

Central London Annex to the London Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) 2026-2029



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Executive summary

Central London is a core driver of the UK economy, characterised by a high concentration of knowledge-intensive industries, global connectivity, and a diverse labour market. Despite cost-of-living pressures, geopolitical instability and shifting work patterns, the sub-region continues to demonstrate long-term economic resilience.

Central London's economy is anchored by globally significant financial and professional services, alongside fast-growing sectors such as life sciences, creative industries, and green finance. Investment and business activity continue to rise, yet employers report structural skills mismatches, limited progression pathways, and ongoing inequalities in access to good work. The emergence of AI, automation, and green infrastructure is accelerating demand for digital, analytical, and technical skills across all sectors.

Through quantitative analysis of a wide range of data sources, such as GLA Economics datasets and the Business Register and Employment Survey, as well qualitative evidence including employer engagement events and existing relationships with stakeholders, Central London Forward has identified local skills needs across Central London in key priority sectors.

Local Skills Needs

Employers consistently identify:

- **Basic and transferable skills:** communication, leadership, operations, problem-solving
- **Digital and AI-related skills:** essential across finance, life sciences, and creative tech
- **Specialist technical skills:** including biochemistry and clinical research skills in life sciences, and regulatory and analytical competencies in financial services

Financial Services

The sector employs 410,000 people in Central London and continues to grow, driven by green finance and transformational digital change. Employers seek a blend of financial expertise, data capability, and strong regulatory knowledge. Diversity remains low, with women and ethnic-minority groups underrepresented.

Life Sciences

A rapidly expanding 'frontier innovation' sector, supported by Central London's role within the UK's 'golden triangle'. Demand is high for medical scientists, lab technicians, biostatisticians, and clinical research specialists—alongside AI-enabled skills.

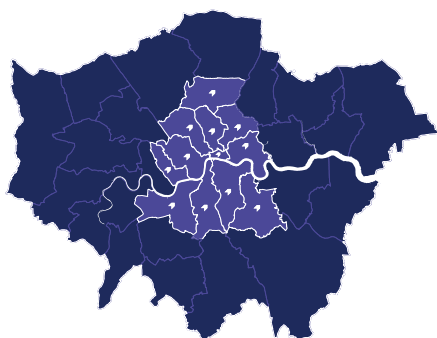
Visitor Economy & Hospitality

Despite London's strong tourism sector, hospitality faces chronic skills shortages, particularly in customer service, leadership, and chef roles. Declining employment and difficult working conditions hinder recruitment and progression.

Cross-Cutting Themes

- **Basic & Transferable Skills:** foundational to all priority sectors; critical for progression and employer satisfaction.
- **Digital & AI Skills:** essential for competitiveness and sector transformation.
- **Green Skills:** growing demand, particularly within green finance and heat network infrastructure.

Strategic and economic context



Central London remains the key driver of the UK's most significant economic hubs, characterised by a high concentration of knowledge-intensive industries, strong international connectivity, and a large, diverse workforce. Despite ongoing pressures from cost-of-living challenges, geopolitical uncertainty, and post-pandemic adjustments to working patterns, the sub-region continues to demonstrate economic resilience and sustained long-term growth potential.

Central London's economy is highly dependent on its globally significant financial and professional services sector, particularly in the City of London. The City alone generates £109bn in annual economic output, accounting for one in every five financial services jobs in Great Britain. This concentration of high-value activity provides a strong buffer against wider economic volatility, with the City's workforce expanding by over 25% between 2019 and 2023.

Private sector activity across Central London also shows renewed momentum. Business surveys and PMI indicators reported notable growth heading into 2026, reinforcing confidence in the capital's recovery trajectory.

Employment statistics in Central London have mirrored similar patterns across London, stubbornly high unemployment figures and a lack of job opportunities. Claimant count data for Central London shows that 5.6% of residents were claiming unemployment-related welfare payments in January 2026, slightly above the 5.5% figure in London but much higher than the UK-wide rate of 3.8%.

