

Sport and physical activity sector local skills plan

Liverpool City Region: 2025–2028

CREATED BY

Liverpool City Region Sport and
Physical Activity Local Skills
Accountability Board



Contents

Photo credits:

CIMSPA would like to thank Merseyside Sport Partnership, St Helens Borough Council, SO Health and Swim England for their support in sourcing photographs for this skills plan.

Introduction

Liverpool City Region Sport and Physical Activity Local Skills Accountability Board

About the board

Chair: Jennie Platt, Partnership Manager, Merseyside Sport Partnership

Vice Chair: Mark Burrows, Deputy Principal & Deputy Chief Executive, Southport Education Group

Board member organisations

- Active Sports Group
- Coach Core
- England Netball
- Liverpool Chamber of Commerce CIC
- Liverpool City Region Combined Authority
- LFC Foundation
- Liverpool John Moores University
- Merseyside Sports Partnership
- Riverside College
- Sefton Council
- Southport Education Group
- SO Health
- St Helens Borough Council
- Swim England
- Ultimate Kids Ltd
- Volair
- Wirral Met College
- Youth Fed

Funding and support

Our local skills work to engage with employability-focused organisations and build a representative sport and physical activity sector workforce is funded and supported by Sport England and the National Lottery.



Get involved

To learn more about this local skills plan or the work of your local skills accountability board please contact CIMSPA who will link you with their workforce development manager for Liverpool City Region.

partners@cimspa.co.uk

LOCAL SKILLS ACCOUNTABILITY BOARD
WEBSITE PAGE [↗](#)

Liverpool City Region – geographical area

The Liverpool City Region Local Skills Accountability Board area covers:

- Liverpool City Council
- Knowsley Council
- Wirral Council
- Halton Borough Council
- St Helens Borough Council
- Sefton Council



Foreword

The Liverpool City Region is facing significant demographic and societal challenges: rising inequalities, an aging population and increasing physical and mental health concerns. The well-established sociological, physiological and psychological benefits of physical activity offer pathways to addressing these challenges and developing a more equitable and prosperous society, making the role of sport and physical activity sector more vital than ever.

Consequently, sport and physical activity is identified as a priority sector for the region, but it must adapt to meet the evolving needs of participants, employers and communities. To unlock this growth potential and respond to the challenges we are facing, the Liverpool City Region must cultivate a well-equipped, diverse and representative workforce.

Tailored specifically for the Liverpool City Region and created in collaboration with key local stakeholders, this local skills plan for the sport and physical activity sector identifies critical workforce challenges, skills improvement opportunities and strategic priorities for the sector.

It sets out clear recommendations and actions to shape the workforce of the future, aligning with national efforts while addressing the unique needs of our area.

The plan's recommendations mirror the journey of someone progressing through their career in the sector, from recruitment to training and development, then onto support. It outlines a vision for medium and long-term successes in the region's sport and physical activity sector, providing clear actions to meet these objectives.

Collaboration is key to ensuring that the sector can respond to the increasing demands to tackle shared challenges. By working collectively, stakeholders including local authorities, education providers, businesses and community organisations can share resources, expertise and best practices to achieve meaningful progress.

In the Liverpool City Region, organisations across the sport and physical activity, education, and health sectors are coming together to create a consistent, effective and joined-up approach.

This approach not only ensures that participants and employees receive the support they need but also helps organisations align their efforts to meet regional and national goals. To ensure we reach all members of the community, it is essential that our approach prioritises accessibility and flexibility, offering inclusive opportunities that cater to diverse needs, abilities and circumstances so that everyone can participate in and benefit from sport and physical activity.

Through this coordinated effort, the sector can deliver greater impact, improve workforce skills and enhance service provision, ultimately fostering a healthier and more prosperous community.

Jennie Platt

Chair, Liverpool City Region Local Skills Accountability Board
Partnership Manager, Merseyside Sport Partnership

CIMSPA and local skills



The right training, delivered in the right place, at the right time.

Our collaborative local skills project is bringing together employers, education providers and employability-focused organisations to effectively and efficiently match supply and demand.

CIMSPA – the Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity – is the chartered professional body for the sport and physical activity sector workforce.

In 2023, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport published “Get Active: A strategy for the future of sport and physical activity”. This strategy explicitly backs CIMSPA’s rollout of local-based skills and training: “We will support CIMSPA in the development of local skills improvement plans with full national coverage.”

In line with its “Uniting the Movement” strategy, Sport England has commissioned CIMSPA to help accelerate local-focused skills improvements within the sport and physical activity workforce.

CIMSPA already have a team of workforce development managers working at a local level across England, Wales and Scotland.

The CIMSPA workforce development manager within Liverpool City Region works with the area’s local skills accountability board and with other organisations, carrying out skills diagnostics and helping to deliver the recommendations within this local skills plan.

[LOCAL SKILLS ACCOUNTABILITY BOARD WEBSITE PAGE](#)

Vision and context

Vision

Create a thriving, inclusive and future-ready sport and physical activity workforce that empowers individuals; enables physical, mental and social wellbeing within our local communities; and drives economic growth across the Liverpool City Region.

Vision detail

To realise this vision, the local sport and physical activity sector will need a workforce that is skilled, motivated, valued and able to deliver exceptional experiences for participants.

Developing it will require a joined-up approach from stakeholders, aligning education, skills and funding to maximise impact and efficiency.

This approach fosters a sustainable environment for future growth and inclusivity within the sport and physical activity sector in the Liverpool City Region.

