ies Report

Institute for Employment Studies

Skills Bootcamps and Adult Skills

An overview of the current provision and availability of information

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1 The Skill Context

1.1 UK skills landscape

The mega-trends of technological and climate change are rapidly accelerating in their effects on global economies. Technology is evolving fast with the introduction of forms of generative artificial intelligence that move beyond automating routine work to greatly affecting the knowledge economy. Equally, climate change is moving from theory to reality, with current climate events and new predictions for climate disruption. As such, delays to action to reduce the impact of human activity on the climate present significant risks. However, as argued by World Government Summit, 2022, there are opportunities to address these 'twin transitions' to a digitised, technologised, and green economy, in tandem and this combined transition will require new jobs that will over time replace those that are lost. To achieve this, however, requires a focus on skills supply, helping people adjust and be resilient to the changes in economies.

In this context, the ageing demographic in all parts of the world (ILO, 2019) cannot be ignored; it is imperative to extend working lives. Vast numbers of the workers needed in the economy in 2035 are already in work or the labour force, meaning the focus on new skills supply has to engage these workers as well as people in the talent pipeline. To deliver this will require targeted policies, funding and a focus on supporting new working patterns (ILO, 2019).

These global trends are naturally affecting the UK economy. To address them requires system changes without delay. The COVID-19 pandemic had a dramatic effect on the UK economy with a rise in unemployment rates for older and younger workers. Recent analysis of labour market statistics shows an unemployment rate of four per cent but employment also rising – now at 76% (IES, 2023). Vacancies have fallen since a peak last Spring, meaning there are 1.3 unemployed people for every vacancy, so this is now below pre-pandemic rates. In the short term, for construction, manufacturing and many white-collar industries, vacancy figures are above pre-pandemic levels which suggests skill shortages. Demand or skill shortages are prominent in industries where employers are more likely to need higher level or job-specific skills (white collar professions, public services, manufacturing and construction). This suggests that people joining or rejoining the labour force may need to reskill (IES, 2023).

Technological advancements are influencing the skills required across many industries and there is an increasing demand for digital skills. While there are many uncertainties, forecasts predict that by 2035 the UK labour market will have changed substantially, 'moving steadily and inexorably in favour of the service sector' (Wilson et al, 2022). These authors forecast the strongest jobs growth in business and other services, and non-market services (dominated by health and education). Significant declines are predicted for manufacturing despite output in this sector being projected to continue to increase in

the lead up to 2035, suggesting ongoing productivity increases in this sector. In addition, most new jobs will be seen in professional and associate professional occupations, indicating that it is not simply new skills that are required, but also new skills at a higher level (Wilson et al, 2022).

Consequently, projections show that workers with low levels of education are at greatest risk from automation and artificial intelligence will likely impact higher skilled jobs (Taylor et al, 2022). The drive for net zero and transition to a greener economy is opening up new occupations and changing the skills composition of existing occupations – particularly in renewable energy and construction. Common skills such as problem solving/decision making, critical thinking/analysis, communication, collaboration, creativity, and innovation will be in demand across many sectors and occupations (Taylor et al, 2022).

The post-Brexit landscape has necessitated a focus on fostering local talent and enhancing the competitiveness of the nation's workforce. Connecting individuals to growth sectors and preparing them to fill high skills vacancies where employers struggle to recruit is a critical way to achieve better social equity, shared prosperity as well as increasing productivity.

This in turn necessitates a spotlight to be thrown onto the skills 'system' to understand whether it can deliver the new, higher-level skills that are increasingly required. Apprenticeships are a key aspect of this, enabling work-based learning for young people and adults. However, the programme remains challenged in terms of volumes. The focus on quality with the move to new occupational standards, as well as the changes to the funding system and particularly the Apprenticeship Levy, have had an impact on starts and employers are still adjusting to these changes. The 2022/23 data[1] show the overall number of new starts was down by 4.6% to 275,630 compared with 2021/22 where 288,800 starts were reported. Going back further puts this into perspective and indicates that starts have been 'bumpy' over time: for instance, between 2009/10 and 2010/11 there was a large jump in starts (63%) from 279,700 to 457,200. However, this reversed between 2011/12 and 2013/14 when starts fell from 520,600 to 440,400. The current scale of the programme is not so different, therefore, from 10 years ago, although it has dropped substantially from the highs seen in the mid-2010s.

Positively, satisfaction with the programme is high, with 83% of employers with current apprentices expressing satisfaction overall, which rises to 85% of those with completer apprentices. The benefits recorded by employers involved are significant – 85% believe apprenticeships contribute to the development of skills relevant to their organisation, and 75% indicate that their engagement with apprenticeships leads to increased productivity. However, at their best, apprenticeships are substantial and extensive skills development programmes, and this may not suit the needs of all people in the labour force. In light of this, the government has invested in alternative forms of training to support entry and progression in work.

[1] https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/apprenticeships-and-traineeships

1.2 Skills Bootcamps

Skills Bootcamps were introduced in England in 2020 to support the Government's ambition to deliver sector-specific skills to support employers[2]. These courses aim to help individuals upskill or reskill so that they can transition from working in declining sectors and occupations that offer limited progression to growth areas where there are skills shortages and progression opportunities. The Skills Bootcamps are available to people who are unemployed or inactive, as well as those in employment. For people not currently in work, they aim to build the base level skills necessary for job entry that then enable acceleration once in work; for those already in employment, the courses can help employers and employees build the skills to be resilient to occupational change.

Skills Bootcamps are short, flexible courses that last around 12 weeks but can extend to 16 weeks. They are co-designed with employers and typically deliver technical skills and wraparound support. In the initial wave that took place with support of combined authorities, Skills Bootcamps could deliver skills across multiple levels including up to Level 7 (master's degree equivalent)[3], although predominantly focused on Levels 3-5 (A level to foundation degree equivalent). As the courses have been mainstreamed, they generally cover skills that are equivalent to Level 3-5, although some Level 2 provision exists.

Desk research shows that the current understanding of the purpose of the Skills Bootcamps is to fill gaps in the existing system. Skills Bootcamps recognise that extensive qualifications such as Apprenticeships and Higher Technical qualifications are not required by experienced people changing careers, who instead need more targeted provision to enable their transitions. The Skills Bootcamps can infill where particular jobs do not require full Apprenticeships or full Higher Technical qualifications (at Level 4 or 5), such as retrofitting and heat pump installation in the construction and green skills arena.

Desk research also highlights how Skills Bootcamps respond closely to employers' immediate skills needs, enabling provision to fill skills shortages in the current time, rather than those predicted for the future which extensive qualifications can meet. One indicator of this and a core component of the Skills Bootcamps is a guaranteed interview for a role that aligns with the skills delivered in the bootcamp. Participants who are self-employed or undertaking the Skills Bootcamp via their employer are not required to have a job interview. A second indicator concerns their focus, which is on industry standards and accreditations – so technical competence, which does not fully align with the current technical education system. Skills Bootcamps can respond quickly to emerging technical skills needs and competencies such as green and digital. As shorter duration courses they can respond to these changing needs where a full qualification would be less appropriate.

