

Skills for All – Working Together in Devon

Phill Adams, Head of Skills, Devon County Council

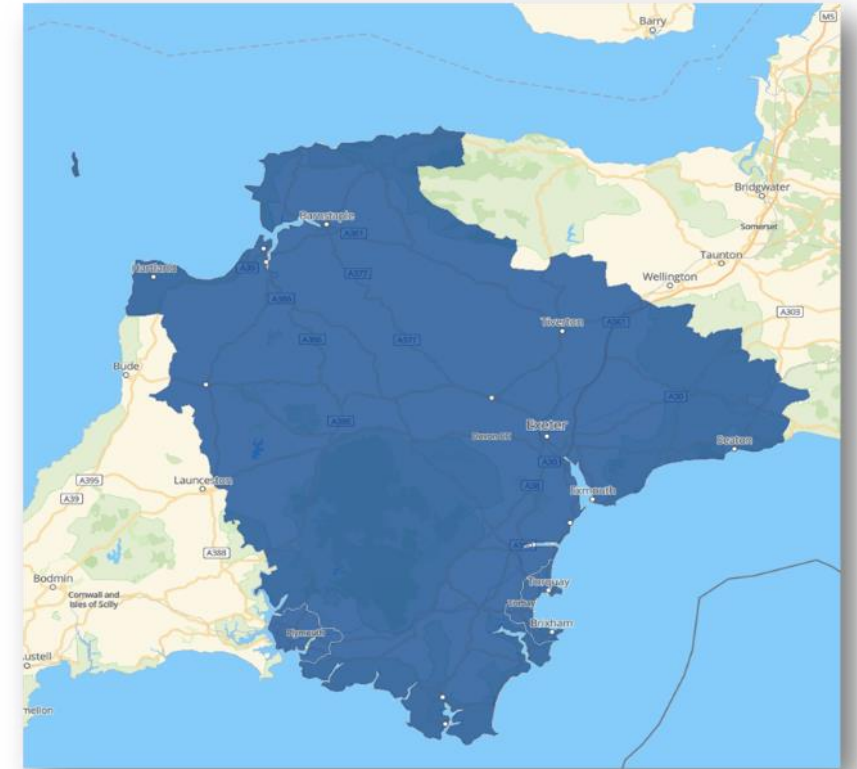
Tom Winters, Economic Development Officer, East Devon District Council

10th October 2024



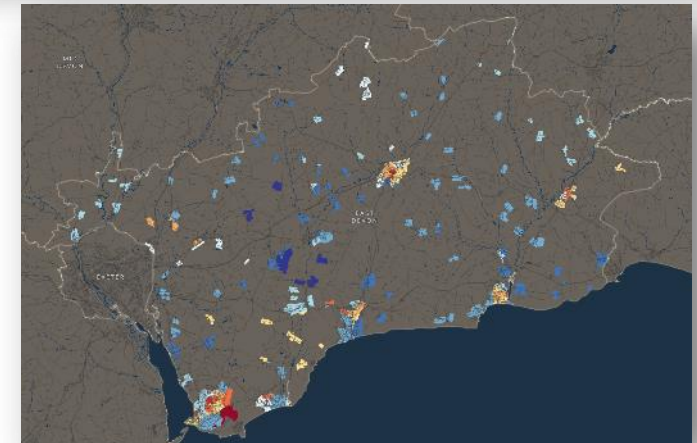
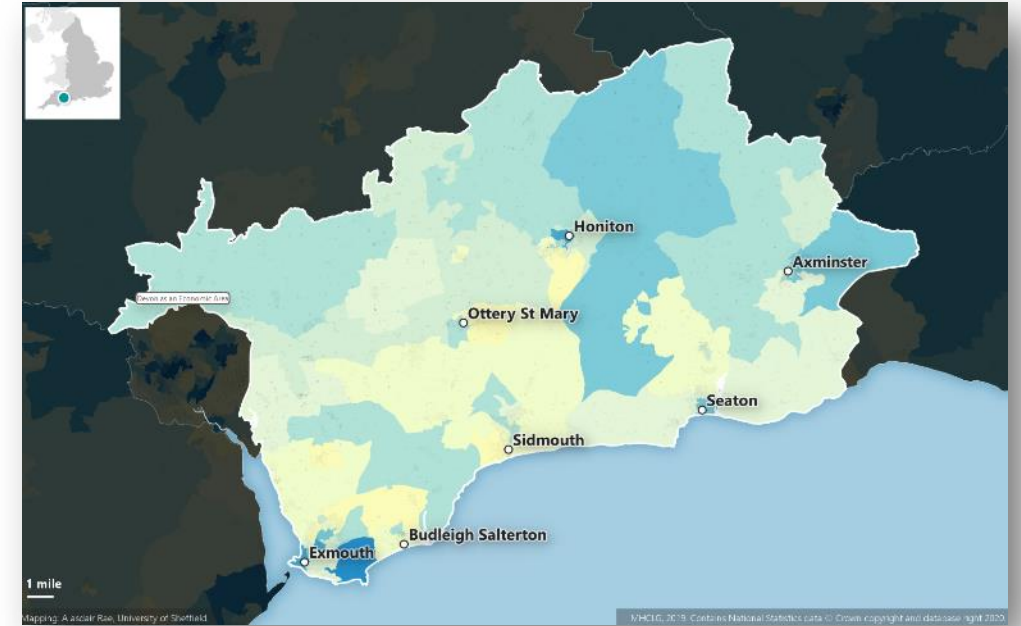
Devon as an Economic Area

- A mixed urban / rural area with a population of 1.2 million. Devon County makes up the majority of the area
- Despite being home to two cities (Exeter and Plymouth), geography is predominantly rural / coastal, with 2,650 sq miles of green space. Takes around 3 hours to drive from North to South Coast.
- Extremely varied in terms of economic make up. Exeter in top quintile of areas for GVA per head in 2022 (£41,181). Torbay, West Devon and Torrridge amongst lowest in the UK (£14,595, £14,144 and £13,487 respectively - roughly 30% lower than Cornwall or Merthyr Tydfil)
- Employment, wages and skills make up similarly varied. 47% of individuals in South Hams hold a degree, compared to 22% in Torrridge. Workplace based weekly wage in East Devon £682 per week, compared to £575 in Torbay.
- Demography overall rapidly ageing, with more individuals over 65 than under 16. Plymouth and Exeter however far more in line with national trends.
- As County, averages mask significant district and ward level differentials. Some of the biggest gaps in the Country around relative skills levels.



East Devon District – Successes and Challenges

- Devon's largest district with 152,000 residents. Located directly adjacent to Exeter, but workplace-based larger than the City itself.
- Significant economic growth over the past 10 years. 54% growth in workplace based wages over the decade, compared to 31% nationally. The gap with the national average has closed from £83 per week to just £10 since 2013.
- Ongoing challenges however around skills gap and educational attainment. 5% fewer residents with a NVQ Level 3 or above than in neighbouring Exeter, 5% more with functional skills as their highest achievement level.
- Pockets of significant skills and educational deprivation leading across the district's market towns and communities. 3 wards in Exmouth and Honiton in the bottom 10% of the IMD education domain



‘Working Locally’ – Delivering Skills as Local Authorities

- Improving skills achievement of our residents one of our primary mechanisms for closing the gap, whether around poverty, productivity or life chances.
- Devon and East Devon have worked together closely over the past few years around seeking to expand and deepen local skills achievement and good jobs across the area.
- Embedded as a priority within our Corporate Plans, with both Councils committing resources to delivery of skills outcomes with residents and employers.
- Devon Employment and Skills Team made up of 200 staff, including delivery of Adult Education, Sector Skills, Employment and Inclusion and Careers Teams.
- Skills delivery in our DNA. Devon has led on skills commissioning and intelligence for the area for over decade, firstly with the LEP and now closely aligned with Devon Chamber of Commerce on LSIP and our Colleges and providers.



