasons' (44%) followed by 'academic failure/left in bad standing/not permitted to progress' (15.7%).

Figure 50: Continuation Status of First Year, First Degree Students, 2013-14

Continuation Status	Swindon		Wiltshire		SWLEP	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Continuing at HE provider	730	79.7%	2,090	83.0%	2,820	82.1%
Gained intended award or higher	55	6.2%	120	4.7%	175	5.1%
Gained other award	10	..	35	1.3%	45	1.3%
Left with no award	50	5.7%	140	5.5%	190	5.6%
Dormant or writing-up	65	7.3%	140	5.5%	205	6.0%
Total	920	100.0%	2,520	100.0%	3,435	100.0%

Source: HESA Destinations of Leavers Survey and Student Record 2016/17. Note: Figures rounded/supressed, as per the HESA methodology. '..' denotes supressed figures

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[31] Continuation status is a measure of potential outcomes associated with students at the end of year 1.

4.5.2 Qualifications Awarded

In 2015-16 70.2% of SWLEP domiciled students were awarded a first degree, 14.1% were awarded a postgraduate qualification, 11.6% were awarded an 'other undergraduate' qualification[32] and 3.8% were awarded a foundation degree. The classification of first degrees across SWLEP shows an increase from 77.6% that qualified with First Class Honours or upper second class honours in 2013-14 to 80.5% that did so in 2015-16 as shown in Figure 51. This compares well to the UK average in 2015-16, where just 73.2% of first degrees were awarded on this basis.

The percentage of students that qualified with First Class Honours or Upper Second Class in 2015-16 was slightly higher in Wiltshire (81.5%) than Swindon (77.5%). Devizes had the highest percentage at 85.0% and South West Wiltshire had the lowest at 76.8% (see Appendix B.37).

Figure 51: Classification of First Degree, 2015-16, SWLEP Students

Classification of First Degree	2013-14		2015-16		UK 2015-16
	Count	%	Count	%	%
First Class Honours	790	22.5%	780	25.3%	23.6%
Upper Second Class Honours	1,940	55.1%	1,700	55.2%	49.6%
Lower Second Class Honours	675	19.2%	525	17.0%	21.7%
Third Class Honours/Pass	115	3.3%	75	2.5%	5.1%
Total	3,655	100.0%	3,200	100.0%	100.0%

Source: HESA Destinations of Leavers Survey and Student Record 2016/17. Note: Figures rounded/supressed, as per the HESA methodology

5.3.3 Employment Status and Destinations

The final Figures in this chapter of the report relate to employment status and destinations of SWLEP's graduates. The survey of young people asked respondents to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with a series of statements about where they hoped to live and work following graduation. The percentage that agreed or strongly agreed with each statement is shown in Figure 52 and further

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[32] For definitions see https://www.hesa.ac.uk/support/definitions/students#level-study-qualification-obtained

detail is provided at Appendix C.33. It shows that the majority of the young people surveyed would like to leave the area after they have completed their studies, and whilst some agreed that they needed to leave to secure a good job, the proportion agreeing with this statement was lower than the proportion that would like to leave.

The extent to which living in Swindon or Wiltshire had influenced their career choices was also explored. The findings show that 29.8% of young people agreed or strongly agreed that where they lived had influenced the career choices they had made so far; and 32.9% agreed or strongly agreed that where they lived limited the career choices they had made so far (see Appendix C.35). These figures did not vary significantly by geography.

Figure 52: Agreement with Statements about Aspirations Following Graduation
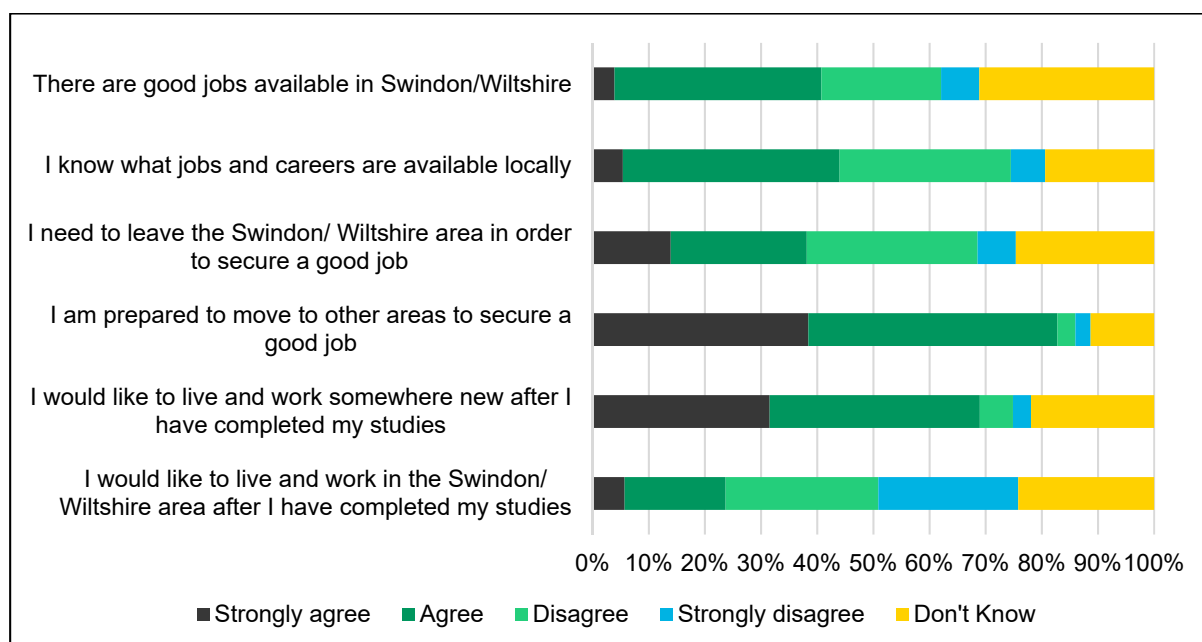
Source: SWLEP Survey of Young People, January, 2018. Base = various

Key Findings
- The majority of young people expressed a desire to leave the area after they have completed their studies
- Whilst this is partially accounted for by a need to leave the area to secure a good job, it is not wholly accounted for by this factor
- Nearly a third of young people agreed that where they live had influenced their career choices so far and a slightly higher percentage believe that where they live has limited their choices. There is no significant difference in response by geography

Data from HESA shows the actual patterns of employment and location. As can be seen from Figure 53, the percentage of graduates that went into employment (anywhere) following their course reduced slightly between 2013-14 and 2015-16;

and more graduates embarked on (primarily full-time) study in 2015-16. However, the results compare favourably with national averages. A recent report by the CIPD[33] which also drew on HESA's 2015-16 data to consider graduate outcomes found that 5% of recent graduates failed to find a job within six months of graduation.

Figure 53: Employment Status of SWLEP Domiciled Graduates, 2013-14 and 2015-16

	2013-14		2015-16	
Activity	Count	%	Count	%
Full-time work	2,540	61.2%	2,235	60.1%
Full-time study	400	9.7%	505	13.6%
Part-time work	505	12.1%	435	11.7%
Other	225	5.5%	140	3.8%
Unemployed	145	3.5%	130	3.5%
Primarily studying and also in work	105	2.6%	105	2.8%
Primarily in work and also studying	140	3.4%	100	2.7%
Part-time study	45	1.1%	30	0.9%
Due to start work	45	1.1%	30	0.9%
Total	4,150	100.0%	3,715	100.0%

Source: HESA Destinations of Leavers Survey and Student Record 2016/17. Note: Figures rounded/supressed, as per the HESA methodology

There were, however, some geographical variations within this picture as shown in Appendix B.43. The percentage of graduates that went into full-time employment was higher amongst graduates from Swindon than graduates from Wiltshire. At PCON level North Swindon saw the highest percentage at 62.6% and Chippenham saw the lowest at 56.5%.

Interestingly, in 2015-16 4.0% of SWLEP's graduates were employed by the employer that they had before their programme of study; 11.1% were employed by them during their period of study and 9.4% were employed by them both before and during their programme of study (see Appendix B.41). The percentage of graduates that were employed by their employer both before and during their programme of study was higher for graduates that originated in Wiltshire at 9.8% than for those that originated in Swindon at 8.2%, with the highest percentage being found for South West Wiltshire domiciled students at 11.4%.

Of the graduates that did gain employment, either with an existing or new employer, the data show that 31% of them were employed in SWLEP in 2015-16. However, this figure does mask considerable geographic variation (see Appendix B.45):

- 38.3% of Swindon domiciled students that gained employment upon graduation did so within SWLEP; and,

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[33] The Graduate Employment Gap: Expectations Versus Reality, CIPD, November 2017

- 28.7% of Wiltshire domiciled students that gained employment upon graduation did so within SWLEP.

It is not possible to compare these figures with a national average, however, Chapter 2 compares similar figures for graduate flows (see Figure 12), which demonstrate when compared to a other LEP areas that the SWLEP has:

- A significantly lower proportion of students that stay for study and employment;
- A slightly higher proportion of students that leave for study and return for employment; and,
- A significantly higher proportion of students that leave for study and do not return.

When analysed by age of qualifier (see Appendix B.46), the data shows that 39.1% of older qualifiers (25 and over) find employment in the SWLEP area, compared to 27.1% of those between 21 and 24 years old.

The matter of where students live during terms time also has a bearing on these figures. As highlighted in Chapter 2, national evidence suggests that students who stay in their home area are much more likely to remain there for work after graduation. This trend is borne out locally:

- 52.6% of Swindon domiciled students who had a term time address in Swindon and gained employment after graduation did so within SWLEP; and,
- 44.4% of Wiltshire domiciled students who had a term time address in Wiltshire and gained employment after graduation did so within SWLEP.

Both Swindon and Wiltshire do also attract graduates from elsewhere as can be seen from Figure 54. Across the LEP area 46.6% of graduates that were employed within the area originated from elsewhere in the country (and a further 1.2% from overseas). The data also shows that Wiltshire attracted a slightly higher number of non-SWLEP domiciled graduates than Swindon in 2015-16.

Figure 54: Origin (domicile) of all Graduates Employed in SWLEP Area, 2015-16

| | Employment Location | | | | | |
| | Swindon | | Wiltshire | | SWLEP | |
Domiciled (origin)	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Swindon	310	39.1%	55	3.7%	365	16.4%
Wiltshire	125	15.6%	670	47.1%	790	35.8%
SWLEP	435	54.6%	720	50.8%	1,155	52.2%
Non-UK	15	..	10	..	25	1.2%
Other UK	345	43.3%	685	48.4%	1,030	46.6%
Total	795	100.0%	1420	100.0%	2215	100.0%

Source: HESA Destinations of Leavers Survey and Student Record 2016/17: Note: Figures rounded/supressed, as per the HESA methodology. '..' denotes supressed figures

Key Findings

- Graduates originating from SWLEP are successful in finding jobs all over the UK and abroad
- Of those that gained employment, 31% did so within the SWLEP area
- Swindon domiciled students were more likely to secure employment in the LEP (38%), than their counterparts from Wiltshire (29%)
- Those with a term time address in the SWLEP area were more likely to get a job in the area
- 46.6% of all graduates employed in the SWLEP area originated from outside the area
- However, despite the addition of graduates from outside the area, the LEP still experiences a net loss of graduates

The number of graduates in SWLEP by different types of industry is shown in Figure 55. Education (20.1%), followed by Human Health and Social Work Activities (19.2%) are the industries with the highest number of graduates, although the numbers in each had reduced slightly in 2015-16. 2015-16 also saw some growth in Manufacturing (9.9%), bringing it into the top three in 2015-16.   When compared with national figures, the top three industries are 'Human Health and Social Work' (20.6%), 'Wholesale and Retail Trade; Repair of Motor Vehicles and Motorcycles' (14.2%) and 'Professional, Scientific and Technical Activities' (11.9%).