There are no costs to employers where they recruit individuals outside the labour force who have completed a Skills Bootcamp. Where employers use Skills Bootcamps to train

[2] https://find-employer-schemes.education.gov.uk/schemes/skills-Skills Bootcamps

[3] https://www.gov.uk/what-different-qualification-levels-mean/list-of-qualification-levels

their existing workforce, they are expected to contribute to costs; for large employers, this amounts to 30% of the training costs whereas small or medium employers pay 10%.

To date, there has been a pilot wave of Skills Bootcamps followed by two waves of DfE commissioned Skills Bootcamps, in six regions in 2020-2021 and scaling up to all regions of England from 2021. The early waves tested funding approaches, including grant funding to combined authorities and national level funding. Stakeholders confirmed that the model now offers both options so there can be regional variation in Skills Bootcamps as regional funding allows for alignment with Local Skills Improvement Plans.

In the pilot, the main focus of the Skills Bootcamps was on digital provision covering topics ranging from digital marketing, women in software engineering, cloud services engineering, computer aided design (CAD), coding, cybersecurity, IT, social media and digital leadership. However, one combined authority introduced some technical skills courses including energy and marine design, welding, and electrical and mechanical skills. In this wave, over 350 employers were recorded as involved and over 820 individuals gained Skills Bootcamp places across the areas. Most individuals were unemployed but a few Skills Bootcamps, mostly the technical skills courses, supported employee upskilling (Williams et al, 2021).

In the ensuing waves, some providers were procured nationally to deliver Skills Bootcamps to meet national priority sectors with high skill demand, and others were commissioned through combined authorities, where regional skills gaps are the focus. This enabled a substantial scale up and 16,120 people gained places, with 51% of these either receiving Universal Credit or being unemployed for less than 12 months. Moreover, 2,648 employers took part with two-thirds of these being small or medium enterprises. Skills Bootcamps in this wave covered construction, digital, engineering, HGV and green jobs, with digital (with 309 Skills Bootcamps) being by far the most prominent subject. This compared to the others, which ranged from, at their lowest, 34 courses in engineering, and at their highest, 60 Skills Bootcamps in green (CFE, 2023).

In implementation, the first wave of Skills Bootcamps was affected by the pandemic which constrained employer engagement in co-design, although where they were involved, employers welcomed this as it assured them that courses would deliver the skills they needed (Williams et al, 2021). By wave 2, employers' involvement was configured as co-investment in two respects: financial/monetary (use of the discounted 30% employer contribution and the offer of guaranteed interviews) and in design and delivery (supporting curriculum development or delivery by offering guest speaking slots, or mentoring). The evaluation (CFE, 2023) indicated that for:

- Financial/monetary investment: employers saw it as their social responsibility to financially invest but this also enabled their training budgets to stretch further. However, in some cases, trained individuals moved onto other companies, leading employers to resent their financial investment in them.
- Non-financial investment: employers saw the value in supporting curriculum design to ensure the training delivered the skills they needed. Where they delivered curriculum elements, they saw this as 'giving back' for the support they themselves had received

in the early stages of their career. They could also see benefits from raising awareness of their sector or company. However, some Skills Bootcamps are less amenable to co-design of curriculum (such as HGV, which is the most prescribed Skills Bootcamp curriculum due to the licence requirements), so this was seen as a limitation.

- Where employers supported both elements of co-investment, they felt their contribution was much greater than the 30% suggested.

Providers' perceptions of good quality provision were linked in wave 1 to provision being employer led and meeting employers' skills needs (Williams et al, 2021). The quality of teaching and learning was a close second, with high quality, industry experienced teaching staff being seen as crucial. Providers also stressed the importance of learner views in assessing whether a quality Skills Bootcamp was achieved. The learner survey validated these perspectives and generally showed high levels of satisfaction with training. Their qualitative feedback stressed the centrality of the quality of teaching, and credibility of trainers, with industry insight, who also provided additional support to help learners navigate content.

In wave 2, these perceptions and factors denoting quality were reinforced (CFE, 2023). For example, employers indicated the importance of trainers who were experienced teachers, were knowledgeable about the sector and could deliver an industry-specific curriculum. However, factors that could affect perception of quality included the form of guaranteed interviews – for some candidates this focused on lists of job adverts rather than an arranged interview, for example, which again stressed the importance of employer engagement.

In respect of outputs, wave 2 evaluation used qualitative evidence from learners that indicated that courses increased confidence through the guaranteed interviews and skills gained through a Skills Bootcamp led participants to feel they had more credibility. There were indications from learners that being able to list a Skills Bootcamp on their CV led to an increased likelihood of being shortlisted with employers outside of the Skills Bootcamp. In wave 1 and wave 2, there was evidence (qualitative and anecdotal) of participants gaining new jobs and/or moving into apprenticeships. Where this happened, these learners often noted that the Skills Bootcamp had been good preparation, had led to enhanced skills in post, had an effect on pay and progression, and performance in job.

Ofsted, in their Skills Bootcamp Thematic Report (2022) stated that most providers organised the curriculum and teaching well. However, this was not consistent, and, with some providers, there could be a lack of rigorous pre-course assessment to tailor to learners' needs and measure their outcomes. Moreover, assessment practices varied and were 'often too weak.' In some cases, the courses did not allow time or opportunity for learners to master the skills being taught to a suitable level, which undermined outcomes. Furthermore, where courses were fully online with little teaching support, this could lead to poor experiences for learners.

There is a broader point raised by the Skills Bootcamp design, beyond inconsistent teaching quality, about how consistent courses are for the same industries and sectors, between providers and between waves. The evaluations to date do not specifically

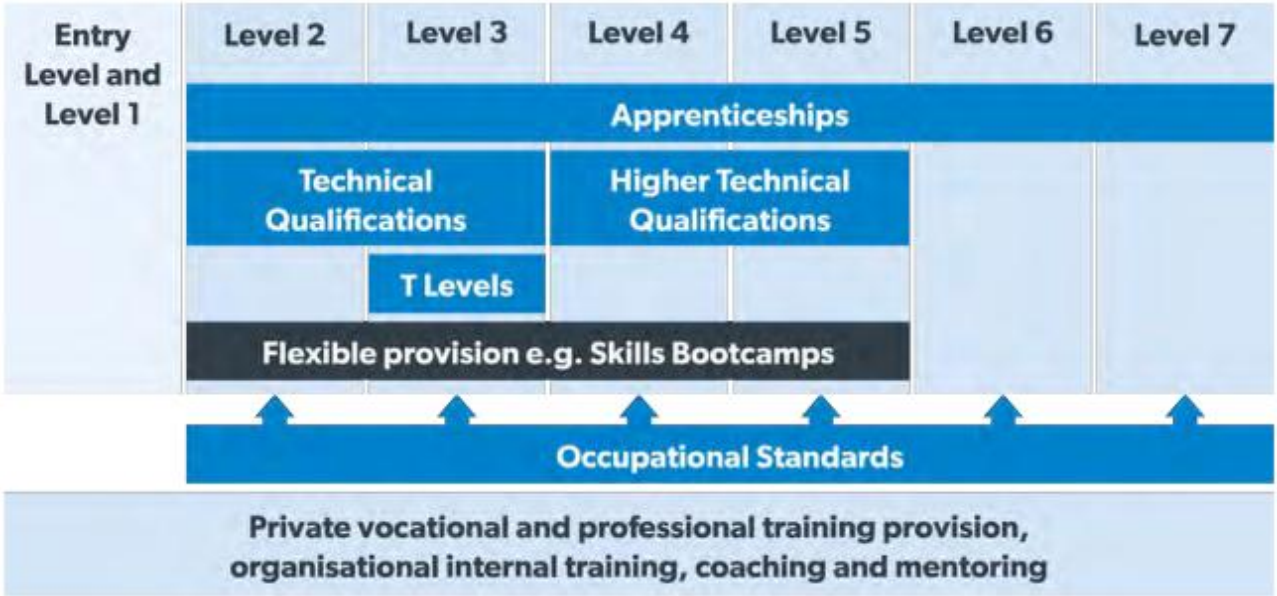
comment on this, although there are indications of variation and some belief that greater consistency would be valuable. Acting against greater curriculum consistency, may be the funding model. As the wave 2 report notes, the model operates annually, which can undermine consistency in provision by causing uncertainty (CFE, 2023). Perhaps more pertinent is commentary around the different credentials and outcomes seen in different Skills Bootcamps, including those in the same sector area, which emerged in both waves of evaluation. By wave 2, there are emerging indications that some providers would wish to see curricula 'tightened up' to be comparable, for example, in certain digital areas, all offering vendor certificates rather than some doing this and others offering certificates of completion (CFE, 2023).

