



worldskillsuk
excellence at work

WorldSkills UK
National Finals

Annual Review 2023-24



Funded by
UK Government

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Summary of the ROI findings from Frontier Economics

WorldSkills UK commissioned Frontier Economics to update the economic review of activities. They estimated that WorldSkills UK's activities generate a high return on investment, **£3.50 for every pound invested** by the UK government.

This high level stems from:

- elevating teaching standards in further education and technical skills training
- skills training in a competitive environment leading to improved labour market performance and increased earnings
- knowledge-sharing among participants inspires peers, improving their performance and earnings
- increasing information about careers that improves educational and job outcomes and reduces dropout rates

Frontier Economics also highlighted benefits from WorldSkills UK's activities that could not be quantified but may be significant, such as potential reductions of skills gaps and productivity gains in firms employing learners on our programmes. Our workforce development is likely to increase the retention of teachers and reduce recruitment costs, and our promotion of global excellence in skills through research, sharing best practice and benchmarking against other countries is valuable.





We were delighted to host our fourth International Skills Summit where we welcomed some of our international partners as speakers and launched our Manufacturing Excellence report, in partnership with BAE Systems, highlighting the need to change the narrative

Foreword

Welcome to our 2023-24 annual review. As you will see, it has been an impressive year of achievements for WorldSkills UK as we continue to work with our partners in UK governments, industry and education to embed world-class skills across the UK.

Our impacts have been recognised against our three core aims:

- raising standards through international benchmarking
- championing future skills through analysis of rapidly changing economic demand
- empowering young people, from all backgrounds through competitions-based training.

We are incredibly proud that our programmes provide both a kitemark for excellence and act as a catalyst for world-class technical teaching. As a long-standing member of WorldSkills, the global body for skills development, our international collaborations have been instrumental in allowing us to share the latest training techniques and methodologies with further education, higher education institutions and employers across the UK to drive real change.

We are making great strides in embedding world-class teaching and learning through our Centre of Excellence workforce development programme. This programme goes from strength to strength, with continued support from NCFE, UK governments and leading education and industry partners. We have also expanded our CPD offering through the WorldSkills UK Learning Lab, with a record number of educators using our online resources.

about careers in manufacturing. Our EDI Engineering event in December focused on how to develop inclusive curriculum to help widen access to this vital sector and our EDI Heroes Awards in March celebrated the fantastic work that individuals and organisations are already doing to make sure young people from all backgrounds can achieve excellence in technical education.

2023 was cause for celebration as EuroSkills, Europe's largest skills competition, returned following a period of disruption due to the pandemic. Team UK gave a medal-winning performance which saw success in competitions including Digital Construction, Mechatronics and Robot Systems Integration. Our new strategic partnership with Pearson has provided opportunities to shine a spotlight on Team UK more than ever before in the build up to WorldSkills Lyon 2024.

We also saw an increased involvement in our National Competitions with over 6,000 registrations, culminating in an amazing celebration of skills hosted across Greater Manchester. These competition-based training programmes are designed by industry experts and help young people grow personally and professionally by developing their technical and employability skills. We continue to use the success stories of participants to drive our careers advocacy work. By collaborating with leading careers partners and focusing on inclusivity, we're inspiring the next generation and elevating technical education across the UK.

Looking to the year ahead, we're committed to transforming teaching practices and learner outcomes through collaboration, innovation, and world-class methodologies. Our aim is to help build a world-class skills economy, giving employers the pipeline of talent they need to grow and giving young people the best start to their careers. We are incredibly grateful to our partners in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland for their unwavering support. Together, we can achieve a world-class skills system across the UK, delivering success and prosperity for young people, educators, and employers.



Marion Plant OBE, FCGI
Chair, WorldSkills UK



Ben Blackledge
Chief Executive, WorldSkills UK



Raising standards, through international benchmarking and professional development

Reach:

- **137,900 learners** benefited across all our activities, keeping us on track to meet our 2023-25 target of 300,000
- We connected with **all 190 General Further Education Colleges** (GFEs) and 823 Independent Training Providers

Educator participation:

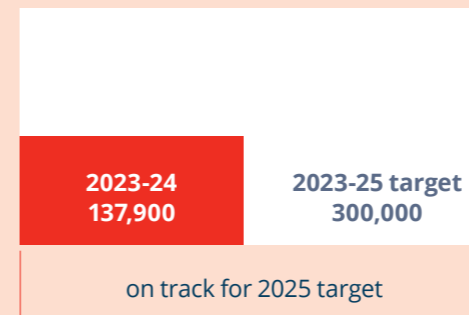
- **5,780 educators** engaged in our Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activities, exceeding our goal of 5,000
- We achieved repeat engagement with **272 establishments**, almost three times our aim

WorldSkills UK Centre of Excellence:

- **88 General Further Education Colleges** (GFEs) in the UK are participating, hitting 93% of our 2023-25 target of 95 GFEs
- **26 colleges** from **15 Institutes of Technology** (IoTs) enabled a focus on higher level and specialist technical skills

Satisfaction and impact:

- **93%** of educators in Centre of Excellence professional development activities are satisfied, surpassing our 80% target
- **91%** of educators believe the training enhanced their teaching, understanding or delivery