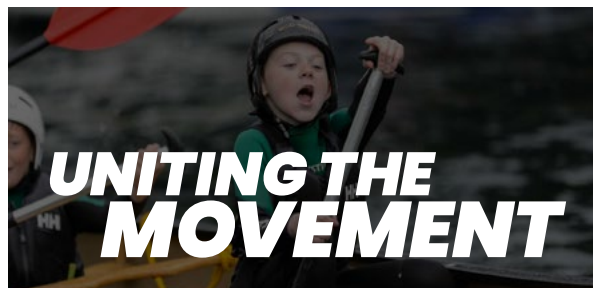


National context



DCMS strategy context

In August 2023, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport published “Get Active: A strategy for the future of sport and physical activity”. This strategy explicitly backs CIMSPA’s rollout of local-based skills and training: “We will support CIMSPA in the development of Local Skills Improvement Plans with full national coverage.”



Sport England strategy context

In 2021, Sport England launched Uniting the Movement, a 10-year strategy outlining the importance of the workforce in driving change to transform lives and communities through sport and physical activity.

Uniting the Movement strategic priorities include:

- Unleashing the power of diversity
- Ensuring people have access to help from those who relate to their experiences
- Training and qualifications fit for the future
- Better career choices
- Organisations contributing more to the social fabric of their communities

With this, the sector’s workforce must be representative of the community it serves, creating sustainable careers, placing local employer and individual need at the heart of training and development. There is a collective responsibility to ensure the sport and physical activity sector is a valued and accessible career choice with progression for individuals.



The Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022 context

The passing into law of the Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022 places employers at the heart of the skills system, making it easier for people to access the skills required to secure well paid jobs in industries with skills gaps.

Employers and training providers must work together to identify the skills needed locally and address the skills gaps. For further education colleges and training providers who access funding to deliver their training, it is now a legal requirement to work with employers to develop skills plans. Adult skills funding is being developed, and funding must align to the employer-identified priorities.

Local context

Liverpool City Region Local Skills Improvement Plan

The Liverpool City Region Local Skills Improvement Plan is an extensive research project by the Liverpool City Region Chamber of Commerce aimed at addressing regional skills gaps.

The plan focuses on three key areas:

- **Strengthening collaboration:** Building partnerships by engaging employers, education providers and stakeholders
- **Bridging skills gaps:** Evaluating industry needs and aligning training programmes
- **Empowering the workforce:** Monitoring emerging trends like green skills and digital transformation, ensuring a competitive and innovative workforce

To support the above, the Liverpool City Region Sport and Physical Activity Local Skills Accountability Board has based their local skills plan on increasing collaboration between education providers, employers and other key stakeholders. This will ensure that sport and physical activity training aligns with employer requirements, bridging the skills gaps in the sector and addressing trending needs.

By fostering collaboration and addressing regional workforce challenges such as recruitment, retention, career progression and diversity, the Liverpool City Region Sport and Physical Activity Local Skills Plan will support the Liverpool City Region Local Skills Improvement Plan to strengthen the sector's skills, enhance service quality and support economic growth and community wellbeing in the Liverpool City Region.

[LIVERPOOL CITY REGION LOCAL SKILLS IMPROVEMENT PLAN](#)



Themes, recommendations, partners and stakeholders

Themes

This plan has four themes.

1	Recruitment	Ensuring supply meets demand by attracting the best talent to work in the sport and physical activity sector.
2	Training and professional development	<p>Enhancing the training offered locally and ensuring that the funding which supports it can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Meet the demand and needs of employers▶ Produce work-ready people▶ Add complementary skills to enable people to achieve their career or business goals
3	Support	Ensuring the right support is available for the local sport and activity workforce and their employers to enable the outcomes of this skills plan to be achieved.
4	Retention	Working to retain talent within the sector and upskilling our workforce with the skills required to flourish.

Recommendations

This plan has four headline recommendations:

1 Create career pathways

Create a range of clear pathways from education to the workplace, focusing on skills aligned with local sector demands and the sector's professional standards.

2 Upskill the workforce

Develop clear progression opportunities with links to in-demand healthcare skills to support workforce retention.

3 Support the health sector

Instigate a shared commitment by sport and physical activity organisations to support health interventions and ease pressure on primary care.

4 Improve work environments

Foster a supportive work environment in sport and physical activity organisations that enhances staff recruitment, retention, training and development, sharing best practices across the region.

Partners and stakeholders

CIMSPA and the local skills accountability board will work collaboratively with a range of partners and stakeholders to deliver on the actions that underpin this plan's recommendations.

These include:

Education and training providers

Those delivering accredited training – both sector/occupation-specific training and training around basic skills, knowledge and behaviours – for example, further education colleges and higher education institutes.

Skills and sector partners

Those with knowledge and understanding of the sport and physical activity sector, with expertise to support both employers and training providers, for example, Merseyside Sport Partnership, Liverpool Chamber of Commerce CIC, national governing bodies of sport and other system partners.

Employers and deployers

For example, leisure providers, coaching companies and gym owners.

Recommendations, actions and milestones

RECOMMENDATION 1

Create career pathways: Create a range of clear pathways from education to the workplace, focusing on skills aligned with local sector demands and the sector's professional standards.

