

Moray Workforce North Roadmap

October 2026



1. Developing the Moray Workforce North Roadmap

The Moray Workforce North Roadmap has been developed following the Moray Pathways Workforce North Employer Summit held in December 2025, where employers and partners identified a broad range of opportunities and priorities relating to workforce attraction, skills development, education, employability, business growth and future workforce planning.

Over the following months, the Moray Workforce Planning Group met on a number of occasions to shape the roadmap, drawing upon labour market intelligence, regional and local strategies, partner expertise and existing workforce activity across Moray. This collaborative approach ensured the roadmap reflected both evidence and practical experience, while providing partners with the opportunity to collectively consider current activity, future investment and emerging workforce challenges.

Throughout these discussions, it became clear that many of the priorities identified by employers were already being progressed through existing partnership activity across Moray. Rather than duplicate these efforts, partners agreed that the roadmap should focus on areas where greater collaboration, improved coordination and targeted new activity could add the greatest value.

Moray already benefits from a wide range of workforce initiatives delivered by employers and partner organisations. These activities support careers education, employer engagement, employability,

vocational learning, apprenticeships, business support, inward investment and economic development, providing a strong foundation for the actions set out within this roadmap.

The result is a focused roadmap that builds upon existing strengths, strengthens partnership working and identifies the collaborative actions needed to respond to Moray's current and future workforce challenges.

2. Purpose

The Moray Workforce North Roadmap provides a clear and practical framework for collaborative action to strengthen Moray's workforce. It brings together partners from across education, skills, employability, business and economic development to deliver coordinated activity that responds to current workforce challenges while preparing the region for future opportunities. The roadmap is built around five cross-cutting themes that support people of all ages, employers and those involved in educating, influencing and developing the future workforce. It focuses on practical actions that add value to existing partnership activity, strengthen collaboration and support sustainable workforce growth across Moray.

3. Why it matters

Moray has a strong and resilient economy, supported by successful businesses, a skilled workforce and well-established partnerships. However, like many areas across Scotland, the region faces challenges which require a coordinated response.

These include:

- Skills shortages across several priority sectors
- A declining working-age population and the need to attract and retain talent
- Significant future investment which will increase demand for skilled workers
- Career pathways that are not always visible or well understood
- The need for employers and individuals to navigate an increasingly complex skills and training landscape
- The need to support people to upskill and reskill as technology, industries and workforce requirements continue to evolve.

4. What success looks like

Success will be measured not only through delivery of individual actions but through the longer-term impact they have on people, employers and the wider economy.

The Moray Workforce North Roadmap aims to achieve:

- Clear, consistent and positive messaging about living, learning and working in Moray
- Increased awareness of current and future career opportunities across Moray's priority sectors
- Stronger pathways from education into employment
- Increased employer engagement within education and workforce development
- Flexible vocational, apprenticeship and lifelong learning opportunities that respond to employer demand.
- Improved opportunities for adults to upskill, reskill and change careers
- Stronger partnership working across organisations supporting workforce development
- A workforce that is better prepared to respond to future investment and economic opportunities.
- Moray being recognised as a place where people can build successful careers and businesses throughout their working lives.

5. Principles for delivery

The Moray Workforce North Roadmap has been developed around shared principles that will guide implementation.

Activity will be:

- **Evidence informed**, using labour market intelligence and employer insight to inform decision making
- **Employer led**, ensuring activity responds to genuine workforce demand
- **Collaborative**, building upon the expertise and resources of partners across Moray
- **Focused on adding value**, complementing existing activity and avoiding unnecessary duplication
- **Flexible and responsive**, allowing partners to respond to emerging opportunities, investment and changing workforce needs
- **Practical and deliverable**, focusing on actions that can achieve measurable outcomes.
- **Inclusive**, supporting people of all ages, backgrounds and career stages.
- **Outcome focused**, with progress monitored through agreed measures and regular partner review.

