

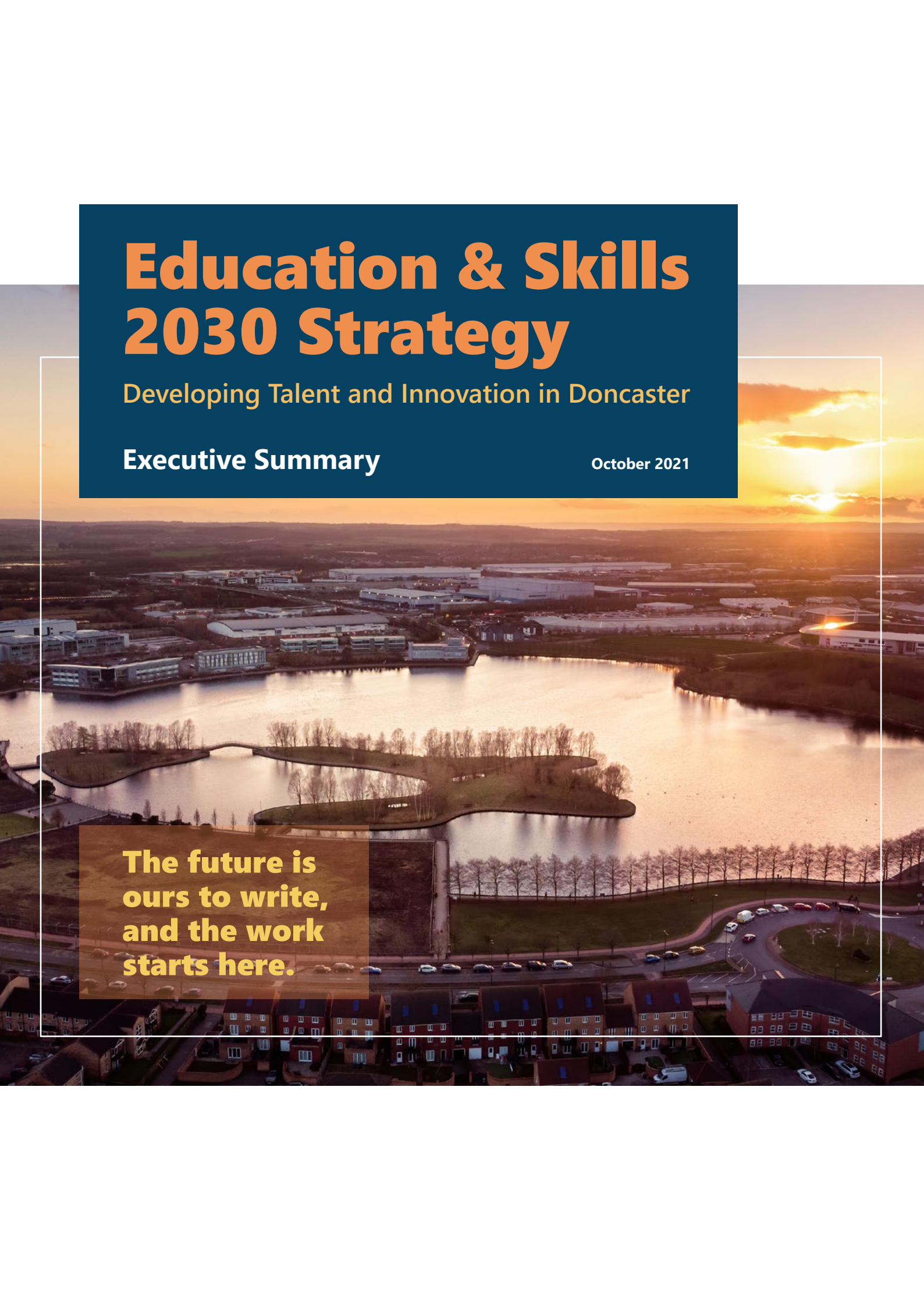
# Education & Skills 2030 Strategy

Developing Talent and Innovation in Doncaster

Executive Summary

October 2021

**The future is  
ours to write,  
and the work  
starts here.**



# Strategic Context

Team Doncaster has transformed its approach to the delivery of learning provision over the past four years, undertaking key transformational projects such as developing the borough as a University City, along with an ambitious Inclusion Programme, and implementing the Social Mobility Opportunity Area Delivery Plan.

Such activity has been instrumental in raising standards and outcomes in learning. Despite these achievements, outcomes must continue to improve at pace – to make sure, not just that we close the gap between ourselves and the national average, but also so that we close the gap between disadvantaged learners and their peers. Not enough of our young people leave school with the required grades in English and Maths at GCSE, too many of our residents have no formal qualifications to their name, and too few of our residents manage to access highly skilled, highly paid employment.