Across both waves of evaluation common messages arise for improving Skills Bootcamp provision. These focus on ensuring there are referral routes that cover high quality information, advice, and guidance on Skills Bootcamps to ensure the opportunity is highlighted to relevant individuals and they have full insight and realistic expectations for training, future careers and progression. The importance of employer engagement and co-investment is stressed alongside the time involved in securing and sustaining these relationships. There is a need for clarity on outcomes and, specifically, a need to ensure the appropriateness of guaranteed interviews linked to the training and career goals. Participants may have their own goals for Skills Bootcamp outcomes which may not link precisely to the success indicators currently established.

1.2.1 Towards greater alignment

The Skills Bootcamps sit within the 'skills system' in England, in that they are commissioned by the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) and the Department for Education and are designed to respond to emerging skills needs and provide a flexible pathway to apprenticeships.

Figure 1.1 The skills system.



Source: IfATE, 2023 'A simpler skills system'

Desk research indicates that Skills Bootcamps can lead towards accelerated apprenticeships. This is where prior knowledge or skills can be accredited to the apprenticeship reducing the training required – although this still must meet the 12-month minimum duration requirement. This in turn means the apprenticeship can be completed more quickly and at lower cost to the employer. As such, as part of commissioning Skills Bootcamps through the dynamic purchasing system marketplace, stakeholders have indicated how the process now requires providers to specify where Skills Bootcamps align in some way with occupational standards, using the headers and subcategories to align with the IfATE occupational map. Providers are also required to indicate where Skills Bootcamps can be linked to an accelerated apprenticeship, an approach which is being tested in the year ahead. While these data may not be in the public domain, it suggests that links between the existing occupational standards and the emerging insights on changing occupational needs for people changing careers could be more systematically made.

This move towards consistency is also being recognised in the work of IfATE, which in June 2023, published a manifesto for 'A simpler Skills System'. Part of this focuses on providing employers with the flexibility they need to develop the future workforce through a more diverse range of training – still linked to occupational standards – but which might enable individuals to create learning journeys that are more personalised to them and the changing labour market. A focus for IfATE in the coming year is to approve Level 3 qualifications based on specialised learning, which can rapidly top up existing skills. This will require flexibility to develop and approve new qualifications not currently covered by occupational standards. This work will sit in the other new developments – such as provision being introduced to support the Lifelong Loan Entitlement and recognise the role that Skills Bootcamps can play in providing a rapid response to employers' demands as well as a pathway to apprenticeship.

However, this does not mean that all Skills Bootcamps will readily fit into the system – at least not immediately. Skills Bootcamps are also a way to respond to changes in occupation and skill specification that will take more time to move through the processes for approval into an occupational standard and it may not be necessary to include the specific curriculum of a particular Skills Bootcamp in a related occupational standard, should it be covered or incorporated through the broader terminologies therein. Overall, there are indications that Skills Bootcamps may be 'feeding forward' on the current shortages experienced by employers and playing to that gap, while enabling individuals to access short, sharp provision to support career changes. In turn, this may be supporting the pace of change the economy is now seeing.

2 About the research

IES was commissioned by the Gatsby Foundation to undertake research to build a better understanding of what the Skills Bootcamps deliver and how far this articulates with provision elsewhere in the English skills system. The initial stage involved a systematic extraction of information from Skills Bootcamps curricula to build a descriptive picture of content and design. This will form underpinning evidence to take forward further work on potential options to further enhance adult training provision. This chapter outlines the approach taken to the research over a three-month period, and the content of this report.

2.1 Scoping interviews

IES conducted scoping interviews with two policy stakeholders to clarify and gain an updated understanding of the Skills Bootcamps' policy and delivery, their purpose and any other developments, and insight on their fit in the technical education system. This helped inform the previous chapter on the skills context and added insight into the data analysis chapter.

2.2 Developing the sample of Skills Bootcamps for extraction

A sample of Skills Bootcamps to examine and extract from was selected from the DfE dataset of the 1800 Skills Bootcamps funded from March 2023[4] (see Table 2.1). A sample of Skills Bootcamps was selected to make analysis more manageable within the time and to reduce the risk of analysing duplicated Skills Bootcamps.

Table 2.1 Number of Skills Bootcamps being offered in each sector from March 2023

Sector	Number of Skills Bootcamps offered
Digital	1069
Construction	65
Engineering	102
Green Skills	122
Business administration	13
Creative industries	4
Health and Social Care	15

[4] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/skills-bootcamps-training-providers

Leadership and management	4
Hospitality	1
Rail	19
New to HGV driving	162
Upgrade current HGV licence	155
Return to HGV driving	69
Total	1800

Source: IES analysis of DfE data, 2024

The analysis incorporated the Skills Bootcamps with pathways to accelerated apprenticeship into the appropriate sectors and sampled from all sectors, except HGV. HGV was excluded as HGV Driving Skills Bootcamps are distinctly more prescriptive and standardised than other Skills Bootcamps. Even though numbers for some sectors were very small, the Skills Bootcamps cover roles with high vacancies or with current/future skills needs. For example, Health and social care had the highest number of vacancies in December to February 2023.[5]

Based on the selected sectors, there were 1,414 Skills Bootcamps being offered in England. The sample removed duplicates of the same Skills Bootcamp being delivered by a specified provider in multiple regions, which reduced the sample to 473, as shown in Table 2.2 Number of Skills Bootcamps being offered in a sample of sectors, excluding duplicates i.e. where they are offered by the same providerbelow.

Some Skills Bootcamps have the same name but are delivered by different providers; these remain in the sample to interrogate consistency between providers as these Skills Bootcamps may have different content and/or requirements.