Theme(s)	No.	2025–2028 actions	What does success look like?	How will it be measured?*
TRAIN SUPPORT	1a	Ensure that sector education is comprehensive, provides relevant skills and knowledge and meets the needs of local employers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The Get Britain Working white paper is used as a basis to support people development ▶ Education providers understand employability skills required by local employers ▶ Employers are engaged in curriculum design and delivery to ensure skills, knowledge and behaviours are being developed to sector standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Local workforce skills diagnostic data (reduction in roles and skills needed) ▶ Liverpool City Region local skills reports ▶ Sport and physical activity course destination data from education providers
TRAIN SUPPORT	1b	Embed, encourage and support equity, inclusion and diversity in sector education provision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Access to education and the sector is consistent within every community across the Liverpool City Region ▶ Inclusivity strategies strongly influence education and CPD programmes ▶ Curriculums are aligned with inclusivity-focused professional standards where relevant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Number of relevant local training courses and CPD programmes endorsed by CIMSPA ▶ Demographic of people undertaking training and CPD
TRAIN SUPPORT RETAIN	1c	Improve collaboration between education providers and employers to deliver mutually beneficial work placement and apprenticeship opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Forums for collaborative working are established in the region ▶ Employers are supported with receiving learners through work placement and apprenticeship programmes ▶ A consistent framework of work placement and apprenticeship types, responsibilities, guidance and expected outcomes is understood by employers across the region ▶ Employers, educators and students are connected and maximise opportunities through the Be More portal and other centralised platforms ▶ CIMSPA's work-based placement learning guidance is used and implemented by employers, employees and education providers ▶ More sport and physical activity apprenticeships and work placements are available ▶ A good take-up of sport and physical activity apprenticeships and work placement opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Work placement and apprenticeship destination data ▶ Liverpool City Region Careers Hub data ▶ Be More portal data ▶ Qualitative data

RECOMMENDATION 1 (continued)

Theme(s)	No.	2025–2028 actions	What does success look like?	How will it be measured?*
RECRUIT SUPPORT RETAIN	1d	Improve awareness of careers in the sector among young people through use of CIMSPA resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Further and higher education providers use the CIMSPA Careers Hub to support students and build awareness of roles within the sector ▶ CIMSPA careers guidance resources support education providers in attracting students to sport and physical activity courses ▶ Increased awareness of career pathways into the sector among 14-to-19-year-olds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ CIMSPA Careers Hub page visits ▶ CIMSPA careers guidance course uptake ▶ Data from the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority ▶ Qualitative data
RECRUIT TRAIN SUPPORT RETAIN	1e	Support education providers and employers in understanding the effects of artificial intelligence (AI) on the sector and how to meet evolving workforce AI needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Research into national and local ethical AI practices and policies around AI and safe usage is used to inform sector stakeholders ▶ Employers evaluate and assess current and future AI needs ▶ A data-informed approach is used to inform integration of AI into sport and physical activity education provision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Employer data collection to demonstrate workforce AI training needs ▶ Liverpool City Region Combined Authority data

To achieve recommendation 1, we must focus on equipping learners with key skills, integrating work placements and apprenticeships and collaborating with employers to meet evolving sector demands.

*See [glossary below](#) for more information on specific terms.

RECOMMENDATIONS, ACTIONS AND MILESTONES

RECOMMENDATION 2

Upskill the workforce: Develop clear progression opportunities with links to in-demand healthcare skills to support workforce retention

Theme(s)	No.	2025–2028 actions	What does success look like?	How will it be measured?*
RECRUIT RETAIN	2a	Encourage employers to map career pathways and offer more training opportunities to improve retention.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employers continuously identify relevant and necessary training opportunities to support employee development and inform education Annual reviews facilitate communications between employers and education providers Increased knowledge and skills within the workforce Improved retention resulting in decreased employee turnover 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Endorsed education course completion data Sport England place-based work data for the Liverpool City Region Recruitment and attainment data from CIMSPA, the local combined authority and any additional local data sources available Internal retention monitoring data from employers Local workforce skills diagnostic data Qualitative data
RECRUIT TRAIN SUPPORT RETAIN	2b	Improve understanding of health and wellbeing skills needed to support the health sector locally.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health and wellbeing skills needed to support local health sector organisations are identified and understood Qualifications needed to collaborate with the health sector are identified Local sport and physical activity employers are able to identify workforce health and wellbeing skills gaps Local sector professionals gain specialist health and wellbeing skills through CIMSPA-endorsed qualifications Job descriptions for sector vacancies include accurate information about health and wellbeing skills required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local documentation and reporting Qualitative data
RECRUIT TRAIN RETAIN	2c	Provide training aligned with local healthcare needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training aligned with local sector healthcare needs is created through the Training Academy for Sport and Physical Activity Local sector professionals are able to gain specialist healthcare skills Local employers are able to upskill their workforce to offer more services aligned with local healthcare needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sport England Active Lives Survey data Local workforce skills diagnostic data Liverpool City Region Combined Authority data Chamber of Commerce data State of Health in the City: Liverpool 2040 progress reports

To achieve recommendation 2, we must consider providing career support and continuously adapting programmes based on data and research collated on emerging trends.

*See [glossary below](#) for more information on specific terms.

RECOMMENDATIONS, ACTIONS AND MILESTONES

RECOMMENDATION 3

Support the health sector: Instigate a shared commitment by sport and physical activity organisations to support health interventions and ease pressure on primary care.

Theme(s)	No.	2025–2028 actions	What does success look like?	How will it be measured?*
SUPPORT RETAIN	3a	Support sector organisations to align with health sector needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employers understand the role they can play in preventative healthcare Health challenges more prevalent in areas of deprivation are understood and addressed Training aligned with local healthcare needs is available Local employers collaborate to improve reach of initiatives The sector workforce is aligned with and collaborates on Sport England future of public sector leisure strategic needs in a similar style to Pivot to Active Wellbeing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact reporting on the local sectors' preventative health programmes Data and geographical mapping against Index of Multiple Deprivation data Public Health Outcomes Framework data Qualitative data Increased activity participation of target groups through healthcare referrals Updates to the Liverpool Local Plan
SUPPORT	3b	Increase inclusive practice to support preventative care for the broadest possible range of participants.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equality, diversity and inclusion strategies are adopted by sector organisations Guidance for creating inclusive environments is shared between sector organisations Best practice is shared through collaboration via the All Together Active board Increased participation through exercise referral programmes Increased participation from minority groups Participant feedback informs continual service improvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Qualitative and quantitative data from a variety of sources including Merseyside Sport Partnership and local authorities Sport England Active Lives Survey data Public Health Outcomes Framework data tool Feedback and case studies from participants and sector organisations Increased participation and referral of target groups Updates to the Liverpool Local Plan
RECRUIT TRAIN SUPPORT RETAIN	3c	Increase collaboration between health sector and sport and physical activity sector organisations in the region.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Healthcare professionals understand the range of benefits that sport and physical activity can offer patients A network of health sector and sport and physical activity sector organisations Common language is used to describe needs, qualifications and services Collaborative initiatives improve the exercise referral pipeline 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sport England social value and social return of investment data Qualitative data Number of joint initiatives between the health and sport and physical activity sector