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823
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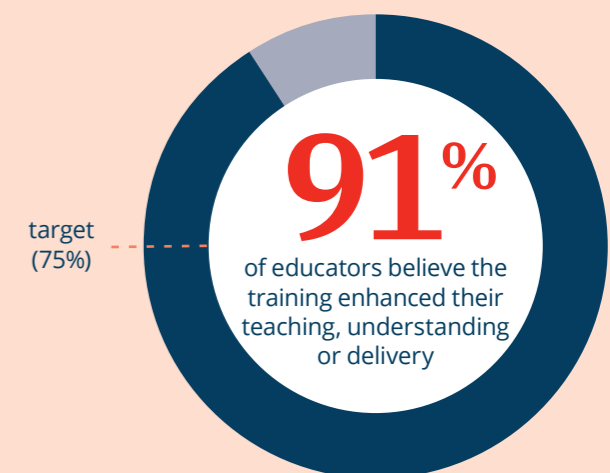
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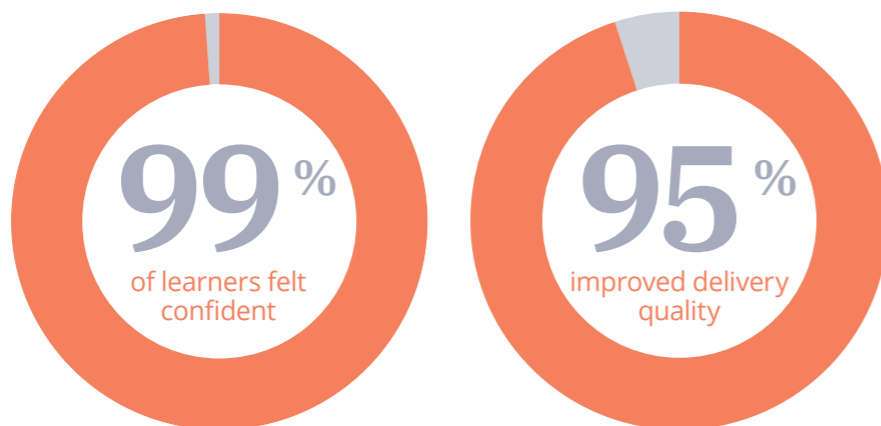
The programme positively impacted the learning experiences of **85,000** learners

Over **4,300** educators participated, with **125** taking technical skills masterclasses

A leap towards teaching excellence – the Centre of Excellence workforce development programme

WorldSkills UK's three-year Centre of Excellence pilot programme, in partnership with NCFE, concluded in August 2023. It equipped leaders, teachers, and trainers with skills to raise the quality of technical and vocational learning.

Programme benefits:



- **99% of learners felt confident applying skills to future careers**
- **95% of participants improved delivery** and assessment quality
- **79% of educators improved** teaching methods
- **79% of learners reported improved technical skills**
- **70% reported better performance;** 72% felt more motivated
- **58% of leaders updated course content;** 46% enhanced teacher support.

The pilot improved teaching quality, learner skills, motivation, and aspirations. Following its success, a refined programme was launched in September 2023, offering:

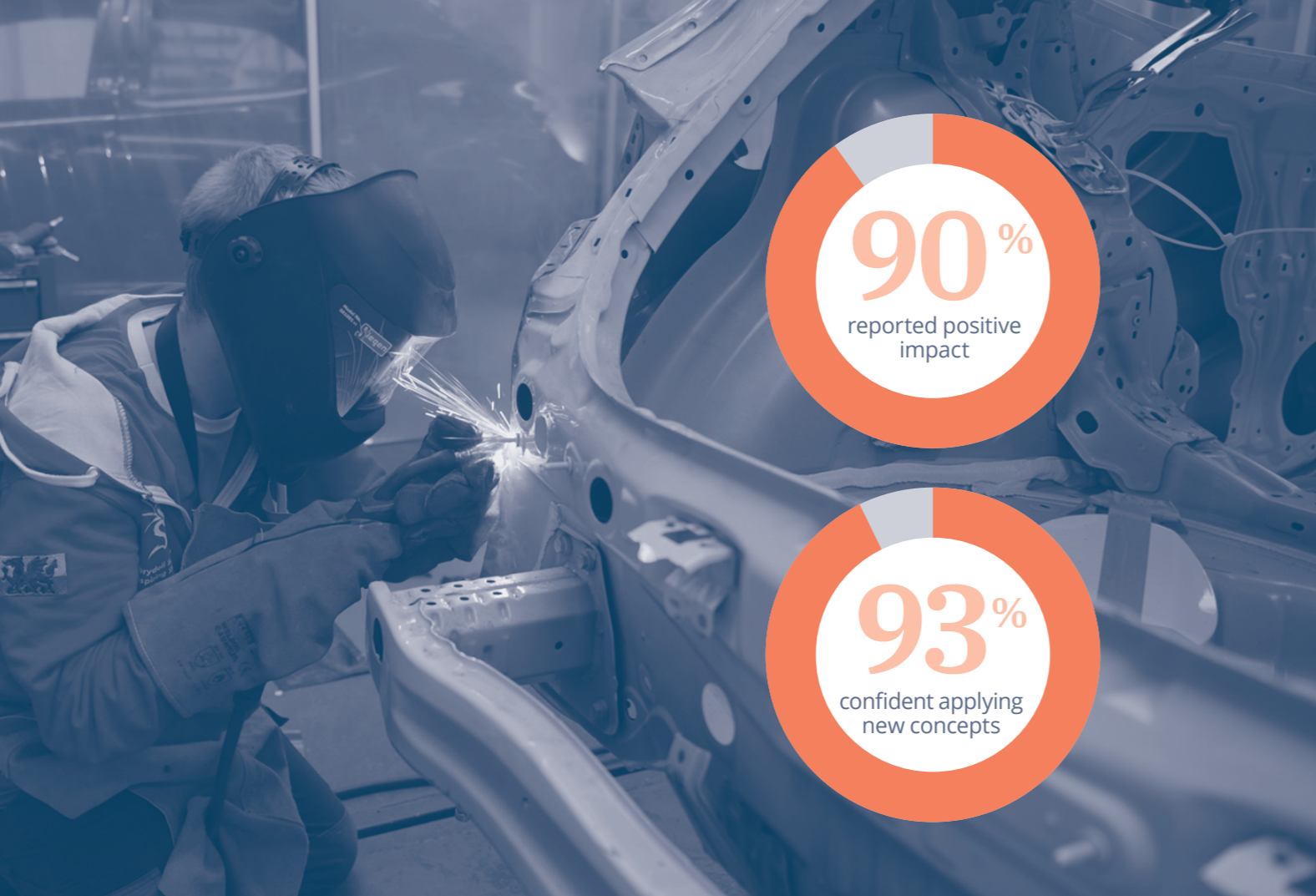
- **World-Class Teacher Training:** accessible top-tier training for all teaching practitioners
- **Network for Innovation:** a collaborative space for educators, industry professionals, and international partners
- **Global Community for Thought Leadership:** sharing insights on international skills development
- The cascading learning approach, popular and impactful in the pilot, continues to extend benefits to high volumes of educators and learners.

