A Report on new methods of delivery for remote workers

More Developed Area: York and North Yorkshire

Completed by Beyond 2030 on behalf of Calderdale College and as part of the College's 2017-18 ESF funded Skills Support for the Workforce programme across the York, North Yorkshire and East Riding Local Enterprise Partnership Area.

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1 Introduction to the LEP and Research

The York, North Yorkshire and East Riding Local Enterprise Partnership (YNYER LEP) covers nearly 1.1 million hectares of which 95% is classified as rural. 45% of the LEP's resident population lives in a rural area. In comparison only 18% of the English population live in rural locations (ONS, 2011).

YNYER LEP has commissioned a series of research reports to make a clear assessment of skills development challenges faced by remote and rural workers and then provide recommendations on how these should be addressed.

Individual reports will consider the challenges faced by various business sizes, sole traders, micro businesses and SMEs, within the More Developed Area (MDA) and Transitional Area (TA) of the YNYER LEP.

Within the YNYER LEP, York and North Yorkshire is at nearly 98% of UK GDP per capita, thus is considered a More Developed Area (MDA), while East Riding at 83% and is considered a Transition Area (TA) (Eurostat, 2016).

This report considers the rural economy within the More Developed Area (MDA) of York and North Yorkshire.

2 Rural Economy

The rural economy is all around us. Wherever we are in the UK, we are never far from a rural economy, and this is particularly the case in certain LEP areas including the YNYER LEP which we will consider in more detail later in this study.

However, the rural economy is more accurately regarded as an umbrella term for at least four different types of rural economies (Cartmel & Furlong, 2000).

These four areas are understood as:

- A traditional rural community reliant on agriculture and being isolated geographically.
- An urban fringe where employment is affected and determined by proximity to the town or city.
- A seasonal area where job opportunities undergo strong seasonal variations.
- An ex-industrial area.

The Rural-Urban Classification is commonly used to distinguish rural and urban areas. Here the classification defines areas as rural if they fall outside of settlements with more than a 10,000 resident population (DEFRA, 2017).

Whilst these areas may share many of the same characteristics and challenges for the future, there will of course be differences between them.

80% of the UK is officially classified as rural with only 17% of the population living in those communities. The total GVA generated by the rural economy is approximately £400 billion (DEFRA, 2017).

In 2015/16 there were 537,000 businesses registered in rural areas, accounting for 24 per cent of all registered businesses in England (Defra, 2017). Businesses registered in rural areas employ 3.5 million people, accounting for 13 per cent of all those employed by registered businesses in England.

The majority of the half a million businesses based in rural communities have nothing at all to do with farming, but agriculture continues often to be seen as the entirety of the rural economy. Whilst half a million people work in the farming industry it is actually now only a minor part of the UK countryside economy.

Increasingly, creative, digital and on-line industries are key parts of the rural economy.

In rural areas, 29% of people are employed in businesses with up to 9 employees compared to 19% in urban areas (Defra, 2017).

Rural communities tend to be older with fewer young adults and higher than average numbers of middle aged and above. Young people frequently migrate to the cities and inward migration is normally limited to older people. Diversity is less obvious but modern immigration from abroad is having clear effects on those communities. Low pay is more usual in rural communities and there is a higher reliance on transport. Figures show that 13% of disposable income is spent on transport in rural communities (compared to 11% in urban areas) (Defra, 2016). Housing is often expensive, particularly so in coastal areas, where the market for second homes and holiday properties has had clearly inflationary pressures on prices and rents.

Many rural schools are under pressure with changes in funding leading to merged year groups and larger classes – one of the main reasons which motivates parents to move their children to other schools. Likewise, GPs are facing funding pressures under a system which does not give them funding for treating holiday makers.

Cuts to public transport budgets is clearly having an impact on rural bus routes. Welfare reform has also had an impact, as finding smaller accommodation (if you have a spare bedroom) is often not a viable alternative as it might not exist in or near your village. Research shows that homes in rural areas are far less likely to meet the decent homes standard, with 56% having a SAP rating (thermal efficiency) of under 30 compared with just 7% in urban areas (Clarke & Monk, 2012). This leads to very real concerns about fuel poverty. With reduced public funding, the voluntary sector is shrinking and they are often particularly important in rural communities.

The lack of broadband coverage is a significant issue. There is now broad acceptance that there will be a final 5% of premises that will not be able to access superfast broadband. We have been unable to obtain definitive information on where these blind spots will be, but it is acknowledged that rural and isolated communities will probably be under served.

Childcare facilities are often lacking from rural communities and this has an impact on the employment prospects of parents, particularly on the parents of young children who have primary responsibility for childcare.

Migration is having an impact on rural areas, with some communities and their industries relying on migrant labour. Currently the Gangmasters Licensing Authority only regulates labour providers in agriculture, forestry, horticulture, shellfish gathering and food processing and packaging. There are clearly other areas of the economy with potentially vulnerable employment.

Research has also highlighted other business challenges in rural communities including a lack of effective business support networks, noting the withdrawal of Business Link services and replacement with web based services. A lack of support services is especially important because the rural economy is characterised by micro and small businesses and in the past few years there have been changes to public funding and initiatives such that small business routinely struggle to keep up with changes. There are also concerns around how some LEPs are engaging with rural employers at a strategic level. In particular there has been concern around rural proofing policy and delivery based interventions.

Of note is that the Commission for Rural Communities (CRC) was abolished in 2013 as part of the government's wider quango reforms. Established to work on rural issues in 2006, the Commission was closed and replaced with a policy team within DEFRA. The Commission produced many notable reports and one wonders how the LEP network might have operated alongside the CRC.

It is widely accepted that when local services and the local infrastructure does not work then there are impacts on business.

When one considers poverty in the UK, the mind jumps to the inner city estates of the UK's urban conurbations. But deprivation can be just as great in the countryside. 15% of households in rural areas live in relative poverty (LGA & PHE, 2017).

The divide is felt even more keenly in the remotest areas where income is less, redundancies are higher, services are fewer (from schools to supermarkets) and homes can cost nearly ten times rural household incomes.

The digital revolution was supposed to close many of these gaps, but as above, it seems likely that actually it might make it worse. Ultrafast broadband will be everywhere in towns and cities and potentially nowhere in the slow-speed countryside.

2.2 Introduction to York and North Yorkshire MDA

York and North Yorkshire is divided into a number of local government districts: Craven, Hambleton, Harrogate, Richmondshire, Ryedale, Scarborough, Selby and the City of York.

It has a resident population of 809,200, which equates to 71% of the LEPs resident population (ONS, 2017). Nearly 380,000 individuals are employed in the area. Employment rates stand at 81.9% for North Yorkshire and 78% in York compared to LEP average of 79.9% (Table 1).

Using YNYER LEP as the standard, we can see various differences in the productivity, skills and employment across North Yorkshire and York. Table 1 highlights where the area performs better (green) or worse (red).

For example, self-employment in North Yorkshire stands at 14.1% - greater than within York, the LEP as a whole and the English average. However, the number of individuals qualified to level 4 or above is lower and the proportion with no qualifications is greater in North Yorkshire.

Table 1 Productivity, skills and jobs:

Measure	North Yorkshire	York	YNYER LEP	England
Gross Weekly pay full time (£)	£489.10	£509.60	£504.70	£544.70
Job density (the ratio of total jobs to population aged 16-64.	0.96	0.85	0.86	0.84
Employment Rate	81.9%	78.0%	79.9%	75.0%
Self-Employment	14.1%	9.6%	12.2%	10.6%
Full-time workers	63.1%	62.7%	63.8%	69.1%
Workless Households	10.9%	12.5%	11.9%	15.3%
Unemployment Rate	2.3%	3.2%	3.0%	4.7%
Economically Inactive	16.1%	18.8%	17.6%	21.2%
Level 4+	35.9%	42.7%	37.5%	37.9%
No Qualifications	6.5%	6.2%	6.3%	7.8%

Source: Office for National Statistics: LEP and National Labour Market Profiles; GVA for Local Enterprise Partnerships

Looking in more detail at Local Authority level, we can see that there are variations in the job, skills and productivity levels.

Where the area performs better, we have highlighted this in green with relatively poor performance being highlighted in red in Table 2. In summary:

- Four authorities have a lower weekly wage than the LEP average (Craven, Hambleton, Ryedale and Scarborough).
- In three authorities the job density is above one - meaning that there is more than one job for every resident aged 16-64. These are Craven, Harrogate, and Ryedale. However Craven and Ryedale employment rate is lower than the LEP average.
- Self-employment is particularly high in Harrogate and Scarborough and also in Scarborough, the proportion of full-time workers is low.
- The proportion of workers with a level four qualification ranges from 23.5% in Hambleton to 50.4% in Craven.

Where the local authority area performs better than the YNYER standard we have highlighted this in green, or worse in red, in the table below.