Table 2.2 Number of Skills Bootcamps being offered in a sample of sectors, excluding duplicates i.e. where they are offered by the same provider

Sector	Number of Skills Bootcamps offered
Digital	288
Engineering	65
Construction	59
Green Skills	29
Rail	11
Health Social Care	7
Business Administration	5
Creative Industries	4
Leadership	4
Hospitality	1

5 https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peoplenotinwork/unemployment/datasets/vacanciesbyindustryvacs02

Total	473

Source: IES analysis of DfE data, 2024

The largest number of Skills Bootcamps (288) are in the Digital sector – which is unsurprising given the early phase focus on this sector. To obtain a number of digital Skills Bootcamps for the sample, which was more manageable and comparable to other industries, Digital Skills Bootcamps were categorised according to the pathways within the Digital route occupational map: Digital Business Services; Digital Production, Design and Development; and Digital Support Services. The Skills Bootcamps were also categorised based on their name and an understanding of the occupations within each of the three pathways, for example the 'Data analyst' Skills Bootcamp was coded to Digital business services, as it aligns closely with the 'Digital solutions technician' occupations. Following this, each of these three groups were randomly sampled proportionate with the number of Skills Bootcamps being offered within each, to achieve a selection of 141 digital Skills Bootcamps. Random sampling aimed to ensure a mix of course type, region/online and (type of) provider.

The other sectors are smaller, so all of these Skills Bootcamps were included in the sample. The end sample included 326 Skills Bootcamps, in the following sectors:

Table 2.3 Skills Bootcamps selected for the sample, by sector.

Sector	Count of Skills Bootcamps currently being funded
Digital	141
Engineering	65
Construction	59
Green Skills	29
Rail	11
Health Social Care	7
Business Administration	5
Creative Industries	4
Leadership	4
Hospitality	1
Total	326

Source: IES analysis of DfE data, 2024

The Digital Skills Bootcamps were clustered into groups of similar Skills Bootcamps (e.g. data analysis Skills Bootcamps) and a couple were analysed from each cluster to identify the associated occupational pathway. This was treated as a pilot to determine the feasibility of analysing a large number of Skills Bootcamps and the level of detail of the extraction protocol, ensuring some Skills Bootcamps across each sector were tested. The team found that since very few Skills Bootcamps had enough information to be aligned to an occupational standard, it would not be feasible to make a judgement for all the Skills Bootcamps. A judgement for occupational standard was made for a couple of Skills

Bootcamps within each sector based on which had the most relevant information available to make a judgment, and where possible, to achieve a range of Skills Bootcamps. All Skills Bootcamps which had a pathway or link to an apprenticeship were covered.

2.3 Data extraction and analysis

From the sample of Skills Bootcamps, information was extracted on their characteristics to help understand the extent of any trends, variation and gaps in delivery, skills development and groups targeted. It also aimed to understand where the Skills Bootcamps fit within the technical education system through identifying where they could be mapped to occupational standards. This also identified Skills Bootcamps that do not appear to be linked to existing occupational standards.

For the extraction of the curricula, an Excel extraction framework was used to capture consistent information in a row for each Skills Bootcamp, in addition to the data provided from DfE. Information collected covered the following variables:

- Characteristics: the name and type of provider (e.g. FEC, ITP or HEI/other); region and/or whether provision is online; entry requirements and targeted audience; level of the bootcamp; and duration and frequency and so forth. The analysis also captured where a Skills Bootcamp is a standalone or provided in multiple regions.
- Curriculum and approach: learning aims; assessment approach; level of employer engagement; skills developed through the course and offer of guaranteed interview; any accreditations or qualifications that are being delivered, as well as pathways to accelerated apprenticeship; and any mention of guaranteed interviews.
- The criteria whereby Skills Bootcamps were categorised as green Skills Bootcamps: these could cover a range of occupations in different sectors
- Pathways to accelerated apprenticeships: provide an opportunity to check that a clear pathway is identified.

This information was also used to determine any linkages to occupational standards. This report includes brief descriptive analysis of the data captured in the extraction framework.

3 Characteristics

This section outlines the main characteristics of the Skills Bootcamps, which are largely already provided in the DfE dataset of Skills Bootcamps.

3.1 Region

There were 326 Skills Bootcamps in the sample. The sample excluded multiple iterations of the same bootcamp, meaning where a Skills Bootcamp was offered in multiple regions, only one of them would be included in the sample. As a result, some of the Skills Bootcamps in the sample were also offered in different regions. The following analysis did not identify all the sectors of Skills Bootcamp offered in a region.

Table 3.1: Regions in England where the Skills Bootcamps have been sampled from

Region	Count of Skills Bootcamps in sample
East Midlands	63
East of England	17
London and South East	21
North East	95
North West	40
South West	50
West Midlands	31
Yorkshire and the Humber	9
Total	326

Source: IES analysis of DfE data, 2024

The Skills Bootcamps in the sample covered all nine regions of England (see Table 3.1). London and the South East were combined due to low numbers. The North East had the highest provision of Skills Bootcamps at 95, which was 29% of all Skills Bootcamps in the sample, followed by the East Midlands at 63 which was 19% of all Skills Bootcamps.

There were twice as many Skills Bootcamps in the sample in the North (North East, North West, Yorkshire and Humber) (144) as the South (South East, South West, London) (71). Of Skills Bootcamps sampled, 44% were in the North, 25% (80) were in the East (East Midlands, East of England), 22% in the South and 10% (31) in the West (West Midlands).

3.1.1 Geographical spread of sectors

In each region, the range of sectors covered by the Skills Bootcamps varied. The spread of sectors in each region is shown in Table 3.2 Number of Skills Bootcamps in each

sector by region (in the sample) overleaf. Areas with high concentrations of one sector included the North East, where just over two-fifths (42%) of Skills Bootcamps were in the engineering sector (n=40) and in the East Midlands where most Skills Bootcamps, 81%, were in the digital sector (n=51). This is compared to 20% of Skills Bootcamps being in the engineering sector and 43% of Skills Bootcamps being in the digital sector across England. In all other regions the most prevalent sector was digital, except East of England where nearly half (47%) of Skills Bootcamps were in construction.

No region had a Skills Bootcamp in every sector, which is expected due to the small numbers in some sectors. London and the South East and the North East covered eight sectors each. Engineering Skills Bootcamps had the highest geographical coverage as there was an engineering Skills Bootcamp in all regions except the East of England.

Table 3.2 Number of Skills Bootcamps in each sector by region (in the sample)

	East Midlands	East of England	London and South East	North East	North West	South West	West Midlands	Yorkshire and the Humber	Total
Business Admin	1		1	1		1		1	5
Construction	3	8	2	20	11	11	4		59
Creative Industries			1	2			1		4
Digital	51	5	7	17	22	22	17		141
Engineering	5		3	40	5	6	2	4	65
Green Skills	2	2	1	13	1	8	2		29
Health Social Care	1		2			1	3		7
Hospitality						1			1
Leadership		2		1	1				4
Rail			4	1			2	4	11
Total	63	17	20	95	40	50	31	9	326

Source: IES analysis of DfE data, 2024

3.2 Location/mode of training

Providers also recorded information for the location of training. Over half (53%) of the Skills Bootcamps had their location as either solely online, a combination of online and in-person or with an online option. A university in the North East, for example, offered digital and green Skills Bootcamps online (five digital, one green skills) with an option for on-campus employability sessions. The evaluations explored in section 1.2 indicate that Skills Bootcamps run online may have implications for quality and experience. A small proportion (8%) of Skills Bootcamps specified multiple locations in a region or 'various' locations.