The international, national, regional, and local strategic context is also changing, and Doncaster must adapt to reflect these changes. Employment and society in the 21st Century increasingly requires a solid foundation in traditional core academic skills and knowledge, as well as technical skills and essential life skills. Our younger generations are facing longer working careers which may require them to re-skill a number of times. How we deliver learning and how we skill our residents needs to adapt and respond to these changes – ensuring that learning is cross-disciplinary, personalised, and focussed on transferable and human skills to ensure future resilience.

In addition to this, the Covid-19 pandemic has created the largest disruption of education systems in history. The impact on employment could also hardly be starker – particularly for our young, minority, and disadvantaged residents. On the other hand, the pandemic has acted as a catalyst for innovation. New, inventive approaches to education and training have emerged, with provision for distance and digital learning progressing rapidly.



As a society, we have also been reminded of the essential role of educators and educational settings play within the community. There is therefore a pressing need to address the widening levels of disparity and develop resilience for future challenges through capitalising on these innovations and opportunities – championing lifelong learning as a crucial way to raise levels of wellbeing across the borough.

This is why we are taking a long-term view for Education and Skills, through this co-produced and co-owned plan. We need to deliver a system fit for the future; a system that benefits everyone. And we believe that we can achieve this through working collaboratively to leverage our community assets and raise expectations and aspirations.

This is a key strategic moment for Doncaster to go beyond 'catching up with the national average'; to forge its own path as a leading location for talent development and innovation.

# 1. International & National Drivers for Change

The past few years have seen introduced a new **National Curriculum and reformed qualifications and assessment at GCSE and A Level**. The curriculum has been transformed, with a focus on the 'essential knowledge and skills every child should have'. The bar has been raised for children's learning in the areas of maths, English, computing and science.

**Further major changes to the national education and skills agenda include:** the introduction of the Apprenticeship Levy, changes to the Ofsted framework, increasing academisation of schools, the introduction of T (Technical) Level courses, and an unfolding devolution agenda has seen the Adult Education Budget devolved to Mayoral Combined Authorities.

The '**Fourth Industrial Revolution**' has brought inventions such as artificial intelligence, 3D printing, autonomous vehicles, and biotechnology. These rapidly developing technologies are changing the way we work and the jobs and skills required to do them. The useful skills in the workplace of the future are likely to be different from those needed today.

The Government Office for Science Foresight Report: **Future of Skills & Lifelong Learning**<sup>1</sup> (2017) identifies five challenges:

1. Young adults in the UK have relatively poor literacy and numeracy by international comparisons.
2. Employers believe labour market entrants are not properly prepared for the workforce.
3. The UK has relatively large mismatches between the supply of and the demand for skills.
4. Many places and sectors in the UK are in 'low skills equilibrium'.
5. Participation in formal learning declines with age, and adult learning is in decline.

The notion of societal well-being has changed over the years to encompass far more than economic and material prosperity. Linked to the **UN Sustainable Development Goals**<sup>2</sup>, the **OECD's Learning Compass 2030**<sup>3</sup> sets out the competencies students need to thrive in 2030. These include core literacy and numeracy skills, as well as data and digital literacy, good physical and mental health, and social and emotional skills and competencies. In addition, Nesta's **Creativity and the Future of Skills** report (2018)<sup>4</sup> highlights the increasing importance of creativity to the growth of jobs between now and 2030.

The House of Lords report: **Tackling Intergenerational Unfairness**<sup>5</sup> (2019) highlights a number of challenges that are posed by an ageing population, the global financial crisis, and government policies that have failed to consider generational issues:

- Younger people are disadvantaged by an education and training system that is ill equipped for the needs of the rapidly changing labour market, and all generations will need support in adapting to technological change.
- Post-16 vocational education is underfunded and has not received sustained policy focus from central government.
- The options to retrain and reskill in later life are incoherent and underfunded. Much more investment is needed in both vocational education and lifelong learning to prepare younger generations for a 100-year life.
- Younger generations are seeing slowing pay progression and increasingly precarious employment.



<sup>1</sup>Future of Skills & Lifelong Learning (2017): [gov.uk/government/publications/future-of-skills-and-lifelong-learning](http://gov.uk/government/publications/future-of-skills-and-lifelong-learning)

<sup>2</sup>UN Sustainable Development Goals: [sdgs.un.org/goals](http://sdgs.un.org/goals)

<sup>3</sup>OECD's Learning Compass 2030: [oecd.org/education/2030-project/teaching-and-learning/learning/learning-compass-2030](http://oecd.org/education/2030-project/teaching-and-learning/learning/learning-compass-2030)

<sup>4</sup>Creativity and the Future of Skills: [media.nesta.org.uk/documents/Creativity\\_and\\_the\\_Future\\_of\\_Skills\\_v6.pdf](http://media.nesta.org.uk/documents/Creativity_and_the_Future_of_Skills_v6.pdf)

<sup>5</sup>Tackling Intergenerational Unfairness: [publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201719/ldselect/ldintfair/329/329.pdf](http://publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201719/ldselect/ldintfair/329/329.pdf)