Appendix B.52 shows the relative profiles for Swindon and Wiltshire separately. Although the numbers are relatively small, Swindon saw a higher percentage of graduates employed in Financial and Insurance Activities. It also saw a higher percentage of graduates employed in Human Health and Social Work Activities. Wiltshire, on the other hand, saw a higher percentage employed in Public Admin and Defence as well as Manufacturing.

Figure 55: Number of Graduates by Industry, 2013-14 and 2015-16
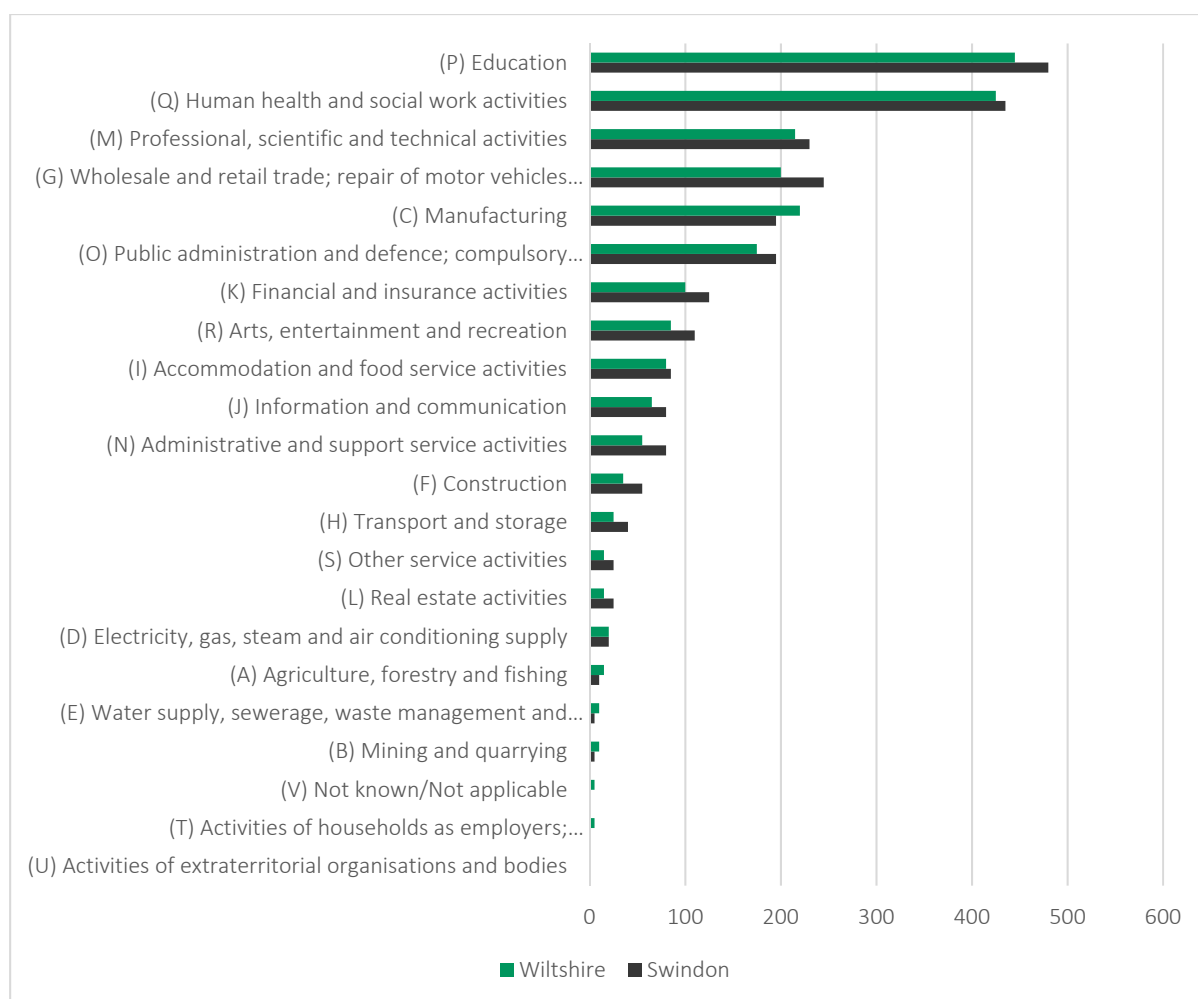
Source: HESA Destinations of Leavers Survey and Student Record 2016/17. Note: Figures rounded/supressed, as per the HESA methodology

The number of graduates by occupation is shown in Figure 56. In 2015-16, 78.6% of graduates employed in the LEP area were employed in the top three occupational groups, compared to 71.0% nationally.

In detail, the largest volume of graduates that found employment in SWLEP did so in a Professional Occupation (49%, compared to 38.7% nationally), followed by an Associate Professional and Technical Occupation (23.5% compared to 28.8% nationally), although the numbers in each group shrank slightly between 2013-14 and 2015-16. Interestingly, SWLEP did have very slightly more graduates employed as Managers, Directors and Senior Officials in 2015-16 but also had 22% in lower level occupations.

The relative profiles for Swindon and Wiltshire are shown at Appendix B.55, illustrating that Swindon had a higher percentage of graduate employment in Professional Occupations but Wiltshire had a slightly higher percentage of

Managers, Directors and Senior Officials. However, Wiltshire also had a higher percentage of graduates employed in Elementary Occupations.

Figure 56: Number of Graduates by Occupation, 2013-14 and 2015-16

Source: HESA Destinations of Leavers Survey and Student Record 2016/17. Note: Figures rounded/supressed, as per the HESA methodology
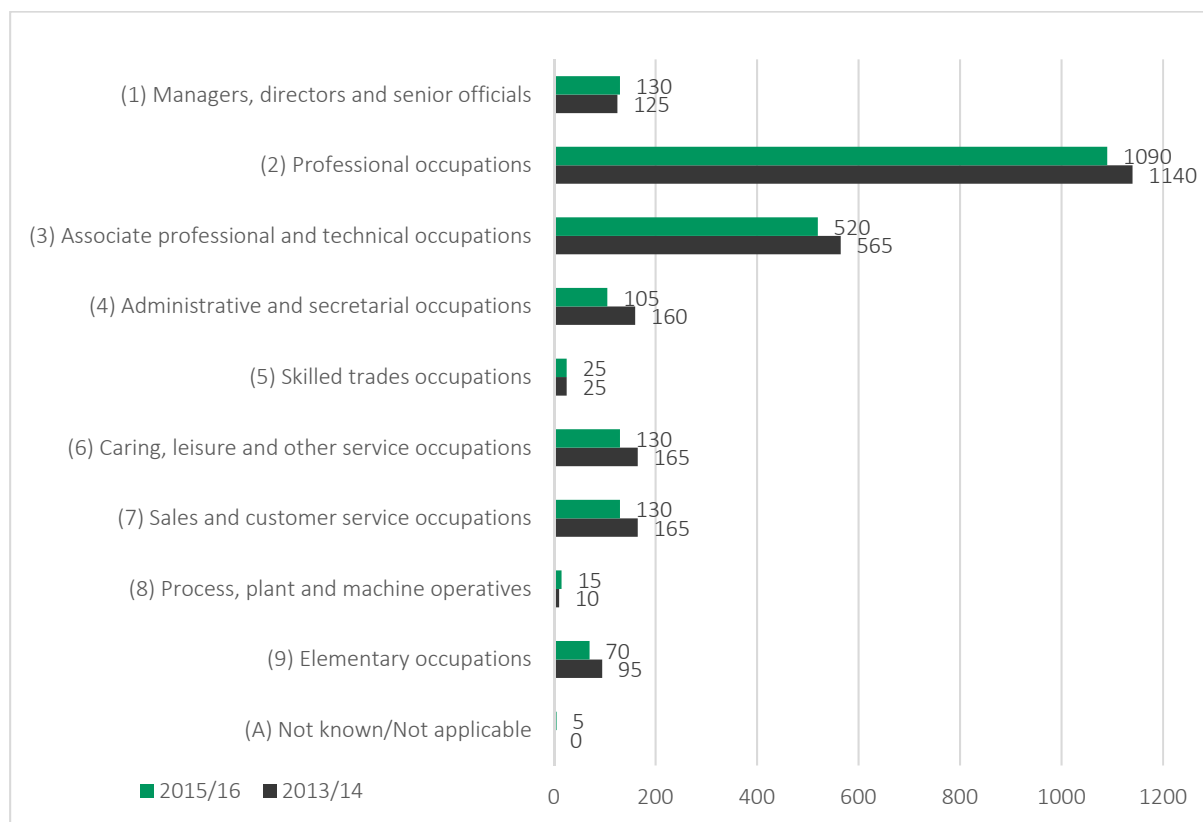
A breakdown of occupation by course aim is shown at Appendix B.56. Unsurprisingly, it shows that significant numbers of graduates that hold a first degree or postgraduate qualification gain employment in Managerial or Professional Occupations. However, significant numbers of people with a first degree, and to a lesser extent a postgraduate qualification, also gain employment in lower level occupations including Elementary Occupations, although the proportion doing so is lower than the UK average.

Key Findings
- Graduates employed in the SWLEP area were more likely to be employed in higher skilled occupations than the national average, particularly in Swindon
- Graduates within the SWLEP area were more likely to be employed within the Education sector than the national average, but less likely to be employed in Wholesale/Retail Trade

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FROM CHAPTER 4

- Whilst the number of Higher Education learners has dropped slightly in Wiltshire it has increased in Swindon over time. In line with the national student profile, this growth has been in the under 21 age bracket.
- Humanities and Language based subjects are particularly popular with SWLEP's students, along with Creative Art and Design and Business Admin. Fewer young people have been taking STEM based subjects which may present a challenge given employer demand for STEM skills in the area.
- The Strategy could look to 'nudge' more students towards STEM subjects through careers advice.
- A large proportion of adults that responded to the survey were aware that the local colleges offer Higher Education courses and there was some interest expressed in studying locally. However, the percentages were lower for young people. For adults there is a much stronger correlation between higher level study and their career.
- When asked where they would prefer to study, assuming the right course was available, the largest percentage of young respondents opted for a university outside of SWLEP but the highest percentage of adults opted for a university within SWLEP if it were available.
- The research also identified a number of factors that might encourage more students to study locally, including financial incentives.
- However, the courses that are on offer, along with the reputation of the institution are key factors in choosing where to study.
- Distance from home and the flexible ways of learning are more important for adults than their younger counterparts.
- Overall, the top three institutions of choice for SWLEP's students are the Open University, the University of the West of England and Oxford Brookes University.
- These are within commuting distance for many learners and the findings show that a large proportion of SWLEP domiciled learners continue to live in the area during term time. This is highest in Swindon and also highest for learners that are 25 years or older.
- However, the proportion of learners with a term time address in SWLEP is much lower for young people at just 11.5%.
- A large percentage of SWLEP's young people also expect to leave the area following their studies.
- HESA data show that less than a third gain employment in the SWLEP area following graduation, although the figure is higher in Swindon than in Wiltshire.
- Although the area does attract students from elsewhere there is a net loss of graduate talent which is a potential area of focus for the strategy.