Several sectors central to the Central London economy—such as financial services, hospitality, and life sciences—continue to face significant recruitment and skills shortages. Analyses show increasing focus on improving pathways into priority sectors and tackling inequalities in the labour market, including disparities in employment outcomes and progression.

The Central London Careers Hub plays a key role in strengthening early talent pipeline by connecting employers with schools and colleges, building sector understanding, and ensuring young Londoners - particularly those underrepresented in high growth industries - can access pathways into priority sectors.

At the same time, Central London continues to attract global capital and investment, particularly in high-growth sectors such as fintech, AI, creative industries, and green finance.

Economic assessments predict that London will outperform other UK regions in 2026 due to its concentration of international firms and innovation-driven industries.

The labour market faces structural challenges—particularly around workforce participation, skills mismatches, and productivity—that reinforce the importance of targeted skills interventions. Addressing shortages in key growth sectors, improving access to high-quality training, and supporting residents facing multiple barriers to employment will remain central to sustaining inclusive growth. To do this, it is going to be important to tackle labour market inequities as structural challenges are likely to impact lower-income, ethnic minority and other marginalised communities, further exacerbating existing inequality.

Local skills needs

As mentioned above, the labour market is changing rapidly and it is vital that government at all levels, and skills providers respond to those changes effectively. It continues to be important to support young people and people at the start of their career to gain the skills and experience they need to enter a secure career path. However, the changing nature of the labour market means that we also must focus on upskilling people mid-career.

Due to this, **a set of transferable employment skills, which are already important today, will be even more vital in the coming years.** The National Foundation of Educational Research estimates that between one million and three million jobs in ‘high-risk’ occupations could be lost by 2035 and workers in these ‘high-risk’ occupations are more likely to be at either end of the age distribution (under 24 or over 55). Consequently, a greater policy and funding focus is needed on supporting workers in these ‘high-risk’ jobs to change careers, in particular looking at Digital and AI skills. For those in older categories, this comes with wider difficulties due to caring responsibilities, economic uncertainty and risk of overload, with the possibility of this causing health crises for this cohort. As a result, it is vital that skills courses are designed to be inclusive and supportive of older workers who need to reskill.

Additionally, it continues to be important that Londoners are supported to access the skills they need to access high-growth sectors with technical skills, to ensure these priority sectors continue to grow and thrive, while employing local people, especially those from underrepresented groups.

As such, we have summarised local skills needs in Central London below:



Priority sectors:

Financial Services

Overview

Central London has long been a world-leading centre for financial services, and it is the largest sector in the capital by employment. There are 410,000 jobs in the finance sector in Central London alone, representing 11.6% of all jobs in the sub-region. While there was a sustained fall in online job postings in financial services over the past few years, from a high of around 24,000 to around 10,000, there has been a significant uptick over the past 12 months.

However, while finance is a high-value sector, it is one of low-access, as exemplified by the workforce profile detailed below. A key part of our work with the sector must be aimed at opening up recruitment processes, creating clear pathways and tackling labour market inequities in the sector.

The finance sector is continuing to grow, in part due to the rapid growth of green finance. The growth of London's financial sector is playing a vital role in the drive to net zero. Data from the Low Carbon Environmental Goods and Services markets (jointly commissioned by the GLA and CLF) showed that in the carbon finance sub-sector, sales grew 27%; number of employees grew 26%; and number of companies grew 17%.

Many of the most in-demand skills from employers in the sector are key transferable skills such as communication, project management and digital skills. The sector is expected to be the most affected by the emergence of AI in the coming years and it will be vital that potential employees hold good digital skills and critical thinking to work with this development.