## 2. Regional Drivers for Change

The **Sheffield City Region Strategic Economic Plan 2020-2040<sup>6</sup>** aims to grow the economy and transform the lives and wellbeing of people across the region. Skills, Education, and Employment is a major priority within the plan, with the following intervention areas:

- Establishing the Sheffield City Region as a place for world class technical education with leadership and investment;
- Deliver an all-age careers service that is truly best in class and meets the needs of our people and employers;
- Deep and effective collaborations between businesses, education, and training providers to drive skills development;
- Investment in our apprenticeship system to build upon existing high-quality education assets;
- Maximising devolution levers and investment to support education quality and progression;
- Working with UK Government, institutions, and businesses to raise aspirations, careers knowledge and investment in skills.

## 3. Local Drivers for Change

### Borough Strategy & Wellbeing Goals

Doncaster Delivering Together is Team Doncaster's Partnership Strategy to 2030. Its central mission is: **Thriving People, Places, & Planet**. It is geared towards six Wellbeing Goals. These are the long-term 'beacons in the distance' we will work towards, and they all interconnect. For example, reducing unemployment must go hand-in-hand with plans to improve health outcomes, skills and transport connections.

The Education and Skills strategy will have a significant impact on each of the six **Wellbeing Goals**

To meet the Goals, Team Doncaster has listened to the views of local residents, businesses, community groups and organisations and agreed the '**Great 8**' priorities:

1. Tackling climate change
2. Developing the skills to thrive in life and work
3. Making Doncaster the best place to do business and create good jobs
4. Building opportunities for healthier, happier & longer lives for all
5. Creating safer, stronger, greener, & cleaner communities where everyone belongs
6. Nurturing a child & family-friendly borough
7. Building transport & digital connections fit for the future
8. Promoting the borough and its cultural, sporting and heritage opportunities



### Supporting Documents

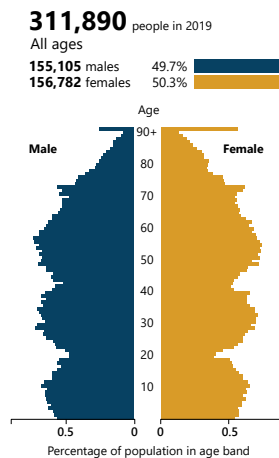
The actions following this strategy will be outlined in a separate Action Plan. The Education and Skills 2030 strategy also has several sub-strategies and plans that address specific topics, including:

- Adult Family and Community Curriculum Strategy
- Children and Young People Plan
- Doncaster Culture Education Partnership Action Plan
- Maths and Reading Strategies
- Organisation of Learning Provision Strategy
- Parenting and Family Support Strategy
- School Improvement Strategy
- Special Education Needs and Disabilities Strategy

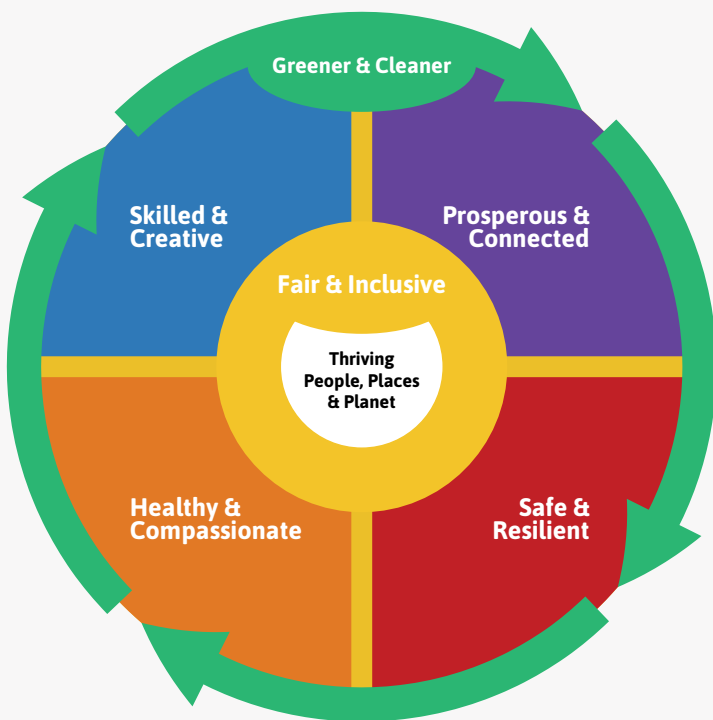
# 4. Place & Population<sup>7</sup>

## Size & Profile

Doncaster is the largest metropolitan borough in England, covering a diverse landscape of approximately 568km<sup>2</sup>. The borough has a population of 311,890, which is predicted to increase by 3.7% by 2030. Doncaster has an age profile that is broadly comparable to other areas. However, it has a lower percentage of population in the 20 to 25 age group and a slightly higher proportion in the 55-64 age group; something that has implications for Doncaster's economy (something addressed by Priority 4). With 91.8% of Doncaster residents self-identifying as White British, Doncaster is less ethnically diverse than similar local authority areas. The next two largest groups after this are 'Other White' (3.4%) and 'Asian' (2.5%). Doncaster does have, however, a significant Gypsy, Roma and Traveller population.