3.3 Providers

Table 3.3 Type of provider offering Skills Bootcamps (in the sample)

Provider type	Count of Skills Bootcamps currently being funded
College	68
University	42
Other	216
Total	326

Source: IES analysis of DfE data, 2024

Based on the DfE data for the Skills Bootcamps sample, 68 Skills Bootcamps were run by colleges (21%), 42 by universities (13%) and 216 (66%) by other providers (Table 3.3). Analysis of the 'other' providers shows that nearly three-quarters (72%) of these were independent training providers (n=155). Some were independent training providers partnered with a college (n=15), training providers associated with private companies or employers (n=17), such as an employer that offered a Skills Bootcamp in Plant Operations, its specialism. For 10 Skills Bootcamps, the provider was listed as a local authority or chamber of commerce, some of which mentioned planning to subcontract the training. There were three providers (covering 18 Skills Bootcamps) where the desk research could not establish any additional information to categorise them and so, these remain listed as 'other'.

There were 12 universities offering 42 Skills Bootcamps. A training provider was mistakenly recorded as a University in the DfE data for one of the Skills Bootcamps and so this has been re-coded. Nearly four-fifths (79%) of the Skills Bootcamps offered by universities were in the digital sector (n=33), with the remaining made up of green skills (4), engineering (2), health and social care (1), construction (1) and creative industries (1) sectors.

In the sample, colleges offered Skills Bootcamps across all sectors except creative industries and leadership. In colleges, the most numerous Skills Bootcamps were digital (29%), followed by engineering (26%). In the DfE categorisation of 'Other' providers, the most numerous Skills Bootcamps were digital (41%), followed by engineering (21%).

There were a wide range of providers in each sector, with 130 different providers in the sample overall. However, the rail Skills Bootcamps were mostly offered by one provider – seven out of the 11 rail Skills Bootcamps were provided by one organisation.

3.4 Pathway to accelerated apprenticeship

Six of the Skills Bootcamps were recorded as being pathways to accelerated apprenticeship, which means that their assessment and/or learning as part of the Skills Bootcamp could be recognised as part of an apprenticeship. In these cases, if a Skills Bootcamp learner went on to an apprenticeship, the learning covered in the Skills Bootcamp could be removed from their apprenticeship training plan, allowing their apprenticeship to have a shortened duration.

This is a new model that is currently being tested and it is due to be expanded, hence the small numbers at this stage. Five of the Skills Bootcamps with pathway to accelerated apprenticeship were in the digital sector, four of which were run by the same provider, and one was in the rail sector.

3.5 Green Skills Bootcamps

Table 3.4 Green Skills Bootcamps by sector (in the sample)

Sector	Count of Green Skills Bootcamps
Engineering	30
Green Skills	29
Construction	18
Digital	5
Business Administration	1
Total	83

Source: IES analysis of DfE data, 2024

Separate to the sector categorisation, which includes a green skills sector, 83 Skills Bootcamps were labelled as green Skills Bootcamps (Table 3.4). These were in the sectors of engineering, construction, digital and business administration. All Skills Bootcamps in the green skills sector were marked as green Skills Bootcamps.

It was not possible to find information on the criteria for categorising a Skills Bootcamp as ‘green skills’ delivery. The green Skills Bootcamps examined in this review alluded to green skills and/or sustainability, in their name and/or curriculum. However, it was not always clear how much green skills content the Skills Bootcamps covered. For example, a Skills Bootcamp in AI for Environmental Sustainability is described as having ‘an environmental theme’ but the curriculum appeared to be otherwise focussed on general AI skills.

4 Availability of information

From the data extraction work it can be asserted that the information in the DfE dataset of Skills Bootcamps was not an accurate reflection of all the Skills Bootcamps that were running. Some of the information for the sample of 326 Skills Bootcamps was found to be inaccurate or out of date. For example, in some cases, the reported name of the Skills Bootcamp differed to the information found on the provider's website. For 49 of the Skills Bootcamps (15%), the link provided did not lead to information about the Skills Bootcamp or led to an error page. In most cases a replacement link could be found, but in other cases no information on the Skills Bootcamp could be extracted.

Characteristics and curriculum information was extracted for 78% of the Skills Bootcamps in the sample (255), although some of this information was limited. For 67 Skills Bootcamps (21%) no information could be extracted on the specific Skills Bootcamp. Reasons for lack of information included:

- The Skills Bootcamp was not being run at the time of the research – it may have been in the past or will be in the future, but registration was not open.
- The Skills Bootcamp was not being run at all – the provider confirmed the Skills Bootcamp was not running.
- The Skills Bootcamp could not be found. This suggested the Skills Bootcamp was either not running or was being run under another name where it could not be confirmed they were the same. For a couple of Skills Bootcamps across the sample, information on the specific Skills Bootcamp could not be extracted because the provider had multiple different Skills Bootcamps listed under the name provided.
- The Skills Bootcamp was being run but not taking applicants currently.

Additionally, four Skills Bootcamps (1%) were excluded because the course appeared to be identical to another Skills Bootcamp in the sample, under a different name.

It was often the case that information was only available online at the recruitment stage, so where Skills Bootcamps were full or not currently taking applicants, no further information could be extracted. In some circumstances, where the provider's overview page had general information for their Skills Bootcamps (such as entry requirements), this was included even where no information could be found on the specific Skills Bootcamp. The next chapter reports on the level of information that could be found for each variable.

5 Findings and analysis

Where information was available, it was summarised on a number of characteristics for each Skills Bootcamp. These were: target audience, apprenticeship level, duration, frequency, entry requirements, funding, whether the Skills Bootcamp was provided in multiple regions, curriculum, employment skills, assessment approach, outcomes, accelerated apprenticeships, employer information and links to occupational standards.

Given the limited availability and accuracy of information, in many places this report is constrained in the conclusions that it is possible to draw. Where this is the case, the report highlights the number of cases (n) where information was available against the initial sample size of 326 Skills Bootcamps.

5.1 Target audience

The analysis in this report sought to understand the target audience for Skills Bootcamps and whether their purpose centred on entry into a new profession or career progression. Skills Bootcamps have been categorised as those aimed at **upskilling** pre-existing employees in the industry or those with prior qualifications/experience in the industry, and/or **re-skilling** new entrants into the industry who may be unemployed.

From the sample (n=326), 194 Skills Bootcamps had information available online for target audience, although for two it was unclear whether they were aimed at upskilling or reskilling (Table 5.1). For the 192 Skills Bootcamps with information on upskilling and reskilling, the majority were aimed at both upskilling and reskilling, targeting employed and unemployed people (63%), implying that those were open to anyone with the option of further tailoring of courses for employers.

Table 5.1 Count of which group Skills Bootcamps are aimed at.

Target audience	n	%
Upskilling	35	18.2
Reskilling	36	18.8
Upskilling and reskilling	121	63.0
Total valid cases	192	

Source: IES analysis of DfE data, 2024

Similar proportions of Skills Bootcamps were aimed at upskilling only (18%) and reskilling only (19%). Whilst target audience varied for most sectors, all rail Skills Bootcamps were aimed at reskilling only, and high proportions of engineering Skills Bootcamps were aimed at upskilling only (20%). Providers made specific references to unemployed and self-

employed (for those upskilling) as well as unemployed people and those returning to work.

5.2 Entry Requirements

Entry requirements for the Skills Bootcamps in the sample included the area or region that the participant worked or lived in, experience in the profession, qualifications, and a knowledge or skill requirement.