Data from the Central London Careers Hub shows a sustained high level of interest in financial services among young people in Central London. However, Hub engagement also reveals persistent misconceptions about routes into the sector and lower confidence among girls, SEND learners, and students from ethnic minority backgrounds. This insight highlights the need for targeted employer led outreach and clearer progression pathways. Through collaborative working we will expand employer led programmes such as sector insights,

inclusive recruitment workshops, and mentoring opportunities to ensure a diverse pipeline of young Londoners are prepared for and aware of roles within financial services.

While financial services is a very highly-paid sector in comparison to the average across London, it is less diverse and representative of London also. Two-thirds of employees in the sector are male and only 32% of them are from ethnic-minority backgrounds, lower than the average for all sectors across London. This shows that a key aspect of the work to tackle skills gaps in this sector also needs to be about attracting people who are younger, female and from ethnic minority backgrounds, supporting Londoners into highly-paid jobs in their city. We will use the LSIP to look at the reasons for this, including reported discrimination and elitism in the sector, as well as opaque recruitment practices.



Workforce profile (7) (sector in CLF vs. all sectors in London)

- **34% female and 66% male**
- **32% from ethnic minority backgrounds (38% across all sectors in London)**
- **18% aged over 50 years (27% across all sectors)**
- **9% reported a disability (14% across all sectors)**

Occupations in demand

In the financial sector specifically, employers report sustained and growing need for roles that combine financial expertise, analytical capability, and strong regulatory and compliance awareness.

Demand remains strongest for core financial occupations, reflecting London's position as an international financial centre. These include finance and investment analysts and advisers, who support strategic decision-making and respond to increasingly complex global markets, and financial managers and directors, who oversee governance, risk management, and financial sustainability within organisations. The sector also continues to rely heavily on chartered and certified accountants, underpinned by regulatory requirements and the need for robust financial reporting.

Alongside these roles, employers are seeking a steady supply of financial and accounting technicians, book-keepers, payroll managers, and wages clerks. These occupations remain vital for operational accuracy and compliance across businesses of all sizes, particularly as organisations adopt new software systems and automated processes. Though automation is reshaping some entry-level tasks, demand persists for workers capable of combining technical knowledge with digital literacy and the ability to adapt to new tools.

Overall, the sector's occupational demand highlights a blend of traditional financial competencies and emerging digital, analytical, and management capabilities. This

underscores the importance of continued investment in professional qualifications, technical skills, and data literacy within Central London's workforce.



Skills in demand

Employers in Central London's financial services sector continue to emphasise the importance of a blend of technical expertise and strong transferable skills. As the sector adapts to regulatory changes, technological innovation, and evolving business models, these skills underpin productivity, compliance, and operational resilience. Demand remains high for core financial competencies that support accurate reporting, regulatory compliance, and informed decision-making.

Finance and accounting skills are fundamental across roles, enabling staff to manage budgets, assess financial performance, and ensure appropriate financial governance. Auditing skills are increasingly important as organisations navigate stringent regulatory environments and heightened expectations around transparency and risk management. Skills in preparing and interpreting financial statements are central to both internal reporting and external stakeholder engagement, particularly in larger firms subject to complex disclosure requirements. In addition, operational roles continue to rely heavily on invoicing capabilities and the ability to work effectively with financial systems, reflecting employers' needs for accuracy, timeliness, and digital literacy in day-to-day financial processes.

Alongside technical expertise, the sector places strong emphasis on transferable skills that support effective communication, leadership, and operational efficiency. Communication skills—both written and verbal—are critical for roles involving client engagement, regulatory reporting, and cross-team collaboration. Management and leadership skills are increasingly required as organisations undertake transformation programmes, adopt new technologies, and restructure teams to meet changing business needs. Employers also highlight the importance of being detail oriented, given the high stakes associated with financial accuracy, compliance, and risk mitigation. Skills in operations support the smooth functioning of business processes, particularly in areas such as payments, client onboarding, and back-office functions. These operational skills, combined with an ability to manage

complexity and adapt to new systems, are essential for maintaining service quality in a fast-paced sector.

