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Central London Local Skills Improvement Plan Annual Progress Report 2024/2025



June 2025

This progress report follows on from the CLF Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) and the 2024 Progress Report, outlining progress made against the LSIP priorities in 2024/25.

Who we are

Central London Forward (CLF) is the partnership of the 12 Central London local authorities. We work together with our member authorities and with other stakeholders to support inclusive and sustainable growth in Central London; so that our economy thrives, and our residents benefit from the opportunities this creates.

Central London Forward worked with BusinessLDN to develop the Local Skills Improvement Plan for the capital and published the Central London LSIP report - [Meeting Central London's Skills Needs](#) – as well as the first annual progress report last year - [Central-London-Local-Skills-Improvement-Plan-Annual-Progress-Report-2023-24.pdf](#).

Who is this publication for?

This publication provides an update on progress in delivering the Local Skills Improvement Plan in Central London. It is aimed at employers and employer organisations, colleges and other skills providers, boroughs and other stakeholders across Central London.

Summary of the Central London Local Skills Improvement Plan

Report – [Meeting Central London's Skills Needs](#)

Central London has a strong and dynamic economy, which drives growth for the whole of the UK. Over 3m people work in Central London. The area has world-leading clusters in the industries of the future, and the local economy generates £314bn of GVA. Ensuring employers have access to the skills they need is vital to enabling the future success of Central London's economy.

However, while Central London has a highly qualified workforce, too many residents struggle to benefit from the opportunities available locally, and too many businesses struggle to recruit to the skilled workers they need to succeed.

In 2023 Central London Forward worked with businesses, skills providers, boroughs and other stakeholders to shape London's Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP). The report identified the skills needs of employers locally, explored the extent to which the post-16 technical skills system was meeting these needs, and set out locally implementable changes to the skills system to better meet employer needs.

The report identified five priority sectors:

1. financial and professional services;
2. information and communication;
3. health and social care;
4. arts, entertainment, and recreation;
5. hospitality and retail.

The report also focused on two cross-cutting themes; supporting the transition to net zero, and tackling labour market inequalities.

Strategic and economic context update

The national skills and employment environment is going through extensive reform. The Government has established the new arms-length body 'Skills England' which will set direction for the national skills policy and deliver the new 'growth and skills levy', which is replacing the apprenticeship levy. These changes are part of the wider plans outlined in the 'Get Britain Working White Paper' which sets out major reforms to the employment and skills system, in which LSIPs will play an important role.

Regionally, the Greater London Authority (GLA) has published the London Growth Plan with objectives and priority sectors for driving growth in the capital. This is to be followed by an 'Inclusive Talent Strategy' which will set out priorities for skills provision to be able to meet these objectives.

Between the developing regional and national strategies, there are number of priority sectors within the Central London LSIP, including creative industries, finance, IT and life sciences. Skills England and the London Growth Plan also reflect CLF's ambition to support the transition to net zero through improved skills provision. Going forward, CLF will look to build on the work already started in these areas through the LSIP and shape future LSIP actions to reflect shared regional and national priorities.

The Local Skills Improvement Fund (LSIF), which has been vital in delivery of CLF's LSIP priorities, ended in March 2025 and was not continued. This will significantly reduce the budget available the partnership of Central London FE providers that had come together to bid for and allocate LSIF funding. This will have a negative effect on collaboration and innovation which will need to be addressed in future LSIP stages if no similar funding is announced.

2024/25 Progress Report

Facilitating collaboration between local skills services

Actions: Employer engagement, reviewing provision,

Themes: Tackling labour market inequalities, Supporting transition to net-zero

In order to embed improvements in skills provision, key stakeholders, including boroughs, providers and employers, must be able to collaborate effectively. CLF facilitates this collaboration through a network of groups that bring together these key stakeholders in order to share best practice, discuss new strategies and build consensus for policy positions.

CLF has three groups within the skills function:

Group	Membership
Skills Officer Group (SKOG)	Lead officers from skills teams within CLF's 12 member boroughs.
Construction Skills Group (CSG)	A sub-group of SKOG with officers from CLF boroughs with specific responsibility for construction skills and Section 106 teams.

Employment and Skills Board (ESB)	Key stakeholders including senior council officers and cabinet members with responsibility for skills and employment, as well as representatives from FE providers and employers.
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What has been achieved so far?