The social and economic profile of Doncaster as a place to grow up, work and live has a huge bearing on education and skills outcomes. Doncaster has many strengths, including one of the best rail hubs in the North, an international airport and a rich heritage going back to Roman times. We have a high proportion of employment in Health, Engineering Education, Logistics, Construction, Manufacturing and Business Administration.



## Health

By the age of 30, those with the highest levels of education can expect to live four years longer than those with the lowest levels of education. Poor mental and physical health can also affect learning outcomes. School pupils with better emotional wellbeing at age seven can expect to progress the equivalent of an additional term's worth of progress than peers with poorer emotional wellbeing. A positive association also exists between academic attainment and the physical activity levels of pupils – yet Doncaster remains one of the least active places in the region, with only half of residents taking part in the recommended 150 minutes of physical activity per week. This means that promoting the health and wellbeing of students within nurseries, schools, colleges, and other settings has the potential to improve their educational outcomes. This especially important for our borough. The health of people in Doncaster is generally worse than the England average, and is reflected by the fact that both life and healthy life expectancy is lower for our residents than the England average.

Excess weight is a particular longstanding challenge, with 25.4% of reception-aged children, and 35.6% of Year 6 children in Doncaster being classed as either overweight or obese. Overweight and obese children are at increased risk of becoming overweight adults. In Doncaster, 69.5% of residents aged over 18 are classed as either overweight or obese.

## Deprivation

Poverty and socio-economic background also have a significant impact on learning and cognition. Doncaster is in the top 20% of most deprived Local Authority Areas in England. Just under a quarter (22.6%) of children in the borough live in low income families. Doncaster's overall level of relative deprivation ranking has increased over the last five years, moving 48th to 41st out of 317 local authority areas (1 being the most deprived). The map to the right illustrates shows how levels of deprivation vary considerably across our communities.

Health and educational outcomes also vary significantly across the population, with a strong correlation between deprivation and these poor outcomes. Life expectancy is 10.9 years lower for men and 8.2 years lower for women in the most deprived areas of Doncaster compared to the least deprived areas.

<sup>6</sup>Sheffield City Region Strategic Economic Plan 2020-2040: [sheffieldcityregion.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/SCR-SEP-Final.pdf](https://sheffieldcityregion.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/SCR-SEP-Final.pdf)

<sup>7</sup>All statistics are accurate as at December 2019.



# Pupil Characteristics

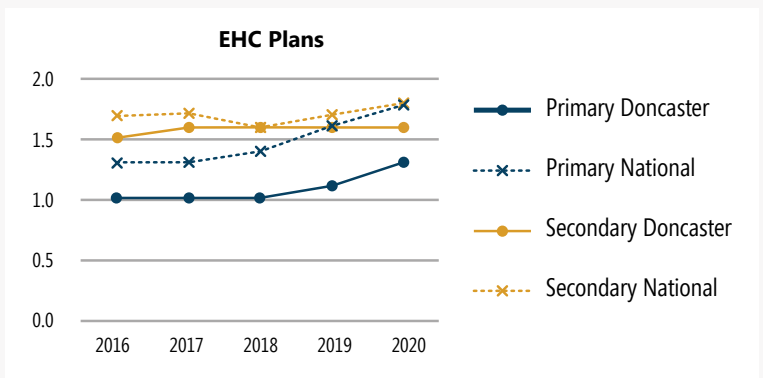
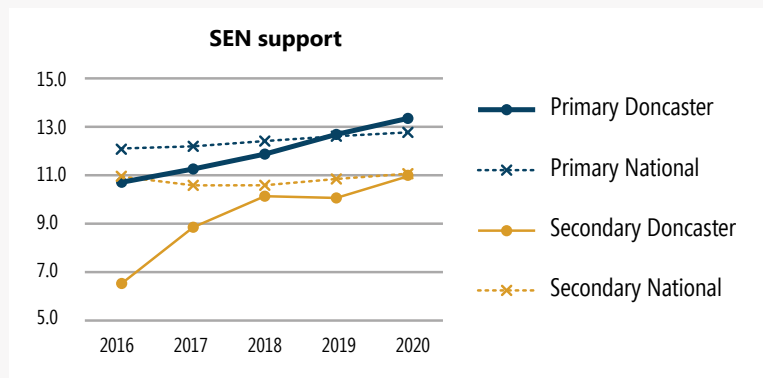
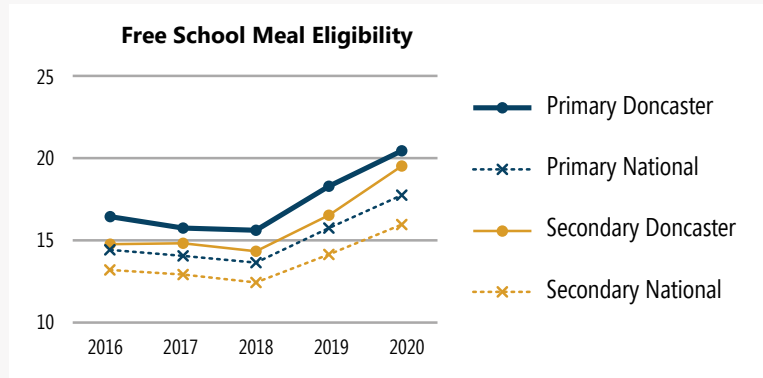
There are currently just over 48,000 pupils attending a Doncaster school, of which 60% are in a state-funded primary school and 37% in a state-funded secondary school.