Skills in Demand in the Finance Sector		Central London Forward 	
Technical		Transferable	
1 Finance		1 Communication	
2 Accounting		2 Management	
3 Auditing		3 Detail Oriented	
4 Financial Statements		4 Operations	
5 Invoicing		5 Leadership	

Actions

CLF will work with the City of London and other stakeholders, including employers and select other boroughs, to support skills pathways and open up recruitment processes into this highly-paid but highly-skilled sector, to ensure local young people in Central London can see a route into financial services roles.

Part of this could including using the LSIP and the new GLA sub-regional sector hubs to invest in a programme of basic and transferable skills for Central London, co-ordinating employers and providers to meet the needs of residents.

Life sciences

Overview

Life Sciences is a new sector included in the London Growth Plan, as part of 'frontier innovation'. This is because London is key part of the UK's Life science 'golden triangle' and it is a rapidly growing and developing sector, in Central London in particular. While there are only 5,000 life science jobs in Central London, 11% of all life sciences jobs are in London overall and the sector is expected to continue growing over the next decade. Additionally, the sector's workforce is younger and more highly skilled than the average, however not very diverse in terms of gender or ethnicity. The skills needed in the sector are a mix of highly technical skills such as biochemistry and transferable skills such as research and communication. Employers have told us that digital skills, such as AI specialisms, are vital for the sector. This is because modern research, clinical development, and manufacturing now generate far more data and complexity than traditional methods can handle.

Long-term projections point to continued growth in life sciences employment. Analysis by the Futures Group suggests that employment could grow by around 2.2% a year at the UK level over the coming decade, alongside substantial replacement demand as workers leave the

sector, due to a range of factors such as retirement, global competition and tighter immigration rules.

The growth of life sciences in Central London has been highly supported by local government. The LIFT programme (in Camden, Islington, Hackney and Tower Hamlets), the Inclusive Health and Life Sciences Coalition (made up of eight CLF member boroughs), and SC1 London (a collaboration between Lambeth, Southwark and NHS partners) are all council-intensive initiatives focused on supporting local people into these growth sectors. CLF will work with these partners to improve pathways for Londoners into the life sciences sector and support it to grow further in the coming years.

Occupations in demand

Central London's life sciences sector is experiencing strong and sustained demand for a wide range of scientific, technical, and research-focused occupations. Driven by growth in biomedical research, clinical development, biotechnology innovation, and increased investment in public health capabilities, employers are seeking talent across both specialist scientific roles and essential laboratory and operational functions.

Demand remains particularly high for medical scientists, biologists, and researchers/research associates, who underpin the research and innovation activity that defines the sector. These roles are central to advancing new treatments, diagnostics, and technologies, and require strong scientific foundations alongside the ability to work with complex laboratory techniques and emerging biotechnologies.

Supporting the research pipeline, laboratory technicians remain in high demand across academic institutions, NHS laboratories, and private-sector research facilities. Their work ensures the smooth running of laboratories, the reliability of scientific procedures, and adherence to quality and safety standards.

The sector also relies on specialist analytical roles such as biostatisticians, who play a critical part in designing studies, analysing clinical trial data, and ensuring the scientific validity of research outputs. Their expertise is increasingly valued as datasets grow larger and more complex, particularly in genomics, population health, and personalised medicine.

Beyond core research and clinical functions, employers are seeking talent in roles linked to regulation, compliance, and environmental impact. Environmental planner scientists are needed to support sustainability assessments, regulatory submissions, and environmental monitoring, reflecting the growing focus on responsible innovation and environmental stewardship within the sector.

Occupations in Demand in the Life Sciences Sector		Central London Forward	
1 Medical scientist	6 Environmental planner scientist		
2 Research development manager	7 Researcher/Researcher associate		
3 Biologist	8 Clinical research manager		
4 Clinical research co-ordinator	9 Biostatistician		
5 Laboratory technician	10 Quality inspector		

Skills in demand

Employers consistently highlight the need for a combination of highly specialised technical skills and strong transferable capabilities that support research excellence, regulatory compliance, and project delivery.