Table 2 Productivity, skills and jobs by local authorities in York and North Yorkshire MDA

	Craven	Hambleton	Harrogate	Richmondshire	Ryedale	Scarborough	Selby	York	YNYER LEP	England
Gross Weekly pay full time (£)	£413.10	£496.80	£535.50	£507.20	£443.10	£460.30	£549.40	£509.60	£504.70	£544.70
Job density (the ratio of total jobs to population aged 16-64.	1.16	0.98	1.06	0.8	1.02	0.93	0.73	0.85	0.86	0.84
Employment Rate	77.7%	84.1%	85.2%	77.0%	77.2%	80.8%	83.8%	78.0%	79.9%	75.0%
Self-Employment	*	14.7%	19.2%	*	12.7%	18.0%	*	9.6%	12.2%	10.6%
Full-time workers	60%	65%	61.5%	62.5%	69.9%	58.5%	68.6%	62.7%	63.8%	69.1%
Unemployment Rate	3.2%	2.8%	2.7%	2.8%	3.3%	3.7%	3.8%	3.2%	3.0%	4.7%
Level 4+	50.4%	23.5%	42.9%	25.3%	36.8%	37.5%	31.0%	42.7%	37.5%	37.9%
No Qualifications	*	9.1%	*	*	*	7.4%	8.9%	6.2%	6.3%	7.8%

(ONS, 2017) * data not available, sample too small

2.3 Rural Characteristics in York and North Yorkshire

2.3.1 Residents

The York and North Yorkshire district covers over 830,000 hectares of which 96% is classified as rural. The majority of the Yorkshire Dales and the North York Moors lie within North Yorkshire's boundaries, and around 40% of the county is covered by National Parks.

45% of the MDA resident population lives in a rural area, which is the same as the LEP data of 45%. In comparison only 18% of the English population live in rural locations (ONS, 2011).

The rural –urban resident population across the Local Authorities varies substantially across the LEP (Table 3). For example:

- Across Hambleton 81% of the resident population is in a rural location. This district is part of the North York Moors and 98% of the land classified as rural.
- Richmondshire and Rydale also both have a high rural proportion.
- While in the Local District of York only 16% of the population live in a rural location.
- Scarborough and Harrogate both see a lower rural resident proportion (31% and 33% respectively).

Table 3 Location of residents by Local Authority, LEP and England

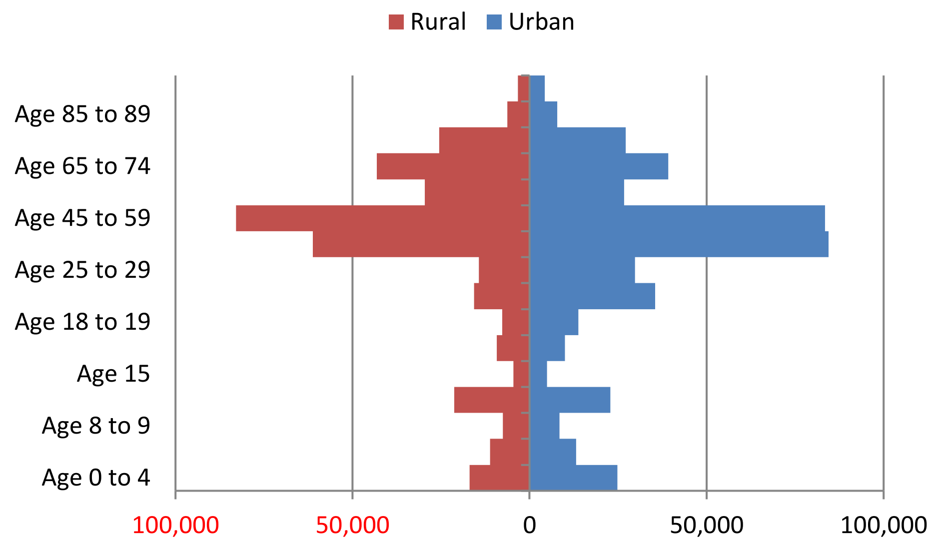
Local Authority District	Total Population	Rural	Urban
Craven	55,409	60%	40%
Hambleton	89,140	81%	19%
Harrogate	157,869	33%	67%
Richmondshire	51,965	77%	23%
Ryedale	51,751	77%	23%
Scarborough	108,793	31%	69%
Selby	83,449	68%	32%
York	198,051	16%	84%
York & North Yorkshire MDA	796,427	45%	55%
YNYER LEP	1,130,606	45%	55%
England	53m	18%	82%

Source: (ONS, 2011) KS101EW - Usual resident population

2.3.1.1 Age Structure

The population in rural areas of the York and North Yorkshire has a higher proportion of older people compared with urban areas. 53% of the population in rural areas are over 45 years of age compared to 43% in urban areas. This is a significant difference given that older people tend to use public services more than people of working age.

Figure 1 York and North Yorkshire Age Structure, rural v urban



Source: (ONS, 2011) KS102EW - Age structure

There is little variation in the proportion of over 45s in rural locations across local authorities (Table 4). Rural Scarborough has the highest proportion at 60% while Selby has the lowest at 48%.

Table 4 Proportion of population over 45 years of age, rural v urban

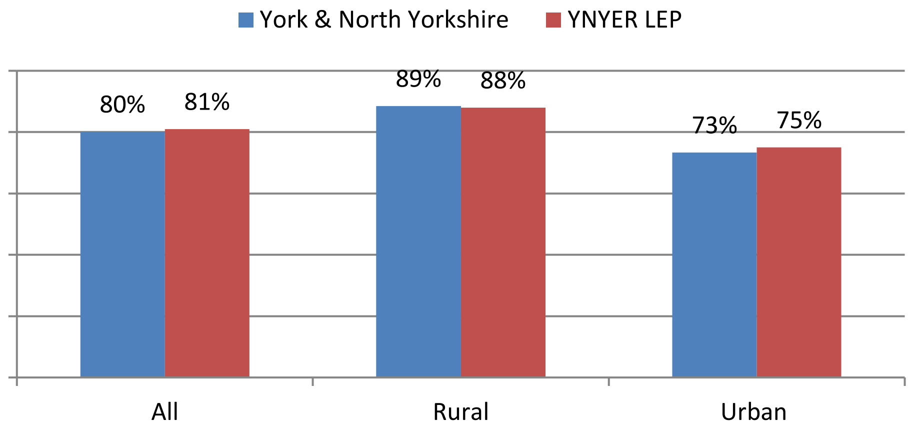
Local Authority District	Rural	Urban
Craven	57%	49%
Hambleton	52%	48%
Harrogate	52%	46%
Richmondshire	52%	14%
Ryedale	56%	48%
Scarborough	60%	49%
Selby	48%	44%
York	51%	39%
York & North Yorkshire MDA	53%	43%
YNYER LEP	53%	45%

Source: (ONS, 2011) KS102EW - Age structure

2.3.1.2 *Car ownership*

Households in rural areas are more likely to have a car or van than urban areas (Figure 2). Across York and North Yorkshire the proportion of households in urban areas with a car is slightly lower than the LEP overall.

Figure 2 Car or van availability, rural v urban



Source: (ONS, 2011) KS404EW - Car or van availability

Rural households in the Harrogate district are most likely to have access to a car or a van.

Table 5 Car or van availability, by local authority, rural v urban

Local Authority District	Rural	Urban
Craven	88%	75%
Hambleton	89%	79%
Harrogate	92%	79%
Richmondshire	86%	90%
Ryedale	88%	76%
Scarborough	84%	65%
Selby	89%	76%
York	90%	71%
York & North Yorkshire MDA	89%	73%
YNYER LEP	88%	75%

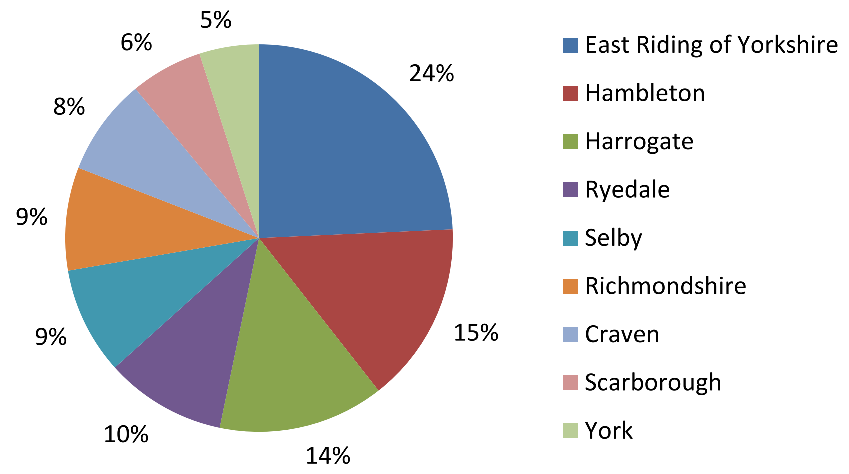
Source: (ONS, 2011) KS404EW - Car or van availability

2.3.2 Businesses

In 2012/13 there were over 47,000 registered businesses across the YNYER LEP. 61%, or 28,540, of these were within a rural location. Three quarters (76%) of the LEP's rural businesses are within York and North Yorkshire area (Figure 3).

Hambleton district has the greatest number of rural businesses while York district has the fewest in the MDA area.

Figure 3 Rural businesses in LEP by local authority district.



Source (Defra, 2016)

The MDA area has nearly 35,000 businesses of which 62% are in a rural location. The proportion of rural and urban businesses does vary across the local authorities (Table 6).

- Nearly all businesses (97%) in Richmondshire district are classified as rural.
- Hambleton and Ryedale districts also have a high proportion of rural businesses (89% and 86% respectively).
- York district on the other hand has mainly urban businesses, which is perhaps unsurprising given that York City is within this district.