As in 2023/24, CLF groups continue to be used effectively to facilitate collaboration, share best practice and shape skills strategies in 2024/25.

The *Skills Officer Group (SKOG)* provides a regular forum for sharing best practice from skills programmes being delivered across CLF's 12 member boroughs. Members have shared insights from activities including employer engagement, employability skills support schemes, creating online skills resources and much more. The group has also provided opportunities to promote shared resources created by boroughs or other stakeholders such as the new '[Skyline Skills Hub](#)' – an online resource for sustainable careers within the built environment, led by City of London Corporation.

The more specific focus of the *Construction Skills Group (CSG)* has led to close cross-borough collaboration on projects relating to construction skills and section 106 agreements. Through CSG, a selection of CLF boroughs has begun working together to align section 106 practices and explore apprenticeship migration between councils. This project, facilitated by CLF, aims to increase skills opportunities provided by section 106 across Central London and improve retention of apprentices in the built environment by allowing them to move between sites in different boroughs.

The *Employment and Skills Board (ESB)* is CLF's key skills network, with members from senior political and officer leadership from local authorities as well as representatives from the FE sector and key employers in the sub-region. ESB has provided a valuable opportunity for the key stakeholders in Central London's skills landscape to scrutinise national and regional skills strategies as one coherent system, streamlining engagement and presenting coherent policy positions that benefit the sub-region. In 2024/25, ESB has facilitated in-depth briefings from the Department for Work and Pensions on the [Get Britain Working White Paper](#) and the Greater London Authority on the [London Growth Plan](#).

What still needs to be achieved?

In addition to continued intelligence and best practice sharing, CLF will be using these networks to shape and influence two major regional skills strategies: GLA's Inclusive Talent Strategy and the next stage of the LSIP.

CLF will arrange regular briefings from the GLA and London Councils at SKOG and ESB regarding the Inclusive Talent Strategy, ensuring the priorities of the strategy address the challenges and build on the successes of skills provision in Central London. These forums will also be used to discuss priorities for the next stage of the Central London LSIP, with CLF aiming to have an increased role for local authorities and FE providers in future activity.

CSG will continue to be used as the foundation for alignment of s106 practices. Initially, a small group of member boroughs will be working with a selected employer to launch a pilot scheme of apprenticeship migration. The wider group will be engaged in sharing clauses from s106 contracts to create a joint best practice document for providing skills opportunities through s106.

Promoting and supporting apprenticeships



Workwhile

Priority Sectors: Information and communication, health and social care

Actions: Employer engagement, establishing career pathways

Themes: Tackling labour market inequalities

[Workwhile](#) is a non-profit organisation promoting good work. CLF is working with Workwhile to engage employers and providers to develop cohorts of apprenticeships in priority sectors as well as providing training on apprenticeships for SMEs and local authorities.

What has been achieved so far?

Over the past year, Workwhile supported 34 apprenticeships with LSIP funding through CLF, exceeding its target of 30. These included roles in Data (9), Health & Social Care (24), and other sectors such as Early Years and Hospitality (11). Initially prioritising Marketing and Data skills based on local authority strategies, Workwhile adapted its approach to meet growing demand in Health & Social Care, and later extended support to other high-need areas.

Support for SMEs included facilitating £297,000 in apprenticeship levy transfers from large employers, including local authorities. SMEs also received "Developmentor" training for line managers, focusing on inclusive leadership, motivation, psychological safety, and coaching. Health and Social Care employers were offered a "Good Work Health Check," providing tailored advice on improving pay, diversity, skills, and wellbeing.

To engage employers, Workwhile hosted 13 outreach events, reaching over 300 SMEs, and collaborated with training providers to identify and support interested businesses. Additionally, Workwhile trained 40 local authority staff via tailored apprenticeship awareness sessions to help embed long-term capacity for apprenticeship promotion.

What still needs to be achieved?

Using the April-September LSIP extension, CLF are providing additional funding to Workwhile to create a new cohort of health and social care apprenticeships, building on the success of the 2024/25 scheme. Workwhile are aiming to support 30+ apprenticeships in the six-month period.

Improving careers education through employer engagement

Actions: Employer engagement, industry placements, career mapping

Themes: Tackling labour market inequalities



The [Central London Careers Hub](#) seeks to ensure all young people in Central London can access high quality careers education. By connecting industry professionals with over 235 Central London schools, the Hub seeks to provide insight into the world of work and empower London students to make informed decisions about their career path.