In recent years, the rates of Free School Meal (FSM) eligibility in Doncaster have been rising. Currently these rates are higher than the national averages, with just over one fifth of pupils in Doncaster's state-funded primaries and just under one fifth of pupils in state-funded secondaries eligible. Approximately two fifths of pupils in state-funded special schools are eligible.

13.4% of primary school pupils and 11% of secondary pupils in Doncaster are registered for Special Educational Needs (SEN) support. 1.3% of primary school pupils and 1.6% of secondary school pupils in Doncaster have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). EHC plans are for children and young people aged up to 25 who need more support than is available through SEN support, and they identify educational, health and social needs and set out the additional support to meet those needs.

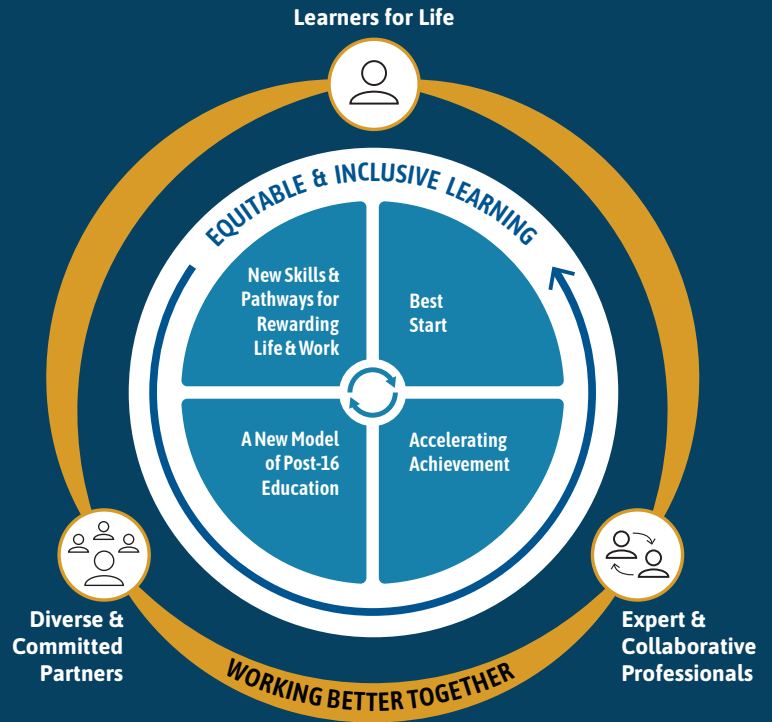
The vast majority of the school population in Doncaster's state-funded schools is from a White British ethnic background; this has remained stable and well above the national average for the years shown. Doncaster has a higher proportion of Gypsy, Roma Traveller pupils than nationally, particularly in primary schools.

Doncaster has a relatively low prevalence of pupils who speak English as an Additional Language (EAL), when compared to the national average. The language most commonly spoken by these pupils is Polish (currently a third of all Primary and Secondary EAL pupils). The proportion of EAL students in Doncaster's primary schools has been increasing over the past four years (an increase of 1.1pp and 0.9pp respectively).



# Our Vision

*Equitable and inclusive lifelong learning that empowers people to fulfil their potential and thrive in life and work.*



## Our Priorities

Over the next decade, we will focus on five key areas for transformation and action. Priorities One to Four cover key learner age stages, whereas Five is a crosscutting 'golden thread':

### 1. Best Start

Ensuring children and young people are ready to learn. This includes increasing levels of parental engagement, renewing our focus on speech and language acquisition and development, and providing a strong Early Help, Health, and Social Care offer.

### 2. Accelerating Achievement

Ensuring that every child and young person achieves their full potential at Key Stages 2 to 4. This includes implementing consistent behavioural approaches, offering an inclusive and well-rounded curriculum that develops essential life skills and supports emotional and physical wellbeing, and recruiting and retaining the best teachers and leaders.