Theme 1: Extensive Campaign

Present a single, strong message about the current and future job opportunities which are available for adults and young people already living in Moray

	Clear promotion of local opportunities to people in Moray	Upskill educators about key sector developments in Moray including skills/jobs requirements and entry pathways	Raise awareness of opportunities with Moray businesses/employers
Actions	1.1 Coordinated effort to share consistent key messages to people already living and working in Moray about existing opportunities and future jobs coming through investment in the area. Key tasks could include: • Identify target audience groups (young people, adults in the community, parents/carers etc) • Agree sectors to be included as part of messaging about opportunities in Moray • Develop resources, material and case studies to promote key messages • Hold engagement sessions with local press.	1.2 CPD programme designed for teachers and lecturers on different technologies including AI, required skillsets and existing, emerging and future roles in Moray's key sectors. Sessions should recognise timetabling challenges and key priorities for education colleagues such as curriculum improvement.	1.3 Share information about forthcoming opportunities to businesses/employers in Moray via targeted newsletters, social media posts and thematic events. These activities must reach local SME base to ensure employers are aware of supply chain opportunities, and workforce implications and local procurement readiness.
Suggested output	• Shared communications framework agreed • Workforce messaging embedded within partner communications and engagement activity • Partners promoting Moray's opportunities through existing communication channels, events and networks • Consistent promotional resources available for partner use.	• A coordinated programme delivered for teachers and lecturers, providing up-to-date insight on emerging technologies, workforce trends, priority sectors, skills requirements and career pathways in Moray.	• Coordinated employer communications plan developed and delivered. • Targeted newsletters, social media campaigns and sector events delivered to businesses across Moray. • Resources and guidance produced to help employers understand supply chain opportunities, workforce implications and local procurement opportunities.
Delivery partners	Lead: Moray Council Employability Team Support: DYW Moray, UHI Moray, Moray Chamber, TSI Moray, HIE, Skills Development Scotland, Business Gateway, FSB, DWP	Lead: DYW Moray Support: Moray Council Education, Moray Chamber of Commerce, Skills Development Scotland	Lead: Moray Chamber Support: Federation of Small Businesses, HIE, UHI Moray, TSI Moray, DYW Moray, Business Gateway, DWP
Suggested outcome	Increased awareness of Moray's current and future education, skills and employment opportunities through consistent promotion across partner organisations.	Teachers and lecturers have increased confidence and knowledge of local labour market opportunities, enabling them to better embed careers education within the curriculum and support learners to make informed decisions about future pathways.	Employers, particularly SMEs, have increased awareness of forthcoming investment, supply chain opportunities and workforce implications, enabling them to plan, collaborate and compete for future opportunities in Moray.
Suggested completion date	October 2026 – October 2027	October 2026 – October 2028	October 2026 – October 2027

Theme 2: Education

Help young people in education and their key influencers clearly see and access local career pathways.

	Increase exposure to local pathways and industry opportunities in schools		Expand Foundation Apprenticeship pathways for Moray school pupils	Enhance CIAG practitioner knowledge
Actions	2.1 Carry out work to understand barriers to school pupils learning about Moray's key sectors and pathways into local jobs.	2.2 Look at best practice from other areas in response to these barriers and use this to inform an appropriate Moray response which increases exposure to local opportunities and inspires young people into Moray's key sectors. Consideration to be given to the wider attainment agenda in Moray and to seek ways to provide accreditation opportunities for young people.	2.3 Broaden the FA offer for Moray school pupils with increased volume of places and greater range of frameworks like Creative and Digital Media, creating more entry routes into Moray's key sectors.	2.4 Improve key influencers' understanding of Moray's sectors, career pathways, industry requirements and technologies driving skills demand, supporting young people to make informed career decisions. Activity could include: • Targeted CPD for CIAG practitioners and school staff, including employer visits, webinars, communities of practice and events. • Parent/carer information and engagement on local pathways, skills demand and future opportunities. • Employer insight on industry requirements, technologies, entry routes and priority sector pathways.
Suggested output	• Research and engagement exercise completed with young people, schools and partners. • Barrier analysis and recommendations report produced.	• Moray employer engagement model developed and implemented. • Increased number of employer encounters, workplace experiences and sector engagement activities delivered.	• Foundation Apprenticeship provision reviewed and expanded to reflect Moray's workforce priorities. • Increased number of Foundation Apprenticeship places and frameworks available to Moray school pupils. • New and enhanced progression pathways established into priority sectors, including areas such as Creative and Digital Media.	• CPD and sector insight activity delivered for CIAG practitioners and school staff. • Parent/carer information and engagement activity shared through school and partner channels. • Employers involved in sharing insight on skills demand, technologies, entry routes and career pathways.
Potential partners	Lead: DYW Moray Support: Moray Council Education, Skills Development Scotland	Lead: DYW Moray Support: Moray Council, UHI Moray, Skills Development Scotland	Lead: Moray Council Education Support: DYW Moray, Highland Learning Academy, UHI Moray, Skills Development Scotland	Lead: Skills Development Scotland Support: Moray Council Education, DYW Moray, Moray Council Youth Work, UHI Moray
Suggested outcome	Improved understanding of factors influencing young people's awareness of local career pathways.	More young people understand local career opportunities and pathways into priority sectors.	More young people have access to a broader range of Foundation Apprenticeships, improving progression into further learning, apprenticeships and employment within Moray's priority sectors.	Key influencers have improved awareness and confidence to discuss Moray's career opportunities, helping young people receive consistent, informed and locally relevant guidance on future pathways.
Suggested completion date	October 2026 – October 2027	October 2026 – October 2027	October 2026 – October 2028	October 2026 – October 2028

Theme 3: Apprenticeship expansion

Make apprenticeship routes more visible, flexible and aligned to local jobs for all Moray people.

	Share insight on employer skills needs to inform response to identified gaps		Promote the existing Graduate Apprenticeship offer
Actions	3.1 Establish a mechanism to more effectively share findings from employer engagement in Moray relating to skills needs, training and apprenticeship requirements and views on existing provision/gaps.	3.2 Map existing vocational learning (and upskilling/reskilling offer) in Moray including schools, UHI Moray, training providers, Moray SWAP etc to understand existing pathways and respond to identified gaps.	3.3 Engage potential GA candidates (including school and college leavers as well as existing workers looking to upskill) to promote and improve uptake of GAs in Moray.
Suggested output	• Moray employer skills intelligence mechanism established. • Regular workforce insight reports shared with partners.	• Establish a Moray learning provision working group. • Map existing learning provision across Moray, including schools, UHI Moray, training providers, Moray SWAP and other relevant provision. • Identify gaps, opportunities, scalable solutions and priorities for future learning provision.	• Coordinated Graduate Apprenticeship awareness campaign delivered. • Employer and learner engagement events held
Potential partners	Lead: DYW Moray Support: Skills Development Scotland, Moray Chamber, HIE, Federation of Small Businesses, Business Gateway, DWP	Lead: Skills Development Scotland & Scottish Funding Council Support: Moray Council Employability Team, DWP, Scottish Funding Council, TSI Moray, UHI Moray	Lead: DYW Moray Support: UHI Moray, Robert Gordon University, Moray Chamber, Skills Development Scotland
Suggested outcome	Skills investment and curriculum planning are increasingly informed by real-time employer demand.	A comprehensive understanding of existing learning provision. This can be considered along with 3.1, enabling partners to identify capacity constraints, service gaps and practical solutions to support workforce growth and delivery across Moray.	Increased awareness and uptake of Graduate Apprenticeships in Moray's priority sectors.
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Theme 4: Upskilling and reskilling

Support Moray adults and employers to train and adapt as jobs change.

	Develop joint training models for rapid upskilling/reskilling	Provide targeted support for adults returning to work or changing careers	Identify opportunities for co-investment in response to local gaps
Actions	4.1 Identify gaps in upskilling and reskilling provision and use this to: • Create short, flexible and modular local training courses to support rapid upskilling and reskilling for the existing workforce, career changers and adult learners supported by industry. • Host reskilling events that allow individuals to explore new job opportunities with employers in Moray's key sectors.	4.2 Promote benefits to employers of adapting recruitment practices to support career changers, adults returning to work, parents, older workers etc. This is to be informed by a local business panel to inform what is included within this activity.	4.3 Develop a Moray Community Benefits and Social Value approach that maximises the impact of public sector procurement spend by securing apprenticeships, jobs, work placements, employer engagement with education, community investment and support for local businesses. Use community benefit commitments and partner co-investment to address identified workforce and skills gaps, including the development of new training pathways and specialist provision in priority sectors.
Suggested Output	• Gap analysis completed and shared with partners. • Agreed action plan to address identified priority skills gaps. • New, adapted or better-promoted learning opportunities developed in response to employer demand.	• Employer panel established. • Employer guidance and resources developed. • Employer engagement sessions delivered promoting inclusive recruitment practices.	Moray Community Benefits and Social Value Framework/Policy developed and adopted by partners.
Potential partners	Lead: UHI Moray (Business Enterprise Hub) Support: Moray Council Employability Team, Skills Development Scotland, DWP	Lead: UHI Moray (Sector Based Work Academy Team) Support: Moray Council Employability Team, Moray Chamber, DYW Moray, DWP	Lead: Moray Council Economic Development Team Support: Moray Council Employability Team, UHI Moray, DYW Moray, DWP, Business Gateway, Moray Chamber
Suggested outcome	• Improved availability of training aligned to employer demand. • Increased opportunities for adults and career changers to access relevant skills development. • Reduced skills shortages in priority sectors.	• Greater employer awareness of inclusive recruitment practices. • Increased recruitment from wider talent pools. • Improved access to employment for underrepresented groups.	Procurement spend is used more effectively to deliver local employment, skills development, apprenticeships and community benefits aligned to Moray's workforce priorities.
Suggested completion date	October 2026 – October 2028	October 2026 – October 2027	October 2026 – October 2027