To achieve recommendation 3, we must improve collaboration with the health sector to encourage preventative care and continuously improve health initiatives to further enhance their positive impact.

*See [glossary below](#) for more information on specific terms.

RECOMMENDATIONS, ACTIONS AND MILESTONES

RECOMMENDATION 4

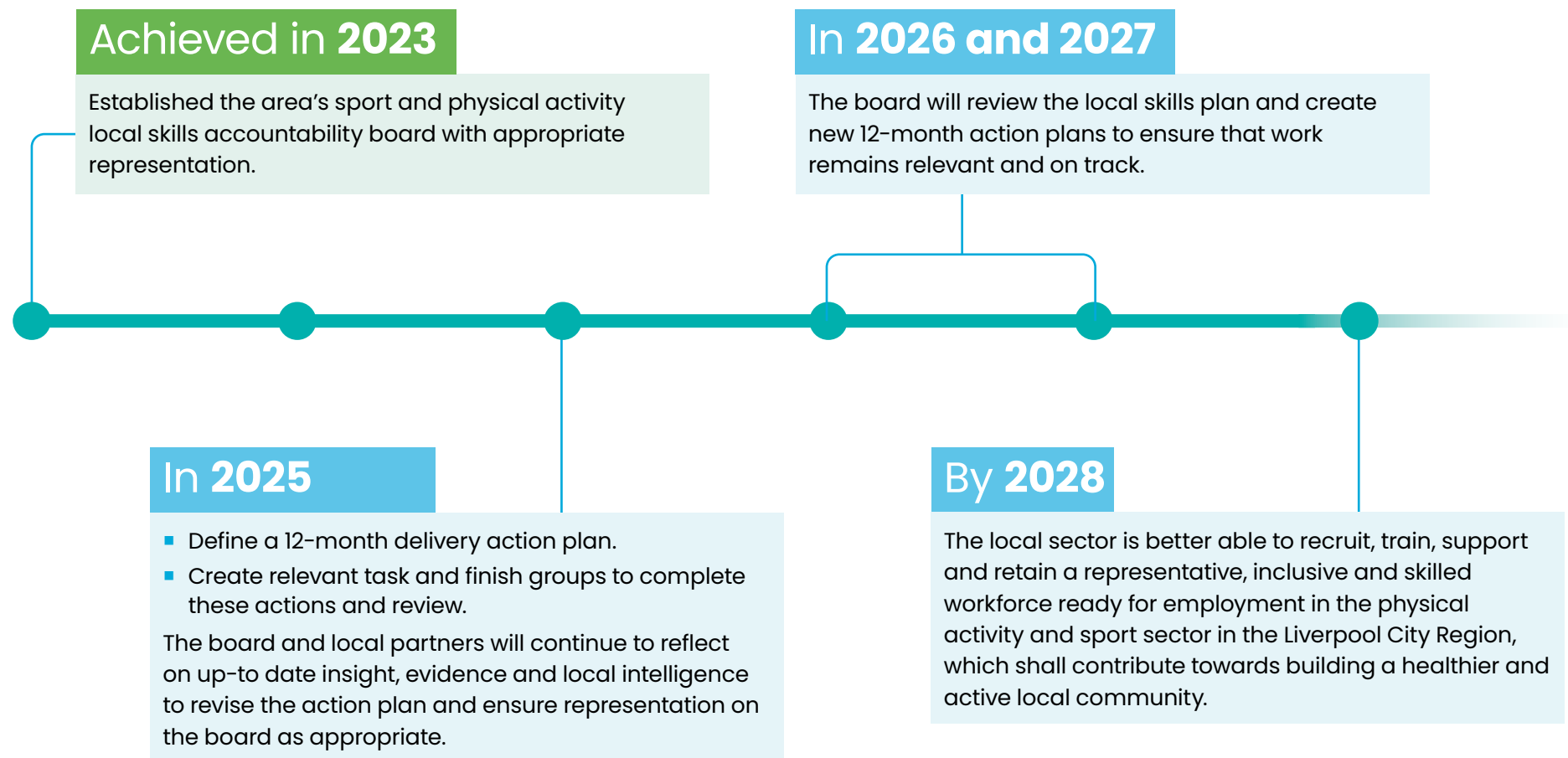
Improve work environments: Foster a supportive work environment in sport and physical activity organisations that enhances staff recruitment, retention, training and development, sharing best practices across the region.