What has been achieved so far?

In 2024/25 The Central London Careers Hub has partnered with schools and employers to deliver programmes, produce resources and conduct research to improve careers education in the sub-region as well as adding 5 new schools to its network.

The Hub has engaged employers through a range of volunteering opportunities, launching Industry Advisory Groups, delivering events for students and starting an innovative new 'teacher encounters' scheme which aims to offer 100 industry placements for teachers by the end of 2025.

This year the Hub has produced a number of resources to improve careers education including 10 sector-specific '[Step In...](#)' guides for career mapping, the 'Spotlight' magazine and the 'Next Steps in London' pathway guide.

The Hub has focussed on inclusion, holding events focussed on SEND, RONI (at risk) and neurodivergent students. In November 2024, 125 employers and educators attended the Hub's SEND conference. Additionally, the Hub funded multiple schools to complete the '[Autism Reality Experience](#)' and funded three schools to engage with SEND and RONI focussed [Face Front Theatre](#).

Central London Forward supported the Hub through regular engagement, facilitating connections with local stakeholders including boroughs and colleges, and strategic input as a steering board member—ensuring alignment with sub-regional priorities and strengthening collaboration.

What still needs to be achieved?

CLF will remain a member of the Hub's steering board to provide strategic insight and identify opportunities for collaboration and capacity building. Specifically, CLF will facilitate collaboration between the Hub and Central London local authorities to connect the hub to schools across Central London. This will help add any hard-to-reach schools to the Hub's network and add valuable insights through the 'Future Skills Questionnaire' which guides the Hub's strategic direction.

Furthermore, CLF is supporting the Hub in collating intelligence in work experience practices in schools with the aim of creating a more aligned, improved system for providing work experience placements for students.

Investing in cutting edge provision through LSIF



Priority Sectors: Information and communication, arts, entertainment and recreation

Actions: Employer engagement, digital provision, industry expertise, industry placements, career mapping, embedding digital skills

Themes: Supporting the transition to net-zero

Bridge is a collaborative partnership of 16 educational institutions across London, encompassing over 130,000 students providing courses ranging from ESOL to Level 6 qualifications and apprenticeships.

What has been achieved so far?

The partnership received £6.7 million between November 2023 and March 2025 through the DfE Local Skills Improvement Fund. To align with the Central London LSIP, the funding was focused on projects improving green and digital skills provision. In that time, Bridge has achieved:

- 59 new courses launched
- 800+ learner starts on new courses
- 4,000+ learners using new facilities/equipment
- 33 employers co-developing provision
- £800k return of investment delivered by January 2025

In 2024/25 Bridge officially launched as a partnership with branding and a [website](#) containing information about the colleges and LSIF funded projects available. CLF supported Bridge in promoting the partnership through stakeholder networks.

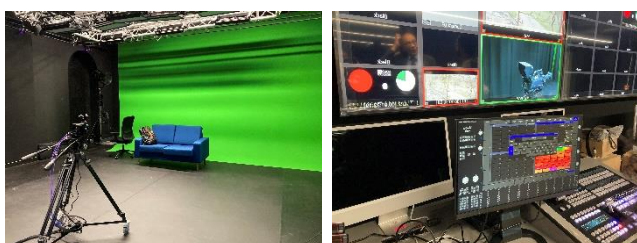
Also this year, the partnership has launched innovative Central resources such as the Green Skills Digital Campus, sustainability toolkits, and video production courses for educators. The initiative has resulted in significant outcomes including new course development, staff training and enhanced employer collaboration.

In March 2025, Bridge launched its Employer Advisory Group to strengthen ties between FE and employers, helping colleges align their offer with industry needs. The group aims to facilitate greater employer involvement in curriculum development and create more opportunities for work placements and career pathways.

Case Study: Capital City College – Mosaic@Soho

Opened in January 2025, Mosaic@Soho is Capital City College's Creative and Digital Media Centre, located in London's Soho. Backed by the Bridge LSIF Partnership, the centre features cutting-edge facilities that support hybrid learning, industry-standard production, and hands-on technical education, including:

- Virtual Production Suite
- Games Design Lab
- Green Screen Studio
- Multi-camera TV Studio
- Podcast Studio



LSIF funding enabled key infrastructure, including cloud services and specialist hardware, enhancing teaching and learner outcomes. Strong employer engagement allows students to work on live briefs and build real-world experience. Mosaic@Soho serves as a creative hub for education, industry, and community, equipping learners with the skills, confidence, and connections needed to thrive in the digital and creative sectors.

