

Swindon Joint Strategic Needs Assessment Bulletin

Bulletin: Skills and Education

Key Points:

- Swindon performs at close to the national average for sustained learning destinations, post 16, though significantly more students move into Further Education Colleges rather than School Sixth Forms
- Seventeen schools and colleges are currently matched with Enterprise Advisers as part of the Careers and Enterprise Company, working to develop Employer Engagement Strategies
- Fewer young people in Swindon start an apprenticeship as a Key Stage 4 destination than in England but Swindon has recently performed better than nationally in relation to growth in the number of apprenticeship starts
- Swindon has had decades of very low participation in Higher Education (HE) with the 10th lowest participation rate in the country amongst young people
- The proportion of adults (18-65 year olds) with learning disabilities in paid employment is well below the national rate of 7.0%

A JSNA helps us to understand:

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- What we know about the current economic and skills situation
- How the needs of Swindon's economy are currently being met
- What we think the future needs of the economy are likely to be; and
- How future needs can be met.

The JSNA process involves many different partners and is maintained by the Economy Skills and Regeneration team. Understanding Swindon's changing population, the factors that affect economic growth, the town's assets and the implications on future growth are vital in setting priorities and planning future services.

This JSNA is part of a suite of documents to understand the needs of businesses and residents in Swindon.

Who is affected?

In 2015 Swindon had an estimated population of 217, 200, of which 118,600 were economically active. 114,400 people in Swindon are in employment, this is set to increase by 15,000 before 2026 in accordance with the expected population increase of over 400,000.

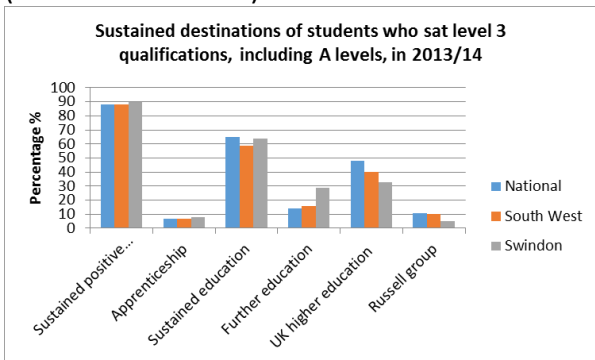
Swindon is home to 8,665 local business units and 6,985 enterprises. The borough has more than double the number, 0.7% (50), of large companies (over 250 employees) than the south west average; although the overwhelming majority of our businesses (82%) are classified as "micro" (employing less than 10 employees).

Challenges upon economic growth

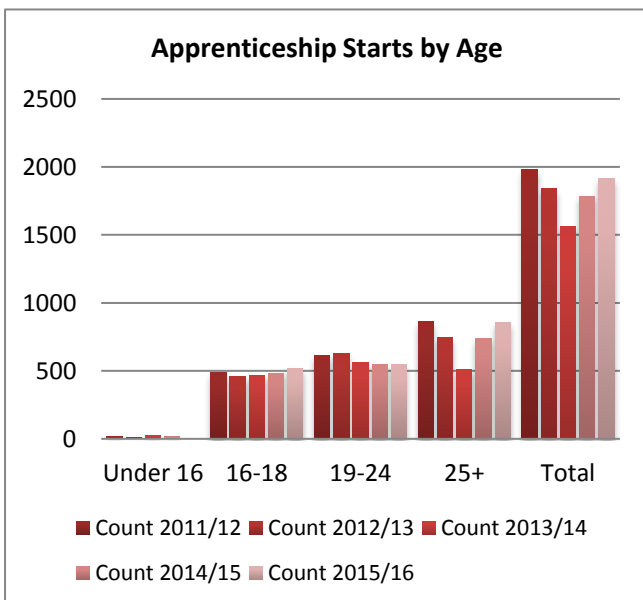
Higher education

Swindon has had decades of very low participation in Higher Education (HE) with the 10th lowest participation rate in the country amongst young people. Swindon-based students entered for level 3 qualifications, including A levels, are much less likely to enter Higher Education, and

Russell Group Universities, than nationally. A much higher proportion than the national average, remain in further education (Source: DfE SFR47).



More than half of all wards in Swindon have some of the lowest participation rates in the country and this situation has persisted for years. Latest data shows that the wards with the lowest percentage of young HE participants were the same wards as a decade earlier. The proportions of young people going into Higher Education from Parks and Penhill wards (7.6% respectively) had the 5th and 6th lowest rate of participation in England. Only 9% of pupils on Free School Meals attend university; this is the second lowest rate in the country and well below the average of 23%.