Theme(s)	No.	2025–2028 actions	What does success look like?	How will it be measured?*
RECRUIT SUPPORT RETAIN	4a	Creating a culture of sharing best practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Positive relationships between sector organisations ▶ Collaborative working groups share ideas of best practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Qualitative data ▶ Local workforce skills diagnostic data
RECRUIT RETAIN	4b	Create an inclusive, representative and diverse workforce.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) policies and procedures are agreed and consistently adopted by sector organisations ▶ Guidance is available to support employers with integrating EDI policies and best practices within the workplace ▶ Flexible working opportunities and consistent working patterns are available to employees ▶ Increased job applications from diverse professionals ▶ A growing diverse and inclusive workforce representative of the Liverpool City Region population 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Local workforce skills diagnostic data ▶ Department for Work and Pensions data ▶ Local documentation and reporting ▶ CIMSPA Insight and Impacts department data ▶ Qualitative data
RECRUIT TRAIN SUPPORT RETAIN	4c	Increase the availability and use of continuous professional development (CPD) opportunities aligned with local sector needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Workforce training needs are identified and understood ▶ Affordable and accessible courses are created to meet workforce training needs ▶ A high-performing workforce with increased knowledge and understanding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Training Academy for Sport and Physical Activity data ▶ Local workforce skills diagnostic data ▶ Local government and Department for Work and Pensions data ▶ Active Partnership data ▶ Local training provider data as available
TRAIN SUPPORT RETAIN	4d	Enhance leadership and management skills to improve the effectiveness of sector managers and leaders and retain talent.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Regional training opportunities for managers and leaders are identified and highlighted to employers and professionals ▶ Managers and leaders in the sector receive career support ▶ Reduced turnover of managers and leaders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Local workforce skills diagnostic data ▶ Local documentation and reporting

To achieve recommendation 4, we must cultivate a supportive and inclusive work environment in sport and physical activity organisations across Liverpool City Region through cross-sector collaboration, sharing best practices and promoting workforce diversity.

*See [glossary below](#) for more information on specific terms.

Milestones



Supporting women in sport and physical activity

Throughout the execution of this local skills plan, the Liverpool City Region LSAB intends to prioritise addressing gender inequalities in sport and physical activity.

The board is committed to better understanding and tackling the specific challenges and barriers involved in recruiting, training, supporting and retaining women in the sport and physical activity sector in order to build a safe, thriving and valued female workforce. This is crucial to tackling wider female inactivity levels in the region.

While the aim is to support all women, the LSAB also want to focus on women who face additional barriers in accessing sport and physical activity careers, including:

- women from global majority communities
- disabled women
- women living in the most deprived neighbourhoods.

National context

Currently, many influential roles that shape culture within sport and physical activity remain male-dominated.

There are still very few female CEOs of major national governing bodies and even fewer female performance directors – both of which play pivotal roles in shaping organisational culture.

More generally, sector roles are also dominated by men. While local data on the female sport and physical activity workforce is currently lacking, national insights offer a useful picture:

UK Coaching Survey – Coaching in the UK 2024

- The percentage of female coaches has dropped sharply from 44% in 2022 to 38% in 2024 – a 6% decline in just two years.
- Male coaches are more likely than female coaches to hold qualifications, feel positive about coaching and recommend it to others.
- Earlier research by UK Coaching found that 78% of women believe more visible female role models in coaching would help their career progression.



CIMSPA Workforce Insights Report 2023

- The workforce in sport and physical activity is overwhelmingly young and male.
- Men hold 56% of jobs in sport and physical activity occupations, compared to 52% across the wider UK workforce.

Local context

Although there is no data currently available on the female sport and physical activity workforce locally, it is important to note more general information from the region that affects how women might pursue careers in the sector:

- According to Sport England's Active Lives Survey, 31% of women in the Liverpool City Region are inactive, compared to 25% of men.
- The Safe Streets Merseyside Campaign (part of the Merseyside Police #TakingAction to End Violence Against Women and Girls campaign) found that 54% of women feel unsafe using public transport at night, with nearly 42% expressing concerns during the day.
- Liverpool's Responding to Violence Against Women & Girls Strategy 2023–2026 (Ambition 4: Changing the Narrative) raises the question: how can sport and physical activity spaces challenge inappropriate language and behaviour, making them safer environments for women and girls to work and participate?
- Merseyside Sports Partnership, the region's Active Partnership, is working with local stakeholders on a plan to help more women and girls be active every day in ways that work for them. This will contribute to a region-wide commitment, including signing the Brighton Declaration under the International Working Group (IWG) on Women and Sport.





Our board's actions

To ensure that women in the Liverpool City Region have more opportunities to join the sport and physical activity sector workforce, the board will take a number of steps alongside this plan's core recommendations:

- Engage with the current Liverpool City Region female sport and physical activity workforce to understand their experiences, including what support they received early in their careers and what is needed now to help them stay, progress and thrive.
- Explore whether girls in local schools, colleges and universities see sport and physical activity as a viable career path. What are their perceptions of the sector, and what educational inequalities might already be limiting their opportunities?
- Examine how local training providers support female students and identifying the challenges they face in offering positive experiences and opportunities.
- Consider the role of men as allies and whether interventions like Active Bystander training can help foster safer, more supportive environments.
- Investigate how safe commuting for education, training and work – especially outside the traditional 9–5 schedule – fits into the solution.
- Review the current landscape, available insight and alignment with local and national strategies.

Wider alignment with local skills work

Be More portal

The Liverpool City Region (LCR) Be More portal is an award-winning platform that connects local residents with apprenticeship, training and career opportunities in a broad range of sectors across Halton, Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton, St Helens and Wirral.

It aims to remove barriers to apprenticeships and skills development, offering a one-stop shop resource that supports individuals to enhance their skills and employers to find qualified, talented workforce.

Included in the Be More offering are:

- a live apprenticeship vacancy board
- information about free internet access and digital equipment and support to make training and employment accessible
- local skills bootcamp guidance
- a local jobs board
- support for connected issues such as mental illness, debt, low confidence and skills gaps.

The Liverpool City Region Local Skills Accountability Board understands the importance of the Be More portal and its contribution to local skills improvement and has directly referenced the portal within this skills plan's recommendations above.