### 3. A New Model of Post-16 Education

Reforming our Post-16 education and skills system to equip residents with the skills, ambition and attributes that allow them to thrive in life and work. This includes improving the quality, diversity and availability of vocational and technical educational that gives parity of esteem with academic routes.

### 4. New Skills & Pathways to Fulfilling Life & Work

Providing opportunities for residents to learn and acquire new skills throughout life, and to access (and progress within) secure, rewarding employment. This includes working closely with industry to develop sectoral career pathways, strengthening our all-age careers, advice, and guidance offer, and improving the availability and accessibility of adult learning.

### 5. Equitable & Inclusive Learning

Addressing educational and skills disparities across our communities and the issue of social mobility. This includes extending the work of the Social Mobility Opportunity Area, increasing support for vulnerable learners, and utilising our local assets to extend our community-learning offer.

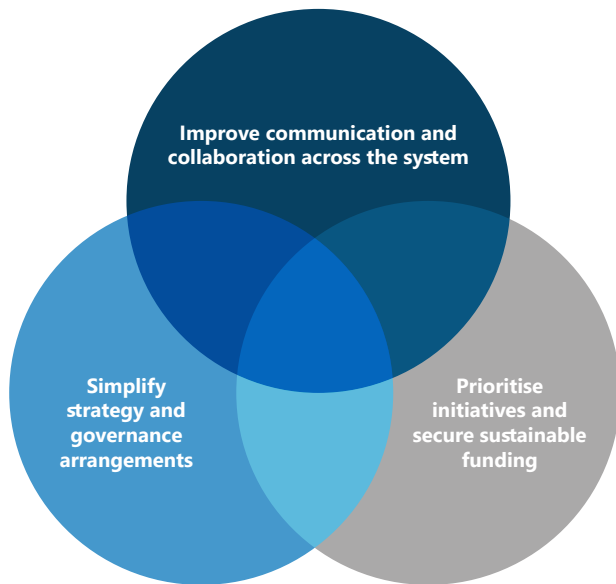


# Priorities on a Page

Priority	Aims	Key challenges	Key indicators
<b>1. Best Start</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» 1. Improve Readiness to Learn &amp; Build Strong Foundations in Learning</li> <li>» 2. Support Effective Learning through High Quality Early Years Settings and Multi-Agency Working</li> <li>» 3. Promote Family &amp; Community Learning to Support Families &amp; Strengthen Parental Engagement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Relatively low levels of parental engagement, with take-up of funded childcare varying considerably across localities</li> <li>» Outcomes up to KS1 vary considerably across localities and pupil characteristics</li> <li>» A number of poor health outcomes for children and mothers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» % of pupils reaching achieving expected in the communication and language, and literacy areas of learning at EYFS</li> <li>» % of pupils achieving the expected standard or better in Reading Writing and Maths combined at KS1</li> <li>» % take up of engagement with a Family Hub, and greater consistency across the borough</li> </ul>
<b>2. Accelerating Achievement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» 4. Establish a Broad Curriculum &amp; Approaches to Teaching &amp; Learning that Develop the Whole Person</li> <li>» 5. Raise Levels of Achievement &amp; Ensure Pupils Reach their Full Potential at Key Stages 2 to 4</li> <li>» 6. Nurture an Outstanding Educational Workforce</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Outcomes at Key Stages 2 and 4 are notably below the national average – particularly in English and Maths</li> <li>» High rates of absence, increasing numbers of permanent exclusions, and very high rates of fixed term exclusions in secondary schools</li> <li>» A low percentage of schools rated either Good or Outstanding, and difficulties in recruiting and retaining teachers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» English and Maths</li> <li>» Attainment gap at KS2 &amp; KS4 &amp; ensuring consistency across schools</li> <li>» Exclusions/attendance &amp; consistency</li> </ul>
<b>3. A New Model of Post-16 Education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» 7. Ensure the Education &amp; Skills System is Responsive to the Needs of the Local &amp; National Economy</li> <li>» 8. Develop a Coordinated Post-16 Education Offer that Gives Learners the Skills they Need to Prosper</li> <li>» 9. Transform Doncaster into a University City that Provides Advanced Learning through Centres of Excellence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» A higher rate of pupils finishing secondary school without achieving English and mathematics than seen nationally</li> <li>» A fragmented Post-16 offer</li> <li>» Sectoral strengths, and the opportunity to establish Doncaster as a University City</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» A higher rate of pupils finishing secondary school without achieving English and mathematics than seen nationally</li> <li>» A fragmented Post-16 offer</li> <li>» Sectoral strengths, and the opportunity to establish Doncaster as a University City</li> </ul>
<b>4. New Skills &amp; Pathways to Fulfilling Life &amp; Work</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» 10. Establish Learning Partnerships with Local &amp; Regional Industries that Provide Quality, Sustainable Employment</li> <li>» 11. Ensure all Residents have Opportunity to Access &amp; Thrive in Fulfilling Careers</li> <li>» 12. Remove Barriers to Employment &amp; Develop, Retain, &amp; Attract Talent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» The % of our working population with level 3 and 4 qualifications is starting to flat-line or decline, with a large gap to regional and national comparators; however, vocational qualifications are above regional and national averages</li> <li>» Doncaster's productivity per worker is relatively low and our economy is low skilled, low wage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» 18-25 year old retention</li> <li>» % of population in skilled occupations</li> <li>» Average weekly pay</li> <li>» % of population Not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEET)</li> </ul>
<b>5. Equitable &amp; Inclusive Learning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» 13. Champion &amp; Empower Disadvantaged Learners to Enable Social Mobility</li> <li>» 14. Improve Outcomes for Minority &amp; Vulnerable Learners</li> <li>» 15. Equitable Lifelong Learning for Every Community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Low levels of social mobility</li> <li>» Disconnected communities with variable access to learning and employment opportunities</li> <li>» Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils are substantially lower than their peers</li> <li>» Outcomes for EAL pupils are substantially lower than their peers across the majority of key stages</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Increased access, engagement and take-up with informal learning opportunities</li> <li>» KS2, KS4, L3 - Stakeholder type, locality</li> <li>» % working population with no formal qualifications</li> </ul>