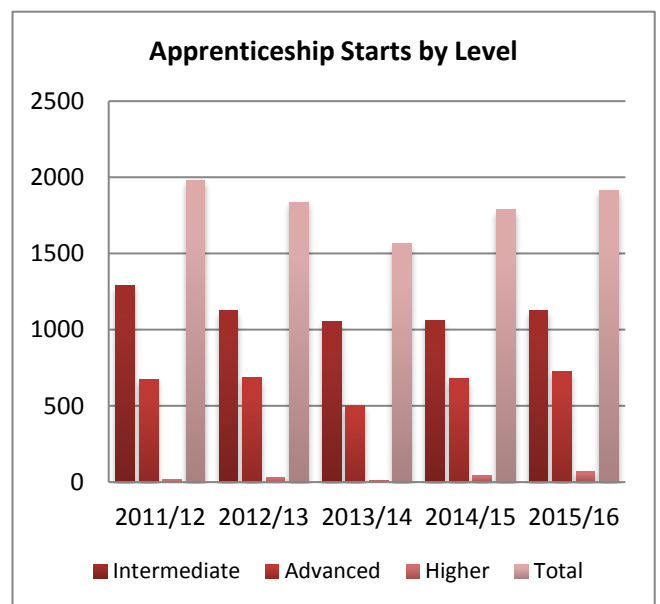
Projections suggest that to 2022, 64% of all jobs (including replacement demand) will require a Level 4 qualification or above, including related skills at a higher level. By 2025, Swindon is projected to have a

population of over a quarter of a million and without any change, none of these residents have local or ready access to higher education which meets the needs of local employers.

Despite not having a university there are a large number of graduate jobs, meaning Swindon imports around 1000 graduates each year. Of the graduates working in the borough 82% are in a high skilled occupation which is the 4th best nationally.

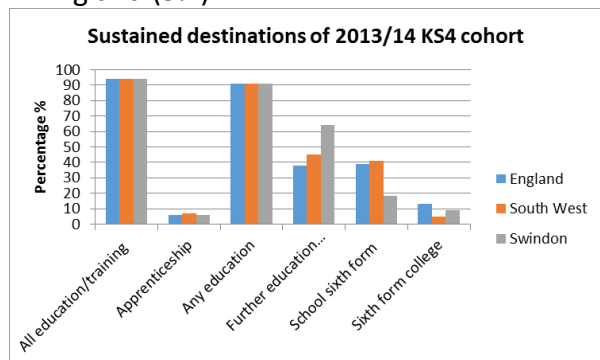
Apprenticeships

Statistics from the National Apprenticeship Service show that there were 1,560 starts in 2013-14, 1,790 in 2014-15 and 1,920 in 2015/16. This represents 1 apprentice per 58 employees in the workforce in Swindon. Trend data shows that Swindon has performed better than the national average



in relation to growth in the number of apprenticeship starts since 2005/06, with a reversal of the decline seen in recent years. Since 2013/14 starts have increased by 14% in 2014-15 and by 7% in 2015-16. In 2015-16 Swindon performed better than nationally with a 7% rise compared to 1%; we had the third largest increase in the Southwest and had the largest increase from 2015 to 2016 out of all local authorities nationally. (Source: FE Data Library)

Fewer young people in Swindon (4%) start an apprenticeship as a Key Stage 4 destination than in the South West (6%) and in England (5%).



Higher apprenticeships starts have been lower than the national average since 2012/13. In 2014/15 Swindon had 3% higher apprentice starts compared to 4% in England. Additionally, the percentage of SEN Young People who started an apprenticeship as a Key Stage 4 destination in 2013/14 is low (3%) when compared to the South West (7%) and England (5%)

Apprenticeships are concentrated in Business, Administration and Law, Retail and Commercial Enterprise and Health, Public Services and Care. Most apprenticeships (59%) are Intermediate level apprenticeships, with 38% at Advanced level and 3% at Higher Level. Traineeship numbers in Swindon in 2015/16 remain low with 56 enrolments (double the number from the previous year).

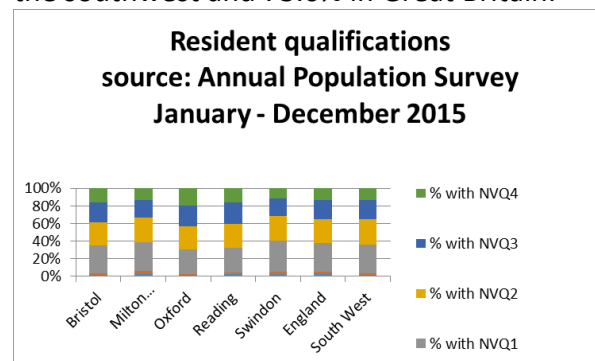
The number of workplaces employing apprentices had not increased before 2015-2016. There were 676 in 2013-14 and 674 in 2014-15. The "Pledge" is to have 956 businesses employing apprentices by 2019-2020.