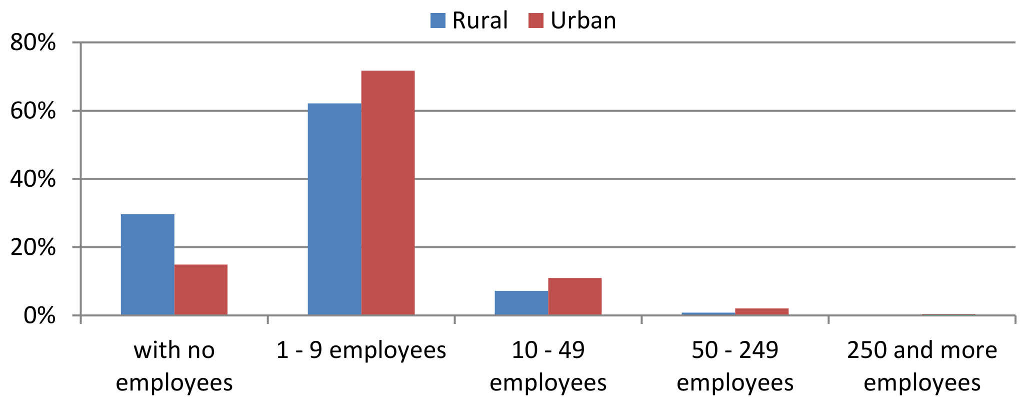
Table 6 Businesses in the Local Authorities, rural v urban

Local Authority District	Number	Rural	Urban
Craven	3,205	72%	28%
Hambleton	4,804	89%	11%
Harrogate	8,045	49%	51%
Richmondshire	2,525	97%	3%
Ryedale	3,350	86%	14%
Scarborough	3,760	46%	54%
Selby	3,175	80%	20%
York	6,055	23%	77%
York & North Yorkshire MDA	34,955	62%	38%
YNYER LEP	47,075	61%	39%

Source (Defra, 2016)

Looking at the size of the businesses, it is evident that a higher proportion of rural businesses are sole traders or partnerships with no employees (Figure 4). 30% of all rural businesses are sole traders in the MDA which is slightly higher than the LEP data of 28%. There are relatively few larger businesses. Just 1% of rural businesses employ more than 50 individuals.

Figure 4 Proportion of registered businesses in York and North Yorkshire by number of employees, rural v urban (2012/13)



Source (Defra, 2016) (no employees comprises mainly sole proprietorships and partnerships)

2.3.3 Economic activity

The overall employment rate is slightly higher across rural and urban areas (66% and 64% respectively) within the MDA area (

Table 7).

Table 7 Economic Activity

	York and North Yorkshire		YNYER LEP	
	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban
Economically Active	71%	72%	70%	71%
In Employment	66%	64%	65%	63%
% self employed	23%	*14%*	*22%*	*14%*
Unemployed	3%	5%	4%	5%
Economically Inactive	29%	28%	30%	29%
% inactive retired	65%	51%	65%	54%

Source: (ONS, 2011) KS601EW to KS603EW - Economic activity, All usual residents aged 16 to 74

The economic activity across the rural areas of each local authority is fairly similar (Table 8). The main differences are:

- Selby has a lower proportion of individuals who are economically active than the LEP average.
- Self-employment is greatest in Scarborough district rural areas.

Table 8 Rural Economic Activity by Local Authority

	Craven	Hambleton	Harrogate	Richmondshire	Ryedale	Scarborough	Selby	York	YNYLEP
Economically Active	71%	69%	72%	73%	72%	70%	64%	74%	70%
In Employment	67%	63%	68%	68%	67%	65%	59%	69%	65%
% self employed	27%	19%	22%	27%	23%	29%	27%	17%	22%
Unemployed	3%	5%	3%	3%	4%	3%	4%	4%	4%
Economically Inactive	29%	31%	28%	27%	28%	30%	36%	26%	30%
% inactive retired	*69%*	*63%*	*66%*	*63%*	*65%*	*65%*	*68%*	*63%*	65%

Source: (ONS, 2011) KS601EW to KS603EW - Economic activity, All usual residents aged 16 to 74

2.3.3.1 Industry

The largest industry of employment across the MDA, in both rural and urban areas, is within wholesale and retail, followed by health and social work and education (Table 9). This is the same as across the LEP.

Table 9 Sector profile in rural area of York and North Yorkshire and YNYLEP, rural v urban

	York and North Yorkshire				YNYLEP			
	Urban		Rural		Urban		Rural	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	180,591	5%	1,427	1%	2,516	1%	13,201	5%
Mining and quarrying	9,708	0%	458	0%	721	0%	936	0%
Manufacturing	699	9%	17,335	8%	27,557	9%	23,233	9%
Electricity	15,748	1%	985	0%	1,716	1%	1,708	1%
Water & Waste	991	1%	1,191	1%	1,673	1%	1,488	1%
Construction	1,058	8%	15,393	7%	22,563	7%	20,733	8%
Wholesale and retail	14,684	15%	36,368	17%	50,648	17%	37,140	15%
Transport and storage	26,296	4%	8,792	4%	12,764	4%	9,965	4%
Accommodation and food	6,520	7%	17,424	8%	22,229	7%	15,789	6%
Information and communication	12,342	2%	5,734	3%	7,540	2%	5,892	2%
Financial	4,234	3%	8,294	4%	9,960	3%	6,700	3%
Real estate	5,253	1%	2,290	1%	3,274	1%	3,430	1%
Professional	2,633	6%	12,561	6%	16,688	5%	15,528	6%
Administrative	11,735	4%	9,022	4%	12,222	4%	9,325	4%
Public Sector	6,946	8%	17,410	8%	24,085	8%	19,232	8%
Education	13,666	10%	21,580	10%	30,866	10%	25,917	10%
Health and social work	18,205	11%	29,830	14%	42,621	14%	29,018	12%
Other	20,284	5%	11,237	5%	15,082	5%	12,719	5%

Source: (ONS, 2011) KS605EW to KS607EW - Industry

Table 10 reveals that the largest industry of employment is wholesale and retail across the rural locations in all local district authorities.

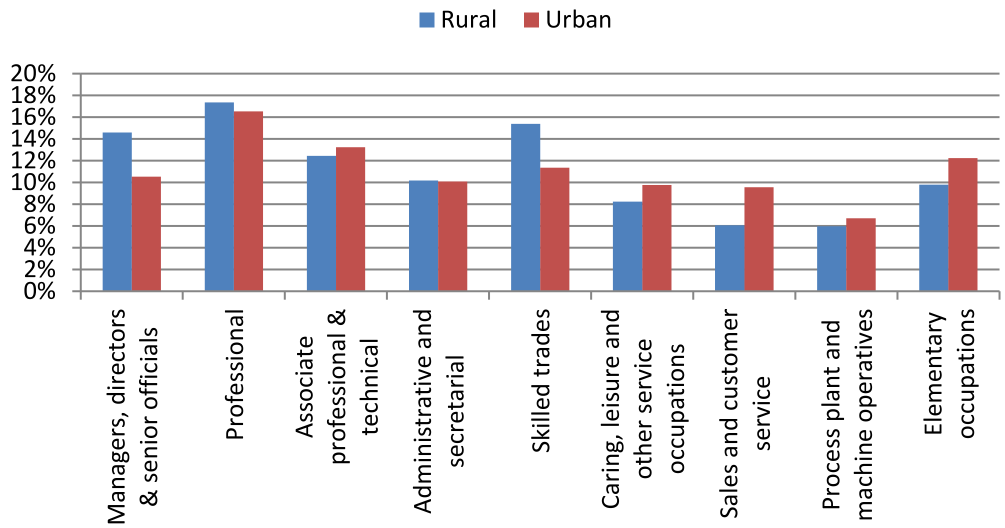
Table 10 Sector profile in rural areas of each district

	Craven	Hambleton	Harrogate	Richmondshire	Ryedale	Scarborough	Selby	York	York, North Yorkshire and East Riding
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	6%	6%	6%	6%	9%	5%	3%	2%	5%
Mining and quarrying	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%
Manufacturing	9%	8%	7%	7%	10%	10%	11%	7%	9%
Electricity	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%	0%	1%
Water & Waste	0%	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	1%	1%	1%
Construction	9%	8%	8%	9%	8%	9%	8%	7%	8%
Wholesale and retail	14%	14%	15%	13%	15%	14%	15%	15%	15%
Transport and storage	3%	4%	3%	3%	3%	3%	5%	4%	4%
Accommodation and food	8%	6%	6%	9%	8%	11%	5%	5%	6%
Information and communication	2%	2%	3%	2%	2%	1%	3%	3%	2%
Financial	4%	2%	4%	2%	2%	1%	4%	5%	3%
Real estate	1%	1%	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%
Professional	6%	6%	9%	5%	6%	4%	7%	8%	6%
Administrative	4%	3%	4%	4%	3%	3%	4%	4%	4%
Public Sector	4%	12%	7%	13%	4%	4%	6%	8%	8%
Education	13%	10%	9%	9%	10%	10%	10%	13%	10%
Health and social work	12%	12%	10%	10%	10%	14%	11%	13%	12%
Other	4%	5%	6%	6%	7%	5%	5%	4%	5%

2.3.3.2 Occupation

The largest occupational group in rural and urban areas of York and North Yorkshire is professional roles (Figure 5). However, rural areas have a greater proportion of managers and skilled trades then urban areas. This is mirrored across the LEP.

Figure 5 York and North York Occupational groups, rural vs urban



Source: (ONS, 2011) KS608EW to KS610EW – Occupation

The occupational profile of rural workers across the LEPs districts are similar (Table 11).

Table 11 Occupational groups in rural areas in LEP districts

	Craven	Hambleton	Harrogate	Richmondshire	Ryedale	Scarborough	Selby	York	York, North Yorkshire and East Riding
Managers, directors & senior officials	14%	14%	18%	13%	13%	14%	14%	15%	14%
Professional	19%	18%	18%	14%	15%	14%	17%	22%	17%
Associate professional & technical	11%	14%	14%	14%	9%	9%	13%	13%	12%
Administrative and secretarial	10%	10%	10%	10%	9%	9%	12%	12%	10%
Skilled trades	18%	15%	14%	17%	20%	19%	12%	10%	15%
Caring, leisure and other service occupations	8%	8%	8%	8%	9%	10%	8%	8%	9%
Sales and customer service	5%	6%	5%	6%	6%	7%	7%	8%	6%
Process plant and machine operatives	6%	6%	4%	6%	7%	7%	8%	5%	6%
Elementary occupations	10%	10%	8%	12%	12%	12%	9%	8%	10%

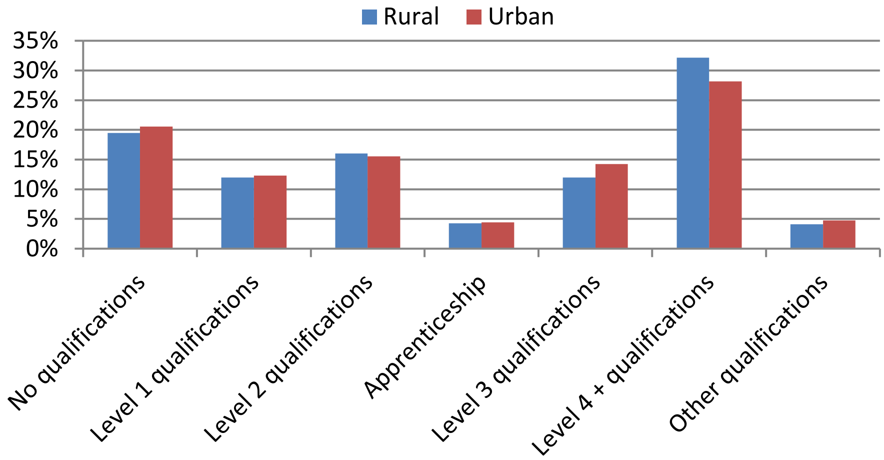
Source: (ONS, 2011) KS608EW to KS610EW – Occupation

2.3.3.3 *Qualifications*

The qualification levels of the residents aged 16 and over in rural and urban areas of York and North Yorkshire are shown below. Here we can see:

- A lower proportion of people in rural areas have no qualifications compared to people in urban areas (19% v 21%).
- A higher proportion of people in rural areas have a level 4 or above qualification (32% compared to 28% in urban areas).

Figure 6 Qualification levels in York and North Yorkshire area, rural v urban



Source: (ONS, 2011) KS501EW - Qualifications and students

There are some differences in the qualification levels of rural areas within the local authority districts (Table 12). For example, 25% of adult rural population in Scarborough have no qualifications compared to just 16% in York.

Table 12 Qualification levels in rural areas of the LEP

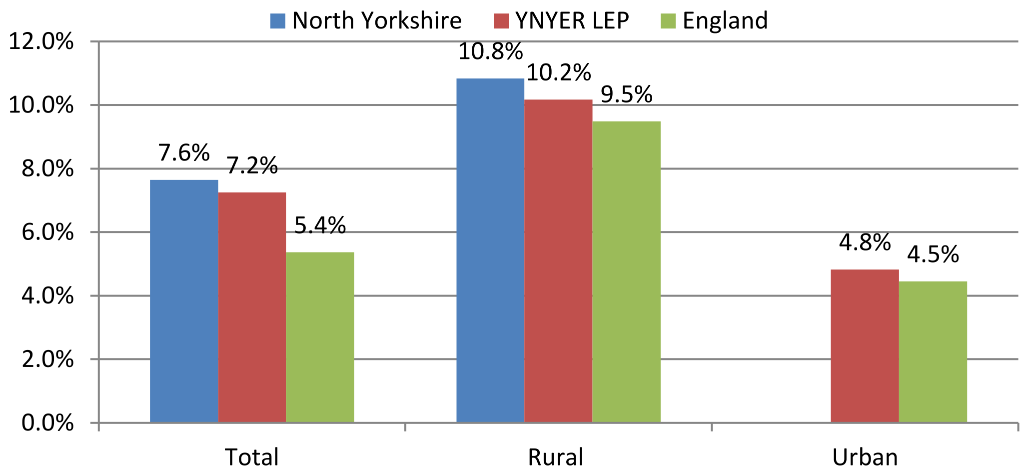
Local Authority	No quals	Level 1	Level 2	Apprenticeship	Level 3	Level 4 +	Other qualifications
Craven	19%	11%	16%	4%	12%	35%	3%
Hambleton	19%	12%	16%	4%	12%	34%	4%
Harrogate	17%	11%	16%	3%	11%	36%	5%
Richmondshire	20%	13%	16%	4%	12%	30%	5%
Ryedale	23%	12%	16%	4%	11%	29%	4%
Scarborough	25%	12%	16%	6%	11%	26%	4%
Selby	19%	13%	16%	5%	13%	29%	4%
York	16%	11%	15%	5%	13%	37%	4%
YNYER LEP	19%	11%	16%	4%	12%	35%	3%

Source: (ONS, 2011) KS501EW - Qualifications and students

2.3.4 Home Working

The proportion of people working from home is higher in rural areas than urban areas (Figure 7). Working mainly at or from home is more prevalent in the MDA and across the whole LEP rural areas than England rural areas.

Figure 7 Proportion of people who work mainly at or from home



Source: (ONS, 2011) KS608EW to KS610EW – Method of travel to work, Based on All usual residents aged 16 to 74 in work

Over 40,000 individuals in the LEP work at or from home. Of these 75% (over 30,000) are based in York and North Yorkshire. Of those working from home in the MDA, 64% individuals are based in rural locations and 36% in urban areas.

The proportion between rural and urban workers differs across local district authorities (Table 13). For example, 92% of home workers in Hambleton district are based in rural locations but in York this stands at 24%.

Table 13 Work mainly at or from home, by districts

	Total working from home	Urban	Rural
Craven	2,511	21%	79%
Hambleton	4,040	8%	92%
Harrogate	6,926	48%	52%
Richmondshire	2,661	11%	89%
Ryedale	2,994	9%	91%
Scarborough	3,489	52%	48%
Selby	2,787	17%	83%
York	5,025	76%	24%
York and North Yorkshire	30,433	36%	64%
YNYER LEP	40,344	36%	64%
England	1.3m	68%	32%

Source: (ONS, 2011) QS701EW - Method of travel to work

2.3.5 Unemployment

The unemployment rate in rural areas stands at 2.7% compared to 5.0% in urban areas (Defra, 2017).

3 Challenges to the take up of training in YNYER LEP rural areas

3.1 Rural Access Issues

Research shows that there are a number of issues which negatively impact on the take up of training. Some of these barriers are shared with urban communities, some are felt more keenly in remote communities, and some are largely exclusive to rural communities.

3.1.1 Examples of barriers which affect both rural and urban communities

Some of the challenges faced in rural and remote communities are similar to those faced by employers and individuals in more urban communities. Likewise, the extent to which those factors impact on skills development is of a comparable magnitude. Particularly worth noting is that many of the challenges which face remote employers are actually not because they are remote, but rather because they are small or micro businesses. This is an important distinction. Just as in urban communities, there is clearly work to be done to raise the profile of the impact of training particularly with micro and small businesses.

3.1.2 Unaware Of Value of Skills

For us it is clear that a significant body of employers across the LEP economy are not actively addressing skills issues. In the majority of cases, when we introduced our primary research the conversation immediately stopped or we were able at best to elicit one or two more responses to initial questions.

For those of us working in the skills world, the issue is at the top of our list, but for employers it is simply *one* of the things on their to-do list, and actually, many employers do not even consider it. This is particularly the case for smaller companies.

Whilst there are clearly employers and sector organisations who are convinced of the value of skills, both now and in the future, there is work yet to be done to convince the market that training and skills are things which they should be demanding.

There is an abundance of literature on the value of skills and some of these messages could usefully be communicated to employers, individuals and stakeholders.

A summary of the benefits for upskilling are shown in the table below:

Table 14 The potential benefits of upskilling

	Benefits
Economy	Leitch (2006) estimated that increases in skills in the UK workforce in the past 10 years, increased GDP by between £30 and £50 billion Up to 20% of annual growth between 1975 and 2002 was attributable to workforce skills (Bell et al, 2005) Increased productivity (Garrett, Campbell and Mason, 2010) The rate of return for the state up to 13% of educating an individual to degree level (PriceWaterhouseCooper, 2005) Improved economic growth (Barro, 1991; 1997); (Sianesi and Van Reensen, 2003) Increased innovation (Tether et al, 2005) The link between health and education (Groot & Maassen van den Bink, 2007) Increased education has been linked with a reduction in depression (Feinstein et al, 2008), increased life satisfaction, increased level of exercise and decrease in the likelihood of smoking (Feinstein & Hammond, 2004) Parents' education is positively associated with how their children perform at school (Sabates, 2008)
Businesses	Increases productivity and profitability (Barrett & O'Connell, 2001) Businesses that train their staff are more likely to survive (Collier et al, 2005; 2007) Increased retention of staff (Dex & Smith, 2001) Presence of skills among other some staff can have a spillover effect (Heuermann et al, 2009) Carriou and Jeger, (1997) found that a 1% increase in training spending delivered a return of 2% in additional value Organisations are benefiting at twice the rate of employees (Konings and Vanormelingen, 2010) Apprenticeships improves business performance including organisational competitiveness, productivity, and quality of its services and products (Bashford, 2006; Hogarth & Hasluck, 2003) Over 80% of employers who employ apprentices agree that they help increase productivity in their workplace (Populus, 2009) 81% of consumers say they would favour a company that employs apprentices (Warwick, 2008) 80% of employers who take on apprentices rely on them to provide skilled workers for the future (Populus, 2009) Research has found that those businesses that use a greater range of Human Resource Management (HRM) practices can double their profit per employee compared to those businesses implementing relatively few (Guest et al, 2003)
Individual	Helps avoid low wages (Descy & Tessaring, 2005) Decreased chance of unemployment (Descy & Tessaring, 2005).

In the city, core business functions can easily be sub contracted out; however rural based businesses often do not have this option. Consequently, owners may either choose to ignore things such as marketing, take it on themselves, or use someone who may be relatively unskilled or expensive. These additional business critical services are often missing from rural communities and consequently growth may be affected. There is a body of evidence showing that owners would benefit from easier access to management and leadership training. In this way, challenges facing businesses relating to skills should not be simply reduced to those facing employees. Rural businesses need support for business growth as much for current business operation.

3.1.3 Barriers felt more keenly in remote communities

Employers highlight the challenges associated with changes in funding, eligibility and bureaucracy in general. Regulations become regarded as a problematic set of shifting sands which take up important time and resource as managers try to navigate the opportunities and challenges they bring. This of course is not unique to rural or remote employers, but the added dimension comes because of the smaller networks that are evident in remote communities. In some industries where there are clusters of similar companies then there are clearly support mechanisms to ensure that local industries can stay up to date with important developments. There are also instances of formal networks where trade associations or equivalent play an important role (for instance in agriculture). However, in remote communities where there are not large numbers of any business, let alone businesses in the same industry, there is a discernible lack of these types of helpful networks. Our research with rural businesses revealed that only 7% were members of any local business networks.

Consequently, any changes in funding, finance or entitlement can be difficult to communicate. In this specific case, any changes around government funding to skills development is likely to be difficult to transmit and rural companies may simply not become aware of the changes and the new opportunities.

Moving on, awareness is clearly a challenge faced by the remote communities. But even when remote employers become aware of training initiatives which may be of interest, the physical challenge, and the isolation can prove significant barriers which prevent optimal take-up.

For example. Consider an employer who wishes to have an employee receive training one day a week. The provider is likely to have them travel to their site, which as we have stated previously may be difficult because of incomplete or limited timing public transport routes. Even when an employer wants to procure training, it just might not be possible because of the understandable determination of a provider to bring together a cohort so as to make delivery cost effective and given the value of peer learning potentially of most worth to the learner.

But there is a secondary issue here too. We have assumed that there is a cohort at a college and we simply need to get the learner to the provider. In remote communities this might not be the case. Even casting a large, bus serviced radius over numerous local communities may not produce sufficient numbers of learners so that the economics of running courses adds up. In this case, we might have demand, just not enough in aggregate terms for a provider to run a course.

Of course this may happen in urban communities too. But it is much less likely, particularly in mainstream topic areas. However in remote areas, it is clear that bringing together cohorts of the necessary size to make provision cost effective is much more of a challenge.

We note also the different challenges which face rural and remote training providers. It is clear that the training sector faces a number of significant challenges. Colleges are under financial pressures common across the entire public sector, perhaps more so given that the very people they seek to recruit as lecturers are so easily able to move into the private sector where they have significantly greater earning potential – for instance we have heard of the difficulty in recruiting and retaining high quality plumbing lecturers because of the difference between salaries being offered by the college and the market. Private training providers are clearly under pressure as evidenced by recent announcements that the largest in the country, Learndirect, is going through a widespread redundancy programme losing approximately 10% of their staff. We have also heard of a number of bespoke private training providers closing down, with the apparent explanation being the disruption caused to cash flow by changes to apprenticeship funding.

3.1.4 Barriers which are largely exclusive to remote communities

Our research with remote communities highlights the importance of information, advice and guidance. In economic terms, incomplete information prevents rational decisions, which are by definition, ineffective and inefficient. Consequently, without complete, comprehensive and robust information, providers simply cannot be in a position to provide advice or guidance.

We know that the LEP is receiving comprehensive research on its primary sectors so there is clearly an opportunity to develop useful and impactful tools. However, for these remote communities, the way by which those tools are shared are almost as important as the content of them. Much has been written on the creation of effective IAG materials, but likewise there is useful work on how to disseminate tools electronically or via modern communication routes.

Absolutely central in all of our work has been that the digital infrastructure is a challenge. It is easy to see improved connectivity as the answer to the problem. It may indeed be the way by which to bring a new era of e-learning and distance learning. However, there are important challenges which require addressing.

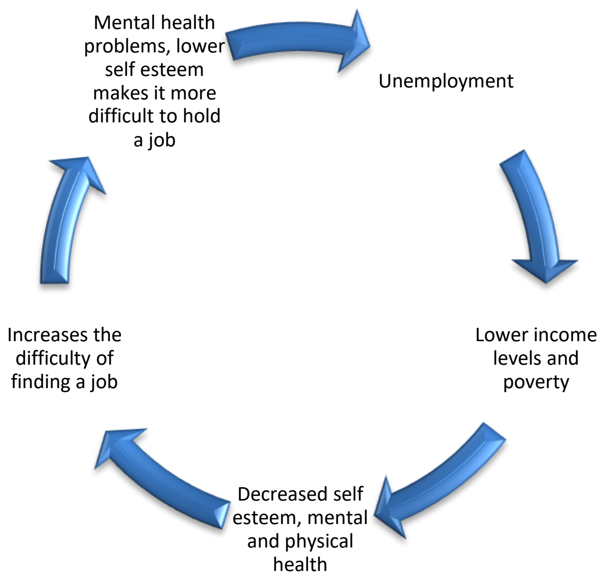
As we have presented previously, rather than the countryside catching up with the city, what we are actually seeing is that urban connectivity is moving even further ahead of remote communities. Even in the relatively short history of the internet, it is not about installing the infrastructure and believing that the task is complete. We have already moved from dial up, to broad band, to wireless, to fibre optic cable to name a few. As technology improves, how do we ensue that remote communities are able to gain the benefits? Is this forever going to be about the rural community trying to hold onto the coat tails of the next technological intervention? Indeed from our research with employers in East Riding, better connectivity – broadband and phone signal – were frequently mentioned when asked what would make business easier.

The challenges of transport are particularly important to rural communities. 25% of employers in York and North Yorkshire reported that there was insufficient public transport provision. The need for more buses was frequently mentioned. Declining public sector support for buses for instance, means that many routes simply no longer run. Where they do, the frequency is much reduced and timetables rarely support anti-social working hours.

3.1.5 Impacts of these barriers

It is now widely recognised that there are close links between various important areas of social policy. When considering skills and training, impacts are felt in employment, but also in health, the criminal justice system and others. There is a clear and causal relationship between skills, employment, wellbeing and others. Consequently, when skills or training interventions are missing or ineffective then we feel the impacts negatively across a number of different areas.

Employment is widely recognised as being a key way to improve life chances. As well as the documented health benefits, being employed for instance, reduces the risk of re-offending by between a third and half (Social Exclusion Unit, 2002). Consequently, unemployment can be an indicator of social exclusion but also a driver in that unemployment can lead to other aspects of social exclusion such as poverty, homelessness, and poor physical and mental health. But conversely these aspects can also be a barrier to employment. This can create a cycle of social exclusion that can be difficult to break.



The value of skills and the positive impact of training is well researched and considered elsewhere, with much literature existing on it and we have included a brief tool above. Importantly, it should also be noted that the availability of human capital is also a factor in many investment decisions made by employers. In the same way that organisations reflect on the capital price of locating in a specific place, so too do they consider the availability of appropriate labour. This is the principle explaining why high tech firms locate themselves around Cambridge and other well regarded universities. But it is also the principle that means areas of high unemployment tend to only ever see the creation of low skilled and low waged jobs. Of course, some of this is about the chicken and the egg, but how do we break the cycle? Should rural economies look to grow and develop in new ways then new skills and new expertise are needed over and above those which already exist.

There is clear evidence of the link between being unskilled or lowly skilled and low wages, uncertainty in the job market and significant periods of worklessness. But there is also emerging research demonstrating the link between areas characterised by low skills and limited amounts of inward investment.

In this way we can show that a poorly trained community has implications both for the present and future. These implications are not just limited to negatively impacted employment prospects. But as above, the implications of poor training can be witnessed across a range of metrics covering a number of areas of social policy.

It is clear that rural communities face a number of challenges which can make it harder to run a business than it might in an urban setting. Some of them are of course are beyond the remit of this study, but are certainly worthy of deeper primary research as we have clearly identified them as being evident and having an impact on the economic performance and potential future growth of the places and sectors within our study.

3.1.6 So what are the skills challenges faced by remote communities?

3.1.6.1 Careers Advice

From September 2012, schools had a new duty to provide access to careers advice. However, there was no additional funding for this duty and so there is an ongoing concern about the quality and efficacy of that provision. In particular there is concern that isolated communities may be a blind spot in any national service (indeed some sectors worry about this too). Advisers may focus on cities and urban areas, having little local knowledge in relation to local employers, local labour markets and developments likely to come to the area. When schools rely on the online National Careers Service, the particular challenges of living in rural areas again come to the fore with regard to poor broadband coverage.

3.1.6.2 Employment and Training

A well-researched area is that employees in rural areas often find in-work progression difficult. The concentration of small firms offer limited opportunities for in-work training as well as few opportunities to take the next step in terms of occupation level. This is because, as data shows, in rural communities, there tends to be a preponderance of smaller firms – which lack this internal progression structure. Consequently, this effectively puts a drag factor on many people within rural communities, holding them in the low wage, low skill part of the economy which is vulnerable to downturns in the economy and is thus characterised by insecure employment. This in turn brings economic, social and health related challenges.