Chapter 5: Employers and the Workforce

5.1 Introduction

Having considered the learner perspective in Chapter 3, this chapter of the report focuses on employers and workforce issues. It explores the available secondary data on skills levels as well as skills shortages, gaps and vacancies; and it also presents the findings from the employer survey to better understand current practices and preferences for enhancing workforce skills.

5.2 Resident and Workday Skills and Commuting Patterns

Figure 57 shows the skills levels within the adult population (aged 16-64) in the SWLEP area compared to the average for the South West and Great Britain between 2014 and 2016. In 2016 the percentage of people with a Level 4+ qualification was higher in SWLEP than the regional or local averages but that figure does mask some local variation. The percentage of people with a Level 4+ qualification was consistently higher (and grew year on year) in Wiltshire, reaching 42.1% in 2016. The percentage of residents with a Level 4+ qualification in Swindon was consistently lower over that timeframe but it did nevertheless increase between 2014 and 2016.

Figure 57: Qualification Levels Jan-Dec 2014 to Jan-Dec 2016

	Swindon			Wiltshire			SWLEP			South West			Great Britain		
	2014	2015	2016	2014	2015	2016	2014	2015	2016	2014	2015	2016	2014	2015	2016
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
NVQ4+	30.8	28.8	33.8	39.7	37.4	42.1	36.4	34.6	39.4	36.6	37.3	37.8	36.0	37.1	38.2
NVQ3+	51.1	47.5	53.4	59.4	59.4	62.6	56.6	55.5	59.6	57.4	58.5	59.4	55.0	55.8	56.9
NVQ2+	71.5	68.9	71.4	77.7	78.1	80.8	75.7	75.1	77.7	76.6	77.7	78.1	73.3	73.6	73.3
NVQ1+	87.5	86.5	87.9	90.4	89.3	91.3	89.4	88.4	90.2	89.5	89.7	89.8	85.0	84.9	85.3
Other quals	6.4	7.0	8.2	4.1	5.1	4.6	4.8	5.7	5.8	4.9	4.8	5.1	6.2	6.5	6.6
No quals	6.1	6.5	3.9	5.6	5.6	4.1	5.7	5.9	4.1	5.6	5.5	5.1	8.8	8.6	8.0

Source: NOMIS - Annual Population Survey, 2016. Note: Population aged 16-64

Appendix A.55 and A.56 provide an age and gender profile of residents with Level 4+ qualifications, showing that:

- **Age** - At 26.3% the LEP had a slightly lower percentage of residents in the 20-24 year age bracket with a Level 4+ qualification than the national average (29.2%). However, Swindon had a much higher percentage of residents in the 20-24 year age bracket with a Level 4+ qualification than Wiltshire. Wiltshire, on the other hand, had higher percentages in all other age brackets. There could be multiple reasons for these differences

including cost of living, housing, job availability etc. but the data does not inform an understanding of reasons why; and,

- **Gender** - The percentage of females with a Level 4+ qualification was higher than it was for males locally, regionally and nationally. However, the difference between the two was comparatively less marked within SWLEP than elsewhere.

At a PCON level, the data shows a far higher percentage of residents with Level 4+ qualifications in South Swindon (39.3%) than in North Swindon (29.2%) as shown in more detail at Appendix A.57. Within Wiltshire, the highest percentage was in Salisbury at 44.4% and the lowest percentage was in South West Wiltshire at 37.7%.

Key Findings

- Within the SWLEP area, the proportion of adults with Level 4 qualifications is higher than national or regional averages
- The LEP has a slightly lower proportion of 20-24 year olds with Level 4 qualifications, however levels were higher in Swindon
- There is considerable geographic variation between PCONs, the lowest of which is North Swindon at 29.2%


Using (2011) census data (the most recent data available) it is also possible to explore the difference between the skills levels within the resident population and those held by the 'workday' population across SWLEP's PCONs. Although this data is not as recent as the NVQ Levels presented above, it does nevertheless help to understand which areas may be net importers and which areas may be net exporters of higher level skills. As shown in more detail in Appendix A.58, South Swindon and Salisbury were the only two areas in which there were more people within the workday population with Level 4+ qualifications than in the resident population. All other PCONs across SWLEP lost people with Level 4 + qualifications during the working day, however the data does not tell us where they go.

In terms of travel patterns, the census data also shows that there were proportionally very high numbers of residents in South Swindon that travelled less than 5 km for work and proportionally high numbers from North Swindon that travelled less than 10 km for work. North Wiltshire was the only PCON across the area in which the highest proportion of residents travelled between 10km and 20km for work; and Devizes had a significant proportion of residents that worked mainly at or from home (see Appendix A.59). Overall, a higher proportion of people from Swindon travelled less than 20km to work than in Wiltshire and whilst residents from Wiltshire were more likely to travel greater than 20km than their counterparts in Swindon, they were also much more likely to work from home. Both travelling further distances and home working are also closely associated with rurality.

'Travel to Work Areas' (TTWAs)[34] are a statistical tool used by Government and other agencies to indicate an area where the population would generally commute to a larger town, city or conurbation for the purposes of employment. They have been developed by ONS to approximate self-contained labour market areas. They represent the areas where most people both live and work and therefore relatively few commuters cross a TTWA boundary on their way to work. As such they are based on statistical analysis rather than administrative boundaries and therefore illustrate 'functional economic geographies'. Figure 58 below shows the TTWAs across the SWLEP area and the wider geography. This shows that there are three main TTWAs across the LEP area:

- **Swindon** - Which extends to the North to include Cirencester and to the South to include Calne and Marlborough;
- **Trowbridge** - Which extends to Chippenham and Devizes in the North, Frome (Somerset) and Bradford on Avon in the East and Warminster to the South; and,
- **Salisbury** – Which extends north of the A303 to Upavon in the north to Amesbury in the West, Fordingbridge (Hants) in the South and East Knoyle in the West.
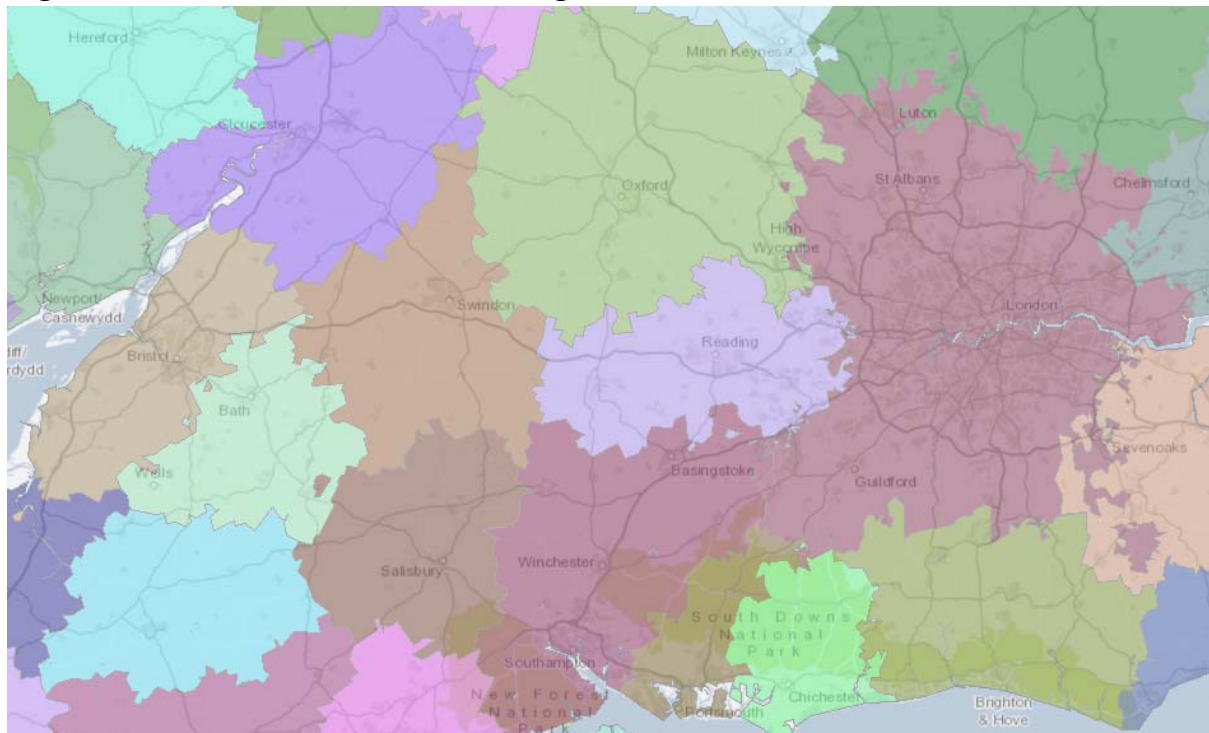
Figure 58: Travel to Work Areas
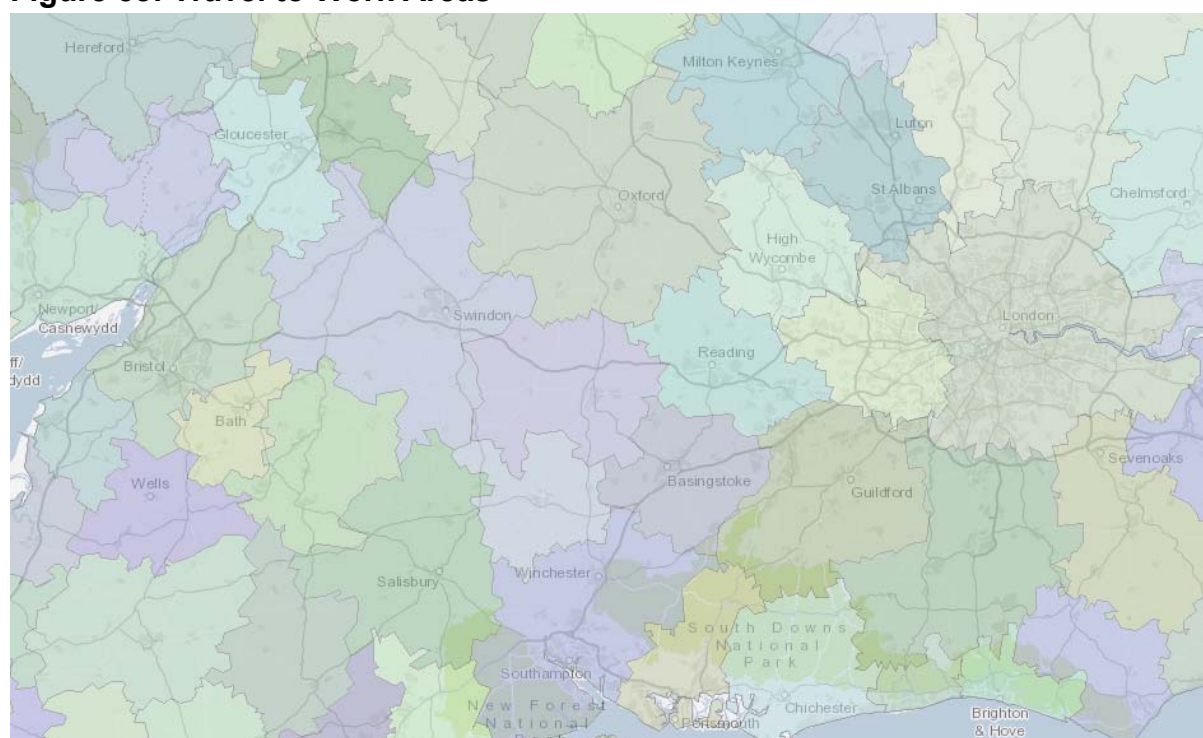
Source: ONS, Travel to Work Areas. Note: The colours indicate unique TTWA areas

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[34] A Travel to Work Area is a collection of wards for which "of the resident economically active population, at least 75% actually work in the area, and also, that of everyone working in the area, at least 75% actually live in the area"

However, the TTWA modelling process has developed alternative TTWAs exploring factors such as age, travel to work method and qualification. Of particular interest for this study is the TTWAs developed for higher level skilled workers[35]. Across the UK, the TTWAs for higher skilled workers are generally larger, reflecting the fact that people with higher level skills are generally prepared to travel further for work. Figure 59 shows that the TTWA's across Swindon and Wiltshire expand in size when plotted for higher skills levels.