Technical proficiency remains fundamental across scientific, research, and clinical roles. Project management skills are increasingly important as organisations coordinate complex, multi-disciplinary research programmes, clinical trials, and regulatory submissions. The growing volume and complexity of clinical trials activity—particularly in areas such as oncology, rare diseases, and advanced therapies—creates demand for staff skilled in trial design, participant management, data handling, and adherence to Good Clinical Practice.

Strong foundations in biology remain essential across laboratory, research, and development settings, supporting work in molecular biology, cell culture, genomics, and other rapidly advancing fields. Auditing skills are also in high demand, particularly within quality assurance functions, where compliance with regulatory frameworks, laboratory standards, and manufacturing protocols is critical to ensuring safety and reliability.

The sector also places significant value on clinical research skills, enabling staff to support study design, ethics and governance processes, data quality, and clinical operations. These skills underpin the ability to translate scientific discovery into effective treatments and technologies.

Alongside technical expertise, employers emphasise the importance of strong transferable skills that support effective research, collaboration, and leadership. Research skills—encompassing critical thinking, experimental design, and data interpretation—are central to innovation and remain a core requirement across scientific and academic settings.

Effective communication is essential for cross-disciplinary collaboration, engagement with clinical partners, and the preparation of research outputs, regulatory documentation, and public-facing materials. Management and leadership skills are increasingly needed as organisations deliver large-scale projects, build multi-institutional partnerships, and respond to rapid technological and regulatory change.

Finally, innovation is a key driver within the sector, with employers seeking individuals who can contribute to problem-solving, adopt new technologies, and support the development of novel therapies, diagnostics, and research methods. The ability to work creatively and adapt to emerging scientific opportunities is seen as central to maintaining the sector's global competitiveness.

Skills in Demand in the Life Sciences Sector		Central London Forward	
Technical	Transferable		
1 Project management	1 Research		
2 Clinical trials	2 Communication		
3 Biology	3 Management		
4 Auditing	4 Leadership		
5 Clinical research	5 Innovation		

Actions

Through the LSIP and the work of the GLA sub-regional sector hub, CLF will build on the ongoing work of groups such as the Inclusive Health and Life Sciences Coalition, the LIFT programme, SC1 London, the Knowledge Quarter and the Paddington Life Sciences Hub, supporting the creation of inclusive talent pathways into this sector. CLF will also work with the Life Sciences Talent Board to monitor emerging priorities and incorporate them into the programme of work.

This will include engaging employers to create pathways into careers, working to improve awareness of the sector, and developing a skills and training offer that meets the needs of the sector.

Visitor economy

Overview

Hospitality and the visitor economy play a vital role in attracting tourists to London, as well as experiences for people who live here. London was the third most visited city in the world in 2024, with tourism contributing more than 10% of the capital's GDP in 2022 and a large proportion of these visits. Overseas visitors spent £17.3bn in London in 2024 – 75% more than in the rest of England combined. People come to London for a variety of reasons but experiences and hospitality play a key role in this, especially in Central London. However, skills shortages are prominent in the sector, in particular basic skills such as communication and leadership. The sector also struggles with poor working conditions, historically plagued

by substandard working conditions, such as low pay, long hours, and little job security¹, making it harder to attract good staff.

Hospitality was identified as a priority sector in London's 2023 LSIP and recognised in the 2025 London Growth Plan as part of the capital's 'experience economy', reflecting its role in tourism, leisure and visitor spending. This is also a key part of the night time economy, which is a focus for a number of Central London boroughs, as well as the Mayor of London.

Since 2023, the number and proportion of jobs in hospitality and retail sectors in Central London have both dropped substantially. On a national basis, UKHospitality has attributed job losses to government decisions and changing customer behaviour. These sectors constituted 16% of the Central London workforce three years ago, but is now only 13.4%.

In terms of the hospitality sector, occupations in demand have stayed broadly the same, with front of house staff and chefs being the most prominent, as they are in the most recent data. Similarly, the most in demand skills in the sector are chef, customer service and communication skills, as they were in 2023. This shows that challenges in the sector have not been tackled in the meantime.

Hospitality employers have told us that a workforce development vision is necessary, including progression pathways, key transferable skills and a talent pipeline from schools. It is possible that revenue from the new overnight visitor levy could be, in part, used to deliver skills and training for this sector, to further boost London's attractiveness to domestic and foreign visitors.



Workforce profile (7) (sector in CLF vs. all sectors in London)

- **35% female and 65% male**
- **47% from ethnic minority backgrounds (38% across all sectors in London)**
- **21% aged over 50 years (27% across all sectors)**
- **16% reported a disability (14% across all sectors)**

Occupations in demand

The hospitality sector in Central London continues to experience strong demand across a broad range of roles, reflecting the area's status as a global destination for tourism, business travel, events, and leisure. Employers report persistent recruitment challenges, particularly in customer-facing and food-service roles, driven by high turnover, increased footfall, and the need for consistent service quality.

¹ Giousmpasoglou, C. Working Conditions in the Hospitality Industry: The Case for a Fair and Decent Work Agenda. Sustainability 2024, 16, 8428. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su16198428>.

Demand remains especially high for chefs, who are essential to delivering high-quality food provision across restaurants, hotels, and catering businesses. Employers note shortages at multiple skill levels, from entry-level to experienced and specialist chefs, reflecting both the pace of business growth and the need for diverse culinary expertise. Supporting kitchen operations, kitchen and catering assistants are also frequently required to maintain food preparation, hygiene standards, and efficient service delivery.

Customer-facing roles remain central to the sector's workforce needs. Waiters and waitresses, bar staff, and coffee shop workers are in consistently high demand, particularly in Central London where footfall is high and businesses rely on flexible staffing to meet fluctuating demand. These roles are essential for maintaining service quality and customer satisfaction across hospitality venues.

Supervisory and managerial roles remain crucial as businesses seek to maintain operational efficiency and oversee diverse teams. Bar and catering supervisors are needed to manage daily operations, coordinate staff, and ensure compliance with health and safety standards. At a higher level, restaurant and catering establishment managers are essential for overseeing business performance, managing budgets, and ensuring high-quality service delivery.

Finally, the increasing importance of hospitality within the events economy has created demand for events managers and organisers. These roles support corporate events, conferences, cultural programming, and large-scale gatherings, all of which form a significant part of Central London's visitor economy. They require strong coordination skills and the ability to work with multiple stakeholders to deliver successful events.

Top 10 Occupations Needed in the Hospitality Sector

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| 1 Chefs | 6 Kitchen & catering assistants |
| 2 Waiters & waitresses | 7 Bar staff |
| 3 Receptionists | 8 Coffee shop workers |
| 4 Housekeepers & related occupations | 9 Restaurant & catering establishment managers |
| 5 Bar & catering supervisors | 10 Events managers & organisers |

Skills in demand

As businesses respond to fluctuating customer demand, rising expectations around service quality, and the need for efficient operations, these skills are central to maintaining competitiveness and delivering high-quality guest experiences.

Technical Skills:

Technical skills remain fundamental across all hospitality roles, particularly in food service, accommodation, and front-of-house operations. Restaurant operation skills are essential for overseeing daily service, coordinating staff, managing bookings, and ensuring smooth customer flow in fast-paced environments. Food safety and sanitation is a critical requirement across the sector, reflecting strict regulatory standards and the importance of maintaining public confidence in food handling and hygiene.