Since the start of the updated programme in 2023-24, the outcomes from the Centre of Excellence programme are impressive:

Extensive reach:

- **Learner engagement:** the programme positively impacted the learning experiences of **85,000** learners as educators implemented internationally inspired pedagogical practices
- **Organisational participation:** the programme expanded from the pilot to engage **119** organisations across the UK, including 88 General Further Education Colleges
- **Educator development:** over 4,300 educators participated, with 125 taking technical skills masterclasses in digital and advanced manufacturing skills.

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Ingredients for success report

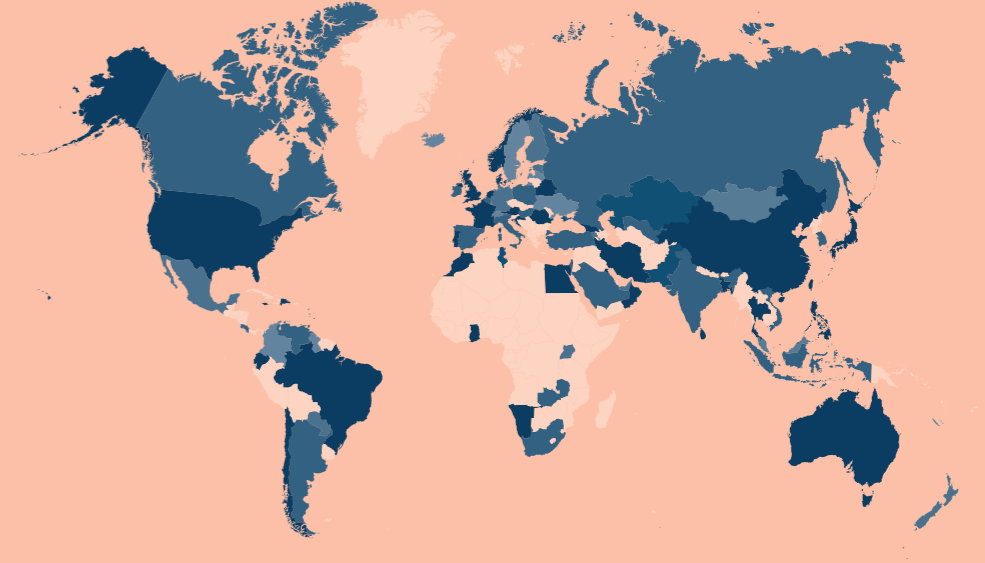
Through the updated Centre of Excellence programme, we commissioned the Association of Colleges to explore best practices in teaching, learning, and assessment in the UK further education and skills sector to support leaders to embed excellence. The report highlighted the importance of a whole organisation approach to delivering excellence in skills, investing in staff and improving employer engagement and identifies opportunities for international benchmarking. It has helped shape the next phase of the Centre of Excellence.

Learners from across the UK now have a better grasp of performing key tasks more efficiently and to higher standards

Strong outcomes:

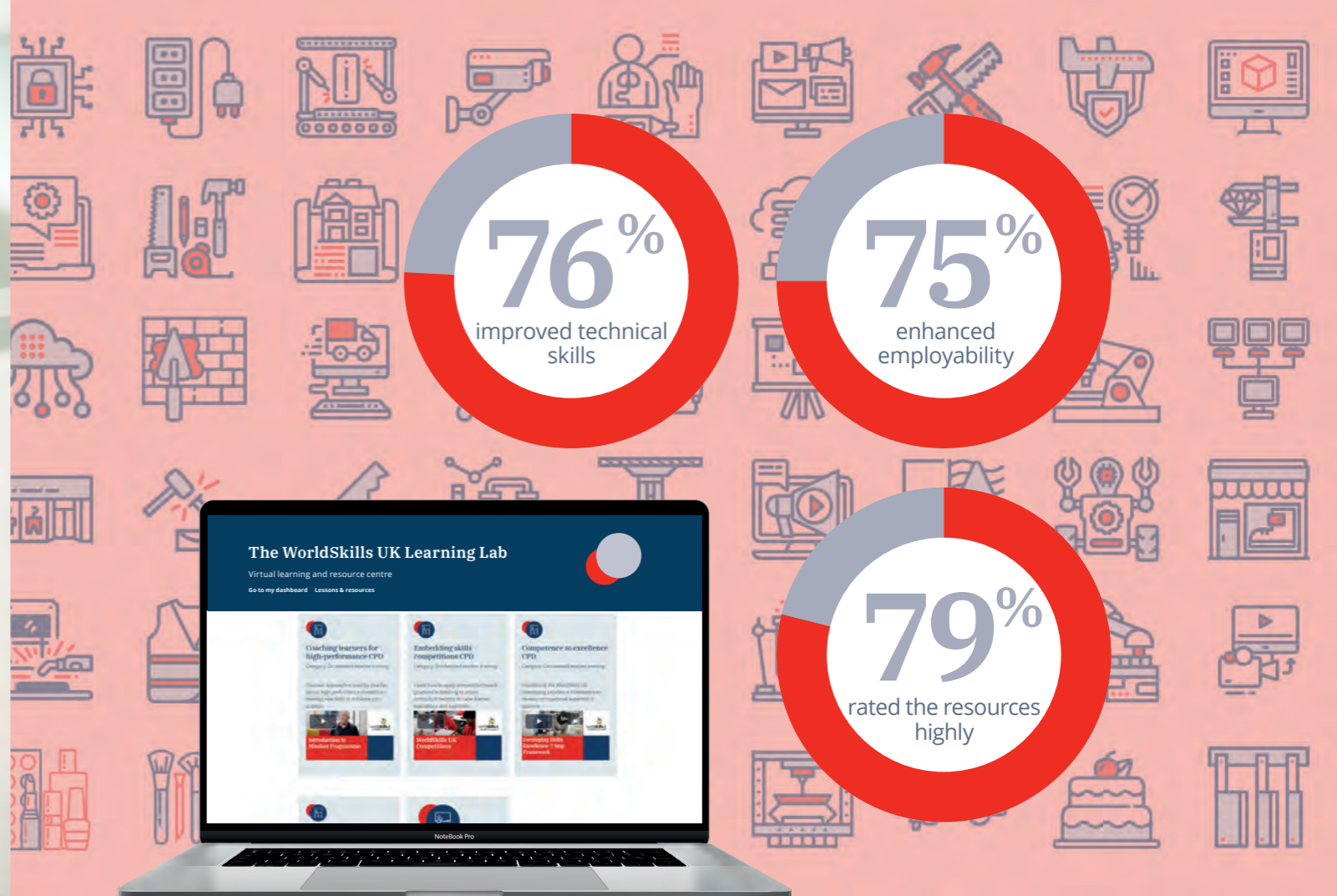
- **Enhanced learner capabilities:** The Centre of Excellence has empowered learners to recognise excellence individually and understand the journey to achieve it
- **Improved standards:** learners from across the UK now have a better grasp of performing key tasks more efficiently and to higher standards, along with developing coping techniques for stress and pressure.
- **Positive feedback:**
 - **90% reported a positive impact** on how they delivered training and assessment to their learners, improving the overall quality of delivery
 - **93% felt confident** in applying new concepts.

A global community that brings together sector leaders, employers, and government to network, contribute to research, learn from international insights and champion the demand for UK skills excellence



Global Community for Thought Leadership

This strand of the Centre of Excellence brings together sector leaders, employers and governments to network, research, learn from international insights and champion UK skills excellence. We held our inaugural roundtable in Manchester in November 2023, showcasing collaboration between government, education and employers. Our second event in March 2024 focused on the Harrington Review to boost UK growth, with input from government departments, major employers and FE leaders.



Extending CPD opportunities – online resources on the WorldSkills UK Learning Lab

WorldSkills UK has developed significant online resources on its Learning Lab, offering CPD for educators and materials for classrooms and workshops. The on-demand curriculum content and real time benchmarking improve delivery and make world class skills development accessible. The tools help young people across the UK measure their technical skills against national standards.

In 2023-24, 680 young people across the UK participated in online benchmarking activities through mindset and technical masterclasses aligned with new national standards.

Comprehensive resources:

Resources include 22 in-depth skill-specific modules on teaching and learning excellence and 20 shorter tools for initial assessments, progress checks and end-point preparation.

Teachers assess and benchmark learners' skills, knowledge and behaviours using a unique benchmarking tracker to identify progress and areas for development.

In the last year
a total of
1,428
educators accessed
these resources



Digital support for educators:

The platform offers on-demand curriculum content and real-time benchmarking, enhancing curriculum delivery and making world-class skills development more accessible.

Impactful outcomes:

Enhanced skills development

- 76% of learners reported an improvement in technical skills from completing the resources
- 75% agreed that their personal and employability skills were enhanced through the resources

High-quality resources

- 79% of learners rated the quality of the resources as either excellent or good.

“Well set out and easy to follow course with excellent demonstrations and practical exercises to help you learn and improve.”