Theme 5: Attracting and keeping working age people in Moray Reduce out-migration and attract new working-age residents to Moray				
	Promote Moray as a great place to live and work	Help employers improve recruitment and retention and improve EDI within the workforce		
Actions	5.1 Develop and deliver a coordinated Moray place brand and talent attraction campaign that promotes the region as a destination to live, learn, work and invest. Create consistent messaging that showcases Moray’s quality of life, career opportunities, strong communities and natural environment, while supporting inward investment, population growth and funding opportunities through a collaborative regional approach. Key tasks could include: - Identify target groups such as working families/early career professionals. - Consider what incentives could be offered to attract people into Moray. - Create compelling stories of working-age people who have moved to (or stayed in) Moray, highlighting the benefits of living in the region. - Work with employers to enhance how the business community promotes Moray to those out with the region.	5.2 Employer events with different professionals including marketing and comms, HR etc. to support employers with their recruitment practices.	5.3 Promote benefits of EDI in the workplace and support employers to diversify their workforce, drive innovation and attract (and retain) a wider range of candidates.	5.4 Promote benefits of volunteering to businesses for staff development amongst staff, especially representatives joining third sector boards/committees.
Suggested output	- Coordinated Moray place brand and talent attraction campaign developed and launched. - Target audience marketing materials and case studies created. - Employer toolkit developed to support consistent promotion of Moray as a place to live and work.	- Programme of employer events delivered focusing on recruitment, marketing, communications and workforce planning. - Good practice resources shared with employers.	- Employer engagement programme delivered to raise awareness of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI). - Practical resources, case studies and guidance provided to employers to support inclusive recruitment and retention.	- Trustee and skilled volunteering opportunities promoted to employers. - Business and third sector networking opportunities facilitated.
Potential partners	Lead: Moray Chamber Support: Moray Council, DYW Moray, HIE, UHI Moray, Skills Development Scotland, TSI Moray, DWP, Visit Scotland	Lead: Moray Chamber Support: Federation of Small Businesses, Business Gateway, HIE, TSI Moray, DWP, DYW Moray	Lead: Moray Chamber Support: Federation of Small Businesses, Business Gateway, HIE, TSI Moray, DWP, DYW Moray	Lead: TSI Moray Support: Moray Chamber, Federation of Small Businesses, Business Gateway, HIE, DWP, DYW Moray
Suggested outcome	Increased awareness of Moray as a destination to live, learn, work and invest, helping to attract and retain working-age people and support sustainable economic growth.	Employers adopt more effective recruitment and attraction practices, improving their ability to recruit and retain the workforce they need.	More employers adopt inclusive recruitment and employment practices, helping to attract, retain and develop a more diverse workforce.	Employers increasingly embed volunteering and civic participation within workforce development, strengthening leadership skills, supporting community organisations and contributing to Community Wealth Building through greater social value and local collaboration. Measurements: - Employees taking up trustee, committee or skilled volunteering roles. - New partnerships established between businesses and third sector organisations. - Participating employers reporting improved staff development and community engagement.
Suggested completion date	October 2026 – October 2028	October 2026 – October 2027	October 2026 – October 2027	October 2026 – October 2028

Workforce North is a shared mission bringing together employers, local authorities, education and skills organisations, third sector, economic development partners and government to address workforce challenges across the Highlands and Islands (including Moray). It aims to help people, businesses and communities benefit from the region's major economic opportunities by encouraging people to stay in the area and by attracting fresh talent through a variety of coordinated initiatives. Find out more on the [Workforce North hub on SDS.co.uk](https://www.sds.co.uk/workforce-north).