Evidence shows that people in rural areas are much less inclined to claim the benefits to which they are entitled, often deterred by the hassle factor of travelling to relevant offices, or the fact that their employment is often seasonal and irregular, meaning that multiple applications need to be made for a matter of only a few months at a time. This leads to many claimants not 'bothering' with the system which means that they often do not access career development support offered through government funded initiatives.

Crucially, training providers routinely report that delivering solutions in rural locations is much riskier than in high population areas. As outlined above, transport is a significant issue, but often staff and other costs are higher as people are brought into areas to deliver training rather than using central offices and facilities. Thus their costs are routinely higher and cohorts of learners are often smaller. This means that providers may look to lessen their costs by reducing the quality of their provision.

3.1.6.3 Apprenticeships

The very nature of Apprenticeships is difficult for small and micro businesses, and despite various initiatives to make it easier for micro businesses to engage with the provision, smaller firms are routinely nervous about engaging with Apprenticeships for a number of reasons. Where 'sharing' an Apprentice is an option, it is historically something that has sounded easier than it has been in practice, and GTA, ATA type solutions have actually been patchy both in terms of volume, but also in terms of impact. Traditionally, rural businesses have often complained about the lack of focus placed on rural locations. Current funding criteria do not take notice of the extra costs with rural provision outlined above and so providers have less motivation to really push the offer in rural communities. However, there are good examples of VCS and private providers, acting as sub-contractors, offering good quality Apprenticeship provision.

3.1.6.4 Perception of Rural Communities

Despite the traditional perception of the countryside, very few economies in rural England are driven by agriculture, which now accounts for less than 5% of the rural workforce. Rural firms are in every sector. This lack of real understanding is also a frequent complaint against nominally supportive development agencies who are seen as being based in towns and cities and staffed by people with incomplete understanding of rural issues.

3.1.6.5 Digital Skills and Necessary Infrastructure

Many rural communities have insufficient internet infrastructure necessary to take advantage of progress in digital solutions. There are numerous moves to roll out access to high speed broadband, but investment needs to be made to ensure also that when the infrastructure does arrive the skills are there to make the most of the opportunities available. To note also is that when this infrastructure and skill set is in place, it can be a future way to deliver long distance or remote learning, with such solutions currently entering the learning and skills sector on a frequent basis.

Therefore we are able to more fully understand the challenges faced by rural and remote communities, both in the sense of the barriers local employers face but also how they receive support in relation to training and skills development as well as the skills that local businesses need.

4 Potential Solutions by which to improve access to training in rural and remote areas

There have been several high profile considerations of how to improve the economic competitiveness of rural communities across the UK. However, as we will later suggest, there is a lack of completeness in that literature, particularly around research into skills *delivery* in rural and remote places. A key finding of this report is that more in-depth research could usefully be conducted into the success of remote and rural delivery – particularly by providers in the LEP area. For example, we have been unable to identify any evaluation material of delivery undertaken in the remote communities which might be able to shape future delivery.

Improving the rural situation was something discussed by Lord Heseltine in his 'no stone unturned in the pursuit of growth report' (Heseltine, 2012) and more latterly by the UKCES (Owen, et al., 2013). Various other reports by well-regarded bodies such as NIACE and others have also reflected on how to improve the position of rural and remote communities.

At a strategic level there are clear evidence based recommendations.

There are a number of barriers which have an impact, which go beyond the remit of this study, but which are deserving of consideration. These are discussed frequently elsewhere and so we point readers to sources such as the rural economy and community documents published by Defra and Natural England and ACRE (Defra & Natural England, 2017, ACRE, 2017) for a fuller consideration of barriers such as unaffordable housing, and public services under pressure including local schools and health care. These factors can have an impact on people of working age living in these communities and can effectively result in the hollowing out of the community.

What is clear is that rural communities need special consideration in terms of the delivery of social policy in various areas. This rural proofing is a well-accepted notion and is one that is often discussed in the literature (Defra, 2017). The differences in rural and urban places can mean that there are unintended consequences in rural communities from the imposition of policy conceived and administered from a town or city.

Consequently, there is a key need for rural proofing of skill and training delivery, even in an area such as YNYER LEP where there is a significant rural constituency.

In 2013 the Commission for Rural Communities (CRC) set out a number of key points which could improve the economic welfare of remote areas of the UK. Amongst others, the CRC highlighted the role that the rural community should play at a strategic level in Local Enterprise Partnerships. They called for:

- LEP Boards to have rural champions.
- The creation of rural sub groups.

These strategic appointments are seen as key ways by which to ensure that the rural parts of the LEP area are fully engaged and represented. As shown previously, the rural economy is not homogenous, nor is it simply about farming or land based industries. Without expert representation, what we can end up seeing is policy which may not be rural proofed, and if it is, it may be only on the basis of an incomplete and potentially caricatured perception of rural and remote communities.

There are a number of other solutions which are missing from rural communities. In particular, we see that business networks are often missing from them. These networks are often the basis for knowledge sharing and marketing of business solutions. We note that Business Link services are now conducted by web link which has been criticised in remote communities.

What follows are examples of some of the most innovative approaches currently being used to improve the delivery of relevant skills to remote communities. Firstly we address some of the strategic and policy measures that could improve the skills of remote communities before highlighting some more practical measures aimed at delivery to remote and rural communities.

5 Innovation in delivering skills and training

The recent changes in the skills system have been discussed elsewhere and it is not our intention to consider policy changes here. Rather we look to highlight the innovative and novel approaches which are now being taken, or which are being recommended for the future in the sector. The policy changes combined with technological developments seem likely to produce a considerable shift in how training is organised, shaped and delivered.

In December 2016, the Skills Commission, a body led by parliamentarians and senior figures from across education, skills and business published its review into the future of FE and skills, with a particular focus on innovation (Bowater, 2016).

The full report can be found on the Skills Commission site[1], but it produced a set of seventeen recommendations, which we reproduce in full. Interestingly, the report highlights that recommendations 1, 9 and 11 are particularly relevant for LEPs across the country. As we reviewed those recommendations, we saw the value and relevance of several other recommendations to our own study. Therefore, as well as the three highlighted recommendations, we invite readers from stakeholders to consider all the recommendations.

Recommendations within the report were:

1. Provision needs to be flexible and fit around the needs of learners and employers. Providers must develop their offer in partnership with employers, either directly through LEPs or other employer and sector groups. Where funding conditions or statutory requirements limit the development of flexible and bespoke delivery models, the DfE, EFA and SFA should review whether exemptions could be made in cases where high standards can be maintained.
2. FE and skills providers should use their physical space and assets to become skills hubs for local businesses, and serve as incubators for their learners' next career steps. This should be considered in the commissioning and design of future building projects.
3. Devolution settlements should be 'full' and include additional powers across all areas of skills provision. They should encourage cross local authority and LEP collaboration.
4. Funding for devolution should be based on an area's capability and ambition, not solely on population density or the number of large businesses.
5. Provider's boards should be made up of leaders from diverse sector areas.
6. Providers should future proof their staff, as well as their institutions, by guaranteeing ongoing industry experience. This should be partnered with employer engagement at all levels of the organisation.
7. Devolved authorities should generate business intelligence, and use that for adequate skills planning for the future.
8. The DfE should create comprehensive data sets across 16-24 years, similar to that of early years, to ensure that national policy is reactive to, and reflective of, the changing labour market.
9. LEPs and the Careers and Enterprise Company should work together to ensure that careers information advice and guidance is based on attainable employment opportunities. This should mean it is grounded in local and national skills needs, based on rigorous data sets, and reflective of genuine career options. This needs to be provided throughout the education and skills system, including mandatory advice in schools.
10. Building on themes contained in the 2016 Skills Plan, each provider's offer should be built on clear pathways, with clear end destinations articulated to learners. Providers should have a pathway agreed with the learner.
11. Providers, awarding bodies and employers should work to better quantify and clarify the transferrable skills contained within each programme.
12. To enhance provision, create more efficient delivery models and to reduce the need for physical facilities providers should invest in the digital capabilities of their staff and collaborate with other providers.

[1] http://www.policyconnect.org.uk/sc/research/going-places-innovation-further-education-and-skills

13. Providers need to have the confidence to innovate digitally. In its annual report to Parliament on Education and Skills, Ofsted should highlight examples of good digital practice that have transformed outcomes.
14. Where institutions are embarking on a process of merger, or transformation, the blueprint for change should be grounded in the education and training needs of learners and local employers. Change should focus on cultural alignment and embedding cultural change, not merely structural or organisational solutions.
15. Income diversification should be embedded in providers' strategies for growth. Commercial opportunities should be sought in line with the provider's mission statement.
16. Providers should have more freedom and flexibility over their business models and structures. Providers and provider groups should be better able to use their funds to invest in the future. The SFA should review funding arrangements so they are less retrospective and can encourage growth, especially in apprenticeship provision.
17. Lessons should be learnt from the Area Based Review process. All parts of the education and skills landscape must be considered in any future geographical review of provision.

It feels difficult to disagree with the above recommendations and it is for this reason that we include them in their entirety. If nothing else, stakeholders across the LEP may wish to consider them.

5.1 Distance Learning

Elsewhere there is much support for distance learning based on the developments of technology which are increasingly being used by the sector. In YNYER, the online infrastructure is not something that can simply be taken for granted. We know of several challenges around digital infrastructure and understand that there is more comprehensive research into the digital maturity of the LEP.