Table 5.2 Count of Skills Bootcamps entry requirements.

Entry Requirements	n
Geographical area	50
Experience in profession required	6
Experience in profession desired	12
Qualification	10
Knowledge or skill requirement	13
Computer equipment	5
Total valid cases (n)	139

Source: IES analysis of DfE data, 2024

Out of the 139 Skills Bootcamps where information was available on entry requirements, 84 (60%) had specific entry requirements stated on their webpage and 55 (40%) stated there were no entry requirements (Table 5.2).

The most common requirement for the sampled Skills Bootcamps centred on the area or region in which participants lived or worked in (n=50) where several Skills Bootcamps stated that residents living within a commutable distance from the region may also attend. There was little variation on whether this requirement was present when the mode of delivery for a Skills Bootcamps was listed as online or in-person.

Additionally, six Skills Bootcamps required experience in the occupation and 12 stated that this was desirable. This requirement for previous experience was seen in construction (n=8), digital (n=5), engineering (n=3) and green skills (n=2). Requirements ranged from an interest in the area and basic skills to needing specific qualifications such as ACS in construction or NVQ for plumbing. A Skills Bootcamp in electric vehicles stated that applicants must have a Level 3 in Motor Vehicles or three years' experience in the car mechanic industry.

The analysis found that a total of 11 Skills Bootcamps were advertised as being intended for new entrants to the occupation, but still had entry requirements. On further investigation, requirements in these cases cover pre-requisites for the relevant occupations such as prior coding experience as well as desirable qualities such as a general interest in the area.

In addition, a small number of Skills Bootcamps (n=5) mentioned a requirement for participants to have access to computer equipment and an internet connection. All five of these delivered training online. Some Skills Bootcamps in the construction sector also had requirements related to health and safety standards for working in the sector such as needing a driving license or passing a drug and alcohol test.

5.3 Qualification level

Skills Bootcamps were mainly delivered at Levels 3-5, although Level 2 was available in some sectors (Table 5.3).

Table 5.3 Level of bootcamp

Level	Count	%
2	9	13
3	43	62
3 or 4	3	4
4	8	12
5	6	9
Total valid cases (n)	69	

Source: IES analysis of DfE data, 2024

In the Skills Bootcamps sample (n=326), only one fifth (21%) of Skills Bootcamps had information about qualification level (n=69), suggesting learners may not be able to ascertain level before signing up for a Skills Bootcamp. In this desk research and the existing evaluations of the Skills Bootcamps it was unclear how important knowing the Level of a training course was to potential learners, however this type of information is useful, for example to careers professionals who can advise on how different Levels of courses translate to more well-known qualifications such as A levels and degrees. The majority of Skills Bootcamps where information was available (62%, n=43) were at Level 3. The spread across Level 2 (13%), Level 4 (14%) and Level 5 (9%) was similar, with three Skills Bootcamps allowing for participants to work toward either a Level 3 or Level 4 qualification.

Table 5.4 Proportion of levels offered across the four major sectors (in the sample)

Level	Construction (%)	Digital (%)	Engineering (%)	Green Skills (%)	Total (n)
2	20	3	9	100	7
3	70	63	73		37
3 or 4		3	18		3
4	10	17			7
5		14			5
Total valid cases (n)	10	35	11	3	59

Source: IES analysis of DfE data, 2024

Levels of the Skills Bootcamps were broadly similar across sectors (Table 5.4). Across the four major sectors in the sample, namely, construction, digital, engineering, and green skills, the majority provided Level 3 provision. All Level 5 Skills Bootcamps were in the digital sector. Construction (70%), digital (63%) and engineering (73%) typically delivered at Level 3.

5.4 Duration

The standard duration for a Skills Bootcamp is expected to be 12 weeks with a maximum duration of 16 weeks. An aim for this analysis was to understand the average duration advertised in the sample and how this varies (Table 5.5). Most (n= 210) Skills Bootcamps had information available on this – in the format of the number of weeks (n=195) and hours (n=84). Many cases only had information available on one or the other measure. Where information for both was available, average number of hours per week was calculated.

Table 5.5 Average duration of Skills Bootcamps (in the sample)

	Number of weeks	Total number of hours	Average number of hours per week
Average	12.4	119.3	11.9
Range	2-24	8-480	0.5-40
Valid cases (n)	195	84	66

Source: IES analysis of DfE data, 2024

On average, the sampled Skills Bootcamps ran for 12.4 weeks with a total of 119.3 hours. An average of 11.9 hours per week denoted that the majority of Skills Bootcamps ran part time. However, it should be noted that the range for number of weeks (2 to 24) and hours (8 to 480) was very large, meaning that there was significant variation across Skills Bootcamps. For instance, those Skills Bootcamps that ran for two to three weeks only, would often run full-time. Other Skills Bootcamps ran from anywhere between two and 16 weeks depending on whether delivery was full-time or part-time.

Table 5.6 Sector-wise average duration of Skills Bootcamps (in the sample)

	Average number of weeks	Average number of hours	Average number of hours per week	Total valid cases (n)
Construction	11.6	80.5	14.2	59
Digital	12.6	188.9	18.3	141
Engineering	13.1	60.2	4.3	65
Green Skills	10.4	60.7	6.1	29

Source: IES analysis of DfE data, 2024

The average number of weeks across the construction (11.6), digital (12.6), engineering (13.2), and green skills (10.4) was similar and around the standard 12 weeks duration (Table 5.6). However, the average number of hours differed significantly across sectors with engineering and green skills having an average duration of about 60 hours. This was higher for construction with an average duration of 80.5 hours. In comparison, the digital sector has a much longer duration with an average of 188.9 hours. A higher average number of hours per week in this sector also suggests that a higher number of Skills Bootcamps within the sector are full-time.

5.5 Funding

According to the policy, Skills Bootcamps should be fully funded for individual learners (free at the point of access), which was the case with the sample. Five Skills Bootcamps specified that a local authority was providing funding for the course.

Where providers specified a cost, this referred to the employer contribution towards the funding (n=69). Of the 69 Skills Bootcamps that had information available on employer contribution, the large majority (86%, n=59) specified that employers were expected to contribute 30% of the course fee for employees, 13% (n=9) specified a contribution ranging from 10% to 30% depending on the size of the organisation.

For one Skills Bootcamp in electric vehicle charging installation, the documentation stated that it was free for unemployed and self-employed people if they met the standard new role/increased responsibility criteria, and that funding was available for employers if they could prove it would be positive for their development. It also mentioned learners having to buy course books themselves. However, it is possible this was no longer running as a Skills Bootcamp, as the publicity material made no mention of Skills Bootcamps or their funding.

Some Skills Bootcamps also indicated other costs were involved. For example, a Skills Bootcamp in arboriculture appeared to charge for certain/additional units, for example, the unit in chainsaw maintenance and crosscutting was £139.00. One provider mentioned that childcare costs for the course were covered and a free London travelcard from zones 2-6 would be provided.

5.6 Regional Provision and frequency

Based on the DfE data it was possible to establish which Skills Bootcamps in the sample were duplicates (meaning they were provided in multiple regions), and which Skills Bootcamps were ‘one-offs’ (meaning they were provided in one region) (Table 5.7).