Community and Adult Needs

The proportion of adults (18-65 year olds) with learning disabilities in paid employment, at 4.2% in 2014/15, is well below the national rate of 7.0%. The national Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2015 show that Swindon is a place of contrasts. Overall it is amongst some of the least deprived parts of England, however pockets of deprivation exist, and 8 of Swindon Local Super Output Areas (LSOAs)

are in the most deprived 10% nationally, whilst others are in the most privileged 10%. 1% of the Swindon workforce are registered as Job Seekers (1,400 people) compared with 1.5% in England. 24% of claimants are aged between 18 – 24 years and 24% are 50+ years. Worklessness, i.e. those on a range of out of work benefits, is below average, but some wards have very high rates of worklessness. These include Penhill where 24% are on out of work benefits; Parks (19%); Walcot (15%) and Gorse Hill and Pinehurst (14%).

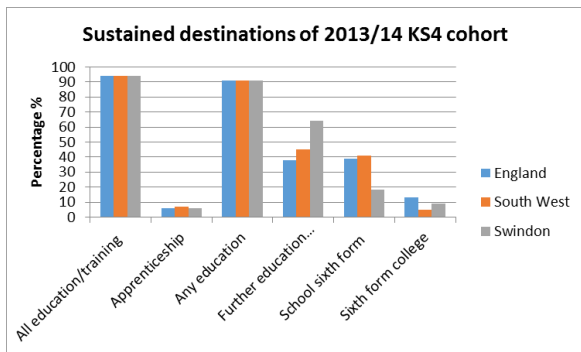
Swindon has a higher proportion of adults who have low skills levels. There are only 68.9% of adults who have achieved a Level 2 or above qualification compared to 77.6% in the southwest and 73.6% in Great Britain.



The 2011 Census found long term health problems or disability limited the day to day activities of 15.4% (32,302) of people in Swindon.

Young People

From 2013 to 2016 the September Guarantee, an offer, by the end of September (of a "suitable" place in learning to young people completing compulsory education) rate for year 11 students in Swindon grew to be among the highest in the country Swindon performs at close to the national average for sustained destinations (recorded in sustained participation in all of the first two terms), post 16, though significantly more students move into Further Education Colleges rather than School Sixth Forms (Source: DfE SFR47)



There is a falling trend in the proportion of 16 and 17 year olds who are recorded as NEET (Not in Education Employment or Training) or Unknown in Swindon, matching that found nationally

Education Employment and Training (EET) rates for key vulnerable groups of 16 to 18 year olds are below those of their peers and of similar cohorts nationally

Attainment at KS4 and 5 is lower than the national average, and gaps at KS4 and KS5 for vulnerable groups are wider than the national average (Source: DfE SFR)

Neither of Swindon’s FE Colleges have a positive ‘value added’ score for Level 3 vocational/technical courses

Employers across all sectors of the national economy have entry level occupations. However, significant minorities struggle to recruit to those positions because of difficulties in finding personnel with the right attitude, motivation and work ethic

Economic Inclusiveness

Swindon is one of the most affordable housing areas in southern England. Median house prices in Swindon, £204,650, are more than half that of Oxford, and over £60,000 below the national urban authority average.

Both Swindon’s work and resident place pay is slightly higher than the national averages of £445.20 and £443.60 per week, this is still lower than other areas such as Reading where workplace wages are over £518 per week. This wage level however does provide strong standards of living when compared to low local house and rental values locally.

Swindon has experienced strong growth in work place and resident pay over the last five years at nearly double the national average. This is confirmed by anecdotal reports from businesses who say they have struggled to recruit locally and have increased salaries to attract staff. In the long term this could create a problem for attracting inward investment

Worklessness

In Swindon, worklessness varies from 23.5% in Penhill to 2% in Ridgeway. There are over 3,500 people out of work in our top 4 wards. This gives very powerful rationale for focussed policy intervention with the aim of reducing worklessness in these wards. Growing up in a workless household will affect future and lifetime poverty, according to a recent study from the ONS. While worklessness rates will inevitably rise and fall over time depending on overall economic conditions, it should be noted that the top 4 wards in Swindon with the highest levels of worklessness (Penhill, Parks, Walcot, Gorsehill and Pinehurst) have remained the worst performing areas in the LEP over the past decade. This provides us with compelling evidence for active labour market intervention. These wards also suffer from the most extreme deprivation across all indices (health, income, social mobility); evidence suggests that tackling worklessness should have a direct bearing on all of these issues

What strategies and operations already exist?