Our Skills Delivery in Devon Last Month

100	200	240	100	247	100
Digital Activities Sessions for Young People	English and Maths GCSEs Completed	Numeracy Courses Completed	Digital Devon / Level 3 Skills	Skills for Key Sectors	Skills Bootcamps Completed

- **Learn Devon** is Devon County Council's Adult Education Service, Based in Exmouth, with a team of 100 tutors stretching across the County.
- Working with over 6,000 learners a year, including 3,000 quals a year.
- Delivers Maths and English provision up to GCSE, functional skills delivery for those with an SEND need or other barrier to learning, family and community-based learning, and wider support around employability and digital skills.
- Over recent years, has been pivotal in working with and supporting both businesses and vulnerable groups, from onboarding in the NHS, to supporting JC with redundancy and redeployment programmes, to supporting employers to upskill and diversify in the digital, manufacturing and logistics sector .
- Integrated with the Devon Colleges offer, providing pathways into Level 3 and above qualifications and opportunities.
- Our first line of support for adults in Devon looking to retrain and renew, with a strong community based team that allows us to flex to meet the needs of those furthest from the market / with individual needs.



- **Devon, Plymouth and Torbay Careers Hub** delivered by Devon County Council
- Working with over 120 schools and 40,000 young people per year, as well as 200 employers
- Cornerstone employer network of 23 prime employers provides a critical partner in developing our careers offer, and helping to deliver to schools.
- Focus on direct interactions with schools in East Devon and its neighbours around work experience, apprenticeships, working with those furthest from the market.
- Local champions and leadership crucial in connecting young people to local jobs and opportunities. Early evidence of direct impact on recruitment and retention as a result, with a higher take up of local talent.



- **Skills Bootcamps / Train 4 Tomorrow Programme**, led by Devon on behalf of Cornwall and Devon partners for the past five years.
- 3,000 technical skills bootcamps delivered since inception, with 1,200 delivered in 2024 alone (worth around £3.9m).
- 650 enrollments as of Monday on Wave 5, with number growing through September and October.
- Mixture of digital, green skills, construction, professional service, engineering and health upskilling.
- 400 employers involved across the entire programme, as well as all of Devon and Cornwall's colleges, universities and 40 of its training providers.



**SKILLS
FOR LIFE**

SKILLS BOOTCAMPS

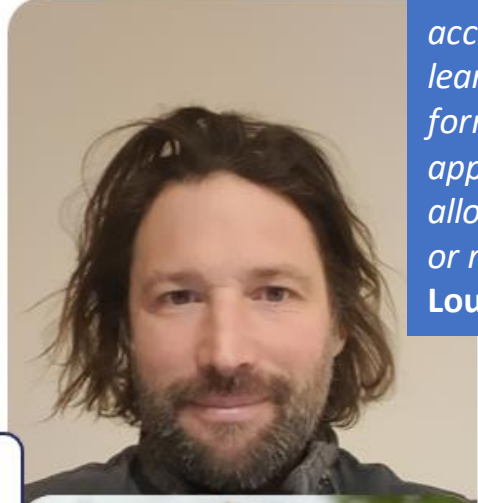
Devon
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“I have a degree in something unrelated but that course, albeit a Level 2 was one of the most valuable courses I’ve done for a very, very long time”.

Jo – Regenerative Agriculture graduate



“Skills Bootcamps is an accelerated and intensive learning experience. This format is particularly appealing to me because it allows for quick upskilling or reskilling”.

Louis – Cyber graduate.

Transforming lives across Devon



“The bootcamp took me from having next to no knowledge of WordPress, to feeling confident to build pages myself”.