Feedback from educator on the Learning Lab



International Skills Summit

In May 2023, we hosted our fourth International Skills Summit in Newcastle, focusing on future skills at national and city-region levels. It featured an international insights panel that looked at global partnerships and international benchmarking. 97% of attendees gained a better understanding of WorldSkills UK, and 90% learned about the importance of international benchmarking.

Through such strategic international partnerships and events, WorldSkills UK continues to inform skills policy and elevate standards in technical education and apprenticeships.

Learning from the best – transfers of good practice through international collaborations

WorldSkills UK has been actively collaborating with international partners to enhance educational standards and share best practice. These partnerships include WorldSkills organisations from Taiwan, France, the Netherlands, Australia, Korea, India, Hungary, Barbados, Finland, Kenya and Japan.

WorldSkills Netherlands said: “Collaborating and sharing knowledge about organising skills competitions is invaluable for the development of our own organisation. We believe that this exchange strengthens the special relationship between WorldSkills UK and WorldSkills Netherlands”.

“The innovation hub is an excellent forum where educators can come together and share good practice.”

Feedback from attendee at a Network for Innovation session

“Really interesting to hear about international practice.”

Feedback from attendee at a Network for Innovation session





Championing future skills, through analysis of rapidly changing economic demand

We have significantly enhanced STEM skills training by actively partnering with sector and industry stakeholders

Meeting the needs of the future – focussing on STEM and digital skills

WorldSkills UK supports UK competitiveness by inspiring young people and partnering with sectors to develop world-class skills with a focus on key sectors.

We reviewed the skill areas in our competitions and added Additive Manufacturing and Renewable Energy as pilot competitions, competing in both at WorldSkills Lyon 2024.

STEM skills training was enhanced through partnerships with industry stakeholders, enriching CPD programmes, career advocacy, competition training and insights work.



Understanding challenges for UK manufacturing and the role for the WorldSkills UK – *Manufacturing Excellence* report

This report, commissioned by WorldSkills UK, supported by BAE Systems and produced by the Learning & Work Institute, found skills gaps limiting the manufacturing sector's growth and job creation. There is rising demand for new skills and an ageing workforce, and most young people avoid manufacturing careers due to negative perceptions and poor career advice. Few employers actively combat these challenges.

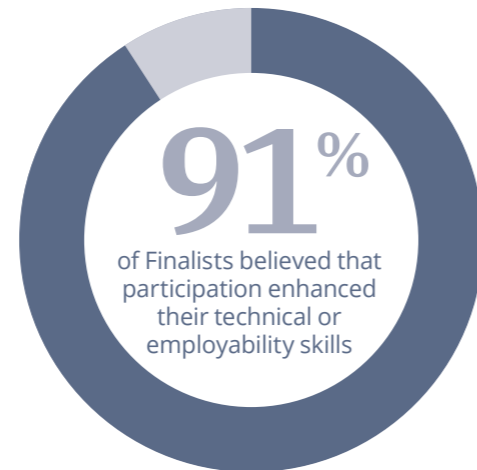
In response, WorldSkills UK is:

- promoting diverse skills champions to inspire youth
- improving access to world-class CPD and technical training via the Centre for Excellence
- partnering with Make UK, Gambica and BPP Education Group to ensure manufacturing employers support the technical education workforce.

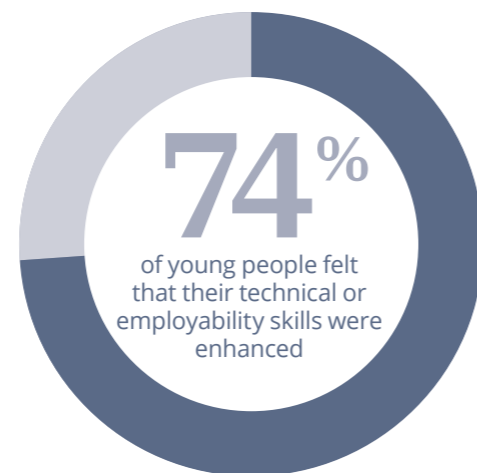


Empowering young people, from all backgrounds, through competitions – based training and careers advocacy

137,000
young people's career journeys were enhanced by WorldSkills UK



6,745
young people benchmarked through competitions and assessment tools



- **Strong reach:** WorldSkills UK enhanced the education, skills and career journeys of more than **137,000 young people** in 2023-24, through competition-based training, improved teaching standards and engaging career encounters
- **Widespread benchmarking:** 6,745 young people were benchmarked against national and international standards in 2023-24, through local, national and international competitions and other benchmarking and assessment tools

- **Competitor satisfaction:** 91% of competitors in the National Finals believed that participation enhanced their technical or employability skills
- **Online benchmarking:** 74% of young people felt that their technical or employability skills were enhanced
- **Ethnic minority representation:** the participation of young people from ethnic minority groups in National Competitions increased to 14%.