What still needs to be achieved?

CLF will now focus on supporting Bridge to fully realise the potential of the new courses and resources as well as ensuring the partnership continues to function following the discontinuation of the LSIF programme.

Between April and September 2025, CLF will be providing a contribution to Bridge to part-fund a full-time officer who can lead the partnership. The project lead will focus on maintaining the productive network created by Bridge, ensuring FE providers in Central London can continue to share resources and best practice as well as making sure the partnership is in a position to organise joint bids for any future funding when it may arise.

A key aspect of this will be developing the Employer Advisory Group, which held its first meeting in May 2025 and will be holding its second in July. CLF and Bridge will work together to use this forum to identify issues facing green and digital skills provision with a view to addressing these through collaboration between employers and colleges.

Promoting inclusive career pathways in growth sectors

Actions: Employer engagement, career mapping

Themes: Tackling labour market inequalities, supporting the transition to net zero

What has been achieved so far?

This year CLF has focussed on the growing life sciences sector, with Central London being home to multiple emerging clusters of life sciences employers. In 2024/25, CLF has worked with the Inclusive Health and Life Sciences Coalition (IHLS), a partnership of eight CLF boroughs, to promote inclusive pathways into the growing sector.

In October 2024, CLF part-funded an event aiming to ‘demystify life sciences careers’ and highlight the work that had been going on around the sub-region to create and promote opportunities in the sector. This included new apprenticeship pilots, engagement with primary schools on STEM and a competition held by a local college in which young people created TikTok videos promoting STEM careers.

In March 2025, CLF organised a panel on the same topic at the London Employment and Skills Summit held by Business LDN. This gave the IHLS coalition the opportunity to promote their work to senior leaders from business, education and London government.

CLF has also been working with partners at the GLA and London Councils to map jobs update the ‘Low Carbon and Environmental Goods and Services’ (LCEGS) dataset. The update will provide in-depth data at a regional, sub-regional and borough level for the growing green economy, helping to tailor skills provision to local needs. This year, CLF has provided funding and offered strategic guidance for the scope of the project.

What still needs to be achieved?

CLF is continuing to seek opportunities to collaborate with the IHLS coalition and promote the variety of activities ongoing to create accessible routes into life sciences and STEM careers. CLF has also committed in its [2024-26 strategy](#) to looking to expand this workstream into other growth sectors such as green finance.

CLF is also working in partnership with the GLA and London Councils to deliver the LCEGS dataset update. With the project currently in the final procurement stages, CLF will be supporting in assessing bids from private partners. Once completed, CLF will work with boroughs and skills providers to tailor green skills provision to the findings of the dataset.

Priorities and actions (Roadmap):

A summary of the key actions undertaken to address priorities identified in *Meeting Central London's Skills Needs*

Priority: Sector and actionable priority	Activity	Partners involved	Timescales	Method of implementation and outcomes expected	Monitoring arrangements	Progress status
Priority: updating provision Action: reviewing provision	Utilising CLF stakeholder networks to shape and influence two major regional skills strategies: GLA's Inclusive Talent Strategy (ITS) and the next stage of the LSIP.	CLF, local authorities, employers, FE providers, GLA, London Councils, Business LDN	April 2025 – October 2025	<p>Engaging with GLA and London Councils on Inclusive Talent Strategy through Employment and Skills Board and Skills Officer Group, allowing boroughs and other stakeholders to feed into strategy.</p> <p>LSIP – using all available skills networks as forums to discuss priorities for next LSIP stage.</p> <p>Expected outcome would be the skills needs of Central London employers, residents and boroughs being reflected in both strategies London-wide strategies and sub-region LSIP priorities with support and sign off from member boroughs.</p>	<p>ITS – regular engagement with GLA and London Councils to ensure CLF priorities are being reflected in ITS.</p> <p>LSIP – regular meetings with Business LDN to feedback priorities of CLF stakeholders and internal engagement log for Central London LSIP development.</p>	Progress underway
Priority: updating provision	Aligning s106 practices for providing apprenticeships across CLF boroughs in order to overcome current obstacles in construction sector.	CLF, local authorities, employers	Potential 2/3 year pilot programme	Project facilitated through CLF Construction Skills Group (CSG) which contains decision-making s106 leads from CLF boroughs.	Once agreement is reached between boroughs and selected developer, CLF skills lead will develop monitoring framework for project involving reporting	Progress underway

Action: reviewing provision	<p>Facilitating apprenticeship migration between boroughs to improve retention.</p> <p>Sharing effective s106 clauses to create single best practice s106 agreement template for Central London.</p>			<p>Apprenticeship migration aiming to be launched through pilot involving 3-4 CLF boroughs. Participating boroughs will agree with a single large developer to allow apprenticeship to move between sites in different boroughs and allow those to be counted to s106 target starts. Timeframe and start date yet to be agreed. Target outcome would be cohort of apprentices completing their qualification at multiple sites crossing borough boundaries.</p> <p>CSG will provide forum for sharing effective s106 clauses from borough which will be collated into a single best practice template.</p>	<p>from boroughs and developer.</p> <p>CLF skills officer will create list of desired clauses from boroughs and template for best practice s106 document.</p>	
Theme: Supporting transition to net-zero Priority: Updating provision	<p>Bridge Skills Partnership focussed LSIF funding on two areas – green and digital.</p> <p>Bridge has launched 8 green projects with member colleges. Projects included funding new retrofit labs, carbon literacy courses, a new Green Skills Innovation Centre and upgrading equipment to industry standard.</p>	FE providers, employers	August 2023 – March 2025	<p>Bridge supported member colleges to bid for LSIF funding for specific projects aiming to improve green skills provision and address skills gaps for employers.</p> <p>CLF supports Bridge by promoting these projects through stakeholder networks to drive, connecting colleges with employers, local authorities and other providers.</p>	Bridge skills partnership will monitor starts, completions and ROI for each LSIF funded project	On track

	Bridge used LSIF to create a ‘Green Skills Digital Campus’ – a virtual resource than can be used by providers to promote sustainable construction careers.					
Sector: Information and Communication Priority: Embedding digital skills Action: Sector-specific digital skills	<p>Bridge has launched 12 digital projects across member boroughs. These projects include funding media production equipment, multiple new digital hubs and immersive learning technology.</p> <p>Bridge also created shared resources relating to video production for colleges and students to use to upskill.</p>	FE providers, employers	August 2023 – March 2025	<p>Bridge supported member colleges to bid for LSIF funding for specific projects aiming to improve digital skills provision and address skills gaps for employers.</p> <p>CLF supports Bridge by promoting these projects through stakeholder networks, connecting colleges with employers, local authorities and other providers.</p>	Bridge skills partnership will monitor starts, completions and ROI for each LSIF funded project	On track
Priority: Employer engagement Action: Convening employers and providers	With CLF support, Bridge launched an ‘Employer Advisory Group’ (EAG) to strengthen ties between FE and employers, helping colleges align their offer with industry needs. The group aims to facilitate greater employer involvement in curriculum development and create more opportunities for work placements and career pathways.	CLF, FE providers, employers	March 2025 – March 2026 (review)	<p>CLF supported Bridge in developing the EAG through strategic guidance as a member of the steering group and part-funding the launch event held in March 2025.</p> <p>The EAG will initially hold meetings to discuss challenges in green and digital skills provision, the first of which was held in May 2025.</p> <p>The aim of the EAG is to foster connections between employers</p>	CLF and Bridge will work together to monitor success any specific projects undertaken through collaboration between Bridge member colleges and employers arising through the EAG. Progress will be reviewed one year from launch in March 2026.	Progress underway

				and one or multiple colleges facilitating industry contribution to the contents, delivery and students outcomes in green and digital courses.		
Sector: Health and Social Care Priority: Career mapping Action: Establish career pathways	<p>Workwhile supported a cohort of apprentices in health and social care – an LSIP priority sector. The project supported 24 apprentices, the majority of the total apprenticeships supported by Workwhile through the LSIP.</p> <p>CLFis now providing further funding from April – September 2025 to support a further 30+ apprenticeships in health social care.</p>	Workwhile, employers, providers	August 2024 – September 2025	<p>Workwhile brings together employers and sector-specific training providers to support apprenticeships in target sectors. Workwhile then provides training to employers in managing and support apprentices internally through online sessions and the ‘developmentor’ programme. Workwhile also facilitates levy transfers from larger employers to SMEs to provide additional opportunities.</p> <p>The outcome expected is to support people into health and social care careers and improve employer practices for apprenticeships.</p>	Workwhile will provide regular updates on cohort progress and activity until end of September 2025.	On track/progress underway
Priority: Employer engagement Action: Information, advice and guidance	<p>Workwhile engaged with employers through 13 outreach events, reaching over 300 SMEs, and worked with training providers to support interested businesses.</p> <p>Workwhile also trained 40 local authority staff through tailored apprenticeship awareness sessions.</p>	Workwhile, employers, local authorities	April 2024 – March 2025	<p>Workwhile holds outreach sessions and training for a variety of employers as one of its main functions.</p> <p>CLF also arranged for Workwhile to deliver an LSIP funded webinar for micro-businesses and SMEs on apprenticeships.</p>	CLF will arrange regular meetings with Workwhile to discuss any additional events and outreach being undertaken.	On track/completed?

				These sessions aim to support employers in taking on and supporting apprentices as well as navigate the administrative side of the apprenticeship levy and levy transfers.		
Priority: Employer engagement Action: Convening employers and providers	<p>Central London Careers Hub now has a network of over 200 education institutions and 400 professional volunteers from employers.</p> <p>The Hub utilises this network to bring together schools and employers for events, programmes and producing resources to help map career pathways and improve careers education in Central London.</p> <p>This year the Hub has launched the 'Teacher Encounters' scheme, Industry Advisory groups and 10 sector specific step-in guides.</p>	Central London Careers Hub , schools, employers	Ongoing	<p>Central London Careers Hub engages with professional volunteers through a tiered system dictated by how much time the employer is able to give. The Hub uses connections with these employers to host events, facilitate industry placements for teachers and gain insights for careers education resources.</p> <p>CLF connects the Hub to member boroughs in order to reach schools not yet part of the network.</p>	Regular meetings between Hub and CLF to report ongoing activities and events.	On track
Theme: Tackling labour market inequalities Priority: Updating provision	<p>Central London Careers Hub focussed events and programmes on SEND, RONI, and neurodivergent students. In November 2024, 125 employers and educators attended its SEND conference.</p> <p>It also funded schools to take part in the 'Autism Reality Experience'</p>	Central London Careers Hub, schools, employers	April 2024 – March 2025	The Hub uses its network of employers and schools to host events on specific topics, promoting inclusive pathways for specific cohorts and uses its funding to support schools to engage with other organisations delivering similar programmes.	Central London Careers Hub monitors engagement with events and programmes and share information with CLF during regular meetings.	On track

	and SEND/RONI-focused Face Front Theatre workshops.			This work aims to highlight the opportunities available to SEND and neurodiverse students in multiple sectors, helping support them into careers and tackle labour market inequality.		
Theme: Tackling labour market inequalities Priority: Career mapping Action: Sector-based campaigns	<p>In 2024/25, CLF partnered with the Inclusive Health and Life Sciences Coalition (IHLS) to promote inclusive career pathways in the sector.</p> <p>CLF supported an October 2024 event to raise awareness of life sciences careers, including apprenticeships, STEM engagement in schools, and a youth TikTok competition. In March 2025, CLF organized a panel at the London Employment and Skills Summit to showcase IHLS's work to senior leaders.</p>	CLF, local authorities, providers, schools, employers	October 2024 - ongoing	<p>CLF contributed LSIP funds to the Life Sciences careers event held in October 2024 and facilitated the IHLS Coalition panel at the employment and skills summit.</p> <p>Future collaboration will aim to create new, and promote existing, inclusive pathways into life sciences and STEM careers.</p>	CLF will arrange regular IHLS coalition leads in order to discuss future engagement opportunities.	Progress underway
Theme: Supporting transition to net-zero Priority: Updating provision Action:	Updating the 'Low Carbon and Environmental Good and Services' (LCEGS) dataset which provides regional, sub-regional and borough data for green industries in London. This data will be used to target green skills provision.	CLF, GLA, London Councils	June 2023 – July 2025	CLF, GLA and London Councils have collaborated to finalise specifications of contract. Procurement process began May 2025 and partners will jointly assess bids from private partners.	As project leads, GLA will monitor the delivery of the project, supported by CLF and London Partners, following completion of the procurement stage and project initiation in July 2025.	Progress underway