Skills in cooking and food preparation continue to be in high demand, particularly as businesses seek chefs and kitchen assistants who can work efficiently, follow diverse menus, and maintain consistency during busy service periods. In accommodation and housekeeping settings, housekeeping skills—including cleaning standards, room preparation, and time management—are essential to maintaining guest satisfaction and meeting industry expectations.

Transferable Skills:

Alongside technical proficiencies, employers place strong emphasis on transferable skills that ensure effective customer engagement and operational reliability. Communication skills are vital across all customer-facing and supervisory roles, enabling staff to manage enquiries, resolve issues, and maintain positive interactions with guests.

Customer service skills are among the most sought after across the sector, underpinning the reputation and commercial success of hospitality businesses. Staff must be able to respond to diverse guest needs, adapt to fast-changing situations, and uphold consistent service standards.

Being detail oriented is crucial in roles where accuracy affects safety, presentation, and service quality—from preparing food to setting tables or cleaning rooms. Management skills are increasingly needed as businesses recruit supervisors and managers capable of coordinating teams, scheduling staff, and maintaining compliance with operational procedures.

Finally, strong operations skills support the efficient running of venues, ensuring that processes such as stock control, workflow management, and service delivery operate smoothly even during peak periods.

Skills in Demand in the Hospitality Sector

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Technical

- 1 Restaurant operation
- 2 Food safety & sanitation
- 3 Cooking
- 4 Food preparation
- 5 Housekeeping

Transferable

- 1 Communication
- 2 Customer service
- 3 Detail oriented
- 4 Management
- 5 Operations

Actions:

CLF will work with employer organisations, such as Hospitality UK (which is based in Camden), as well as skills providers and boroughs, to establish the most effective way of tackling skills challenges and put together a roadmap to creating skills pathways. This may include hospitality skills passports, where employees can take on skills courses, then use these to transfer across roles.

Additionally, we will invest in a programme of basic/transferable skills across skills providers in Central London, as the LSIP has shown is necessary for the hospitality sector, especially with the advancement of AI. We will undertake a number of innovative pilots, working with employers and providers to define which skills are most needed

Cross-cutting themes:

Basic/transferable skills

Across Central London's diverse economy, employers consistently emphasise the need for strong transferable skills that enable workers to adapt to fast-paced environments, collaborate effectively, and deliver high-quality services. While each sector has its own technical requirements, a shared set of core capabilities underpins performance in high-demand occupations.

Communication skills remain the most widely required across sectors. In financial services, life sciences, and hospitality alike, staff must convey information clearly, work across multidisciplinary teams, and engage confidently with clients, customers, and stakeholders. Effective communication is particularly important in roles involving complex analysis, clinical coordination, customer interaction, or leadership responsibilities.

Management and leadership skills are also in high demand, reflecting organisational needs to oversee teams, coordinate projects, and drive operational improvements. In financial services, these skills support governance and project delivery; in life sciences, they are essential for research oversight and clinical trial management; and in hospitality, they underpin the supervision of fast-moving service environments.

Employers additionally highlight the importance of being detail oriented, especially in sectors where accuracy and compliance are critical. Financial and regulatory roles depend on precision in reporting and auditing; laboratory and clinical environments require exact adherence to protocols; and hospitality settings rely on consistent service and presentation standards.

Another core competency is research and analytical capability, which enables workers to interpret information, solve problems, and support evidence-based decision-making. While central to scientific and data-driven roles, these skills are increasingly important across financial and managerial occupations within Central London's knowledge-intensive economy.

Finally, operational and organisational skills—including the ability to manage workflows, coordinate resources, and maintain smooth day-to-day functioning—are vital across all sectors. In hospitality, they underpin service delivery; in life sciences, they support laboratory and clinical operations; and in financial services, they ensure processes run efficiently amid regulatory and technological change.

We know that Adult Community Learning is a strong delivery platform for these skills and has excellent reach into under-represented communities. We will look to engage with these services, to provide joined-up support.

