Our skills framework Phase 2 until 2030

Our skills plan for now and the future

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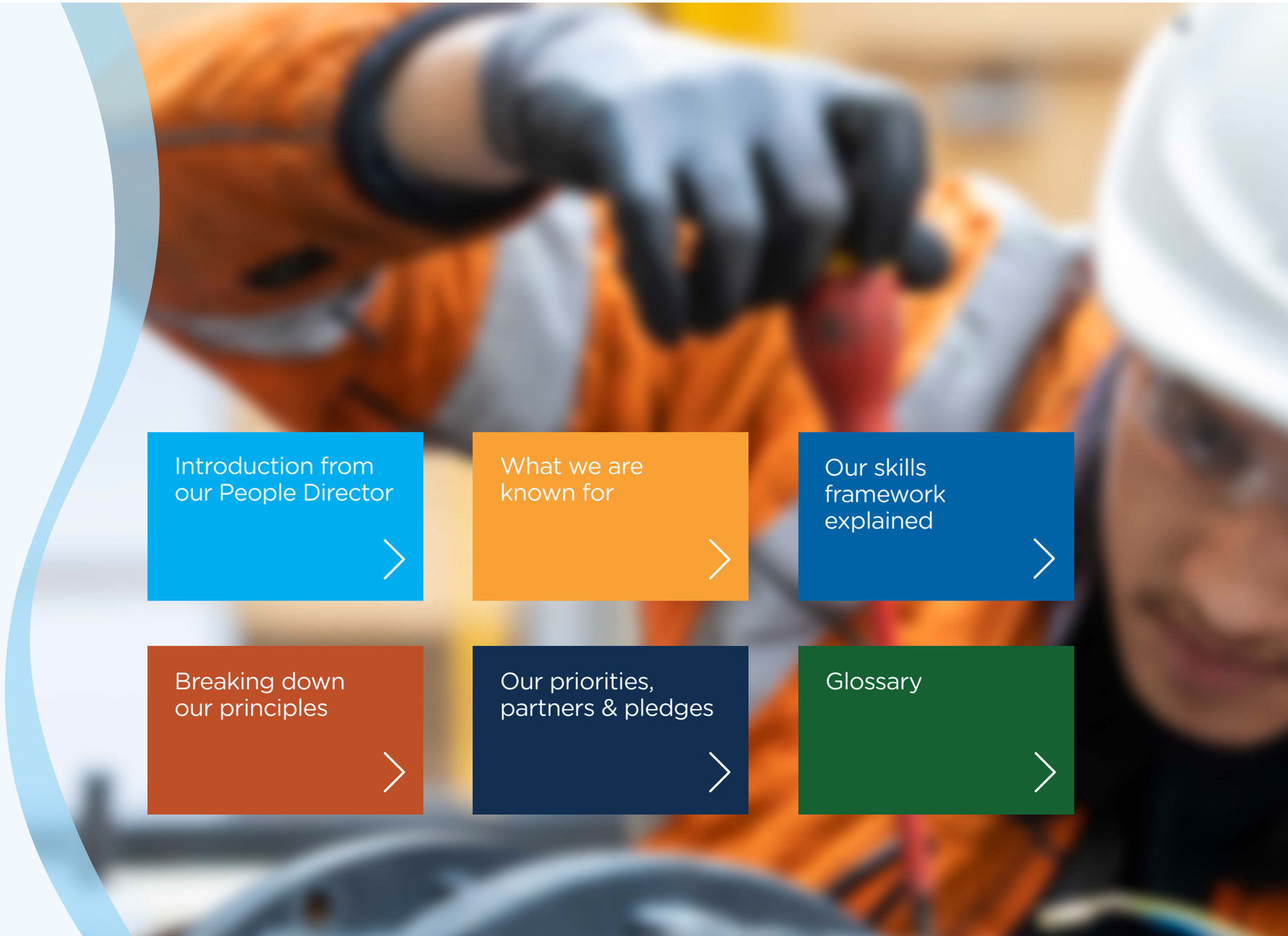

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Foreword from Catherine Green, People Director

AMP8 sees the biggest ever investment in the water industry which brings exciting opportunities for our colleagues and places increasing importance on our skills framework. Thames Water must be well placed to attract and develop the high calibre individuals we need to deliver our stretching commitments to our customers and the environment.

