

SKILLS & EMPLOYMENT BOARD

6 January 2020

National Retraining Scheme / National Skills Fund

Purpose of Report

The paper provides early visibility of an opportunity to position Sheffield City Region to participate in the Department of Education's National Retraining Scheme

Thematic Priority

Develop the SCR skills base, labour mobility and education performance

Freedom of Information

This paper will be made available under the MCA transparency scheme

Recommendations

That Board Members:

Note the contents of the report and presentation and consider if they would want officers to continue to engage with the DfE on this work.

1. Introduction

- 1.1** The National Retraining Scheme is a national Government programme to help adults retrain into better jobs, and be ready for future changes to the economy, including those brought about by automation.
- 1.2** One aspect of the National Retraining Scheme is called Get Help to Retrain. Get Help to Retrain is a digital service that is intended to help people to understand their current skills, explore alternative occupations and find and sign up to the training they need to access opportunities for a broad range of good jobs.
- 1.3** DfE started testing Get Help to Retrain in Liverpool in July 2019. They then rolled out the scheme further to the North East, West Midlands, Leeds, Cambridge and Peterborough and the Heart of the South West this year (2020).
- 1.4** At the start of 2020 SCR was one of a number of areas who DfE made initial enquiries to about becoming a second wave area of Get Help to Retrain.
- 1.5** Covid-19 and subsequent policy responses has changed the shape of the National Retraining scheme pilots. Further roll outs of Get Help to Retrain have been put on hold with

the expectation that the National Careers Service will provide digital signposting for people looking for support on how to change careers.

- 1.6 Under the National Retraining Scheme DfE have funded 6 new pilots. These pilots are being branded as “bootcamps”. The bootcamps are expected to be employer led and start with vacancies employers would like to fill, the bootcamps are then intended to support local people acquire the necessary skills to move into these vacancies. It is not too dissimilar to JCPs’ Sector Based Work Academies. The first bootcamps have been digital e.g. cloud infrastructure / operations, cyber security, coding (python, html, CSS, JavaScript), agile project management, full stack development and CAM/RAP for advanced manufacturing. DfE hope that future bootcamps will have focus on other sectors.
- 1.7 DfE will initially fund 6 areas over the period Sept 2020 – end of March 2021 (West Midlands Combined Authority, Greater Manchester Combined Authority, Liverpool City Region, Leeds City Region, Heart of South West, D2N2) to test the model by delivering approximately 12-week flexible courses to train adults in a range of technical skills.
- 1.8 DfE are planning a second wave of initiatives from April 21. DfE have not decided how many areas would be involved in any potential second wave. This will largely depend on identifying areas of greatest need and vacancies available as the plan is to link the training to guaranteed interviews. DfE hope that the future waves will be extended from Digital into other intermediate technical skills.

2. Proposal and justification

- 2.1 DfE have asked us to consider whether there are any particular skills shortage areas within Sheffield City Region that we would like them to consider for the next wave.
- 2.2 At this point there is no guarantee that work invested in engaging with DfE would result in funding for the area to develop these technical boot camps. Policy is particularly fluid at the moment. However, there is strong alignment between these proposed pilots and our Recovery Action Plan and Strategic Economic Plan. Particularly in terms of supporting people to move into technical and higher vocational career paths which are better for them as individuals and better for the productivity of the region. The new Skills Advisory Network will provide a forum where this type of analysis can be undertaken, with the outcomes being shared with the Board to inform any future decisions.
- 2.3 This paper is identifying this emerging opportunity and testing appetites to continue to engage with DfE to position SCR to become a Wave 2 area.

3. Consideration of alternative approaches

- 3.1 n/a

4. Implications

- 4.1 **Financial**
n/a – the potential opportunity is too distant to be able to determine implications for the CA.
- 4.2 **Legal**
n/a
- 4.3 **Risk Management**
n/a
- 4.4 **Equality, Diversity and Social Inclusion**
n/a

5. Communications

5.1 n/a

6. Appendices/Annexes

6.1 n/a

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Background papers used in the preparation of this report are available for inspection at: 11 Broad Street West, Sheffield S1 2BQ

Other sources and references: