



Skills Taskforce for Global Britain



Aim:

“To ensure that, by 2030, UK skills quality is recognised globally as a key driver in attracting foreign investment, boosting inclusive economic growth and creating jobs across the UK.”



Creating a skills economy

The UK is a well-established globally as a knowledge economy, with outstanding universities and research institutes and world-leading knowledge-intensive industries such as finance, business services, and pharmaceuticals.

However, the UK has not established itself as a world-leading skills economy and this is key for a post-Covid economic recovery particularly with a focus on sectors of the economy which must be internationally competitive – requiring world-class skills – to attract investment and succeed.

These sectors, such as advanced manufacturing/ engineering, life sciences, infrastructure, and digital/creative, are critical to the UK's 'plan for growth' and net-zero ambition. However, our relatively poor standard of technical skills is arguably holding back these sectors, all of which have potential to boost innovation, productivity, competitiveness and attract investment to create jobs and growth across the UK.

By setting a new level of ambition to be a world-leading skills economy, we can harness WorldSkills UK's ability to benchmark the UK's technical skills internationally, combined with data and insights from EY's annual inward investment surveys, to provide new perspectives on how increasing the quality of our technical skills can help attract more inward investment for those sectors of the economy which are internationally traded and have the potential to become more productive and boost ongoing economic growth for the long-term.



Embedding world-class skills in the UK



WorldSkills UK leverages the global WorldSkills network to benchmark our skills quality on an ongoing basis against major competitor economies, increasingly in Asia, and we are in a unique position to bring insights from this global skills benchmarking process back into the UK.



Our international training experts mainstream learning with practitioners through our UK-wide local networks – the Centre of Excellence, Innovation Network and digital hub – to help raise training standards and develop young people’s technical and employability skills, improving quality of skills

development from inside the skills system. The Centre of Excellence alone is designed to support the development over the next three years of 40,000 young people, many from disadvantaged communities.

We share insights from international best practice with policy makers across UK governments to help inform public policy development. The Centre of Excellence, which came out of diagnostic research from Oxford University, was cited in the recent Skills for Jobs White Paper for England as representing best-practice in high-quality training development for teaching staff.



Supplying world-class skills for long-term growth

Setting a new level of ambition to create a competitive skills economy with a world-class skills supply for key sectors would not only help provide a much-needed long-term goal but also create a compelling action plan “roadmap” to join up and address many of the UK Government’s key economic priorities:



- improving our national skills, particularly in digital, science and technology, to help attract inward investment as set out by the Prime Minister in ‘Global Britain in a competitive age’
- supporting productivity growth with high-quality skills, innovation and infrastructure development as set out by the Chancellor in ‘Building Back Better – our plan for growth’
- delivering an employer-led skills system in England as set out by the Education Secretary in ‘Skills for Jobs: Lifelong learning for opportunity and growth’



- improving quality of skills as stated as a priority in ‘Scotland’s Inward Investment Plan’, the ‘International Strategy for Wales’ and Invest Northern Ireland’s latest business plan
- levelling up investment, productivity growth, and living standards in towns and cities across the UK
- growing the quality of goods and services from our domestic high skill economic base to create a stronger foundation from which to trade competitively with the rest of the world.

A skills economy roadmap to 2030

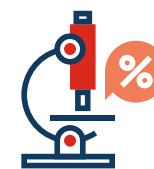
The principle output of the Skills Taskforce for Global Britain is the publication of a skills economy roadmap to 2030.

The Taskforce will be asked to:

- comment on and steer analysis to test the hypothesis that the lack of a supply of high-quality skills is holding back key growth sectors of the economy
- identify what steps should be taken to create a world-leading skills economy in the UK over the next 10 years
- champion the skills economy roadmap.

Key areas of analysis will include:

- how do our skills compare with those competitor countries?
- what are international investors looking for in terms of skills in the UK?
- what skills do UK CEOs need in order to attract investment?
- are all parts of the UK able to attract inward investment? Is the skills pipeline holding any regions back?
- can we quantify the skills gaps in the UK? What is the opportunity cost for UK plc?

