

TEACH TOO LOCAL COLLABORATIVE PROJECT

A case for a shared language between business and education in Sussex. Project led by the Sussex Council of Training Providers.



Summary

We know that the skills specialism in Further Education need to be higher in the teacher workforce in order to meet the fast-paced training demands of local and national businesses.

We know that the recruitment and retention of industry specialists in FE is extremely hard, and for a number of reasons.

We also know that in order for employers to feel fully confident in their local technical training provision, then they need to invest more time in collaborating, shaping and influencing what the curriculum might look like – and more time supporting teaching, mentoring and assessing activities.

The considerable barriers to creating an embedded culture of co-design and delivery are very real and include cost, capacity, economic and policy uncertainty and – most frequently – confidence. Education policy and funding is often messy and opaque. Business thinking is fast-paced and riddled with technical specifics that cycles of qualification and academic term-time delivery plans can't often keep up with.

However, if local economies are to grow and skills gaps are to reduce – then all learners need a clear line of sight to work, and to need to be engaging with the realities of life in an office/on a site/in the lab/on the road at the same time as grasping up-to-date technical practice. Collaboration between local industry and local training providers is vital at the very inception of curriculum design, and continued throughout teaching, work experience, employment and assessment.

We need to move the conversation from understanding the challenges to rethinking the possibilities.

Context

Between November 2018 and February 2019, The Sussex Council of Training Providers have been conducting a series of thought experiments, consultations, workshops and 1:1 consultations to really explore if there is a gulf between expectations of employers in engineering, construction and digital technology sectors and the depth and range of curriculum models taught in FE Colleges and via independent training providers.

We've only been focusing on post-16 technical education, but this has included talking to providers of full-time classroom training, apprenticeships, adult learning - and those preparing for forthcoming T Levels.

This project has been funded by the Education & Training Foundation and Association of Colleges as part of the development of Teach Too - a national framework designed to enhance the technical education workforce through better co-design, co-delivery and dual professionalism. More on this later.

What is happening in Sussex?

Sussex comprises of two counties and an independent city authority, rolling hills and miles of beaches. The industrial heartlands around Gatwick Airport and some of our coastal towns are thriving, although some of the UK's most deprived areas can be found here as well as many rural communities with limited transport connections. The area is a champion of small creative, technology, engineering and hospitality enterprises, sole-traders and ambitious SMEs often more driven by innovative product design for overseas customers than occupying huge office complexes or building the sort of rich industrial heritage you might find in other regions. In short, Sussex *isn't* the UK's big business capital, but this has both pros and cons.

One of the biggest challenges is in the area of adult skills and an ageing workforce. The development, refreshment, and transfer of skills all rely on the partnership of pedagogical excellence in vocational learning. This is particularly important for cutting-edge enterprises embracing a digital future. Our region has enormous skills gaps, and scores of employed adults with no formal learning beyond level two (GCSE). Conversely, Brighton and Hove is one of the most qualified cities in the UK, with doctoral students commonly competing for work in coffee shops.

It is an area of massive opportunity, with the Greater Brighton Area investing in leading digital connectivity and technological innovation spaces; strong engineering and advanced manufacturing bases in Hastings and around Chichester; a growing construction and built environment sector across the region and outstanding food and drink producers now capitalising on the scaling demand for artisan British produce.

The Sussex Council of Training Providers (SCTP) was founded in 1986 and is a community of education and training experts that offer apprenticeships, work-based learning, full-time vocational courses and pre-employment training in Sussex (and in many cases, well beyond).

Our 90+ members include colleges, independent training providers, universities, local authorities and a range of associates who provide relevant services into the education and training sector.

Our aim with this project has always to be collaborative, intelligence-led, open to new ideas - fostering new relationships where possible, as well as amplifying the great examples of innovative co-design already happening.

Teach Too

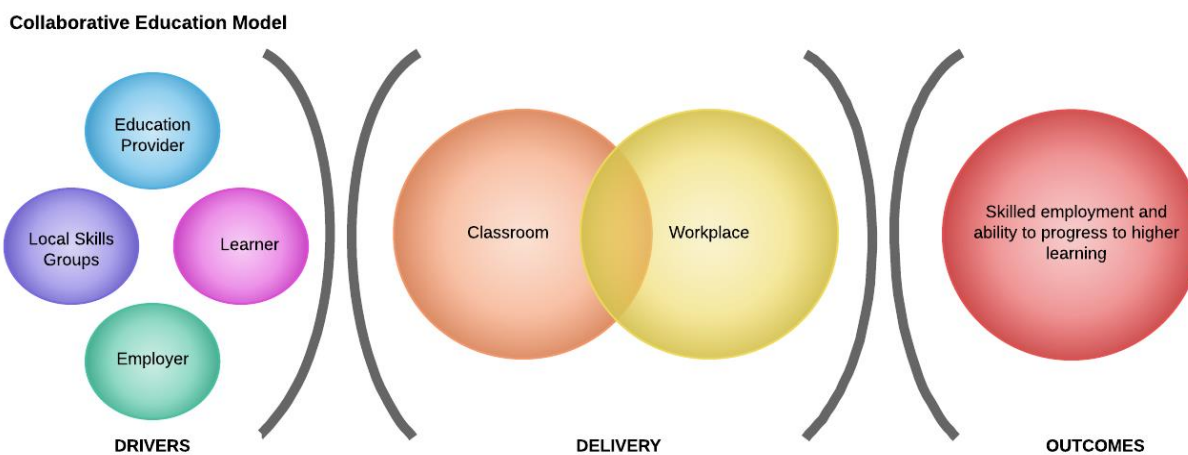
Teach Too is an Education & Training Foundation (ETF) development programme, aiming to address quality improvement in technical education and training, driving excellence through collaborative arrangements. It is now in its 5th phase of development, gathering momentum as a national set of principles that can be embedded in provider/employer relationships wherever they are focused.

The emphasis is on a two-way street - a genuine collaboration between FE sector providers and employers, encouraging people from industry to spend some time

teaching their work and giving employers a direct involvement in designing, planning and developing technical programmes.

The Teach Too toolkit is designed to offer a plain English roadmap for both businesses and training providers to better understand each other's decision-making rationale and to create shared business cases for more integrated working that give a clear, up-to-date and relevant line of site of work to any vocational education student.

The toolkit comprises of guidance and practical activities to support joined-up conversations; particularly useful to employers and providers starting-out on a journey of co-design or contemplating what dual professionalism might look like in their context. The most valuable document is the Business Case Tool – helping all parties to put numbers against any investment of time or resource, making clear the return to any business (whether it is in workforce and learner development/recruitment/retention, the bottom line or meeting targets).



What did we actually do?

In this project, SCTP consultants led a series of workshops on co-design & dual professionalism in Hastings, Brighton, Chichester and online. This was supported by a number of 1:1 consultations and facilitated meetings with strategic authorities and provider/business networks.

The overall aim was to promote, facilitate and enable more in-depth and sustained relationships between employers, key industry practitioners and vocational training providers across Sussex with the objective of improving the range, quality and sustainability of provision for learners.

Throughout the programme, 8 employers, 7 FE college managers and curriculum leaders, 3 independent training providers, 2 local authority managers and 3 business facilitators / brokers directly participated in workshops. All had a specific interest in the development of construction, engineering or digital technology sectors. Many other people discussed the Teach Too principles through more indirect participation at wider business task group meetings or at a mini-conference in February 2019

In workshops we spent time:

- Using the Teach Too toolkit
- Modelling new co-design ideas
- Creating individual action plans and analyses
- Trouble-shooting barriers to collaboration

Facilitators took notes, tested theories, explored data and listened hard to a diversity of perspectives and possible approaches to co-design in the region.

We have considered all activities and relationships through the lens of:

- Collaboration
- Curriculum
- Professionalism
- Leadership

It is these headings that will inform what we think should come next.

Why did we focus on the construction, technology, and engineering sectors?

These are all priority growth sectors, as identified in the national industrial strategy and by the local enterprise partnerships. They are also key areas with skills shortages in the Sussex region, with thousands of unfilled job vacancies.

However, future forecasts around the resilience of these sectors do not all tell the same story.

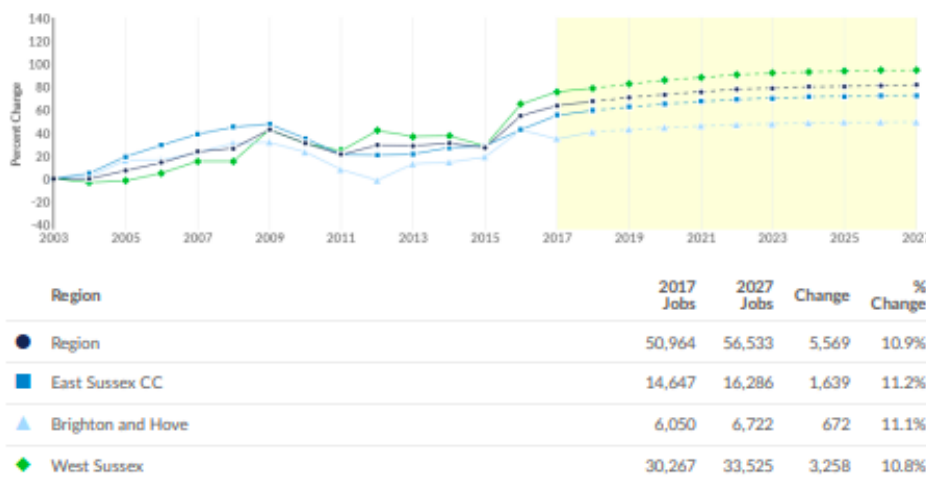
Construction in Sussex is set to sky-rocket, forecast to grow over 10% between 2017-2027, across all regions in Sussex, exceeding all national averages.

The growth is in both the trades and site-construction, but equally in non-construction operations such as surveying, estimating, computer aided design and architecture technologies.

Industry Summary for Construction Industries

<p>52,148</p> <p>Jobs (2018)</p> <p>13% above National average</p>	<p>+10.9%</p> <p>% Change (2017-2027)</p> <p>Nation: +7.4%</p>	<p>£32,937</p> <p>Avg. Wages Per Job (2018)</p> <p>Nation: £33,579</p>
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Regional Trends



Data source: EMSI

Yet, until recently the training available has nearly all focused on traditional labours, with curriculum unchanged for many years. The spread and diversity of training has also been very limited, with over 100 training providers delivering construction-related qualifications in Sussex and Kent, yet 92% of learners studying with just 10 of them.

“In terms of the quality of occupational training, provision is not fully in place [in Kent and East Sussex] for Civil engineering operatives, Floorers and Painters & decorators, Plasterers and dry liners, Scaffolders and Non-construction operatives. This is also the case with the training offer for Civil engineering operative, Plasterers and dry liners and Scaffolders occupations in the neighboring Coast to Capital LEP area”
CITB sector report, October 2017.

Engineering and advanced manufacturing tells a different story. It is a backbone industry in the area, with global firms such as Rolls Royce, Ricardo, Brightwells and General Dynamics employing thousands of people and big local businesses such as Marshall Tufflex and Photek engaging fully with local skills conversations.

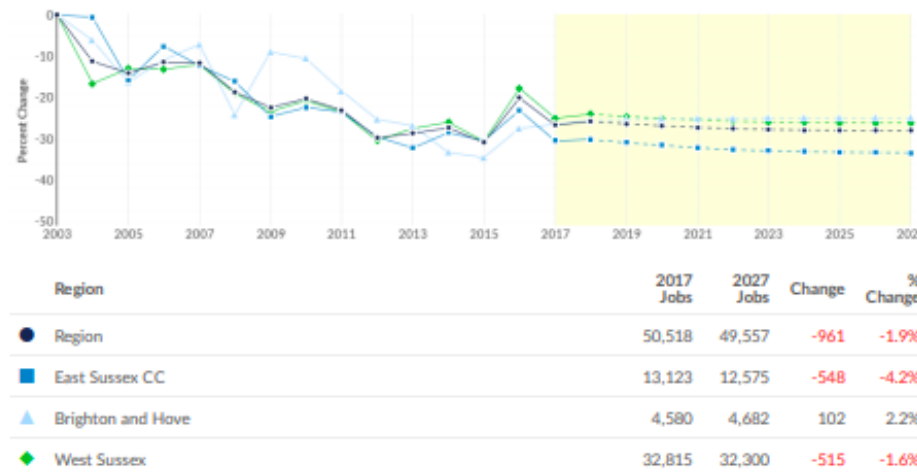
Unlike construction, the data suggests that job numbers will be falling – but this hides the truth that the skillset is changing, with new jobs emerging requiring advanced technical, design and management skills as the factory floor becomes more automated.

The skills gaps are no less acute, because they are changing, and the danger is that the traditional education offer does not change with it unless curriculum is re-designed from the bottom-up.

Industry Summary for Engineering and Electronic Engineering Industries

<p>51,083 Jobs (2018) 26% below National average</p>	<p>-1.9% % Change (2017-2027) Nation: +2.0%</p>	<p>£38,282 Avg. Wages Per Job (2018) Nation: £33,767</p>
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Regional Trends



Data source: EMSI

In ICT and digital, the trend is different again.

The growth of these sectors is rapid and complex, especially given that many of the business models are also new and experimental, with small workforces able to create huge service and product-lines for global customers.

But rather than a proliferation of large employers creating many jobs, the economy is driven by thousands of micro businesses and SMEs, needing highly-skilled entrepreneurial multi-taskers, who combine creative thinking with technical know-how.

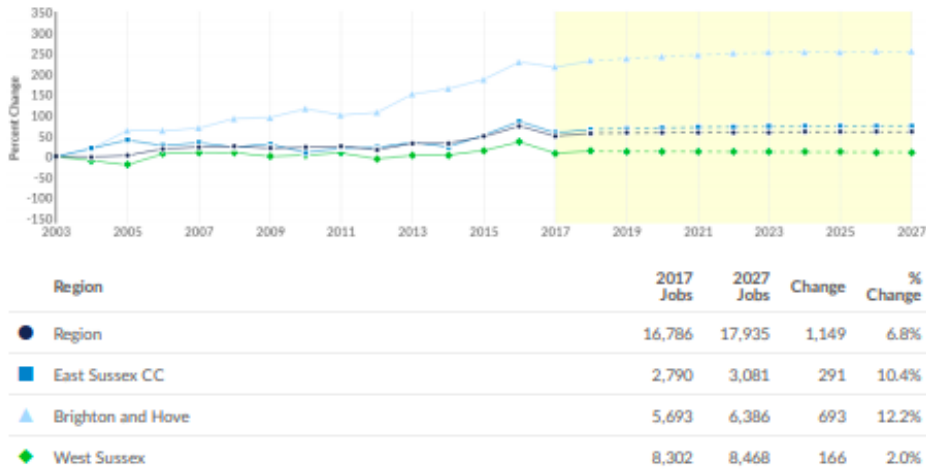
The spread is also not equitable, with major growth in Brighton & Hove, a boost to the workforce in East Sussex but tempered by much slower story in West Sussex.

So, yet again, the training needs are changing and need to be focused, often faster than 12-18 month curriculum cycles can keep apace, and with a need for both deep and broad skills that are constantly evolving.

Industry Summary for Computing Industries

<p>17,555 Jobs (2018) 17% below National average</p>	<p>+6.8% % Change (2017-2027) Nation: +16.1%</p>	<p>£52,010 Avg. Wages Per Job (2018) Nation: £48,442</p>
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Regional Trends



Data source: EMSI

These stories are being recognised in resource investment, with £multi-million investments in STEM and construction teaching facilities in Newhaven, Brighton, Bognor Regis + a mobile construction skills unit from East Sussex College Group from April 2019. However, in many other cases, curriculum and content design appears to be secondary to the capital planning.

One curriculum leader, interviewed as part of this Teach Too project, said that there had been substantial investment in bricks and mortar but very little collaboration with employers on curriculum or equipment purchasing.

What did we learn?

The purpose of this project was to kick-start new ideas and to gain insight. Here are some of the key emerging themes and trends coming from the participants.

Remarks have been aggregated to represent common perspectives or included as direct quotations if available.

Collaboration

Businesses need a clear point of contact and go-to person for advice and guidance. Half the problem is not knowing who to speak to
(employer)

“We could have someone responsible in our college - a co-ordinator to liaise with local/national businesses to help integrated curriculum design happen. Businesses need this too”
(provider)

It is in college and training provider interests to become market leaders in collaboration. It is brand awareness.
(intermediary)

“We need internal knowledge-sharing events, with business speakers”
(provider)

Collaboration and partnerships in all other parts of our business are seen as key to success and sustainability. Why do we not do that as much with training providers?
(employer)

Professionalism

“Measurement of quality should be more robust, focusing on effectiveness of curriculum for consolidating skills. As businesses, we can do more about this”
(employer)

More funding from LEPs, businesses and local government is needed to support practical co-design in key fast-changing sectors
(provider)

There is a HUGE amount of untapped skills and experience in our workforce that could help support training
(employer)

It would be useful to have a dedicated role to build/design solutions and relationships for training
(intermediary)

“We need help identifying competency”
(provider)

Leadership

“We need to retain links with apprentices moving up through business; bring them back in to help shape future courses”
(provider)

“Different departments within the college have different priorities. When it comes to employer engagement, it often doesn’t look very joined-up.”
(provider)

“There is more pressure from our clients to increase social value and our role in community”
(employer)

“The balance of delivering against high pressure targets and a cost focus with the funding needed to drive partnerships is hard”
(employer)

“We have a young, relatable team and need a wide training offer. We want to be recognised as a trend-setter”
(employer)

“We want recognition, awards for our work and to be seen as trusted advisors”
(employer)

“There is a lack of understanding at SLT of the benefit to tailoring training. There is little investment in building deep relationships with training providers”
(employer)

Curriculum

“Providers and awarding organisations could collaborate with one another more to identify what support dual professionals need”
(provider)

“The need for increased clarity from the senior leadership team around innovation was identified to help support new ideas in curriculum”
(provider)

“If we can develop our own cross-business processes, we can ‘educate the educator’ on getting the best out of learners”
(employer)

“Internal strengths are kept internal. We need to find ways to document and share our practice, and to create guides for the sector and for training partners on what successful on-the-job learning looks like”
(employer)

Where else can we learn from?

University College, Birmingham used the Teach Too framework to analyse and rethink their employer engagement strategy.

First, they audited the strategic position of each faculty (reputation, quality, engagement numbers), followed by:

- Staff skills audit
- Mapping of existing links with industry
- Identification of industry current practices and emerging trends
- Assessment of Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, Results aligned with the audit
- Testing interest and depth of knowledge + appetite to up-skill amongst staff

The college then used this information to create specific areas of focus, rather than vague aspirations around curriculum, work experience of progression.

They relaunched their employer engagement strategy, deciding who to work with and what questions to ask by analysing:

- Placement lists
- Local industry working groups / taskgroups
- Apprenticeship providers
- Professional body memberships

Outcomes via this approach:

- Easier consultation with employers who liked the focus
- Application of industry research, with a shared language
- A comprehensive CPD offer to teachers
- A curriculum refresh, with local businesses at the heart of the design

Stansted Airport College is a Partnership between Harlow College and London Stansted Airport (MAG) and is the first partnership of its kind at any Airport. It opened in September 2018, with capacity for 500 trainees.

Early investment in the development of an Employer Engagement Information Pack, ensured that the opportunities for employers in shaping and influencing this project were presented as a business case that aligned fully with the local labour market need.

Curriculum co-design possibilities were broken down in terms of knowledge, skills & behaviours, highlighting specific areas in which businesses could innovate and inform.

As a result, organisations as diverse as Ryanair, Tui, Inflight, GT Engines, Kearsley Airways, Harrods Aviation, Manchester Airport Group, Flightworx, Universal Aviation, Xjet, Swissport, Hilton, Radisson and Novotel – a mix of large and small businesses – are not just customers of the college, they are integrated in to the sustainability and success of it and its learners.

Industry staff provide routine projects, master classes and live briefs, supporting the assessment of learners – and the businesses share facilities, donate equipment (over £20m worth so far) and help design simulation activity.

But there is outstanding practice on our doorstep –

Plumpton College are winning awards for their use of immersive technologies (such as virtual and augmented reality) to co-create resources with national employers.

Youthforce are swapping skills on a big scale, training civil engineering employers on how to better support the pastoral needs of trainee staff, in return for up-skilling the apprenticeship tutors on the latest materials testing techniques.

East Sussex College Group has secured funding, with the help of an employer taskgroup, for a training hub to be sited at two significant construction projects in which site staff will support course design and delivery.

And there are many more examples besides, but there is work to do to embed a culture at the scale needed to meet the looming Sussex skills gaps.

Recommendations for Sussex from our findings

A mutual business case is imperative, as is the need to find a shared language. Terms like 'pedagogy' and even educational acronyms put off many business owners.

The same goes for providers. Businesses may have their heads in 'the cloud' and speak confidently of 'solutions architecture'. They know the difference between junior, executive and C-Suite jobs and they want their apprentices to be 'T-shaped'. For some people who have worked in an education setting for many years, this is just noise.

To achieve a local technical and work-based learning offer that responds to key business growth demands, and a sustainable Brexit-proof workforce for the future, we need to work together.

1. **Practical priority #1** - Build a two-way street. Establish easy ways to swap resources (on-site visits and enrichment for learners in exchange for training room hire?), embed insights from each other into existing CPD programmes and establish co-mentoring programmes.
2. **Practical priority #2** - Work together to unlock funding and resources. An application for a capital grant to build new facilities, for example, would at least double the chance of success if genuine co-design between industry and education can be demonstrated.

This means industry leaders getting into classrooms, or where teaching is taking place,, suggesting engaging ways to deliver programme modules, shaping curriculum options, explaining new equipment or software and creating a culture in which teams have the know-how to support junior staff with their learning.

1. **Practical priority #3** - Find small amounts of diary space to get together, use each other's insights and ask questions. Twilight events, webinars and breakfast meetings are inexpensive and easy to organise if the confidence and trust is there to do it.
2. **Practical priority #4** - Use co-design and dual professionalism to solve long-term challenges and for long-term growth. For education providers, in-depth co-design helps meet Ofsted criteria, the Gatsby Benchmarks, recruit the best learners, access pilot funding, grow apprenticeship provision and secure industry placements.

For businesses, a comprehensive training offer makes you stand out, boosts recruitment and retention; and dual professionalism provides extraordinary CPD to staff, builds a learning culture and demonstrates endless social value.

It means tutors, lecturers and assessors feeling confident about emerging trends in business, using case-studies and worked examples in their teaching. It means introducing learners to attitudes and behaviours to help them progress in the workplace.

3. **Practical priority #5** - Don't reinvent the wheel. The Teach Too toolkit is free, tested and gets to the heart of the challenges. It is also not prescriptive and can be used in whole or part as a flexible guide rather than a rigid set of rules.
4. **Practical priority #6** - Celebrate success, collaboration and innovation. Every stakeholder, including learners and parents, wants to be associated with cutting-edge provision, facilities and positive story-telling. When staff and learners become the advocates, not the marketing copy, it has a ripple effect on local confidence in all corners. People don't buy what you're selling, they buy what other people are buying.

These interactions will not happen in any meaningful sense, without a local energy focused on making it happen, ensuring that it is as easy as possible to happen. This does require money, capacity, will, trust and imagination – all of which we believe are in supply, but not always accessible or directed towards dual professionalism.

5. **Practical priority #7** - Acknowledge that whilst goals are shared, the language used might not be. Providers and employers should create a joint costed business case in plain English before anything else.
6. **Practical priority #8** - Use networks. Capacity for individual employers and training providers will always be limited, but education networks such as SCTP, Sussex Learning Network and the Enterprise Adviser Networks are experts in collaborative practice. Business networks such as the Chambers of Commerce, Wired Sussex, Locate East Sussex, Coastal West Sussex Partnership and the Gatwick Diamond can galvanise and amplify opportunity at scale.

If you're interested in building and implementing a new vision for co-design, co-delivery and dual professionalism in Sussex, contact info@sctp.org.uk