Since launching our skills framework in 2021, it has proven to be a vital business imperative, enabling us to access untapped talent and address key skills challenges. Together, we've achieved incredible outcomes: in AMP7 over 550 individuals from underrepresented groups, including care leavers, prison leavers, refugees, survivors of domestic abuse, people aged 50+, youth including ethnic diverse young people and those experiencing homelessness, disabled and neurodiverse people and Armed Forces leavers have secured sustained employment with Thames Water. We've strengthened our connections with local communities and partners, growing our apprenticeship offer from 3 to 34 pathways, introducing T Levels, summer internships, and supported internships, and re launching the engineering graduate programmes to shape the future of our workforce.

With the biggest investment in this AMP period, our skills framework continues to build on our successes and the foundations we have set. The core pillars of our approach remain unchanged:

1. Improving workforce diversity by building a robust pipeline of skills from local communities and the education sector.
2. Creating careers, not just jobs, by investing in our people and fostering a culture of lifelong learning.
3. Establishing sustainable strategic skills partnerships to strengthen our workforce and industry connections.
4. Taking a leading position within our industry and supply chain on skills development.

Through these pillars, we have driven meaningful social change, empowering individuals, promoting inclusion, and addressing critical skills challenges. Underpinning these pillars are three critical enablers: creating a strong and supportive structure to deliver our framework effectively; embedding a long-term view of skills through strategic workforce planning; and equipping our leaders with the skills, knowledge, and behaviours they need to succeed.
These elements ensure our framework is not only ambitious but also actionable and resilient.

None of this would have been possible without the dedication of our people, stakeholders, supply chain partners, and external collaborators. I am deeply grateful for your passion, enthusiasm, and contributions to this journey.

As we move forward, we remain confident in our ambition to shape a skilled, inclusive, and diverse workforce, one that not only fuels personal and business growth but also ensures Thames Water continues to play a pivotal role in building skills for today and tomorrow.

Thank you for your continued partnership as we bring this agenda to life.

Catherine Green
People Director

What we are known for and want to continue building on

It's up to us to engage our people and make sure our business reflects the diversity of the local communities we serve.

> "Bridging our skills gap is a business imperative, enabling us to drive social value while supporting our diverse communities and empowering untapped talent."
>
> Catherine Green
> *People Director*

At Thames Water, we see our **skills framework as a business imperative**. A vital way to bridge the skills gap while bringing local, untapped talent into our business. This isn't just an ambition; it's a commitment we've already turned into action, achieving tangible results by aligning with key initiatives and signing up to meaningful covenants.

Our success has been driven by the strong partnerships we've built, which have been instrumental in helping us deliver on our goals. Through collaborations such as the Care Leavers Covenant, Homelessness Alliance (Crisis), Ban the Box, the Tent Partnership for Refugees, NEET Step into Employment, Sector Work-Based Academies with the Department for Work and Pensions, Women into STEM, 50+, Armed Forces and Young Black Men initiatives, we have supported individuals from diverse backgrounds into sustained employment with us. These partnerships have amplified our impact and allowed us to make a real difference in the communities we serve.

Additionally, we are proud of the work of our dedicated Employment & Skills Team, whose efforts have been instrumental in embedding this strategy into our business-as-usual recruitment processes. This integration ensures that the principles of our skills framework are not just one-off initiatives but a lasting part of how we attract, develop, and retain talent.

Our skills framework aims to unite and build upon these successes. We want to further strengthen our approach, making Thames Water a leader in fostering benefits for our communities through inclusive hiring practices, development of skills and sustainable careers that nurture talent for the future.

By 2030, we aim to:

- Close the skills gap even further by continuing to target untapped talent and developing our workforce.
- Strengthen and expand our pipeline of core skills to meet long-term business needs.
- Deliver on and exceed public value commitments, leveraging our partnerships to create even greater impact.
- Enhance socioeconomic diversity through our continued focus on inclusion and targeted initiatives.
- Deepen engagement with local communities, ensuring they benefit from skills development and job opportunities.
- Drive local economic growth by fostering partnerships and developing local talent for sustainable careers.