[BE MORE PORTAL](#) 



All Together Active strategy



Active Cheshire and Merseyside Sports Partnership were commissioned by NHS Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care Board to develop a physical activity strategy for the health and social care system across the region. The result of the joint effort is the All Together Active Strategy.

The vision for the strategy is a Cheshire and Merseyside in which fewer people experience health inequalities resulting from physical inactivity, and workforce has been identified as one of the key “system beliefs” to help make this happen. The strategy highlights that those who work within the NHS should be able to have conversations with patients about physical activity and signpost them to safe, high-quality and accessible physical activity opportunities.

This mirrors the national picture, where empowering health and care professionals has been included as one of the four ways forward in the [NHS Harnessing the benefits of physical activity statement](#).

The recommendations of this local skills plan align with the All Together Active Strategy to enhance the effectiveness of the exercise referral process through collaboration, increased participation rates and support for service improvements.

[ALL TOGETHER ACTIVE WEBSITE](#)

Our Mission

All Together Active will reduce health inequalities by:



Data and insight that have informed this work

Economic and social value of sport and physical activity

It is estimated that sport and physical activity provide £2.4 billion in social value to Liverpool City Region annually in primary value (the direct benefit and value to individuals of improved wellbeing such as improving wellbeing, the enjoyment of being active, benefits to physical and mental health plus other benefits such as improved work) and secondary value (the wider value to society, such as reducing the risk of coronary heart disease, type 2 diabetes, dementia, depression and many more) based on adult participation only.

Source: Social value of sport and physical activity in England, 2024

[SOCIAL VALUE OF SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN ENGLAND](#)

Community sport and physical activity makes a significant contribution to the economy and society. In 2017/18 the combined social and economic value of participating and volunteering in community sport and physical activity in England was £85.5 billion. Of this amount almost £72 billion of social value (i.e. positive impact on communities) was created through improved health and mental wellbeing, improved educational attainment and increased earnings, reduced crime and stronger communities.

Source: Local Government Association report, 2024

[LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION REPORT](#)

The challenge of economic inactivity

The Liverpool City Region has one of the highest economic inactivity rates (24%) and lowest employment rates (72%) in the country. An associated increase in unemployment or inactivity may lead to a more competitive labour market and increase barriers to work for those already disadvantaged. The poor health profile of the region also prevents many residents entering the workforce, with LCR having one of the highest rates of health-related inactivity.

Source: Liverpool City Region Plan for Prosperity, 2022

[LIVERPOOL CITY REGION PLAN FOR PROSPERITY](#)

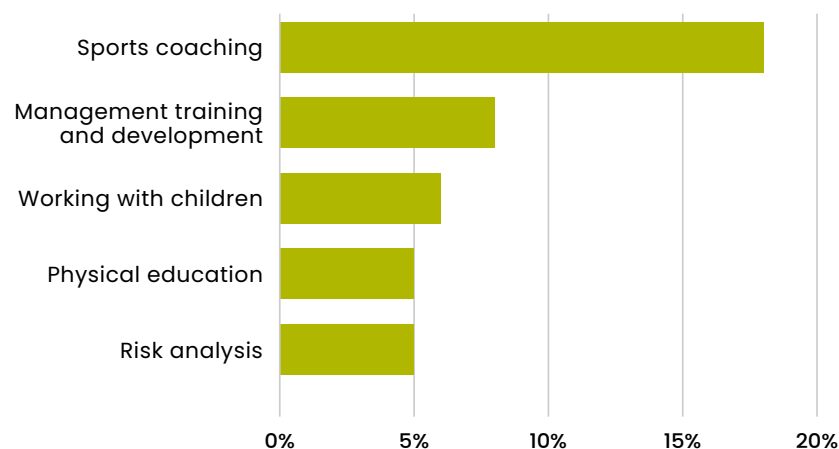
Data and learnings from the CIMSPA regional datapack

Recruitment: Skills

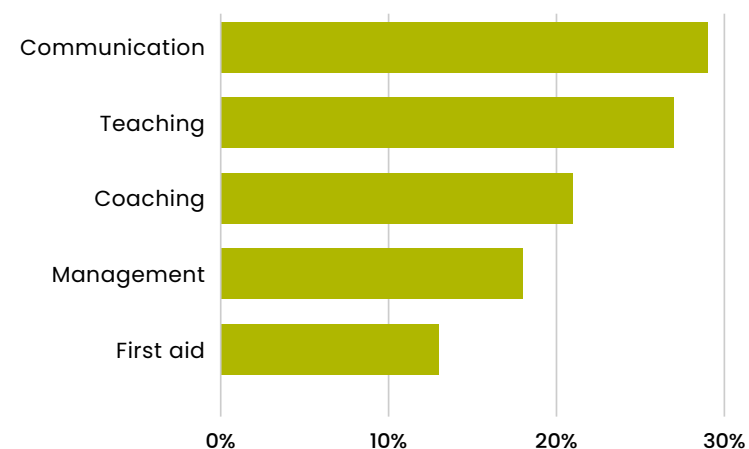
The data shows the top five specialised skills (typically unique to sport and physical activity sector roles) and common skills (highly transferable skills essential to many job roles across multiple sectors) listed in sector job postings in the Liverpool City Region.

With management being one of the most desired skills in both the specialised and common skill categories, it's clear that there is a gap between supply and demand. Through the actions of this local skills plan focused on providing training and CPD aligned with employer needs, the LSAB will reduce the gap and ensure that the local sector workforce has the necessary skills to deliver sport and physical activity services.