Figure 59: Travel to work Areas – High Skilled Workers

Source: ONS, Travel to Work Areas. The colours indicate unique TTWA areas.

Key Findings
- Within the SWLEP area, South Swindon and Salisbury were the only two PCONs to experience a net increase in higher skilled workers during the day, consistent with the TTWA analysis   - Residents of Swindon travel shorter distances to work than their counterparts in Wiltshire   - Rates of home working were also higher in Wiltshire than Swindon, which is to be expected given its rural nature   - There are three principle TTWAs (Swindon, Trowbridge and Salisbury), but when TTWAs are calculated for higher skilled workers, they become larger in size, reflecting the fact that higher skilled workers are more likely to travel further to work

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[35] Based on Census 2011 data. High qualifications include level 4 qualifications or above

5.3   Migration of Skilled Workers from Elsewhere

Census data (see Appendix A.62) shows the LEP area as a whole is a net attractor of people from higher level occupation groups to live in the area. In the year preceding the Census, after accounting for people who have left the area, it received a 'net in-migration' of people from all occupational groups (except students), with high levels of in-migration from higher level occupation groups. There were some differences between Swindon and Wiltshire, with Swindon attracting a high proportion of people from 'Semi-routine Occupations' and Wiltshire attracting a high proportion of people from 'Small Employers and own Account Workers', reflecting the importance of self-employment in rural areas. However, this does not align with the findings from the previous chapter, which showed that Swindon attracted a higher proportion of newly qualified graduates.

5.4   Skills Vacancies, Shortages and Recruitment Challenges

Moving on to the workforce specifically, Figures 60 and 61 present data from the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES) Employment and Skills Survey, focusing on vacancies and skills shortages in both 2013 and 2015[36]. Swindon had a higher proportion of establishments with any vacancies than Wiltshire and has shown the largest rise over the timeframe. Overall in 2015, there were 9,729 vacancies of which 2,877 were skills shortage vacancies. Across the area, 30% of all vacancies were skills shortage vacancies, a significant increase since 2013 when it stood at 13% and higher than the national average of 23%. In 2015, Swindon and Wiltshire had comparable skills shortage vacancy rates, reflecting a significant increase in skills shortage vacancies within Swindon between 2013 and 2015. When combined with survey data that is presented later in this chapter, it confirms that employers are finding it increasingly difficult to find suitably qualified staff. However, as also illustrated in the data, skills shortages are a national problem.

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[36] This is national survey which sampled 1,002 businesses in the LEP in 2013 and 1,016 in 2015. This shows that 17% of establishments had vacancies in 2015 - an increase of 4% since 2013. Given the sample size, the findings should be treated as robust

Figure 60: Vacancies and Skill Shortages, 2013 and 2015

	Swindon		Wiltshire		SWLEP		South West		England	
	2013	2015	2013	2015	2013	2015	2013	2015	2013	2015
% of establishments with any vacancies	14%	20%	14%	16%	14%	17%	14%	18%	15%	20%
% which have at least one vacancy that is hard to fill	4%	7%	5%	9%	5%	8%	5%	8%	5%	8%
% which have a skills shortage vacancy	4%	4%	4%	6%	4%	5%	4%	5%	4%	6%
Number of vacancies	2,546	4,092	5,495	5,637	8,041	9,729	60,765	70,484	55,9620	797,440
Number of skill-shortage vacancies	210	1,250	842	1,626	1,052	2,877	10,355	17,006	123,768	180,159
Number of vacancies as a % of all employment	2%	4%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	2%	3%
% of all vacancies which are SSVs	8%	31%	15%	29%	13%	30%	17%	24%	22%	23%

Source: UKCES, Employer Skills Survey, 2013 and 2015

Figure 61: Percentage of Vacancies which are Skills Shortage Vacancies
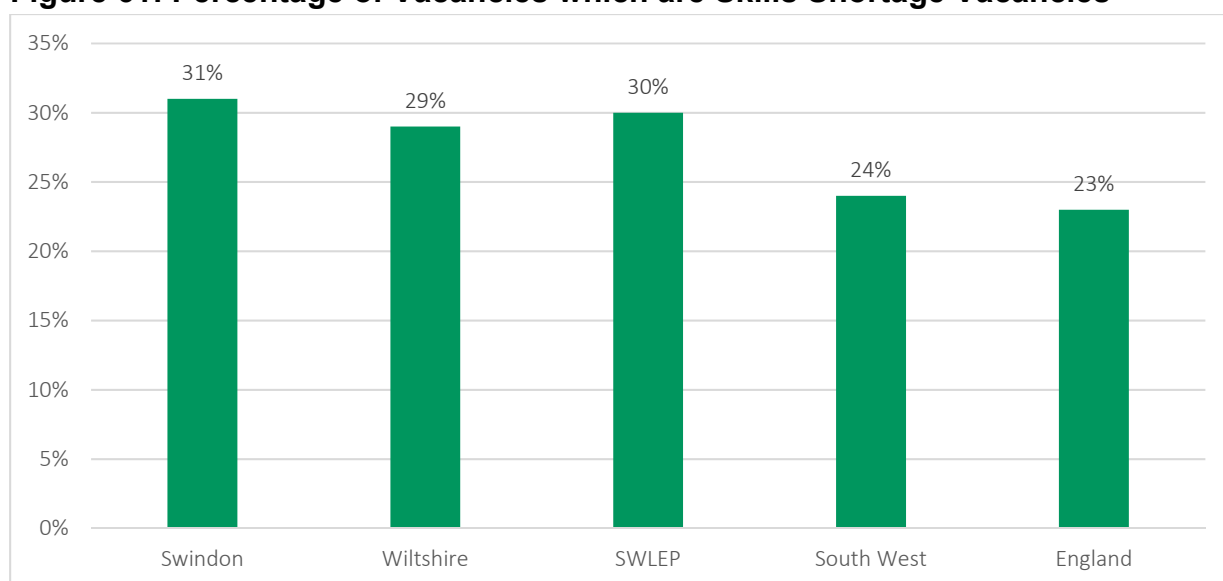
Source: UKCES, Employer Skills Survey, 2013 and 2015

The employer survey undertaken for the present study asked more generally about recruitment challenges and the results showed that 76.7% of the respondents across SWLEP identified that they were experiencing recruitment challenges. As can be seen from Appendix E.6, this was most pronounced in Swindon where 85.3% of employers stated that they were experiencing recruitment challenges (rising to 90.9% in South Swindon). Whilst the overall percentage in Wiltshire was lower at 73.9% this figure does mask considerable PCON variation with the percentages being particularly high in North Wiltshire and Devizes at 92.3% and 90.0% respectively. Sectorally, the employer survey showed that the Construction Sector

had the highest percentage of employers reporting recruitment challenges at 91.7%, followed by Adult Health and Social Care at 90.0%. When broken down by SME/non-SME, the data shows that SMEs were slightly less likely to experience recruitment challenges than their larger counterparts.

Appendix A.67 shows the future growth projections by sector, with the high growth and high volume sectors highlighted in Figure 62 below.

Figure 62: Future Growth Projections, High Growth AND High Volume Sectors

Swindon	Wiltshire
Professional services	Professional services
Health and social work	Health and social work
Support services	Construction
Transport and storage	Wholesale and retail trade
Finance and insurance	Support services

Source: Working Futures 2012-2022 remodelled for each local authority, quoted from the Swindon and Wiltshire Needs Analysis for the Post 16 Area Review (August 2016)

Key Findings
- SWLEP has a comparatively high percentage of skills shortage vacancies
- 76.7% of respondents to the employers survey said that they were experiencing recruitment challenges

5.5 Confidence in Future Recruitment to Higher Skilled Occupations

Employers were also asked about their confidence in being able to recruit – and specifically into higher skilled occupations - in the future. Of the 104 respondents that answered that question:

- 5.8% were very confident;
- 44.2% were confident;
- 35.6% were not confident;
- 6.7% were not at all confident;
- 2.9% said that it was not applicable for them; and,
- 4.8% did not know.

A more detailed breakdown is shown at Appendix E.23 which indicates that confidence levels were higher in Swindon (where 53.3% were confident and 6.7% were very confident) compared to Wiltshire (where 40.6% were confident and 4.7% were very confident). This is also shown below by PCON at Figure 63, but care

should be taken in the interpretation of these findings, given the small sample size within each PCON.