Skills and Employment Strategy

This strategy, overseen by the Employment and Skills board, has 3 subgroups:

- Skills for Growth
- Skills for Inclusion
- Higher Education

Each of these groups has a list of clear objectives as set out in the strategy. “Skills for Growth” oversees; apprenticeships, careers and enterprise. “Skills for Inclusion”

oversees; Community and Adult learning and Young people.

Higher Futures

Higher Futures is a new skills development programme aimed at ensuring the workforce in Swindon and Wiltshire is able to gain higher level skills and qualifications (NVQ level 4, HND, Degree and above). It offers employers specialist impartial support and advice to identify their skills needs and gaps, and develop tailored training solution with Universities and Colleges. This scheme is run by the Local Enterprise partnership and local authorities.

Higher Education Strategy

Swindon's Higher Education strategy has ambitions to: Secure a range of options to access Higher Education in Swindon that is responsive to employer need, contributes to narrowing the participation gap, makes sustained improvements in participation rates for young people and offers an opportunity for upskilling whilst in employment.

JobFest

Jobfest is an event run by the council since 2015 that aims to; Provide an opportunity for Employers who employ young people to promote themselves and the types of work available for young people once they've left learning, Enable young people who are currently unemployed or leaving learning to look for work, to gain a better understanding of the range of employment opportunities in Swindon and to come to this event prepared to talk to employers and learn from the seminars/workshops, and Promote a range of apprenticeship opportunities at various levels through employers.

Careers and Enterprise Company

The Careers and Enterprise Company project has rapidly developed a network, successfully linked to almost all schools. Seventeen schools and colleges are currently matched with their Enterprise Adviser and working to develop Employer Engagement

Strategies (November 2016). The Swindon and Wiltshire Enterprise Adviser Network is the most developed in the Southwest.

Education Business Partnership, funded through the Careers & Enterprise Company, has begun its project to help grow apprenticeships in the Swindon area, and support schools and employers in developing work experience opportunities. The national Skills Plan (BIS, July 2016) has laid out its ambitions to create improved and simplified technical routes towards higher level skills. By 2018 this will commence implementation.

Adult Community Learning

Early work with the Swindon Community Learning Partnership to agree the remit and scope of funding that this group would seek to influence has taken place. Changes to funding has meant that community learning budget is now combined with Adult skills budget to create a single Adult Education Budget (AEB)

SWLEP Apprenticeship Growth Strategy

Swindon and Wiltshire Councils are agreeing a shared Apprenticeship Growth Strategy to minimise costs and maximise impact and opportunities.

What do People Think?

The Skills and Employment Board is an employer-led group which includes: local business representatives, members of the Local Enterprise Partnership, employer organisations, and Voluntary Sector and Public Sector commissioners. The current skills and employment strategy has been developed in collaboration with local stakeholders and is managed by the board.

Recommendations

The JSNA identified 6 strategic objectives (listed below) to be explored by the Economic Strategy to 2036 and 10 specific actions.

1. Raise aspiration of young people and their families
 - a. Deliver Swindon Challenge to raise achievement in schools
 - b. Create strategic partnerships with outstanding providers to improve school performance
2. Grow the number of businesses who utilise apprenticeships as a route to a higher skilled sustainable workforce
 - a. Deliver the Apprenticeship Growth Plan - increase Apprenticeships at all levels including Higher and Degree Apprenticeships.
3. Increase number of Swindon residents with L4 skills and above by securing a range of options to access Higher Education
 - a. Create a Higher Education Strategy for Swindon that links with a Swindon and Wiltshire LEP wide approach
 - b. Work with HE providers to increase supply of higher education available to Swindon residents
 - c. Raise aspiration of residents to improve progression to HE.
4. Establish accessible technical routes that meet the needs of employers
 - a. Develop post 16 technical routes with providers to increase the percentage of young people progressing into Apprenticeships, and achieving L2 English and Maths
5. Reduce the proportion of young people who are not in education employment or training (NEET)
 - a. Improve the percentage of 16 and 17 year olds who are in education, employment and training at 16 and 17 and reduce the number in NEET and unknown destinations.
6. Ensure appropriate referrals of young people who are NEET or at risk of NEET to relevant provision including ESF projects.
 - a. Allow all adults who wish to progress into work to access our inclusive Swindon Adult Education curriculum
 - a. Work with learning providers, partners and employers to develop a joined up adult Education Budget Plan that meets the needs of individuals and businesses.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank all the service users and stakeholders who contributed to and gave their time to help inform this needs assessment.

Where to find more information

More information about all Swindon's JSNAs can be found on the JSNA website: <http://www.swindonjsna.co.uk/>

If you have any queries (or would like to contribute to needs assessment activities in Swindon) please contact: JSNA@swindon.gov.uk

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