Helen -Website Development graduate

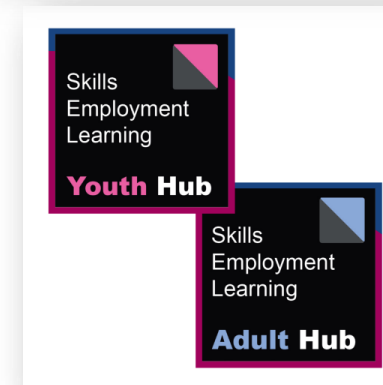
“I wanted a change of direction and the bootcamp was a great way to learn a set of new skills in a supportive environment”.

Leanne – Welding graduate

**train4
tomorrow**

Honiton Employment Hub

- Funded via UKSPF People and Skills budget - £145,000 for the 2024/25 financial year
- Led by DCC on behalf of districts across Devon to create a streamlined offer, avoiding fragmentation and ensuring continuity with future provisions. One of
- Employment Hub combines elements of previously funded programmes including combining our hard to reach support and youth programmes into a single offer, with a 'one-front door' approach to supporting residents
- EDDC and DCC worked together to determine the best location for the Hub and design services around evidenced local need, informed by our Local Economic Review
- Position the Hub in the Beehive, multi-arts entertainment facility in Honiton. Chosen for its central location and status as a community venue, plus proximity to Honiton Jobcentre
- Hub is flexible, including an online offer and ability for advisers to 'drop-in' at other community spaces across the district – key in a rural location poorly connected by public transport
- User journey is personalised, 1-2-1, and can focus on returning to education, finding training opportunities, and gaining employment
- Strong wellbeing focus and empowering individuals to overcome specific barriers to education, training, and employment
- Open to all age groups – high levels of economic inactivity in East Devon driven by large retired population, so important to target those looking to remain or re-enter employment later in life
- Includes a supported employment provision run by Launchpad to assist those with additional needs in gaining work experience
- Works with employers to help them with recruitment drives, redundancy responses, upskilling staff, and adapting workspaces to suit staff with additional requirements



Future Skills Centre / Flybe Academy

- Previous Flybe Training Academy, located adjacent to Exeter Airport in East Devon, put at risk in 2020 with the collapse of Flybe during COVID. 150 training places in aerospace engineering and operations due to be lost, as well as 50 training jobs
- Devon County Council, working with East Devon, stepped in to secure centre from Administrators and creditors (including Homes England). 50,000 sq ft of technical and specialist training capacity secured to the region.
- Following negotiation with local partners, 30-year lease awarded to Exeter College to operate the centre, with a focus on advanced engineering, green jobs and other higher-level skills specialisms.
- Centre reopened in January 2021 as the Future Skills Centre. As of September 2024, 450 young people and adults being trained at the centre per annum, as well as home to 200 apprenticeships. Has secured key clients including aerospace and defence partners locally.
- Has become a key asset for both the two authorities and College, underpinning joint work around future aviation, electric vehicle engineering and support, and other emerging skills specialisms.



'Skills for All' through Local Authorities

- Skills a huge area of growth and development for us over the past 10 years, with the Councils now fully embedded and delivering across the skills landscape as a commissioner and delivery partner.
- More than just about our historic lead on AEB, but a wider role drawing on our ability to address local need, work with employers and providers and delivery for Government. Delivering skills and training which change lives and our economy.
- Devolution now offers a huge opportunity for those beyond the MCA areas to up our game for UK PLC. Areas want to work with Government to deliver skills and learning activity, and increasingly feel we have the capacity and maturity to do that.
- Uniquely placed to act as system leaders for our localities, particularly in extending learning out to those furthest from the market where other capacity (FE and wider providers, third sector) may not reach / may not exist.
- Working across local government and wider public organisations key to success. Districts, Counties / Unitaries and Combined Authorities all have a role to play, alongside employers and our colleges, training providers, schools and universities.
- Where it works however, huge benefits for localities, the economy and local government and public services.