Table 5.7 Count and percentage of Skills Bootcamps provided in multiple regions, by sector (in the sample)

Sector	Multiple regions (n)	Single region (n)
Business admin	2	3
Construction	22	37

Creative industries	0	4
Digital	60	81
Engineering	31	34
Green Skills	3	26
Health Social Care	1	6
Hospitality	0	1
Leadership	0	4
Rail	5	6
Total	124	202
Total (%)	38%	62%

Source: IES analysis of DfE data, 2024

From the sample of 326, 124 Skills Bootcamps were provided across multiple regions (38%), and 202 (62%) were single region. A high proportion of green Skills Bootcamps were provided in a single region reflecting that these Skills Bootcamps are likely more recent and less established or were responding to hyper-local demand.

Data on frequency of how often each Skills Bootcamp is running was limited. This ranged from a fortnightly frequency (for a couple of Skills Bootcamps in heat pump installation and maintenance, run in multiple regions) where demand was high, to twice a year.

5.7 Curriculum and Assessment Approach

From the Skills Bootcamps sampled, around half (169) had information available on the course curriculum. This was not standardised and varied greatly depending on the course and sector.

From the sample, 45 had information available on the assessment approach (Table 5.8). These included examinations, projects, assignments, portfolio building and/or certification. The majority of Skills Bootcamps offered project (n=15, 34%), examination (n=10, 23%), portfolio (9, 20%) and assignment (n=8, 18%) assessment types with a small number (n=2, 5%) that specified self-study.

Table 5.8 Assessment approach (in the sample)

Assessment approach	Count (n)	%
Exam	11	24
Project	15	33
Assignments	8	18
Portfolio	9	20
Self-study	2	4
Total (n)	45	

Source: IES analysis of DfE data, 2024

Across provider types, there was similar variation (Table 5.9 Assessment approach by provider type). Notably, universities predominantly used project (42%), or portfolio (42%) based assessment approaches. For providers categorised as other, examination (33%), project (33%) and assignment (26%) assessment types were most commonly used.

Table 5.9 Assessment approach by provider type

	Exam	Project	Assignments	Portfolio	Self-study	Total
College (%)	20	20	20	40	0	5
Other (%)	30	33	26	7	4	27
University (%)	8	42	0	42	8	12

Source: IES analysis of DfE data, 2024

5.8 Employability skills support

In addition to the topics mentioned in the curriculum that providers aimed to cover during the course, a quarter (25%) of Skills Bootcamps (n=83) explicitly mentioned that they provided general employability skills. This included help with CV writing, interview preparation and presentation skills. A number of providers also provided continued career support and alumni membership which is explored in more detail in section 5.9.

5.9 Outcomes

5.9.1 Guaranteed interview and other outcomes

A guaranteed interview with an employer at the end of the Skills Bootcamp course was part of the Skills Bootcamps provision (Table 5.10 Overall and sector-wise guarantee of interview), which is intended for participants who are unemployed or reskilling.

Table 5.10 Overall and sector-wise guarantee of interview

	Guaranteed interview provided	Interview provided, not guaranteed	Guaranteed interview for unemployed learners	Career support - mock interview, events	With local employers	Employer specified
Count	65	11	5	5	16	8
%	76	13	6	6	19	9
Construction (%)	65	10			25	
Digital (%)	74		10	13	3	
Engineering (%)	65	13			22	
Green Skills (%)	50	17			33	

Rail (%)	67	33
Total valid cases (n)	86	

Source: IES analysis of DfE data, 2024

Of the Skills Bootcamps in the sample, 86 referred to interviews. Of these, 76% (n=65) stated that they provided a guaranteed interview to course participants, 13% (n=11) stated that they provided an interview, but it was unclear whether this was guaranteed, and 6% (n=5) stated that they provide job interviews with employers for those participants who are unemployed at the time of the course. Nearly a fifth of these Skills Bootcamps (19%) specified that interviews were available with a local employer (n=16). Five Skills Bootcamps mentioned guaranteed mock interviews and interview support (6%). Only eight Skills Bootcamps specified the names of organisations the interview would be with. A provider offering two Skills Bootcamps described 'mock interviews' with an employer but also referred potential job offers from those.

Across sectors, Skills Bootcamps in construction (25%), engineering (22%) and green skills (33%) were more likely to state that they worked with local employers to offer a guaranteed interview. Four Skills Bootcamps in the construction sector were working with professional body registered employers in their local area (such as CITB and CECA). The analysis found that rail Skills Bootcamps were largely aimed at reskilling but are not amongst those sectors with higher reported guaranteed interviews.

The lack of specification around guaranteed interviews raised similar concerns to those expressed by Ofsted (2022) and other evaluations explored in Chapter 1, which suggested a range of formats and some weakness/low quality when interviews were not aligned to a suitable occupational job, and/or outcomes centre on job search rather than an actual job to interview for. Although more information is needed to explore this further, it is expected that learners would be interested in understanding which employers they may interview with when signing up to a Skills Bootcamp.

Information for other outcomes and support available to learners was found for 31 Skills Bootcamps in the sample. The most common source of additional support within these cases was membership to a network such as an alumni body (n=14) or further career support and advice after the programme (n=20). Other Skills Bootcamps provided mentoring, help with building a portfolio and engagement opportunities with an employer. One provider mentioned learners would have a portfolio of work samples and a presentation to deliver to prospective employers at their guaranteed interview. Another mentioned a quarterly event where learners were invited to present their final project to local professionals, which was likely in lieu of a guaranteed interview as this was not mentioned by the provider. Examples of this practice were identified in the wave 1 evaluation.

5.9.2 Accreditation/Qualification

From the sample (n=326), 32% (or n=105) of Skills Bootcamps linked their provision to the attainment of an accreditation or qualification. Excluding the 71 cases where no information was provided or Skills Bootcamps were duplicates, this increased to 41%. The

majority of Skills Bootcamps that provided a linked accreditation or qualification did so in the form of a corresponding qualification level or industry-related qualification examination; for example, a Level 3 Certificate in Rail Engineering Traction and Rolling Stock, CompTIA security+ qualification or AWS Cloud Practitioner/AWS Solutions Architect Associate Certification. A number of Skills Bootcamps provided a certificate of achievement on completion to each participant only as proof of their participation. Many university providers also specified that this course was uncredited. It was often unclear whether the certifications were industry accredited or the degree of independence of assessment.

5.9.3 Accelerated apprenticeships

Of the six Skills Bootcamps that are categorised as offering a pathway into an accelerated apprenticeship, it was only possible to find information for a linked apprenticeship for four. Only two of the Skills Bootcamps (including the one in rail) specifically stated that learners of the Skills Bootcamp would have access to an accelerated apprenticeship. The rail Skills Bootcamp indicated that learners would complete mandatory elements of the apprenticeship, and the digital Skills Bootcamp indicated that learners would transition directly into the practical elements of a Digital Marketing or Content Creator apprenticeship. Three of the Skills Bootcamps did not state having a pathway to accelerated apprenticeship, and for one no information could be found on the Skills Bootcamp. However, one of the Skills Bootcamp providers offered a relevant apprenticeship.