# Working Better Together

Three key messages arising from consultation clearly signal a collective desire for change:



## Our Commitment to Developing a Talent & Innovation Ecosystem (TIE)

In order to have sustained resonance and impact, Team Doncaster recognises the need to make some fundamental changes to our existing education and skills delivery model. The full scale of the impact of COVID-19 on our people and economy is not yet known, but it's clear that this has fast-tracked many opportunities for change the system in a way that ensures our residents and organisations are better equipped to deal with future uncertainties. Recent events have shown that there are other ways of doing things; methods that may not have previously been seen as 'best practice' are now emerging as having potential to meet the changing needs of people in more dynamic, flexible, and inclusive ways.

There is even further scope to adopt new and innovative approaches that fit well with Doncaster's ambitions. A good place to start is to understand the variety of learning pathways and destinations that are available for our residents. Historically, learning provision has been biased towards traditional, academic, formal routes that are not always suited to learner strengths and needs. We need to offer greater opportunities for work experience and develop transferrable skills that lead to flexible careers and lifelong learning.

Introducing a TIE model will help to achieve this. It will support a more diverse and inclusive borough-wide learning community that caters to the individual needs of residents and encourages them to get and stay involved. This requires a whole-system approach involving partners from across and outside of the sector, and perhaps most importantly, learners.

Our approach to delivery is encapsulated by nine shared principles:

Learners for life	1. Opportunities to learn across the <b>whole life</b> course.
	2. Education that is <b>learner-centred</b> .
	3. Learning that develops the <b>whole-person</b> .
Expert and collaborative professionals	4. <b>Innovative</b> teachers and leaders.
	5. <b>Collaborative</b> learning professionals.
	6. A system that is <b>expert-led</b> .
Diverse and committed partners	7. Strong partnerships that embed a <b>whole-system</b> approach.
	8. A system with <b>distributed leadership</b> .
	9. <b>Place-based</b> learning connected to culture, communities and families.

## Learning for the real world

Bringing together learners of all ages, employers and community partners to collaborate on meeting real-world design and commercial challenges. This includes national and global issues such as climate change, artificial intelligence, and pandemics. By putting learners at the forefront of innovation, the TIE will provide learners with opportunities to develop both soft and hard skills, as well as conceptual and practical knowledge that will allow them to flourish in life and work. Our residents must feel that they have a part to play in the world, and that they are trusted, valued and able to contribute to positive change. Working to establish innovative forms of teaching, assessment and accreditation for these wider capabilities alongside the more traditional assessments dealing with the mastery of content will be crucial enablers for this – ensuring learners can develop the essential, transferable skills needed for lifelong learning.

## Education to employment through hybrid learning

Making available informal and formal, traditional and non-traditional, academic and vocational learning opportunities to ensure that all residents can learn, train, re-skill and up-skill at all ages and stages, no matter what their learning style or ability. Establishing this Doncaster-specific hybrid model of education will require a number of collaborative developments across the system. Within and across formal education settings, this will involve curriculum enrichment to ensure that skills and qualifications support local jobs. The informal learning offer will also be enhanced through a digital learning platform that develops existing skills and often-unrecognised ability through digital micro-credentials, and makes available local learning and employment opportunities. This will create a series of pathways for local learners to access and progress fulfilling careers, as well as encouraging the learning of new skills as one of the five 'ways to wellbeing'.