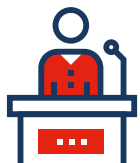




The role of members



As part of the Skills Taskforce, members will have the opportunity to use their experience in order to help answer an economic and policy question which gets to the heart of the Government's ambitions for a more prosperous economy and society.



Members are invited to join on the basis of:

- experience as a business leader in a sector that's reliant on international inward investment
- experience of working on inward investment as an education and skills leader.



Members will be expected to:

- attend four meetings between June 2021 and June 2022
- provide strategic advice to guide the development of the Roadmap to 2030
- be a spokesperson for the campaign by speaking at events, lending name to blogs, recording videos.



Current members



John Cridland CBE – Pro Chancellor of Brunel University, and Chairman of the Home Group

Former CBI Director General John Cridland will Chair the Skills Taskforce for Global Britain. John has a wealth of experience in high-level policy analysis and delivery across the economy, education, business, and international trade and investment.

John is passionate about improving skills outcomes for young people and employers. He is a member of the board at OFSTED, and previously served as Vice Chair of the National Learning and Skills Council, and as a UK Commissioner for Employment and Skills.

John, who was awarded a CBE for services to business in 2006, will help steer the delivery of the Roadmap to 2030, and act as a key spokesperson for the Taskforce to the media, politicians and other senior officials.



Josie Cluer – Founding Member (EY)

EY is a founding member of the Skills Taskforce, represented by Josie Cluer, who will provide access to skills policy experience and global insights from EY, including the annual UK Attractiveness Survey. Josie leads EY's learning business in the UK, working across sectors, helping clients use learning as a driver of organisational transformation. She is a former Special Adviser to the Secretary of State for Innovation, Universities and Skills and regularly writes and speaks on skills and education reform. She has been involved in various charitable activities to increase access to training, skills and jobs for people from disadvantaged backgrounds.



Stephen Burgin

Steve has extensive experience operating at Board level in a variety of sectors, with knowledge of complex projects in international and regulated markets and has always had a keen interest in skills. Steve is currently a member of the Offshore Wind Industry Council, chairs South Staffordshire College and serves as Pro- Chancellor for Staffordshire University.

Prior to this Steve had a number of senior executive roles including Vice President for GE Power in Europe, UK Country President for Alstom, and Senior Vice-President of Areva. Steve has also served as Vice-Chair of Stoke-on-Trent LEP, and Vice- President of the Institute of Engineering and Technology.



Andrew Hodgson OBE

Andrew has over 30 years' experience in delivering major projects in the North East of England, within both the energy and technology sectors. Andrew was awarded an OBE in 2015 for his work in manufacturing and the North East economy and has extensive experience in strategic-level positions for leading companies such as Airbus and BAE Systems as well as smaller firms like Tyneside-based manufacturer, Soil Machine Dynamics. He served as Chair of the North East Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) where he made skills development a leading priority until August 2020.



Dr Ann Limb CBE

Ann is the independent business Chair of the UK Innovation Corridor one of the country's leading regions for science and technology stretching from London to Cambridge and has a long track record of senior roles in the further education sector, including Principal roles at Milton Keynes and Cambridge colleges. Ann remains heavily involved in technical education delivery now as incoming Chair of the City & Guilds Group. Up until 2019, Ann was chair of the country's top performing Local Enterprise Partnership – the South East Midlands LEP and has continued as an Ambassador for the national LEP network.

In the 2011 Birthday Honours, Ann was awarded the OBE for work in education and in 2015 'upgraded' to CBE for public and political services.



Dr Adam Marshall

Adam is a Senior Adviser to the Chartered Management Institute, as well as consultancy firm Flint Global. Prior to his tenure ending this year, Adam served as Director General of the British Chambers of Commerce since March 2016, where he focused on the global trade agenda and campaigned for the interests of over 75,000 businesses through the Brexit process and Covid-19 pandemic.

Prior to joining BCC, Adam helped to start up the Centre for Cities, built commercial links between universities and industry, and worked in local politics. Adam has also worked for the Institute for Public Policy Research, the Cambridge-MIT Institute, and on local economic issues in his native Washington DC.