Figure 63: Confidence in Recruiting to Higher Skilled Occupations by PCON
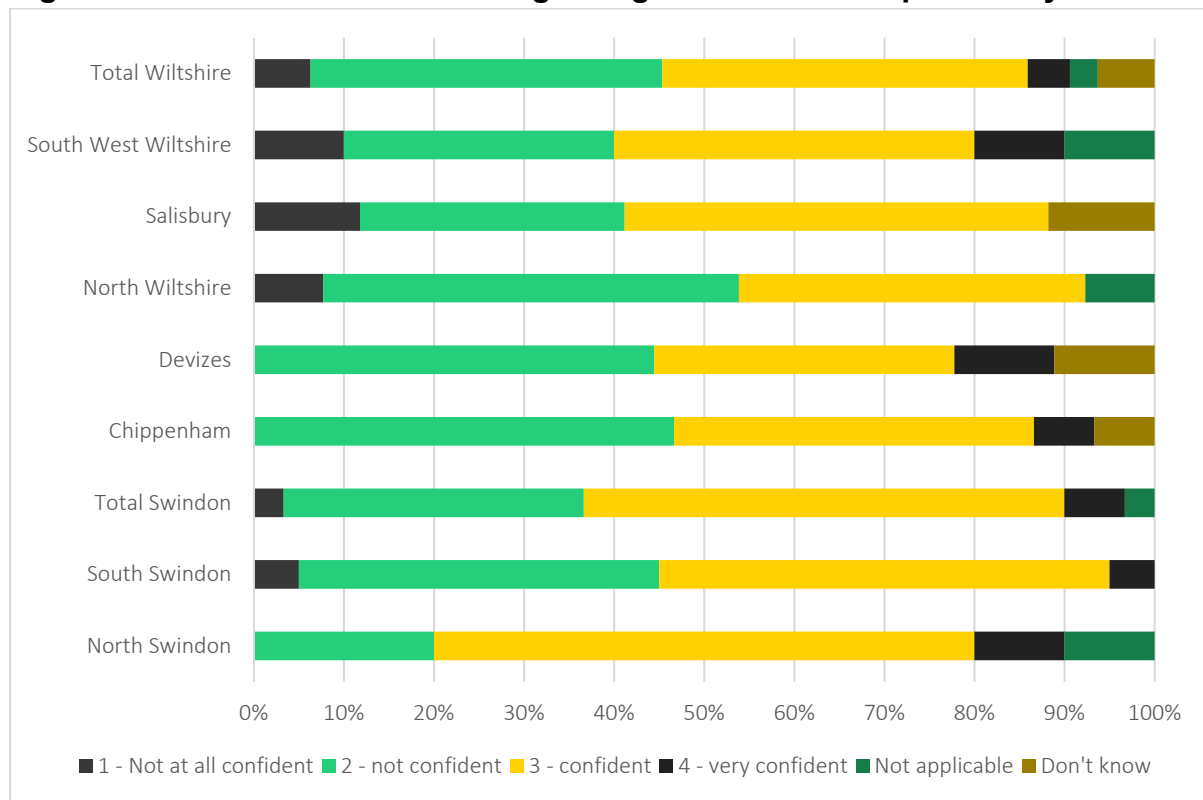
Source: SWLEP Employers Survey, January 2018, Base = 94.

The Advanced Engineering and High Value Manufacturing had the highest levels of confidence in being able to recruit into higher skilled occupations (64.7% of employers were confident and 11.8% were very confident). Similarly, larger employers were more likely to be confident than SMEs, despite the fact that they were more likely to experience recruitment challenges overall.

Key Findings
• 42% of employers were not confident about being able to recruit into higher skilled occupations
• Confidence levels were lower in Wiltshire than in Swindon

A number of issues were identified as potential barriers to fulfilling higher level skills as shown in Figure 64 overleaf. Insufficient numbers of highly skilled people attracted to work in Swindon and Wiltshire was the most frequently mentioned by 54.4% of respondents, followed by insufficient applicants and competition for staff. 23.4% highlighted a lack of Higher Education Institution(s) in the area.

Figure 64: Barriers to Fulfilling Higher level Skills Needs

Barrier	Percentage
Insufficient numbers of highly skilled people attracted...	54.4%
Insufficient applicants	51.5%
Competition for staff	36.9%
Lack of Higher Education Institution(s) in the area	23.3%
Location of business	17.5%
Cost of training	13.6%
Poor school/college education provision in the area	9.7%
Brexit	5.8%
Lack of time to train	5.8%
Not applicable	4.9%
Don't know	4.9%
Lack of information about recruitment options	3.9%
No barriers	1.9%
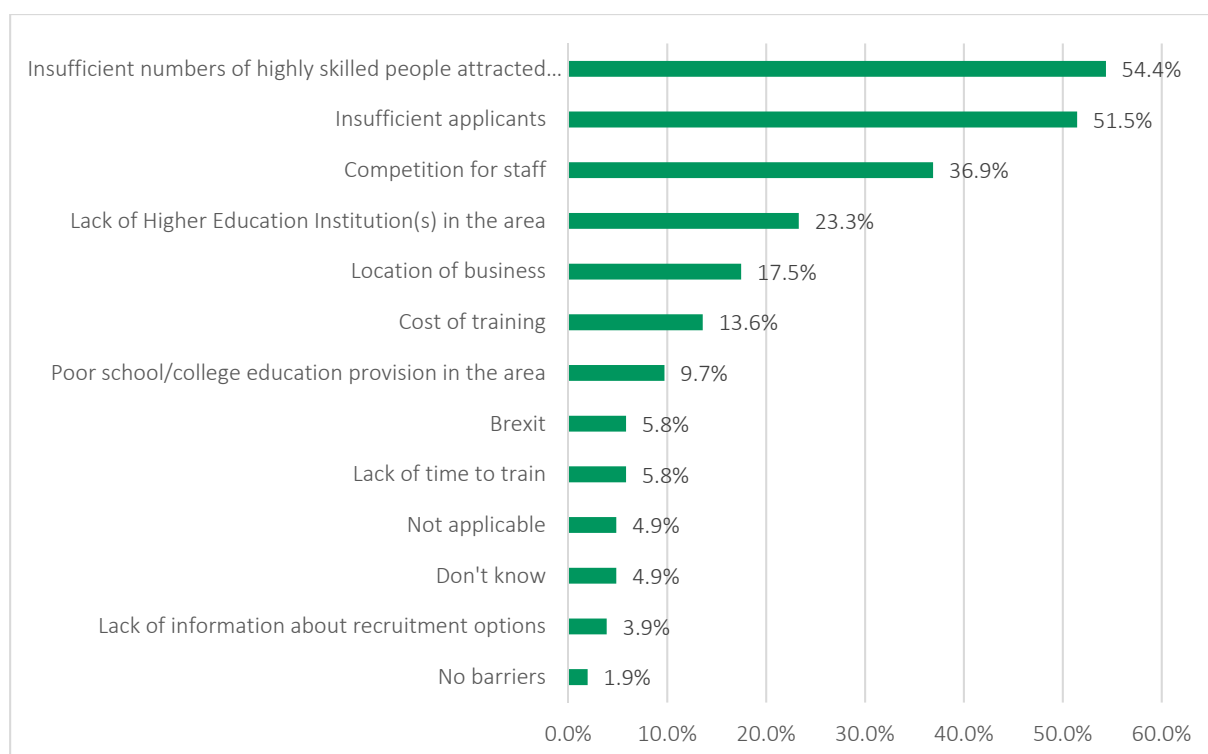
Source: SWLEP Employers Survey, January 2018, Base = 103

When analysed by PCON (Appendix E.27) the issue of insufficient people attracted to the area was more pronounced for Swindon's employers (mentioned by 56.7% of them, rising to 65.0% in South Swindon) than for Wiltshire's employers (mentioned by 50.0%). In Wiltshire insufficient applicants was the most frequently mentioned issue (by 58.1% of employers) and this was particularly the case in Chippenham (at 73.3%). A higher proportion of SMEs cited insufficient applicants than their larger counterparts, although a higher proportion of larger businesses cited 'insufficient numbers of highly skilled people attracted to work in Swindon and Wiltshire'.

Key Findings
- The top three barriers to fulfilling higher level skills related to the number of applicants in the area and this appears to be problem for approximately half of businesses
- 23.3% felt that the lack of an HEI in the area was a barrier

5.7 Skills Gaps

Moving on to skills gaps, the UKCES Employment and Skills Survey provides data on establishments with staff that are not fully proficient in their roles. Figure 65 shows that the percentage of establishments in SWLEP that reported having any staff that were not fully proficient increased between 2013 and 2015 to a position in line with the regional and national average. However, this was due to a significant

increase in Swindon; the percentage of establishments in Wiltshire that reported having staff that were not fully proficient was consistently lower than average. The percentage of non-proficient staff was also higher in Swindon than in Wiltshire; and it was higher than regional or national averages in 2015.

Figure 65: Skills Gaps, 2013 and 2015

	Swindon		Wiltshire		SWLEP		South West		England	
	2013	2015	2013	2015	2013	2015	2013	2015	2013	2015
% of establishments with any staff not fully proficient	13%	18%	11%	12%	11%	14%	14%	14%	15%	14%
Number of skills gaps - absolute figures	5,053	6,472	4,688	7,375	9,740	13,847	106,187	98,656	1,169,688	1,184,701
Number of staff not fully proficient as a % of employment	5%	6%	3%	4%	3%	5%	5%	4%	5%	5%

Source: UKCES, Employer Skills Survey, 2013 and 2015

Key Findings

- Skills gaps in SWLEP are broadly in line with national averages following an increase in the number of establishments with skills gaps in Swindon since 2013

5.8   Employee Training

Against this backdrop the UKCES Employment and Skills Survey considers employee training. At 70% SWLEP had a comparatively high percentage of establishments that had trained staff over the previous 12 months. The percentage was particularly high in Swindon (74%) but even in Wiltshire the percentage (68%) was higher than regional or national averages as can be seen from Figure 66 (overleaf). The number trained as a percentage of the total staff was also comparatively high within SWLEP but the number of training days was more variable.

Figure 66: Employee Training, 2013 and 2015

	Swindon		Wiltshire		SWLEP		South West		England	
	2013	2015	2013	2015	2013	2015	2013	2015	2013	2015
% of establishments training staff over the last 12 months	70%	74%	68%	68%	69%	70%	68%	66%	66%	66%
% of establishments providing off-the-job training in the last 12 months	50%	59%	52%	48%	52%	50%	49%	50%	48%	48%
% of establishments providing on-the-job training in the last 12 months	63%	60%	57%	57%	59%	57%	55%	53%	52%	52%
% of training establishments providing online training or e-learning in the last 12 months	N/A	51%	N/A	43%	N/A	45%	N/A	54%	N/A	45%
Number trained as % of total staff	63.18	66.25	67.74	63.69	66.07	64.61	64.79	67.43	62.18	62.64
Training days per trainee	4.914	7.682	12.923	6.104	10.109	6.686	6.774	6.890	6.708	6.791
Training days per staff	3.105	5.089	8.754	3.888	6.678	4.320	4.389	4.646	4.171	4.254

Source: UKCES, Employer Skills Survey, 2013 and 2015. Note: The question about online or e-learning was not included in 2013

The employer survey undertaken for the present study asked respondents to identify whether they had recently - or were currently - supporting any of their existing employees with particular higher level qualifications (including through apprenticeship routes). The results, shown in Figure 67 indicate that the most popular qualification was a professional qualification, mentioned by 30.8% of employers. In Swindon this figure was slightly higher at 33.3% (rising to 40.0% in North Swindon) than in Wiltshire at 30.2%. Larger businesses showed higher rates of supporting staff through all qualification types.

Figure 67: Employers Supporting Existing Employees with Higher level Qualifications

Answer Choices	%	Count
Professional qualifications	30.80%	32
None of the above	24.00%	25
Foundation degree	23.10%	24
Certificate of Higher Education	19.20%	20
HNC	18.30%	19
Other higher level qualification (please specify)	17.30%	18
Degree with honours	15.40%	16
HND	13.50%	14
Master's degree	13.50%	14
Diploma of HE	7.70%	8
Don't know	7.70%	8
Doctorate	2.90%	3

Source: SWLEP Employers Survey, January 2018, Base = 104

More generally, of the 107 respondents across SWLEP that answered the question:

- 69.2% had a training plan;
- 70.1% had a budget for training expenditure;
- 80.4% provided employees with additional time to train;
- 86.0% had formal performance management processes;
- 60.8% had a manager responsible for skills and training; and,
- 87.9% supported staff to undertake professional qualifications.