It is clear that distance learning brings flexibility which may be attractive to both rural and remote communities, but also to the micro and small business who make up a large number of the employers who are based there. In particular this is of value when learners are trying to work and learn. Of course, as above, this relies on the requisite facilities and infrastructure being in place.

It also reduces the need for transport, which we have previously discussed as being a significant barrier in the remote communities. The barriers of cost and time are also much lessened with reduced time spent at college.

There is an expectation that distance learning is a way to open up the market in the sense that learners will have more choice. For some communities, there may be really only one accessible provider, who may or may not have expertise in the demanded subject. Online teaching opens up choice to the learner, hopefully giving the opportunity to really find the specialist training they are looking for. Of course, with more choice hopefully comes reduced course fees.

There is a danger of seeing distance learning as a panacea. As above, it is important to recognise that there needs to be appropriate facilities and infrastructure. However, even if the approach can be delivered, it is important to recognise that there are a number of potential disadvantages which stakeholders may do well to consider mitigating to ensure maximum impact.

For example, distance learning can lead to a lack of social interaction between learners, which is often one of the main routes for learning. So whilst is learning, it is not a perfect substitute for classroom based instruction. This is not to say it is a poorer version, for some students it may be more effective, but it is worth noting that it is not the same thing. Of course, for some students it simply may not work. Likewise, not all subjects can be effectively delivered online. Drawing on our understanding of the LEP priority sectors, practical courses such as those in social care and nursing do not lend themselves to online provision.

Likewise, there continues to be a sceptical view from some employers about the worth of online qualifications. With some employers regarding them as less rigorous and valuable as the classroom delivered alternatives.

Absolutely crucially, whatever advantages there are to be gained from distance learning will only be achieved if the technology exists and can be used. To an extent at least, digital skills are required before a student can fully take advantage of an online course. So as well as ensuring that the connectivity and hardware is accessible, there is a need to ensure that the requisite digital skills exist.

Whilst there is indeed clearly growing provision in distance and e-learning solutions, there is little evidence which captures the costs and benefits. Consequently, we include case studies which demonstrate training solutions for rural workers.

5.2 Case Studies

5.2.1 Remote Skills course for practitioners

The Remote Skills Course is a relatively new offering from British Association for Immediate Care, (BASICS) Scotland.

An innovative solution for remote practitioners; the Remote Skills Training courses enable candidates to connect simultaneously from multiple sites and gain valuable hands-on skills training in pre-hospital emergencies from the comfort of their own home/workplace.

The course allows these medical practitioners direct access to the training without having to leave the comfort of their own home or workplace, negating them having to take time off to attend courses which for some can be in locations that take days just to travel to and from.

Having invested in professional broadcasting equipment and set up their own studio allowing connection with individuals and small groups in Scotland and even worldwide.

Another part of the investment, thanks to funding by NES (NHS Education Scotland) and The Sandpiper Trust, led to the creation of Training Pods which contain all the necessary equipment needed to participate in one of the courses. Contents of the training pods include:

- Training Manikins
- EZ-IO kits
- Everything you need for Airway Management
- Collars
- Chest Drain Kits
- Sam Sling

The Pods also contain HD web cams ensuring the highest quality is maintained throughout the course.

The shipping of these Pods is managed allowing the student to familiarise themselves with the equipment before the course and time to practice after the live sessions have been completed. Technical and administrative support is also provided throughout the course.

The Remote Skills Course is carried out entirely via Adobe Connect. Similar to the way Skype works, Adobe Connect is a web based conferencing system that allows a high quality video and voice connection over the internet.

All that is required to take part in this course is access to a minimum 1mb broadband connection and a computer that has an up to date web browser with the latest Adobe Flash player installed.

Source: https://basics-scotland.org.uk/courses/our-courses/remote-skills-training-courses/

5.2.2 Skills Enhancement for Rural Communities (SERC)

The programme was designed to take clinical skills training to healthcare staff operating in rural communities (Bennett, et al., 2016). The overall aim was to develop the community and primary care workforce to facilitate the provision of care closer to home by providing the opportunity for up-skilling and continuing professional development.

The innovation

A mobile clinical skills laboratory, owned by the University of Worcester, was commissioned for this programme in order to take clinical training out to healthcare staff in rural communities. The laboratory was equipped with clinical simulation equipment to facilitate the simulation of a clinical setting for teaching purposes. The laboratory could hold up to 12 professionals attending training as well as Clinical Skills Tutors. This method of mobile training was seen as having potential cost-saving benefits because healthcare staff could access training locally, thus avoiding the need to travel and to be taken out of practice for extended periods of time.

Skills audits were carried out by NHS Trust locally to identify which skills should be taught through this innovation.

6 Key points

- 13% of disposable income is spent on transport in rural communities (v 11% in urban areas).
- GPs are facing funding pressures under a system which does not give them funding for treating holiday makers.
- Homes in rural areas are far less likely to meet the decent homes standard, with 56% having a SAP rating (thermal efficiency) of under 30 compared with just 7% in urban areas.
- Rural and isolated communities will probably be under served in terms of broadband connectivity. Ultrafast broadband will be everywhere in towns and cities and potentially nowhere in the slow-speed countryside.
- Childcare facilities are often lacking from rural communities and this has an impact on the employment prospects of parents.
- Some communities and their industries rely on migrant labour in rural areas.
- There are concerns around how some LEPs are engaging with rural employers at a strategic level.
- One in five rural families are below the poverty line.
- York and North Yorkshire has a resident population of 809,200, which equates to 71% of the LEP's total resident population
- 45% of the district's resident population lives in a rural area.
- The 35,000 rural businesses in the MDA area account for 76% of all rural businesses across the LEP.
- Hambleton district has the greatest number of rural businesses while York district has the fewest in the MDA area.
- A high proportion (30%) of rural businesses are sole traders or partnerships with no employees and just 1% of rural businesses employ more than 50 individuals.
- The proportion of retirees within the economically inactive group is higher in rural areas.
- The top three employment sectors in rural MDA are wholesale and retail, health and social work, and education.
- The proportion of people working from home is higher in rural areas than urban areas.
- Over 30,000 individuals in the MDA are home based, and 64% of these are in rural locations.
- Business critical services are often missing from rural communities and consequently growth may be affected.
- Smaller networks are evident in remote communities.
- Our research with rural businesses in the LEP revealed that only 7% were members of any local business networks.
- Getting together a cohort for a college delivered course is a challenge.
- Training providers delivering in rural locations face a number of challenges.
- Information, advice and guidance is important, but it's often based on incomplete information. Now might be an opportunity to produce useful tools.

- Better connectivity – broadband and phone signal – were frequently mentioned by employers when asked what would make business easier.
- The need for more buses was also frequently mentioned.
- There is a need to see how to make the apprenticeship offer work in the rural setting.
- Also need to convince the urbanites that rural doesn't mean just agriculture!
- There is a lack of evaluation of remote methods.
- There is a key need for rural proofing of skill and training delivery.
- The Commission for Rural Communities (CRC) called for LEP Boards to have rural champions and the creation of rural subgroups.
- The rural economy is not homogenous, nor is it simply about farming or land based industries.
- The Skills Commission review into the future of FE and skills have three recommendations particularly relevant for LEPs:
    - Provision needs to be flexible and fit around the needs of learners and employers. Providers must develop their offer in partnership with employers, either directly through LEPs or other employer and sector groups. Where funding conditions or statutory requirements limit the development of flexible and bespoke delivery models, the DfE, EFA and SFA should review whether exemptions could be made in cases where high standards can be maintained.
    - LEPs and the Careers and Enterprise Company should work together to ensure that careers information advice and guidance is based on attainable employment opportunities. This should mean it is grounded in local and national skills needs, based on rigorous data sets, and reflective of genuine career options. This needs to be provided throughout the education and skills system, including mandatory advice in schools.
    - Providers, awarding bodies and employers should work to better quantify and clarify the transferrable skills contained within each programme.
- In YNYER, the online infrastructure is not something that can simply be taken for granted.
- Clearly there are benefits to distance learning – not without down sides – but there is a need to ensure that the requisite digital skills exist.
- There are examples of innovative remote skills courses including Remote Skills course for practitioners and Skills Enhancement for Rural Communities (SERC).

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Provider Toolkit

Challenges facing the UK's Rural Economy

- The rural economy is usefully regarded as an umbrella term for at least four different types of rural economies.
    - A traditional rural community reliant on agriculture and being isolated geographically.
    - An urban fringe where employment is affected and determined by proximity to the town or city.
    - A seasonal area where job opportunities undergo strong seasonal variations.
    - An ex-industrial area.

- One in five rural families live below the below the poverty line.

- GPs are facing funding pressures under a system which does not give them funding for treating holiday makers.

- Homes in rural areas are far less likely to meet the decent homes standard, with 56% having a SAP rating (thermal efficiency) of under 30 compared with just 7% in urban areas.

- Childcare facilities are often lacking from rural communities and this has an impact on the employment prospects of parents.

- Cuts to public transport are clearly having an impact on rural bus routes.

- Rural and isolated communities will probably be under served in terms of broadband connectivity. Ultrafast broadband will be everywhere in towns and cities and potentially nowhere in the slow-speed countryside.

- The majority of businesses based in rural communities have nothing at all to do with farming, but agriculture continues often to be seen as the entirety of the rural economy.

- Some communities and their industries rely on migrant labour in rural areas.

- The proportion of people working from home is higher in rural areas than urban areas.

- Business critical services are often missing from rural communities and consequently growth may be affected.