## Strengths-based and demand-led

Combining further and higher education, aligning learning to areas of economic growth potential with existing skills gaps within Doncaster and the Sheffield City Region to ensure the skills offer is demand-led. Building on our **University City** ambitions, the TIE will promote post-16 learning through four Centres of Excellence; Health & Medical, Engineering, Creative and Digital, and Green Technology



## Learning coordinated by local experts

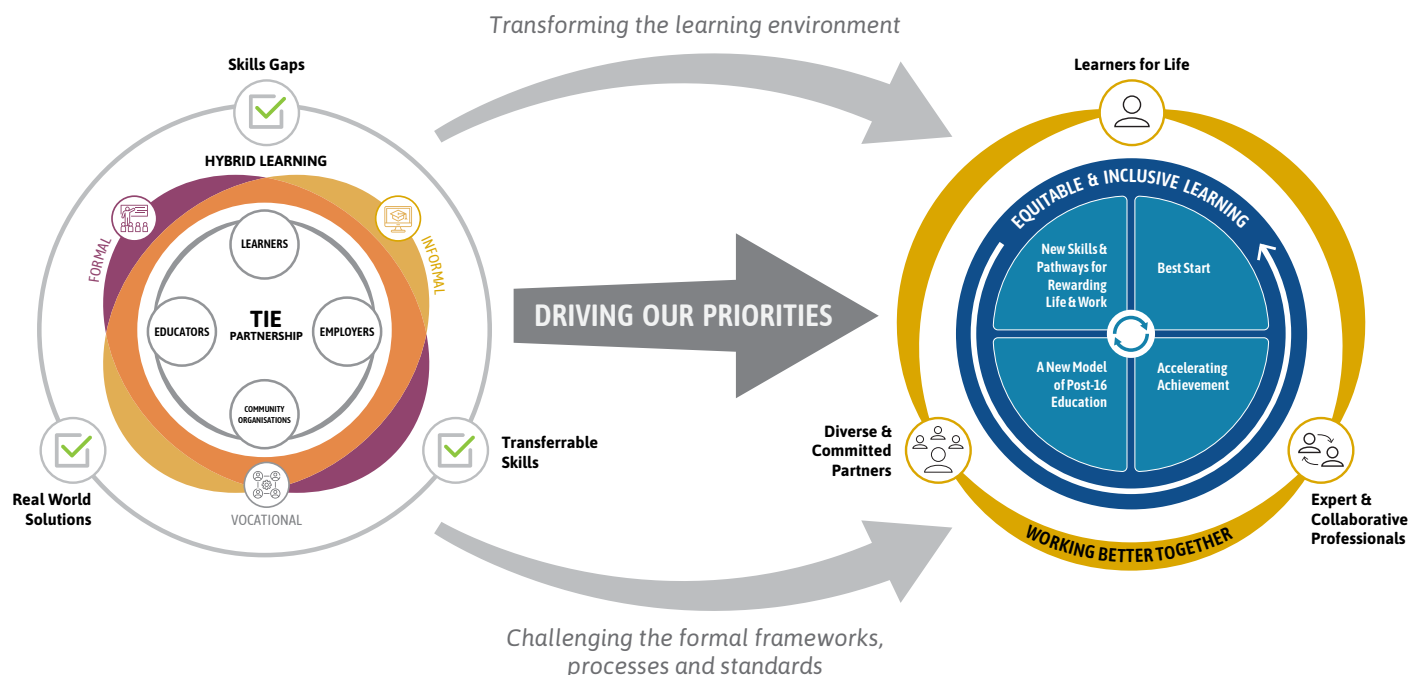
Utilising the wealth of expertise and assets across the system by establishing a local partnership with representation from across education, business, and the community, to develop and coordinate the local ecosystem, in alignment with our Centres of Excellence and local industry specialisms. The partnership will act as:

- **PROVIDER** – co-designing and co-delivering learning experiences, including through assessment and accreditation
- **CURATOR** – creating a digital library of learning resources
- **ENABLER** – supporting learners' progress through new and existing pathways
- **BROKER** – building relationships between business, communities and education providers

As well as drawing on expertise from within the local area, the partnership will also look outwards to draw on best practice and expertise from regional, national and international arenas, to develop accreditation, curriculum enhancement and professional development. This will serve to raise aspirations and put Doncaster at the forefront of innovation.

## How an ecosystem will help deliver the five priorities:

- Supporting learners to develop essential life skills such as collaboration, resilience and empathy, ensuring that both children and their parents have the **best start**
- Motivating and engaging young people by giving them the opportunity to apply their knowledge to complex challenges in a way that **accelerates their achievement**
- Developing a **new model of Post-16** education by giving learners opportunities to demonstrate their value to employers, and increasing the supply of internships, placements, apprenticeships and skilled employment
- Creating opportunities for residents to **learn new skills in formal and informal settings**, and designing integrated pathways from all forms of learning to **fulfilling employment**
- Achieving **equality through inclusive and equitable learning** by creating and highlighting a multitude of academic, and vocational, traditional, and non-traditional learning opportunities available to suit individual needs





[www.teamdoncaster.org.uk](http://www.teamdoncaster.org.uk)