As shown in Appendix X, a higher percentage of Swindon's employers stated that they had/did each of the above than was seen in Wiltshire, with the exception of supporting staff to undertake professional qualifications, where the reverse was true. The percentages were particularly high across all indicators for the Adult Health and Social Care Sector. As would be expected, larger businesses were more likely to have/do all of the above than their SME counterparts.

Key Findings

- Secondary data suggests that employers within the area are participating in training at a similar level to national averages
- Survey data suggests that employers have supported staff through a wide range of higher level qualifications, the most popular being professional qualifications

5.8   Apprenticeships

Considering apprenticeships specifically, 37.4% of survey respondents said that they paid the apprenticeship levy currently. All respondents were also asked whether they were currently participating in apprenticeship schemes at various levels. As shown in Figure 68, the most popular response was advanced apprenticeships (48.2%) followed by intermediate apprenticeships (45.9%). Far fewer were engaging at higher levels. A more detailed breakdown is provided at Appendix E.36. This shows a higher percentage of Swindon's employers engaging with apprenticeships at all levels. Perhaps unsurprisingly degree apprenticeships were most frequently mentioned by employers within the Advanced Engineering and High Value Manufacturing Sector (20.0%).

This shows that whilst the approval of degree apprenticeship standards are increasing and provision is gaining momentum, employers are in the early stages of realising their potential.

Figure 68: Currently Participating in Apprenticeship Schemes

Answer Choices	%	Count
Intermediate apprenticeship (Level 2)	45.9%	39
Advanced apprenticeship (Level 3)	48.2%	41
Higher apprenticeship (Level 4, 5, 6, & 7)	14.1%	12
Degree apprenticeship (Levels 6 and 7)	7.1%	6
Don't know	5.9%	5

Source: SWLEP Employers Survey, January 2018, Base = 85

Key Findings
- Engagement with apprenticeship schemes is high within the sample, however this may not be representative of the wider population of employers   - Within the sample engagement was lower for higher level and degree apprenticeships   - There is scope to increase the number of employers engaged in higher and degree apprenticeships, aligned to the interest shown by learners. This fits well with national skills policy

5.9   Engagement with Training Providers

The survey found that SWLEP's employers use all types of providers to fulfil their training needs as shown in Figure 69 with the most popular being Private Sector/Independent Training Providers, along with in-house provision. As shown in Appendix X, use of universities is higher in Swindon (36.4%) than it is in Wiltshire (25.0%) but use of Further Education Colleges is higher in Wiltshire (52.9%) than it is in Swindon (45.5%). The Health and Life Sciences Sector had the highest

percentage of employers using universities for their training (54.6%) and the Advanced Engineering and High Value Manufacturing Sector had the highest percentage of employers using Further Education Colleges (65.0%). Across all categories of training provider, larger businesses showed a higher proportion of use than their SME counterparts.

Figure 69: Type of Training Provider(s) Used

Answer Choices	%	Count
Private Sector/Independent Training Providers	71.10%	81
In-house provision	71.10%	81
Professional Bodies/Chartered Institutes	54.40%	62
Further Education Colleges	51.80%	59
Universities	30.70%	35
Equipment/Software Manufacturers	26.30%	30
Voluntary Sector	16.70%	19
None	3.50%	4
Don't know	1.80%	2
Other (please specify)	1.80%	2

Source: SWLEP Employers Survey, January 2018. Base = 114

Respondents were also asked more generally about their links with the different types of organisations. Of the 100 employers that responded to this question:

- 54% had links with Further Education;
- 43% had links with Higher Education;
- 18% had links with higher level skills brokerage or skills support organisations (e.g. Higher Futures);
- 37% had links with Independent Training Providers;
- 20% had no links; and,
- 6% did not know.

More detail is provided at Appendix E.44 which shows that a higher percentage of Swindon's employers had links with both Further and Higher Education (58.6% and 55.2% respectively) than was the case for Wiltshire's employers (46.7% and 31.7% respectively). Sectorally, the Advanced Engineering and High Value Manufacturing Sector had the greatest links with both Further and Higher Education (75.0% and 56.3% respectively).

Key Findings

- Employers use a wide range of training providers to deliver training but a high proportion use Private Sector and in house provision
- Employers also have links with Further and Higher Education but they do not necessarily see the universities as providers of training. There is

Employers were also invited, through an open text box, to specify which organisations they had links with. The results are summarised in Figure 70. In many cases the employer simply stated 'various' or several' but where named organisations were provided, Wiltshire College was the most frequently mentioned Further Education College and Bath was the most frequently mentioned university. A good number of organisations also mentioned Higher Futures.

Figure 70: Which Organisations Employers Have Links With

Specific Colleges	Specific Universities/Research Organisations	Skills brokerage/Support organisations	Independent Training Providers
Wiltshire College (x23)	Bath University (x10)	Higher Futures (x12)	Green Labyrinth (x2)
Swindon College (x8)	UWE (x8)	Council led	Others (x1):
New College (x5)	Oxford Brookes (x7)	GWP	AAT
Cirencester (x3)	Bristol Uni (x5)	QA	BB Training Academy
Andover	University of	STEMnet	BIIAB
Henley College	Gloucestershire (x5)		Conflict Masters
Swindon Academy	Bath Spa (x3)		Diane Allen Consultant
South Glos College	Bournemouth (x3)		Didac
Stroud College	Southampton (x2)		HIT Training
Trowbridge	Babcock Institute		IQ
UTC Swindon	Cranfield (Shrivenham)		Ihasco
Weston College	Exeter		Learn Direct
6th Forms	Loughborough		My Skills for Life
	Nottingham		Positive Behaviour
	Open University		Management
	Oxford		QA
	Reading		REC
	Royal Agricultural		Reed business school
	University		SAGE
	Sheffield		Scrum.org
	Solent		Storage Equipment
	Thatcham's Research		Manufacturers
	The University of Law		Association (SEMA)
	University of South		White Horse Training
	Wales		Wiltshire Council
			Training Courses
'Several' (x8)	'Several' (x8)	'	Various/Several' (x8)

Source: SWLEP Employers Survey, January 2018, Base = 60

Where employers indicated that they did not have links with those types of organisations they were asked to state why they had not developed any. Of the 30 employers that answered this question:

- 9 stated that there was no need/it was not relevant to their business;
- 4 had never thought about it;

- 4 did not know how to;
- 1 stated that they had a bad experience previously;
- 6 felt that there were no suitable institutions in their area; and,
- 7 gave various 'other' responses.

5.10 Thoughts on Future Provision

Looking to the future, the survey found that 42.9% of employers would like to see additional training courses developed across Swindon and Wiltshire. As shown in Appendix E.17, the type of courses required varied considerably from trade skills to cyber science. Overall, a slightly higher percentage of employers in Wiltshire (44.1%) stated that they would like to see additional training courses developed compared to Swindon (40.6%) and the percentage was especially high in Salisbury (61.1%). The percentages were also particularly high within the Construction (63.6%) and Adult Health and Social Care Sectors (60.0%). The difference between SMEs and larger businesses was marginal.

When asked a broader question about the extent to which they agreed that developing more comprehensive Higher Education provision in Swindon and Wiltshire would be a good idea, the results overall were positive. Figure 71 shows the results from the 92 respondents that answered the question. As shown in more detail in Figure 72, the percentage of respondents that either strongly agreed or agreed that developing more comprehensive Higher Education provision in Swindon and Wiltshire would be a good idea was slightly higher in Swindon (82.2%) than Wiltshire (78.2%). Employers within the Advanced Engineering and High Value Manufacturing Sector were also most likely to agree or strongly agree (87.5%). The difference between larger businesses and SMEs was marginal.