Top 5 specialised skills



Top 5 common skills



Source: Liverpool City Region 2025 CIMSPA Regional Data Pack (Appendix 1)

Business size

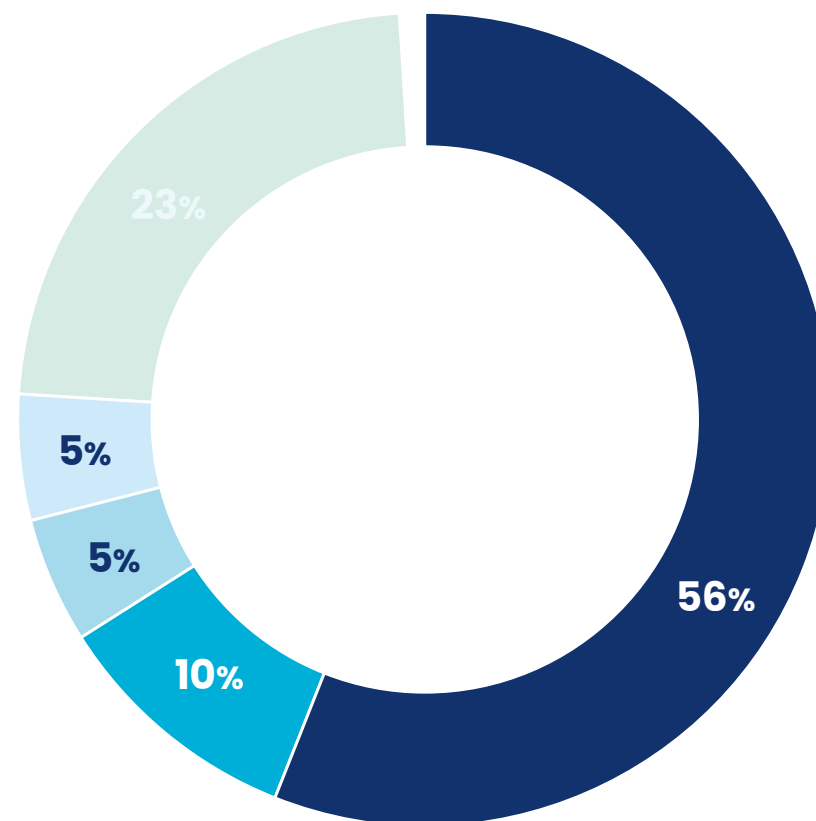
In the Liverpool City Region there are currently 539 companies working within the sport and physical activity sector (adventure sport, community sport, exercise and fitness, health and wellbeing, leisure operations and performance sport) with an estimated turnover of £1.48bn.

A majority of local employers within the Liverpool City Region are microenterprises and experience high turnover, low pay and burnout affecting workforce stability. The local skills plan encourages the development of leadership and management skills to support employers to manage organisations effectively and build sustainable careers..

- 56% Micro-enterprises (1-9 employees)
- 10% Small enterprises (10-49 employees)
- 5% Medium enterprises (50-249 employees)
- 5% Large enterprises (250+ employees)
- 23% Businesses unaccounted for

Notes

- 23% of sport and physical activity businesses within Liverpool City Region are not accounted for here due to either no company financials being available or 0/an unknown number of employees within the business, meaning that they cannot be categorised by business size.
- The total percentage in this chart sums to 99% because individual values were rounded down for simplicity.



Demographics – diversity and deprivation

Social Value Annual Report 2024

- Nearly a third (31%) of residents across the region experience long-term health conditions.
- Levels of economic inactivity are higher in the Liverpool City Region than national averages (23% in the Liverpool City Region compared to 21% in England).
- Life expectancy is two years lower than the average across England.

LIVERPOOL CITY REGION SOCIAL VALUE FRAMEWORK [↗](#)

The Health Foundation (local authority dashboard)

- 43.4% of children are in poverty in Liverpool.

HEALTH FOUNDATION DASHBOARD [↗](#)

Liverpool City Region Plan for Prosperity Evidence Base

Nearly 43% of the neighbourhoods in the Liverpool City Region fall within the top 10% of the most deprived areas in the country, with Knowsley and Liverpool showing particularly high rates of deprivation.

Although barriers to housing and services do not contribute strongly to the region's multiple deprivation score (due to lower property prices in the region), residents experience significant levels of health deprivation, disability, unemployment and low income.

Health deprivation is reflected in poor health outcomes, high rates of work-limiting illness and disability, mobility issues and many more widespread challenges resulting from poor health.

LIVERPOOL CITY REGION PLAN FOR PROSPERITY EVIDENCE BASE [↗](#)

Additional data and information that have informed this plan

Liverpool City Region

Health Inequalities Dashboard,
Office for Health Improvement and Disparities, 2023

[LINK](#)

Liverpool City Region: Innovating for Growth, Corporate Plan 2024–2028,
Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, 2024

[LINK](#)

Liverpool City Region Local Skills Report 2022/2023,
Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, 2022

[LINK](#)

Taking Action to End Violence Against Women and Girls initiative,
Merseyside Police and Crime Commissioner, 2024

[LINK](#)

Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2023–26,
Liverpool City Council, 2023

[LINK](#)

Skills Strategy 2018–2023,
Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, 2018

[LINK](#)

Ongoing feedback and input through skills diagnostic assessments
with employers will continue through the lifetime of this plan.

National

Workforce Insights Report, CIMSPA, 2023

[LINK](#)

Unlocking the potential: How sport, recreation and physical activity can
help improve the health and wellbeing of the nation, National Sector
Partners Group, 2022

[LINK](#)

Contribution of sport to society and economy with particular reference
to impact on young people's health and wellbeing and to community
sport, Local Government Association, 2024

[LINK](#)

Office for National Statistics

[LINK](#)

International Working Group (IWG) on Women & Sport

[LINK](#)

Appendices

Appendix 1: CIMSPA Liverpool City Region Regional Datapack 2025

[LINK](#)

Appendix 2: CIMSPA Business Diagnostic UK Wide Report

[LINK](#)

The scope of the sport and physical activity sector

Sector and industries definitions

The sport and physical activity sector:

“Everyone working in the sport and physical activity workforce in the industries and occupations detailed below and overleaf.”