- Smaller business networks are evident in remote communities.

- Training providers delivering in rural locations face a number of challenges.

- Information, advice and guidance tools are particularly important, but where they do exit, they are often created on partial or out-of-date information.

- There is a need to work on making the apprenticeship offer work in the rural setting.

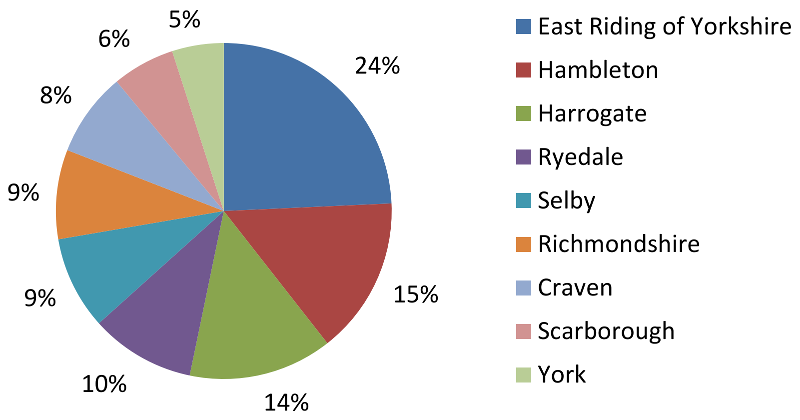
The Rural Economy in York, North Yorkshire and East Riding LEP

- LEP covers nearly 1.1 million hectares of which 95% is classified as rural.

- 45% of the LEP's resident population lives in a rural area. But the comparison between rural and urban resident populations across the Local Authorities varies substantially across the LEP:

Local Authority	Total Population	% Urban	% Rural
Craven	55,409	40%	60%
East Riding of Yorkshire	334,179	56%	44%
Hambleton	89,140	19%	81%
Harrogate	157,869	67%	33%
Richmondshire	51,965	23%	77%
Ryedale	51,751	23%	77%
Scarborough	108,793	69%	31%
Selby	83,449	32%	68%
York	198,051	84%	16%
YNYER LEP	1,130,606	55%	45%

- There are 28,500 businesses located in rural locations across the LEP.



- 28% of rural businesses are sole traders or partnerships with no employees.

- Relatively few (1%) rural businesses employ more than 50 individuals.

- The top 3 industries of employment in rural areas are wholesale and retail, health and social work and education.

- Over 40,000 individuals in the LEP work at or from home. Of these 64%, or 25,000 individuals are based in rural locations.

The Rural Economy in York and North Yorkshire

- The York and North Yorkshire district covers over 830,000 hectares of which 96% is classified as rural.
- The majority of the Yorkshire Dales and the North York Moors lie within North Yorkshire's boundaries, and around 40% of the county is covered by National Parks.
- York and North Yorkshire has a resident population of 800,000. Nearly 380,000 individuals are employed in the area.
- 45% of the district's resident population lives in a rural area.
- Self-employment in North Yorkshire stands at 14.1% - greater than within York, the LEP as a whole and the English average.
- Of the 35,000 businesses in the MDA, 62% are in rural locations.
- 30% of all rural businesses are sole traders in the MDA and just 1% of rural businesses employ more than 50 individuals.
- The largest industries of employment across York and North Yorkshire, in both rural and urban areas, are wholesale and retail, health and social work and education.
- There are over 30,000 home workers in York and North Yorkshire. 64% of these individuals are based in rural locations and 36% in urban areas.

Diagnostic Tool: Working with rural/remote clients – understanding the specific challenges

General Information	
Name	
Email	
Where do you live?	
What sector do you work in?	
☐ Agriculture	☐ Accommodation and food (visitor economy)
☐ Food and drink manufacture	☐ Education
☐ Engineering	☐ Health and Social Care
☐ Other Manufacturing	☐ Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise
☐ Construction	☐ Agritech,
☐ Wholesale and retail	☐ Bio-renewables
☐ Transport and storage	☐ Other (please specify)
Do you want to continue working in this sector?	
☐ Yes ☐ No	If no, what sector do you want to work in?
What is your job title?	
What is your job level?	
☐ Management	☐ Personal service occupation
☐ Professional / technical	☐ Sales and customer service
☐ Skilled	☐ Transport / machine operative
☐ Admin / secretarial	☐ Elementary (Shop floor)

Qualifications and training	
Please state, if any, your highest qualifications	☐ No qualifications
	☐ Entry Level
	☐ Level 1 (i.e. GCSE grade D to G, NVQ L1)
	☐ Level 2 (i.e. GCSE grade A* to C, NVQ L2)
	☐ Level 3 (i.e. A level, NVQ L3)
	☐ Level 4 (i.e. HNC, Higher apprenticeship, NVQ L4)
	☐ Level 5 and above (i.e. foundation degree, degree with honours, masters, Post graduate certificate, doctorate)

Do hold any professional qualifications? (i.e. titles or awards granted by professional body – i.e. Chartered status, EngTech, ICTTech, Driving Instructor, Registered Gas Engineer, Childminder, Dental Nurse, Solicitor)	☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please state the qualification/subject area

Ambitions / Future progression

What do you want to achieve by working with us?	
☐ Improve soft skills	☐ Improve Digital skills
☐ Improve Leadership skills	☐ Improved team working skills
☐ Improve Management skills	☐ Improved financial skills
☐ Be compliant in my job	☐ Improved marketing skills
☐ Improved job specific skills	☐ Other
If you have ticked any of the above, could you please provide us with more details	
What kind of learner are you?	
☐ Prefer classroom based learning	☐ Prefer on the job training
☐ Prefer distance learning (e-learning via personal computer)	☐ Prefer mobile devices
☐ Prefer distance learning (print-based course)	☐ Online tutoring services
☐ Other (please specify)	
Tell us about any challenges you may face in completing your studies with us	
☐ Lack of transport	☐ Time commitment
☐ Lack of childcare	☐ Poor home internet connection
☐ Cost	☐ Other (please specify)

Information, advice & guidance (IAG)

Where do you go for Information, Advice or Guidance on job and training opportunities?	
Are you a member of any business networks?	
☐ Yes ☐ No	If yes, which network?

Diagnostics Tool: Employability Scale

Client ID	**Name of Provider Organisation**	**Staff Member**
Age:	**Gender:**	Male ☐ Female ☐
Initial Meeting ☐	**End Meeting** ☐	

Essential	Yes	No
I have identification		
I have a bank account		
I have an NI number		

	Really not me	Most of the time this is not me	Sometimes me, sometimes not me	Most of the time I'd say this is right	This describes how I am all of the time	Comments
About Me						
I am well enough to work	1	2	3	4	5	
I have supportive friends and family who will help me go to work and, if I need them to, they will pick up the children, give me a lift etc.	1	2	3	4	5	
I know that I will be financially better off in work	1	2	3	4	5	
Attitude						
I really want to find and keep a job	1	2	3	4	5	
I can see myself gaining and keeping employment	1	2	3	4	5	
I am always punctual / on time	1	2	3	4	5	
Knowledge						
I know what job I am looking for	1	2	3	4	5	
I know how to effectively look for job vacancies	1	2	3	4	5	
I can see where I've made mistakes in the past and have learnt from them	1	2	3	4	5	
I can identify the things I need to do to gain employment	1	2	3	4	5	
I will be great in an interview	1	2	3	4	5	
Skills						
I can manage my own behaviour and how I communicate with others	1	2	3	4	5	
I have the qualifications, training and experience for the job I want	1	2	3	4	5	
I have the IT skills I need to search for work	1	2	3	4	5	
I can say why someone should employ me	1	2	3	4	5	
I can talk about my achievements	1	2	3	4	5	
Tools						
I have an excellent CV	1	2	3	4	5	
My covering letter portrays me in the best possible light	1	2	3	4	5	
I have suitable clothing for interviews / work	1	2	3	4	5	
I know who will provide a reference for me	1	2	3	4	5	
Total (out of 100)						

Diagnostics Tool: Employability Soft Skills Scale

Client ID			
Age:	**Gender:**	☐ Male	☐ Female
Meeting:	Beginning of the programme Diagnostic meeting ☐		End of programme meeting Evaluation ☐

	Really not me	Most of the time this is not me	Sometimes me, sometimes not me	Most of the time I'd say this is right	This describes how I am all of the time	Comments
Well-being						
My physical health is good	1	2	3	4	5	
My mental health is good	1	2	3	4	5	
Attitude						
I have a can do attitude	1	2	3	4	5	
I know my strengths	1	2	3	4	5	
I have ambitions for the future	1	2	3	4	5	
I am interested in new things	1	2	3	4	5	
I can control my attitude	1	2	3	4	5	
Team Work / Leadership						
I like working as part of team	1	2	3	4	5	
I am good at motivating others in a team	1	2	3	4	5	
Problem Solving Skills						
When things go wrong I can find a way to solve/fix it	1	2	3	4	5	
Time management						
I am always on time for appointments/events	1	2	3	4	5	
Communication						
I am good at speaking to new people	1	2	3	4	5	
I am good at communicating ideas to a group	1	2	3	4	5	
I am good at talking about things I have achieved	1	2	3	4	5	
I am good at communicating on a 1 to 1 level	1	2	3	4	5	
Total (out of 75)						

Data Protection: We recognise the importance of the Data Protection Act 1998 and ensure we will comply with it. Your personal data will be stored securely and your identity will be anonymised. I understand my information may be shared with Third Partner organisations (i.e. programme evaluator).		
Client Name	**Client Signature**	**Date:**