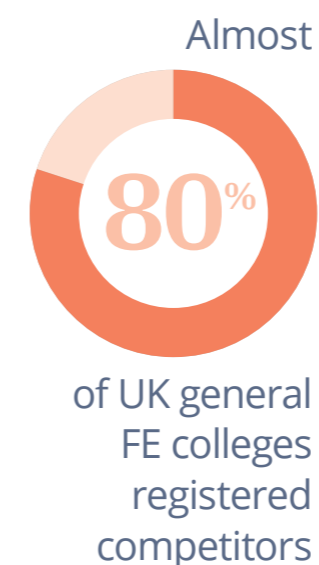


2023 cycle saw
6,200
registrations from
340
organisations

Achieving skills excellence – National skills competitions 2023

Growth:

- The 2023 cycle saw a remarkable registration of 6,200 young people from 340 organisations across 51 skills
- Registrations surged by 16% compared to 2022, with the North West of England leading, followed closely by Wales
- WorldSkills UK's Foundation Skills for students with SEND attracted over 450 registrations, up from 2022
- STEM and digital skills registrations increased by 40%, with notable growth in digital, IT, automotive technology, and electrical installation
- Almost 80% of UK general FE colleges registered competitors, with nearly 90% of registrants aiming for level 3 or 4 qualifications.





Raising skills standards and celebrating excellence: National Finals 2023

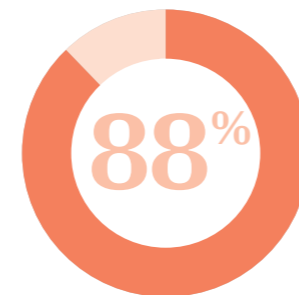
420
talented
young people
competed in
45
skills

The 2023 National Finals in Greater Manchester saw 420 talented young people compete in 45 skills (and 60 young people in the eight foundation skills competition) and highlighted the region's technical education and skills offer. Organisations from the devolved nations of the UK performed especially well, taking nine of the top ten spots in the medal league table.

It was an inspiring experience for competitors, supporters and visitors with many young learners witnessing the excitement and expressing interest in participating in the future. The finals also identified 50 individuals with potential to join the international development programme for future WorldSkills competitions.

WorldSkills UK's engagement programme enabled visitors to be inspired by young people honing their technical and employability skills. Many joined the Business Brunch at Manchester College, hearing how collaboration can deliver world-class skills for thriving regional economies across the UK.

In November, gold medal winners attended a reception at the House of Commons which gave the then Minister of State for Skills,



acknowledged
that competitions
boosted their
personal and
employability skills

Apprenticeships and Higher Education, Rt Hon Robert Halfon an opportunity to engage with gold medallists, discussing their aspirations and remarkable achievements.

Positive outcomes:

- **94%** of survey respondents from the 2023 National Finals **agreed that participating in competitions improved their technical skills** and **88% acknowledged that competitions boosted their personal and employability skills:** increases from 2022 by 6% points and 3% points respectively
- **Educator feedback:** educators reported overwhelmingly positive outcomes for their learners from attending the events:
 - **enhanced employability skills:** improved project planning, management, confidence, and resilience, with in-person competition being a key contributor
 - **networking opportunities:** connections with peers in their skill or industry, including other competitors and Squad members
 - **new experiences:** fresh perspectives on education and skill development, insight into workplace applications, and increased exposure to potential careers and employers.



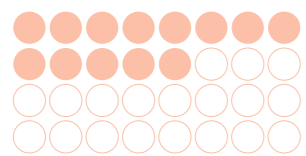
A Triumph for Team UK: EuroSkills Gdańsk 2023

Team UK's performance:

Team UK, with 19 talented individuals, competed in 16 skills competitions at EuroSkills in Gdańsk, Poland, in September. They secured one gold (Digital Construction) and two bronze medals (Plumbing and Heating, and Hairdressing), and earned six Medallions for Excellence (Web Technologies, Joinery, Mechatronics, Electrical Installations, Restaurant Service and Robot Systems Integration). The UK ranked 13th among 32 nations. This event was a stepping stone towards WorldSkills Lyon 2024, with competitors in the early stages of their international training journey. Team UK's success was celebrated in October at the Houses of Parliament, attended by MPs, government representatives, media and key stakeholders.

19
talented individuals

16
skills competitions



placed 13th
of 32 nations

Devolved Nations' performance:

Team UK included exceptional talents from the devolved nations. Nathaniel Patrick from New College Lanarkshire competed in the team competition, ICT Specialists whilst Welsh competitor Ruben Duggan won a bronze medal in Plumbing and Heating. Four competitors from Northern Ireland also made their mark, including Daniel Knox for Electrical Installations, and Charlie Carson and Jason Scott, medallion winners in Robot Systems Integration.

Gearing Up for WorldSkills Lyon 2024:

Following EuroSkills, the countdown to WorldSkills Lyon 2024 began, with a squad of 70 young people undergoing rigorous training. A strategic partnership with Pearson was secured to support Team UK and enhance their profile.

Team UK's
lineup for
EuroSkills
Gdańsk 2023
featured
exceptional
talents from
the devolved
nations.