Sector industries

Industry definitions from CIMSPA for the purpose of this strategy are shown in the table (right).

Paid/voluntary workforce

This sport and physical activity sector local skills plan aims to be broad enough in its outcomes to not need to be separated by employment/deployment status.

Industry	Definition
Exercise and fitness	Services, activities and venues that predominantly improve participant physical fitness.
Community sport	Sport/skill-based services, activities and venues that increase participation and develop skill, sometimes targeting under-represented groups and inequalities.
Leisure operations	Services, activities and venues that predominantly improve participation in physical activity.
Health and wellbeing	Holistic services and activities that promote improvements across all aspects of health, sometimes involving health care and other non-sector professionals.
Adventure sport	Activities, services and venues both indoor and outdoor improving participation in sport perceived as having a high level of risk.
Performance sport	Competitive sport and activities including those in which athletes receive payment for their performance; professional, semi-professional and grass roots sport.

Occupations

Introduction

“Occupations” are a standardised set of job roles that cover the whole of the sport and physical activity sector. For example, what some operators might call a “leisure attendant” is considered to be part of the “recreation assistant” occupation.

Definitions

- Frontline – occupations in sport and physical activity directly servicing the needs of the participant.
- Support chain – occupations in sport and physical activity servicing the needs of the front line and/or the facilities.
- Extended workforce – enablers and influencers of sport and physical activity who are not part of the sector workforce.

Frontline occupations

Sector workforce Occupations aligned with CIMSPA professional standards	Gym Instructor, core group exercise instructor, coach, coaching assistant, personal trainer, strength and conditioning trainer, pilates based matwork instructor, yoga instructor, aspiring manager, entry manager, health navigator, swimming teacher, lifeguard, recreation assistant, assistant swimming teacher, sports therapist*, nutritionist*, sport nutritionist*, physiotherapist*.
Broader workforce	Receptionist, bar staff, kitchen and catering assistant, waiting staff, cleaning assistant, domestic assistant, sales and retail assistant, chef.

*Occupations supported directly by other professional bodies

Support chain occupations

Sector workforce Occupations aligned with CIMSPA professional standards	Entry manager, general manager, senior manager, tutor, assessor, coach developer, health navigator, pool plant operative.
Broader workforce	Sport development officer, researcher, teacher, administrative occupations, finance occupations, health and safety, quality manager, environmental manager, auditor, sports media and reporters, general assistant, maintenance operative (examples).

Extended workforce

Enablers Enablers of sport and physical activity who don't necessarily hold a CIMSPA-recognised professional qualification	Primary school teachers, teaching assistants, PE teachers, childcare workers, carers, sport event staff/volunteers, activity group leaders (e.g. scouts, guides etc), officiating.
Influencers Influencers of sport and physical activity who don't necessarily hold a sector-specific professional qualification	Parents, sport role models, sport and fitness models, sport and fitness social media influencers.

Glossary

CIMSPA Data Lens

The CIMSPA Data Lens is a real-time intelligence dashboard for the UK's sport and physical activity sector.

The Data Lens system uses web-scraping APIs to open access data and machine learning, all segmented through real-world definitions specific to the sport and physical activity sector.

It can be interrogated specifically in niche areas such as exercise and fitness or community sport, or even specific geographies at a county or town level.

[LINK](#)

Local documentation and reporting

Throughout the lifespan of this local skills plan, CIMSPA and the local skills accountability board will look to incorporate any new sector-specific data created by local stakeholders that helps us understand the impact of our actions.

For example – employability and skills reports, survey results and impact reports.

Local skills accountability board (LSAB)

A group of local education and training, skills/employability, health and employer stakeholders across a region and within the sport and physical activity sector.

LSABs are co-ordinated and managed by CIMSPA, enabled by Sport England and National Lottery funding. An LSAB is collectively responsible for the creation, implementation and renewal of a sport and physical activity sector local skills plan.

Local skills improvement plan

Local skills improvement plans (LSIPs) provide an agreed set of actionable priorities that stakeholders in a local area can get behind to drive change.

LSIPs:

- place employers at the heart of local skills systems
- facilitate direct and dynamic working arrangements between employers, providers and local stakeholders
- help learners gain the skills they need to get good jobs and increase their prospects.

Each LSIP has a designated Employer Representative Body (ERB), appointed by the Department for Education.

This document is **NOT** an LSIP.

Local workforce skills diagnostic data

CIMSPA has a team of local workforce development managers working across England, Scotland and Wales.

These workforce development managers are engaged in collecting workforce skills intelligence directly from employers in their local area, through a detailed and standardised workforce skills diagnostic survey.

This data can then be segmented at the level of the local skills accountability board for use in better understanding local workforce needs and in monitoring the success of workforce improvement initiatives.

Public Health Outcomes Framework

The UK government's Public Health Outcomes Framework examines indicators to help understand trends in public health. The associated data tool currently presents data collated by the Office for Health Inequalities and Disparities for the indicators at England and local authority levels. The data is updated on a quarterly basis.

Qualitative data

Qualitative data is non-numeric, descriptive information that gathers experiences and perceptions. It includes case studies, feedback via surveys and forms, and interviews.

Sport and physical activity sector local skills plan

This document is a sport and physical activity sector local skills plan. It is a local skills plan specific to the sport and physical activity sector in a specific region.

The plan has been created by the local skills accountability board (see above), coordinated and managed by CIMSPA.

The Sport and Physical Activity Sector Local Skills Accountability Board – Liverpool City Region



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