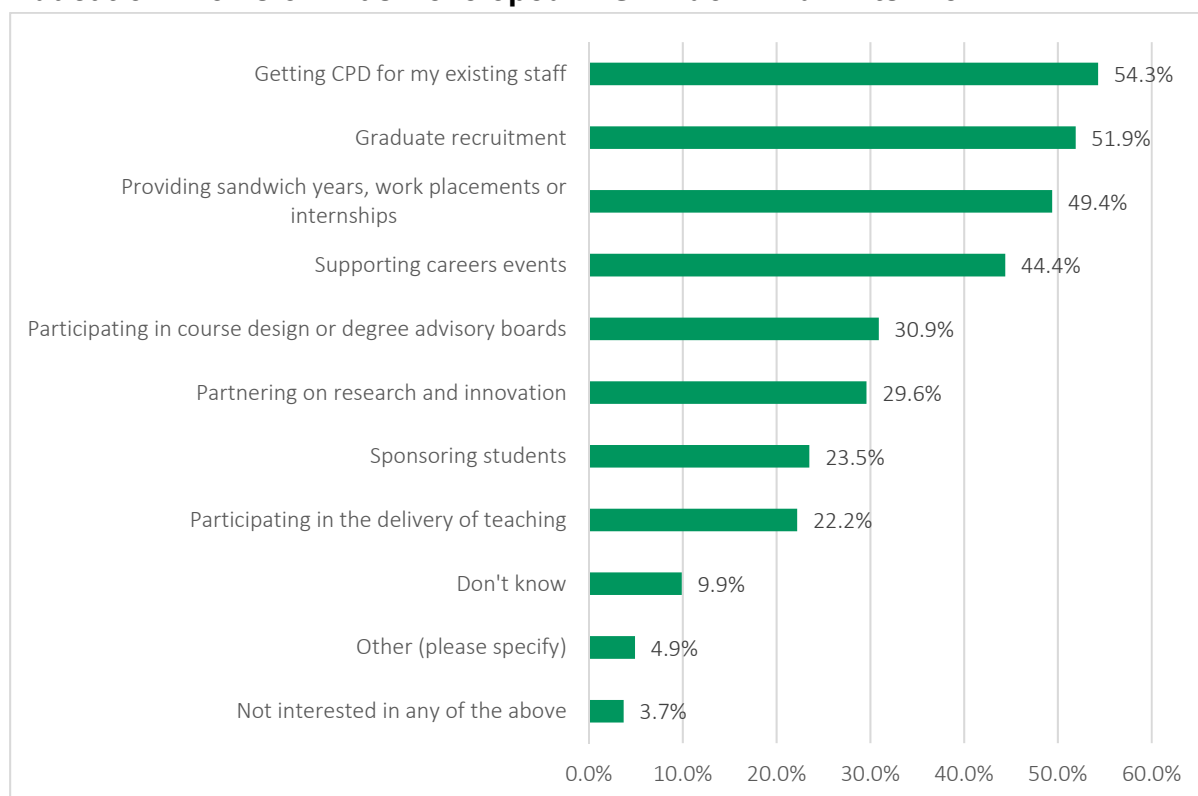**Figure 71: Extent to which Employers Agree that Developing More Comprehensive Higher Education Provision is a Good Idea**
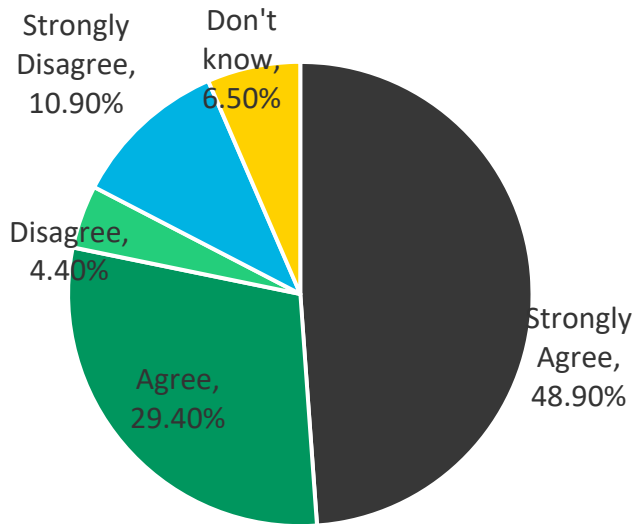
Figure 72: Extent to which Employers Agree that Developing More Comprehensive Higher Education Provision is a Good Idea by PCON
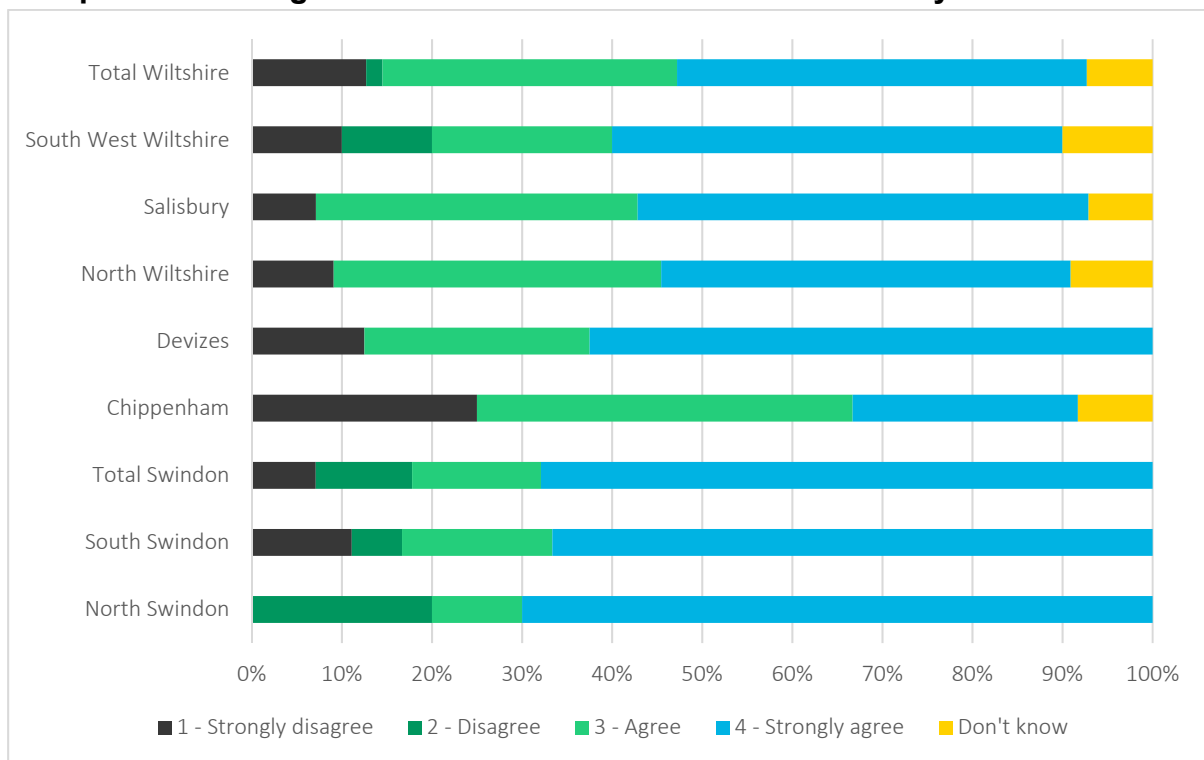
If more comprehensive Higher Education provision was developed, employers indicted that they would have an interest in a number of aspects as shown in Figure 73, with getting CPD for existing staff proving to be the most popular across SWLEP overall at 54.3%. However, in Swindon graduate recruitment was the most popular response at 66.7% and this was also particularly strong within the Digital and Information and Communications Technology Sector where it was mentioned by 83.3% of employers (see appendix E.57).

Figure 73: Interest in Different Aspects if More Comprehensive Higher Education Provision Was Developed In Swindon And Wiltshire

Source: SWLEP Employers Survey, January 2018, Base = 81

Key Findings
• 78.3% of employers agreed that developing more comprehensive Higher Education Provision in Swindon and Wiltshire was a good idea • Employers were interested in various aspects in this regard including CPD for staff, graduate recruitment as well as sandwich years, work placements and internships, although appetite to become more involved in design/delivery was lower

When asked about the most important delivery features for any newly developed provision, of the 75 employers that answered the question:

- 69.3% highlighted courses with a strong vocational element;
- 58.7% highlighted part-time provision;
- 57.3% highlighted flexible/bespoke provision.
- 46.7% highlighted employer-led courses;
- 45.3% highlighted distance/virtual learning;
- 38.7% highlighted research and innovation-led teaching; and,
- 38.7% highlighted sandwich courses or work placements;

As shown in Appendix E.60, courses with a strong vocational element were mentioned as an important delivery feature by 71.4% of Swindon's employers. Part-

time provision was important for 63.8% of Wiltshire's employers. Part-time provision was also mentioned by 75.0% of Digital and Information and Communications Technology employers, along with research and innovation led teaching.

Additionally, for the 75 employers that answered a supplementary question about new provision:

- 72.0% felt that it should involve employers in its development;
- 62.7% felt that it should include higher and degree level apprenticeship routes;
- 57.3% felt it should be developed in partnership with other universities;
- 52.0% felt that it should build on the existing offer from the local colleges;
- 48.0% felt that it should deliver provision at employer's premises;
- 45.3% felt that it should have transport links;
- 45.3% felt that it should operate from multiple sites (i.e. hub and spokes);
- 29.3% felt that it should be offered at a new campus/site; and
- 21.3% felt that it should develop its own degree awarding powers.

In Swindon 86.4% of employers that answered this question indicated that any new provision should involve employers in its development. Whilst this was also seen as important for Wiltshire's employers, a larger percentage (87.5%) of Wiltshire's employers felt that it should include higher and degree level apprenticeship routes. Interestingly, despite its rurality, just 25% of Wiltshire's employers highlighted transport links as an important feature (see appendix E.64). In terms of sectoral responses, 92.3% of Advanced Engineering and High Value Manufacturing employers were keen to see any new provision include higher and degree level apprenticeship routes. Involving employers in its development was also a popular response across the board.

Finally, employers were asked about subjects of interest to them. The first question was based on HEFCE's high level codes and the responses are shown in Figure 74. Across SWLEP as a whole the most popular subject was Business and Admin Studies, mentioned by 49.4% of respondents, followed by Engineering and Technology, mentioned by 44.2% of respondents. This profile does not align well with the findings from the surveys of learners, with considerably fewer young people or adults expressing an interest in Engineering and Technology (16% and 10.5% respectively). However, almost 29% of adults expressed an interest in Business and Admin, but only 12.3% of young people did so. Similarly, whilst 36.4% of employers expressed an interest in Computer Sciences on 18.4% of adults and 10.4% of young people expressed an interest in this area.

Appendix E.68 shows that a much higher percentage of employers in Swindon (60.9%) mentioned Engineering and Technology than in Wiltshire (36.2%). In Wiltshire Business and Admin studies was the most frequently mentioned subject (by

55.3% of employers); followed by Education (38.3%). Unsurprisingly the sectoral breakdown of responses reflects the businesses that engaged with the survey. As set out elsewhere in the report, subjects highlighted in gold are STEM subjects and Figure 74 shows that a high proportion of employers are interested in these subjects, particularly Engineering and Technology.

Figure 74: Subjects Employers Would Like to See Offered Within New Higher Education Provision

Answer Choices	%	Count
Business and Admin Studies	49.40%	38
Engineering and Technology	44.20%	34
Computer Sciences	36.40%	28
Education	28.60%	22
Mathematical Sciences	20.80%	16
Architecture, Building and Planning	19.50%	15
Biological Sciences	18.20%	14
Physical Sciences	16.90%	13
Creative Art and Design	16.90%	13
Other (please specify)	15.60%	12
Social Sciences	14.30%	11
Subjects Allied to Medicine	13.00%	10
Agriculture and Related Subjects	11.70%	9
Medicine and Dentistry	10.40%	8
Law	9.10%	7
Geographical Studies	9.10%	7
Mass Communications and Documentation	7.80%	6
History and Philosophical Studies	7.80%	6
Initial Teacher Training	7.80%	6
Don't Know	7.80%	6
Veterinary Sciences	6.50%	5
Languages	6.50%	5

Source: SWLEP Employers Survey, January 2018, Base = 77

Figure 75 overleaf provides a summary of evidence relating to demand/supply for the top three subject areas highlighted by employers above.

Figure 75: Summary of Supply and Demand Findings for Top Three Subjects

Key Area of Employer Demand	Existing Provision within SWLEP	Appetite of Leaners
Business and Admin Studies	Some provision in SWLEP (fifth largest subject area) BUT further evidence required to assess: • If provision meets demand • If specific courses meet the needs of employers	• 10.2% of SWLEP domiciled students study this (top 3) • Strong interest from adult learners (28.9%) (top 1) • 12.3% of younger learners are interested **Evidence of strong demand**
Engineering and Technology	Largest area of provision within SWLEP BUT further evidence required to assess: • If provision meets demand • If specific courses meet the needs of employers	• 5.2% of SWLEP domiciled students study this. • 10.5% of adults interested • 16% of younger learners interested **Evidence of moderate demand**
Computer Sciences	Ninth largest area of provision within SWLEP BUT further evidence required to assess: • If provision meets demand • If specific courses meet the needs of employers	• 4.3% of SWLEP domiciled students study this • 18.4% of adults interested • 10.4% of younger learners interested **Evidence of moderate demand**

With regard to STEM provision, the Figure above shows that employers are interested in STEM subjects. However, with the exception of Engineering and Technology, there are notable gaps in STEM provision such as:

- Physical Sciences (0 undergraduate entrants in 2014-15)
- Mathematical Sciences (0 undergraduate entrants in 2014-15)

However, this may reflect a lack of demand. With respect to demand, the evidence base shows limited actual participation (see Figure 39 in Chapter 4) in the hard sciences - e.g. Mathematics (2.3%), Chemistry (0%) and Physics (1.1%), although 5.3% of SWLEP domiciled students study Engineering and Technology, 4.3% study Computer Sciences and 3.5% study Biological Sciences. Interest in STEM subjects amongst the survey population appears to be stronger, although respondents could select more than one option when indicating subjects of interest. This may suggest that interest in STEM subjects is secondary, behind a different primary choice. Section 4.6 shows that 38% of young people would like to work in STEM and 50.3%

are interested in STEM, therefore, there may be potential to 'nudge' more young people to take STEM courses through better careers advice.

Respondents were also asked about a range of digital skills that they would like to see developed within any new provision. Figure 76 shows that Data Analytics was particularly popular amongst survey respondents, mentioned by 50.7% of them. However, Software Development was the most frequently mentioned digital skill by Swindon's respondents (54.5%). For the Digital and information and Communications Technology Sector specifically it was Programming (91.7%) as shown in Appendix E.74.