47,000
meaningful
encounters

900
hours volunteered
by alumni

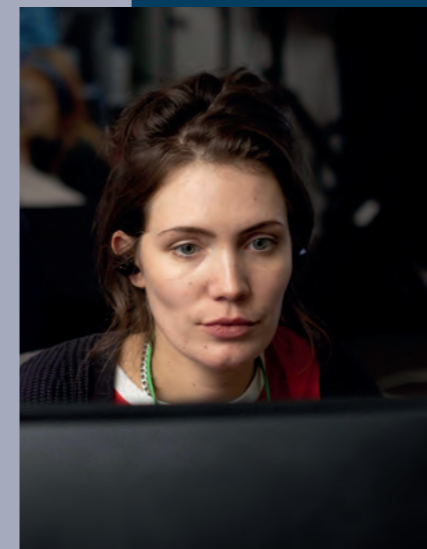
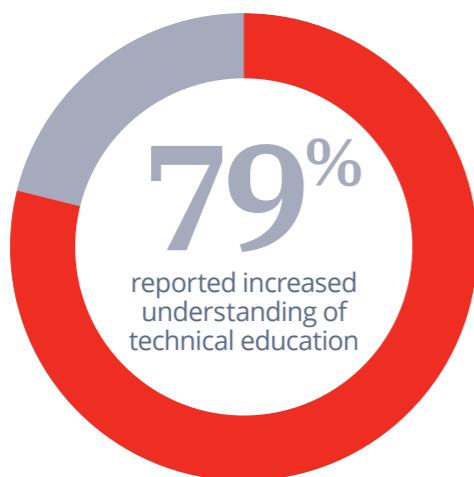
10,000
young people
engaged face-to-face

Raising the profile of technical education and skills – careers advocacy and information activities

Through 2023-24, WorldSkills UK enhanced its career advocacy through partnerships with organisations such as The Careers & Enterprise Company, Youth Employment UK, Education and Employers, and National Careers Week CIC. These collaborations provided opportunities for in-person and virtual career encounters throughout the UK.

These activities were part of our promotion of technical education and skills and facilitated 47,000 career encounters giving young people insights and inspiration into technical pathways. Skills Champions (ex-competitors) volunteered for almost 900 hours, encouraging and informing young people towards technical education and apprenticeships. 34% of speakers at the events were from ethnic minority backgrounds, and 50% were female.

As a result, 76% reported improved knowledge of technical training, with 53% considering apprenticeships or technical careers. Educators also saw benefits, with 79% reporting increased understanding of technical education and apprenticeship options by young people.



Interactive webinars during Green Careers Week

WorldSkills UK, in collaboration with Education and Employers, EDF Energy, IMI, and Air Products, supported Green Careers Week alongside National Careers Week CIC. We hosted three successful interactive webinars highlighting green careers, technical pathways, and skills to support Gatsby Benchmarks 2, 5, and 7. These sessions engaged over 1,600 students from 55 secondary schools across the UK. Topics included green apprenticeships in energy, manufacturing, and automotive sectors, featuring Q&A sessions and quizzes to enhance student engagement, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).



Focus on priority skills at Skills Cymru

In October 2023, WorldSkills UK, in partnership with Inspiring Skills Excellence in Wales, hosted a successful event at Skills Cymru, highlighting career opportunities in the health and science, digital, and creative sectors, with inspirational Skills Champions leading interactive sessions where students engaged in hands-on activities. These sessions provided meaningful and high-quality career experiences for over 2,500 attendees.





EDI Heroes

Progressing Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

Giving young people from all backgrounds the best start in their technical training and careers is at the heart of all of our programmes. We are also proud to work with education and industry partners on specific initiatives that show the importance of widening access to excellence in technical education.

EDI Heroes Awards:

Our Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Heroes Awards, organised in partnerships with UVAC and the Skills & Education Group, celebrated the fantastic achievements of individuals and organisations who have gone the extra mile to make sure that young people from all backgrounds can progress in their technical learning.

The ceremony was held in the House of Commons, with support from Charlotte Nichols MP and was attended by over 100 nominees, partners, MPs and industry leaders.

EDI Engineering Event:

In December, WorldSkills UK, in collaboration with MTC Training, AoC, ETF and the Institute of Mechanical Engineers, hosted representatives from across the UK to discuss the challenges of diversity in this vital sector and strategies for making training in the engineering and manufacturing sectors more inclusive.

Thanks to our Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Group who advise on our EDI strategy and support all our activities.



Funding and resourcing

WorldSkills UK saw another successful financial year.

We brought in over **£7m** of diversified income in 2023-24

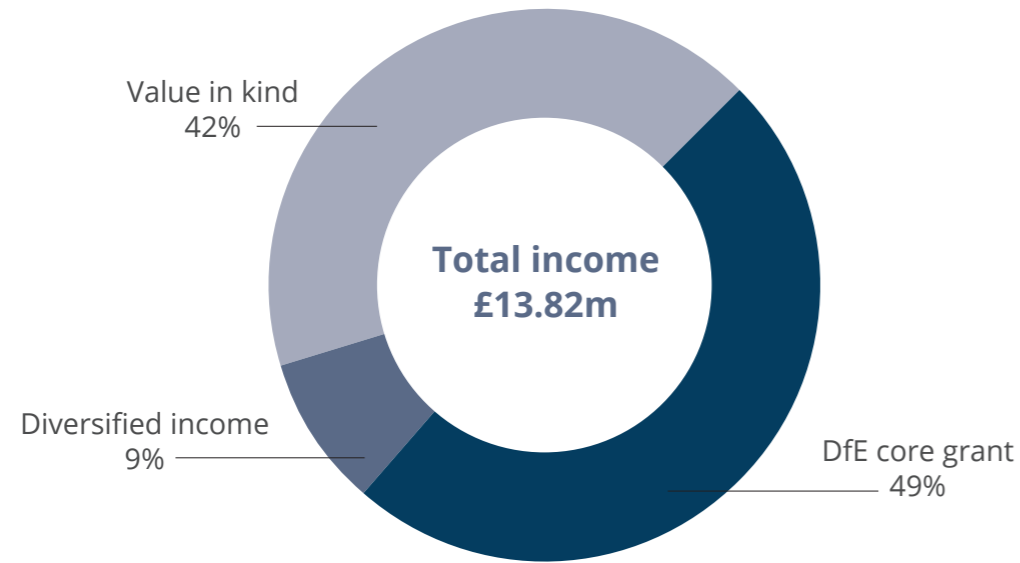
For the second year running, non-core income exceeded core government income with significant leverage of funding against the second year of our core grant from the Department for Education, from commercial and investment partners, and other UK governments. NCFE continued to be our major partner in the Centre of Excellence.