During the review, the research team identified nine Skills Bootcamps in the sample that were not categorised as such but could be suited to be a pathway to an accelerated apprenticeship. This included, for example, where the same provider offers an apprenticeship which could follow on from the Skills Bootcamp, or where providers offered completers a guaranteed interview for an apprenticeship. Additionally, three Skills Bootcamps in the sample which were not categorised in the data appear to already be pathways to accelerated apprenticeship.

5.9.4 Linkage to occupational standards

None of the Skills Bootcamp providers in the sample referred explicitly to any related occupational standards regarding their Skills Bootcamps, although some suggested job roles or pathways to apprenticeships that matched to occupational standards.

For more detailed analysis of occupational standard linkages, Skills Bootcamps were explored based on the sampling strategy explained in section 2.2, which led to 61 Skills Bootcamps being analysed, at least two for each sector (Table 5.11).

Table 5.11 Observed linkages to occupational standards.

Observed linkage to occupational standard	Number of Skills Bootcamps
Pathway/link to apprenticeship	14
Significant linkage	5

Some linkage	18
Some linkages across different standards	3
Potential linkage	11
No clear linkage to one occupational standard	10
Total	61

Source: IES analysis of DfE data, 2024

For most of these Skills Bootcamps it was possible to observe some linkages and therefore establish whether they were a 'close fit' or might align to an occupational standard. However, there was not enough information to say whether this was a deliberate link or establish that the curriculum matched to the occupational standard. The judgements were largely based on the name of the Skills Bootcamp and suggested jobs/roles matching to the name of an occupational standard (77 providers suggested jobs/roles that learners from the Skills Bootcamp could progress to), the curriculum content aligning with the summary, KSBs (knowledge, skills and behaviours) and duties associated with an occupational standard, the level of the Skills Bootcamp and associated accreditation/qualifications, and/or whether the Skills Bootcamps had pathways/links to apprenticeships. Often making a judgement required using all the information available on the Skills Bootcamp.

Where Skills Bootcamps had pathways to accelerated apprenticeships, and other links to apprenticeships, clearer judgements on links to occupational standards could be made. The analysis showed that 14 had pathways/links to apprenticeship. All Skills Bootcamps with clear pathways/links to apprenticeships were analysed as part of the occupational standard judgements, meaning the Skills Bootcamps which were identified in the sample (n=326) as being a pathway to an apprenticeship, accelerated or otherwise.

For five of the Skills Bootcamps, significant linkages were observed, for example the language in the curriculum matched the language used in the occupational standard description. For those Skills Bootcamps it could be assumed that the providers had consulted occupational/apprenticeship/T-Level standards when developing the Skills Bootcamps. This similarly applied to the 14 Skills Bootcamps with pathways/links to apprenticeships.

For 11 Skills Bootcamps, potential linkages were found but it was difficult to categorise them, or not enough information was available on the Skills Bootcamp or occupational standard to confirm a linkage. For example, a Skills Bootcamp in 3D CAD for Backstage Theatre involves working with CAD (computer-aided design) 3D modelling software which is associated with the Production, Design and Development pathway. However, it was developed specifically for those looking for jobs in technical modelling of theatre and stage space, meaning it was unclear how transferrable these skills were. This was linked to the CAD technician occupational standard which has yet to be developed.

For 10 of the Skills Bootcamps there was no clear linkage to a single occupational standard. In some cases, the Skills Bootcamps appeared to align to an occupational standard that was in development, and for others the information suggested that the Skills Bootcamp covered elements of multiple different occupational standards. For example, in

the creative industries, no linkages were observed, as the curriculum and suggested roles varied and did not cover one occupation. In one digital sector Skills Bootcamp, the suggested job roles did not all appear to link to the curriculum. It is possible that some Skills Bootcamps covered elements relevant to multiple occupations, expanding the options available to learners.

Based on the limited information that could be extracted for the Skills Bootcamps, it could be difficult to find the appropriate occupational standard. For example, the occupational standard for Digital marketer (OCC0122) had been identified as a close fit for digital marketing Skills Bootcamps in the digital sector. However, this occupation is on the Sales, Marketing and Procurement route rather than the Digital route, which would be expected for a digital sector Skills Bootcamp. This type of example revealed the complexity of the skills system whereby occupations exist in different sectors, the employers who invest in Skills Bootcamps may identify with one particular sector and the potential participants may identify with either an occupation or a sector when looking for skills training. Good quality information is needed for potential learners about how occupations sit in different sectors and the potential pathways between these sectors such as via Skills Bootcamps.

The interview findings confirmed that Skills Bootcamps do not aim to align to occupational standards due to the flexible nature of their provision. They are designed to be more responsive to change, which may outpace occupational standard development. Furthermore, they can be tailored to specific employers' needs and roles and therefore will have additions to the curriculum that may not be generalisable to a standard. However, changes are being made to reflect more links to occupational standards for example, DfE is using the terminology of IfATE pathways for local authorities to bid into. It is possible that more Skills Bootcamps in the sample are linked to occupational standards, however the published information is too limited to make these assumptions.

6 Summary and scope for further research

This chapter summarises the research findings and scope for further research.

6.1 Summary

Overall, the sample of Skills Bootcamps covered a wide range of Skills Bootcamps in different sectors and regions, also covering all green Skills Bootcamps and Skills Bootcamps with pathways to accelerated apprenticeships. Ultimately, limited information could be extracted for the Skills Bootcamps. Many of the Skills Bootcamps in the sample appeared to not be running and categorisations of Skills Bootcamps did not appear to be up to date, for example, where Skills Bootcamps were marked as pathways to accelerated apprenticeships. In some cases, it was unclear whether the course provided was still being run as a Skills Bootcamp. As a result of the partial availability of information, the conclusions that can be drawn are limited. It also suggests that more could be done to ensure consistency and minimum standards of information provided to potential learners.

These findings reflect that Skills Bootcamps primarily target all groups, for upskilling and reskilling, with very few Skills Bootcamps requiring prior experience. Some sectors reflected this in different proportions, for example, rail Skills Bootcamps were largely aimed at reskilling, and high proportions of engineering Skills Bootcamps were aimed at upskilling.

There was some sector variation across most factors examined in the analysis. For example, a high proportion of green Skills Bootcamps were provided in a single region reflecting that these Skills Bootcamps were likely to be more recent and less established or were responding to hyper local demand.

Skills Bootcamps overwhelmingly adhered to policy requirements, for example across levels, duration, and funding. This was more difficult to ascertain for the guaranteed interviews requirement. Out of the Skills Bootcamps that any information could be extracted for, only a third (34%) mentioned interviews, and even smaller numbers gave further detail on what the job interview would be for or the employer that was involved. In terms of other outcomes, few gave information on whether certifications or qualifications were industry accredited, on the independence of assessment and on the occupations for which the Skills Bootcamp would deliver skills.

Links to occupational standards could be observed mostly where Skills Bootcamps were linked to apprenticeships in some way. Otherwise, the lack of sufficient information in the public realm made it difficult to explore this further. However, findings from the literature and from stakeholder interviews suggest that changes are being made to the system to align the Skills Bootcamps more closely to occupational standards or pathways. Overall,

the published information on Skills Bootcamps was focussed on marketing to individuals and employers and was not suitable for detailed insight. This suggests there is scope for further research, consulting with Skills Bootcamps stakeholders directly on how Skills Bootcamps are operating in the skills system, which IES and Gatsby intend to take forward.

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