Together, these transferable skills form the foundation of a resilient, productive workforce in Central London. Strengthening them across training pathways and employment programmes is essential for improving access to good work and supporting the region's long-term economic growth.

Digital skills

It is clear that Central London will face rising demand for digital and AI skills as employers across major sectors—particularly financial and professional services, information and communication, and the creative and technology industries—continue to modernise operations and adopt advanced technologies.

As Central London is home to world-leading clusters in finance, technology, health innovation, and the creative industries, the need for AI fluency, data literacy, and digital problem-solving will be especially high in these sectors, all of which rely heavily on automation, data-driven decision-making, and advanced digital infrastructure.

Green skills

It is clear from the data and research undertaken that green skills are a vital part of the skills and employment landscape in Central London, and will continue to grow as a sector over the coming years. CLF has funded a piece of work to map the scope of green jobs in Central London, where they are present and the growth of the sector. This Low Carbon Market Snapshot is awaiting full publication but early indications show that a large proportion of green jobs are in the green finance sector.

Our work to identify skills shortages in the finance sector will support the growth and breadth of this industry. Additionally, the Warm Homes Plan's ambition for 50% of London's buildings to be heated by heat networks by 2050 is likely to create a skills shortage over the coming years. However, the sector has indicated that there may not be the workers with appropriate skills in Central London currently to deliver this. Also, the growth of green construction and clean energy will place more demands on skills for these sectors. We will work with employers, boroughs and skills providers to identify these skills gaps and seek to put measures in place to fill them.

Delivering the LSIP priorities in Central London

Central London Forward will continue to work closely with BusinessLDN, the GLA, with other business organisations, with skills providers, with our member authorities and other partners

to take forward the actions set out in this report, and to ensure the local skills system better responds to the needs of local employers.

CLF will take the learning and actions from this report to inform the set-up of the Central London sector hub, to deliver on the priorities of our sub-region and create skills pathways for Londoners.

This will include:

- Supporting the delivery of basic and transferable skills provision
- Co-ordinating demand for digital skills across key sectors with skills providers to create pathways
- Advocating the growth of the life sciences sector across Central London, co-ordinating local authorities' contributions and supporting collaboration.

The Central London Employment and Skills Board – which brings together training providers, employers and employer organisations, central London's local authorities – will oversee actions set out in this report, and review progress in delivering on the actions.

Additionally, the Central London Careers Hub will act as a key implementation partner, ensuring that LSIP priorities translate into practical employer encounters, improved careers education aligned to emerging labour market needs, and stronger transitions between school, FE and employment.

Agreed changes/actions needed

- Invest in a programme of innovative pilots to improve basic, transferable skills, working with CLF boroughs to identify areas of need
- Co-ordinate life sciences programmes across Central London, working with existing groups such as the Inclusive Health and Life Sciences Coalition, the LIFT programme, SC1 London and the Paddington Life Sciences Hub to create talent pathways and support Londoners into the sector
- Work with the City of London Corporation to improve pathways for young, diverse and female Londoners to gain the skills needed to enter and progress into the financial sector.
- Work with the Bridge Partnership of 16 Central London FE providers and borough partners, to establish long-term talent pathways for young people
- Engage with CLF Connect to Work and Full Potential programmes to link employment needs with skills gaps and establish feedback mechanisms to inform delivery.
- Use the LSIP and the forthcoming sub-regional sector hubs to identify areas of poor job quality in key sectors and work with employers and partners to make improvements, building on initiatives such as the Good Work Standard.

Background and method

The work to support the Central London Forward LSIP annex involved analysis of a wide range of data sources on employment and skills in the sub-region, including GLA Economics data and the Business Register and Employment Survey, while qualitative evidence included engagement events and relationships with stakeholders. The Central London Careers Hub contributed insights from Compass+ benchmarking, Careers Leader engagement, and employer-partner feedback, providing a unique view of emerging talent supply and young people's career interests across the sub-region.