We brought in over £7m of diversified income in 2023-24, slightly below 2022-23, including over £520k of direct cash income from commercial investors. Co-investment from our continuing and new partnerships with employers, education providers and other UK governments through resources, materials and equipment (Value in Kind) totalled £5.8m.

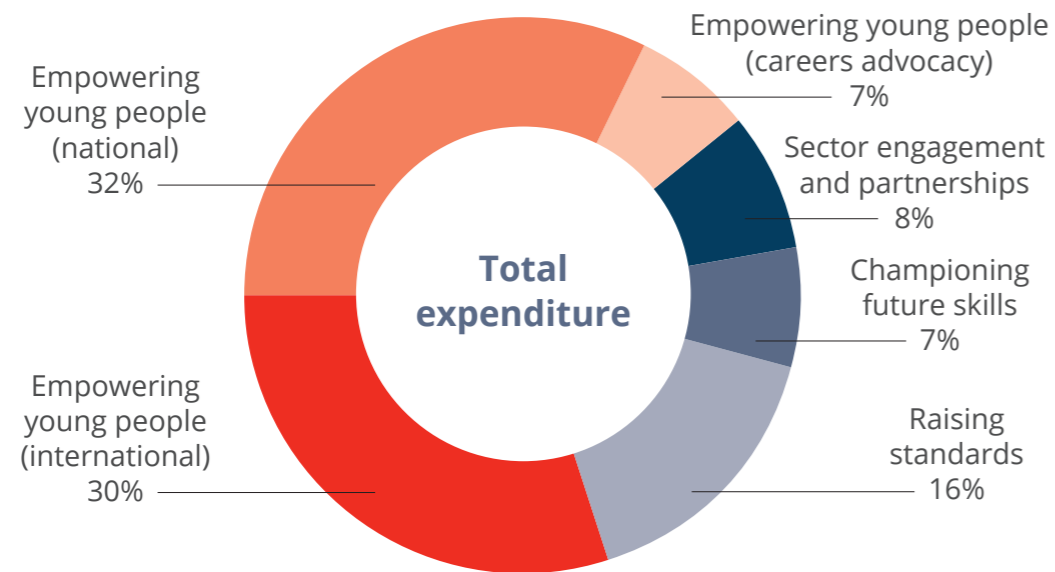
During 2023-24, we diversified our investment partnerships, focussed on engagement across a range of WorldSkills UK programmes and more participatory relationships with investors. This provides a good base for sustainable commercial relationships. Alongside these, a significant sponsorship agreement for Team UK competing at WorldSkills Lyon 2024 was formed with Pearson.

Note: Co-investment (value in kind) calculations are estimates based on information from donor partners. This amount is included in the income chart.

Total income 2023-24



Total expenditure 2023-24



Core partners and supporters

- 3DGBIRE
- ACTAN
- AIM Qualifications and Assessment
- Air Products
- Airbus
- Association of Apprentices
- Association of Colleges
- Association of Employment and Learning Providers
- Association of Professional Landscapers
- Autodesk
- BAE Systems
- Balfour Beatty
- BBC
- BESA
- BPEC
- British Council
- BSIA
- Cadline
- Cheshire College (South & West)
- Coleg Cambria
- ColegauCymru
- Collab Group
- College Development Network
- Colleges Scotland
- Craft Guild of Chefs
- Create Education
- CSL
- Didactic Services
- Doncaster College
- EC Council
- EDF Energy
- Eng EPA
- Engineering Skills Competitions CIC
- EY
- Eyebox
- Fanuc
- Festo
- Festool
- Gatsby Foundation
- Glasgow Clyde College
- Gower College Swansea
- Heta Ltd

Core partners and supporters

(continued)

Inspiring Skills Excellence in Wales
Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education
Institute for the Motor Industry
Institution of Mechanical Engineers
Kaplan
Lincoln Electric
L'Oréal
Make UK
Manchester University
Middlesex University
Morelli Group
National Careers Week CIC
NCFE
NET (National Electrotechnical Training)
New College Lanarkshire
Newcastle College
North Warwickshire and South Leicestershire College
Northern Ireland Government
Offshore Renewable Energy Catapult
Oldham College
Omron
OneFile
Pearson
Pembrokeshire College
Rochdale Training
Royal Air Force
Royal Navy
Salford University
Scottish Funding Council
Shining 3D
Skills and Education Group
Skills for Security
Symetri
Tameside College
Texecom
The Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry
The Careers and Enterprise Company
The Education & Training Foundation
The Manchester College
Ultimaker
University of Wales Trinity St Davids
UVAC
Warners Group
Welsh Government
Wigan and Leigh College



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