Figure 76: Digital Skills that Employers Would Like to See Offered in Any New Higher Education Provision

Answer Choices	%	Count
Website Development and Search Engine Optimisation	37.0%	27
Programming	46.6%	34
Software Development	46.6%	34
App Development	41.1%	30
Network Management	27.4%	20
Data Analytics	50.7%	37
Big Data	30.1%	22
Creative Digital Media	35.6%	26
Don't know	24.7%	18
Other (please specify)	6.9%	5

Source: SWLEP Employers Survey, January 2018, Base = 73

Key Findings

- Courses with a strong vocational element and part-time provision are particularly important for employers
- 72.0% felt that any new provision should involve employers in its development and 62.7% felt that it should include higher and degree level apprenticeship routes
- The subject areas of interest for employers do not entirely align with those expressed by the learners that responded to the surveys, although the level of alignment was greater between employers and adult learners than between young people and employers
- There is appetite for STEM subjects from employers and some interest in them from learners but there is limited actual participation in many STEM subjects
- Survey data suggests that STEM subjects <u>may be</u> secondary choices for young people but 38% of young people would like to work in STEM and 50.3% are interested in it
- The strategy could therefore include actions to 'nudge' more young people to take STEM courses through better careers advice

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FROM CHAPTER 5

- The percentage of SWLEP's population with a Level 4+ qualification is relatively high overall but it is low in Swindon.
- With the exception of Swindon and Salisbury, all PCONs lose people with L4+ qualifications during the working day.
- Whilst the percentage of employers with vacancies is broadly in line with the national average, the percentage of vacancies that are skill shortage vacancies is relatively high, especially in Swindon.
- Nearly half of survey respondents were not confident in their ability to recruit to higher skilled occupations, with the most frequently mentioned barrier being insufficient numbers of people attracted to work in the area.
- In addition to recruitment challenges, Swindon's employers have a relatively high proportion of staff that are not proficient in their roles.
- The proportion of SWLEP's employers that engage in training for their staff is relatively high but the survey found a mixed picture in terms of supporting staff with higher level qualifications specifically.
- Engagement with training providers varies with Independent Training Providers and in-house provision being most popular. Employers do have links with Further and Higher Education but do not necessarily see universities as providers of training.
- Over 40% of survey respondents would like to see additional training courses developed locally and almost 80% agreed that it would be a good idea to develop more comprehensive Higher Education provision.
- Employers were particularly keen to use any newly developed provision for staff CPD and graduate recruitment, although appetite to become more involved in design/delivery was lower.
- They favoured courses with a strong vocational element. Higher and degree apprenticeship routes were also popular. Views on physical location (i.e. a new campus/hub and spoke model) were mixed and only a small percentage of employers felt the need for it to develop its own degree awarding powers.
- Overall the evidence suggests that there is both a need and a demand from employers for more higher level skills training within SWLEP. However, there may be further work to do with employers to effectively secure their engagement in its development.
- Employers' subject areas of interest do not entirely align with those expressed by the learners (though the alignment is greater with adults).
- There is appetite for STEM subjects from employers and some interest in them from learners but there is limited actual participation in many STEM subjects. Survey data suggests that STEM subjects may be secondary choices for young people even though they may have an interest in STEM.
- The strategy could focus on 'nudging' young people to take STEM courses through careers advice which highlights local study and employment

Chapter 6: Conclusions and Options for Consideration

6.1 Introduction

Higher level skills are a key driver for increasing productivity and for improving social mobility. The need for more high level skills within the workforce will become increasingly acute in the future given that the number of jobs is expected to rise by 5% or 19,500 jobs by 2022 across the SWLEP area, with growth being especially focused on higher-level occupations. This research set out to provide an evidence base from which a comprehensive Higher Education Strategy could be developed for Swindon and Wiltshire to help address these important issues.

Having drawn on a wide range of secondary data sources along with the findings from three bespoke local surveys, this final chapter of the report summarises the overall conclusions that have emerged from the study and also makes some recommendations for strategy development.

It should also be noted that, whilst a single strategy will be developed, SWLEP represents a very diverse geographical area encompassing both urban and rural settlements and with differing starting points in terms of skills, attainment and participation in Higher Education. Hence there will be a need to tailor particular actions accordingly.

6.2 Key Conclusions and Recommendations

The conclusions and recommendations presented in this chapter are grouped around the following headings:

- Developing local talent: adults and employees;
- Developing local talent: young people;
- Attracting and retaining talent; and,
- Implications for future provision.

These have all been developed on the basis of the evidence that is presented within this report and it is hoped that they can provide an important steer for the emerging strategy. Please note that there is a degree of overlap in terms of the recommendations relating to each item. Priority actions and potential solutions will need to be developed under later phases of this work.

Developing Local Talent:
Adults and Employees

What does the Evidence Say?

- There is a strong correlation between higher level study and career/work plans for adult learners.

- Proximity and flexible ways of studying are more important to adults than their younger counterparts.

- Whilst there is evidence that some employers are supporting their staff with higher level study, especially for professional qualifications, lack of support from employers was highlighted as a barrier by survey respondents, as well as cost of study.

- Employers that took part in the survey most frequently used in-house provision as well as the private sector and professional bodies for their training needs.

- Over 40% of employers would like to see more training courses delivered locally but appetite to become involved in its design/delivery was lower.

- They favoured courses with a strong vocational element including higher and degree apprenticeships.

- Subject areas of interest for employers do not entirely align with those expressed by learners. This includes STEM based subjects.

How Might the Strategy Address This?

- The strategy should focus on supporting more adults to access higher level skills related to their work.

- This should include the development of local and flexible options. However, it should also consider how to overcome the identified barriers around the lack of employer support for higher level skills development.

- The strategy should build on the work of Higher Futures to broker linkages between employers and providers, including Further and Higher Education.

- Employer engagement should be a crucial part of the strategy to encourage them to get involved in any new design or delivery.

- New provision should have a strong vocational element and include further development of the higher and degree apprenticeship offer.

- Careers advice should be developed for both adults and young people to help them understand what type of subjects employers are most interested in.

- There also needs to be a clear approach specifically for STEM.

Developing Local Talent:
Young People

What does the Evidence Say?

- Attainment is strongly correlated with progression to Higher Education. At Level 3 it is higher than the average in Wiltshire, but lower in Swindon.

- Progression to Higher Education is lower than average in both areas but is most significantly lower in Swindon.

- Higher level participation is particularly low for certain groups of young people but attainment is not the only factor affecting progression. Analysis shows that when attainment is adjusted for, progression is still lower than expected, especially in Swindon, indicating that there are other factors at play.

- Evidence suggests that some young people are more interested in employment options (including apprenticeships) than study although the area does not currently have large numbers of young people going into higher level apprenticeships.

- Other young people do not think that further study is right for them and some are not willing or able to travel for study, although further research is required to understand the barriers to participation for young people in some sub-groups.

- For those who do choose to study there is some interest in STEM based disciplines but far more students from SWLEP opt for non-STEM based subjects, a key issues from the perspective of employer demand.

How Might the Strategy Address This?

- The strategy should prioritise efforts to increase educational attainment levels for students in Swindon.

- Building on the NCOP model, it should also focus on encouraging more students (across both areas) to progress to Higher Education, particularly focusing on recognised low participation groups.

- Given that attainment is not the only factor influencing young people's decisions, the strategy should look to address issues around awareness and aspiration, ensuring that learners have a good understanding of the local and wider Higher Education offer and options open to them.

- However, it should also reflect on the young people's desire to pursue employment above further study. There is a need to showcase the benefits of continued learning and to enhance work-based learning options but also to address barriers – e.g. ensuring a clear understanding of financial implications.

- Apprenticeships, especially at higher level should be seen an area for potential growth and development and an alternative progression route.

- The strategy should also ensure that local options are available for those less willing or able to travel for study including in STEM based subjects.

Attracting and Retaining Talent

What does the Evidence Say?

- National evidence indicates that students are more likely to stay and work locally if they have studied locally.

- A large proportion of students that grew up in the SWLEP area leave for study and do not come back for employment and this is particularly the case in Wiltshire, affecting the graduate talent pool for employers to recruit from.

- The area does attract graduates from elsewhere but when graduate flows are analysed it is clear that SWLEP experiences a net loss of graduate talent.

- Evidence from the survey indicates that many young people want to move away after they graduate and this is not entirely driven by the perception of the jobs market.

- Thinking of the population more generally, net in-migration (from within the UK) appears to be strongest in higher skilled occupations which is positive.

- However, employers report that there are insufficient numbers of highly skilled people attracted to work in the area and see this as the top barrier to fulfilling their higher level skills needs. This suggests that the perception of the area may be an issue.

How Might the Strategy Address This?

- The strategy should focus on developing more provision locally that is attractive to students. If this encourages more of them to stay in the area for study, it is more likely that they will ultimately also stay for work.

- However, this would need to be supported by an effective graduate retention strategy. Retention strategies can help to attract graduate talent to the area, focusing on both SWLEP domiciled and graduates from elsewhere. Knowledge Transfer Partnerships, for example, are a nationally recognised mechanism getting graduates into companies and there is strong evidence to suggest that many are retained by the company afterwards. Likewise, there are a range of internship and graduate recruitment options that could be explored, working closely with employers.

- More generally, the strategy should include actions to promote the area to higher skilled individuals in order to help fulfil employers' needs. There is a direct link here with the 'place making' agenda which would need to be considered. This could include a co-ordinated targeted approach to recruiting graduates from Higher Education Institutions outside the SWLEP area, highlighting employment opportunities within the area to graduates.

Implications for Local Provision

What does the Evidence Say?

- The student population that is studying within the SWLEP area is very small and declining. Around 60% are distance learners.

- There are some exciting developments locally and some niche provision within the area particularly at postgraduate level but for undergraduates the main locally based providers are Oxford Brookes (Swindon) and the three Colleges.

- There are some differences between the colleges' provision compared to the national profile including a lower than average percentage of people studying for a foundation degree.

- Awareness of the Higher Education offer within the colleges is mixed.

- There is a range of provision within commuting distance but less part-time.

- There is strong interest in local courses from adults and employers but for young people it is more mixed with many wishing to leave the area for study.

- Financial support with the cost would make studying locally more attractive to both adults and young learners but having a university within the area and a wider range of courses available was also important to both young people and adults. Student accommodation is also the second most important factor for young people in choosing their institution of study.

- There is some interest in degree apprenticeship models, particularly from adults.

How Might the Strategy Address This?

- Overall the strategy should focus on growing the population of students studying in the SWLEP.

- This could in part be achieved by increasing awareness and up-take of the Higher Education courses that are already available.

- However, there is strong evidence that the development of the higher level offer would be beneficial for the area. This should be a key focus for the strategy.

- Given the strength of opinion from adults and employers, newly developed provision should focus on their requirements which tend to be more vocational.

- However, some younger learners do also want (or need) to stay locally for study, particularly those who are less mobile and disadvantaged and they should also be catered for within the strategy.

- The strategy could usefully support the development of more flexible and part-time options to meet the needs of all groups and should also consider more progression pathways such as foundation degrees.

- There is a strong rationale for supporting apprenticeship routes including degree apprenticeship options.

- There is also a need to develop the wider student offer including accommodation.

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