Marie-Thérèse McGivern

Marie-Therese has extensive experience of both skills development and inward investment. Her current roles include chairing Belfast Maritime and the Employability and Skills Advisory Board for the £10bn Belfast Region City Deal. Marie-Therese also sits on the Strategic Investment Board for Northern Ireland and Northern Ireland Water and is a Director of the Collab Group. From 2009 to 2020 Marie-Thérèse was Principal and Chief Executive of Belfast Metropolitan College.



Baroness Ruby McGregor-Smith CBE

Baroness Ruby McGregor-Smith CBE is the President of the British Chambers of Commerce. She also chairs the Air Operators Association, is a Non Executive Director at the Department of Education, the Tideway Tunnel, One Cam Limited and Mind Gym plc. Ruby was the Chief Executive of MITIE Group PLC, the strategic outsourcing company which employed over 65,000 people during her tenure and became the largest Facilities Management business in the UK.

She is one of a small number of women who have held the position of Chief Executive in the FTSE 100 and FTSE 250 and is the first Asian woman to be appointed in such a role within that group of companies.

Ruby is a member of the House of Lords, having been granted a Life Peerage in 2015 and is a member of the Risk Assessment and Risk Planning Committee. She was appointed by the UK Government to be the In-Work Progression Commissioner in 2020. She is a Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales and was awarded the Outstanding Achievement Award in 2015, the professions' most prestigious award.



Neil Rami

Neil is Chief Executive of the West Midlands Growth Company. Supported by local authorities, universities and regional businesses, the Growth Company was established in 2017 to create jobs and attract inward investment to the region. Under Neil's leadership, the region secured the highest number of foreign direct investment projects on record, attracting investments from HSBC, Deutsche Bank, Jaguar Land Rover and ASOS. Neil held similar economic development roles in Liverpool and Newcastle upon Tyne, and he is currently Chairman of the Midlands Trade and Investment Group.



Chris Sutton

Chris is a member of the Welsh Government's Ministerial Advisory Board for the Economy and is a former Chair of both CBI Wales and Central Cardiff Enterprise Zone. Chris is a Governor of the University of South Wales and Chair of USW subsidiary Merthyr Tydfil FE College. A chartered surveyor, Chris has advised Welsh Government on the utilisation of public sector assets, the devolution of business rates and planning reform.

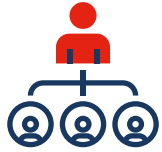


Linda Urquhart OBE

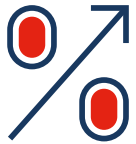
Linda is an experienced business leader and is currently a Non-executive Director at both Coutts and Edinburgh Airport, and a Trustee of Marie Curie. Linda has a wealth of experience at the highest levels of business, including a key perspective on skills and inward investment in Scotland. She was the first female Managing Partner of major Scottish law firm, Morton Fraser, a board member of Scottish Enterprise, and served as Chair of both CBI Scotland and Re:markable (formerly Investors in People Scotland) and Co-Chair of the Fair Work Convention, an independent advisory body to Scottish Ministers. She was awarded an OBE for services to business in 2012.



Working together for a skills economy



With a shared interest in the correlation between the availability of high-quality skills and international inward investment for key growth sectors, WorldSkills UK and EY have come together, harnessing their collective insights and know-how, to set a new level of ambition and create the case for the UK as a world-leading skills economy.



While there have been skills commissions and growth commissions in the past, no one has tackled the specific and important question of improving the quality of our skills economy, including to world-class levels, to help attract inward investment to help drive growth in key sectors and help meet the UK's long-term economic global ambitions.



To address this question and help create a long-term compelling action plan, we need your experience and expertise as someone who has been involved in skills development and inward investment at the highest level.



By pooling your insights with others in a Skills Taskforce for Global Britain, and supported by analysis from EY and WorldSkills UK, we are confident that we can develop proposals which will help inform the strategic direction of skills development and inward investment policy across Whitehall and devolved governments over the next ten years.





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Charity number 1001586,
Company number 02535199
VAT registration number GB945610716

Funded by



Department
for Education