Our skills framework explained

We've designed this skills framework carefully to help us prepare the core skills pipeline we need for today and tomorrow. This will ultimately support us all in meeting our Purpose: to deliver life's essential service, so our customers, communities and environment can thrive.

Principle 1

Improve the diversity of our workforce by building a pipeline of skills from local communities and the education sector

This will help us to...

- Increase productivity
- Increase people performance
- Reduce recruitment costs
- Promote socioeconomic diversity
- Support the development of skills for critical roles, including STEM and digital

Principle 2

Create careers, not just jobs, by investing in our people and fostering a culture of lifelong learning

This will help us to...

- Increase employee engagement
- Invest in functional training to strengthen our skills base
- Build an experienced and flexible workforce
- Help us spend our Growth and Skills Levy more effectively
- Empower our experienced workforce to educate future generations

Principle 3

Establish sustainable strategic skills partnerships

This will help us to...

- Gain more influence to achieve our goals
- Provide significant benefits and cost savings across the business
- Support local and national economies
- Build a positive brand association with Thames Water as an inclusive employer offering employability support

Principle 4

Adopt a leading position in the industry and with our supply chain on the development of skills

This will help us to...

- Build our reputation
- Launch and deliver the Infrastructure strategic skills forum
- Demonstrate our positive impact on economic prosperity to the government and local authorities
- Pioneer education initiatives
- Share our expertise by chairing and contributing to government and the GLA

Our principles will be underpinned by three core pillars:

1. Creating a strong support structure to deliver our agenda
2. Creating a long-term view of skills through strategic workforce planning
3. Equipping our leaders with the skills, knowledge and behaviours they need to be effective

Breaking down our principles

Principle 1

Improve the diversity of our workforce by building a pipeline of skills from local communities and the education sector

The background

The UK continues to face significant skill shortages across various sectors, exacerbated by ongoing challenges in recruitment. As industries adapt to the changing economic and technological landscape, addressing these shortages has become a critical priority for sustainable growth.

In November 2024, the Get Britain Working White Paper further highlighted the need to address economic inactivity, particularly among individuals with health conditions, caring responsibilities, or lower skill levels. It outlines the government's commitment to achieving an 80% employment rate, which would make the UK one of the highest-performing countries globally in terms of employment.

At Thames Water, we are committed to playing our part in this national effort, but more importantly, to delivering on our own ambitions. Representing the communities we serve is not just a value we hold; it is a business imperative. As we prepare to deliver our AMP8 investment programme, bridging the skills gap is critical.

With ongoing government reforms and our own transformation agenda, we see a clear opportunity to align national priorities with our local impact, empowering individuals, enriching our workforce, and ensuring we are equipped to deliver for the future.

Where we are today

Since the launch of Thames Water's skills framework in 2021, we have made significant strides in creating an inclusive workforce by focusing on bridging the skills gap through the recruitment of untapped talent from local communities.

We've seen tangible results from these efforts. Not only have we recruited individuals who have remained in the business and progressed in their careers, but we've also established a strong, sustainable talent pipeline for the future. Programmes like Roots to Reading have helped refugees improve business English and gain access to employment, with many securing roles at Thames Water or elsewhere.

Our Summer Internship Programme has supported diverse young talent, with 40% transitioning into permanent roles. We've embedded inclusive practices such as redacted CVs and a Guaranteed Interview Scheme for underrepresented groups, helping reduce bias and widen access.

Collaborations with Jobcentre Plus and other specialist referral organisations further strengthen our local talent pipeline.

These initiatives have helped us address skills gaps, deliver social impact, and build a workforce that better reflects our communities.

Principle 1

Opportunity

To build a future-ready skills pipeline, we must continue to focus on what's working, engaging with underrepresented groups, removing barriers to employment, and creating real opportunities for people in our local communities.

Our priority is to deepen our impact through inclusive hiring practices, targeted community programmes, and partnerships that help us reach untapped talent. This is not only the right thing to do, it's a business imperative. To deliver our AMP8 investment programme, we need to secure the right skills in the right places, and that means attracting people who may not have previously seen Thames Water as a place for them.

We've already seen the benefits of this approach. Now is the time to embed and scale these efforts, ensuring they become part of how we do business every day.

Did you know?

the unemployment rate for disabled people (5.9%) is just under double the unemployment rate for non-disabled people (3.2%)

Key actions we can take

- Help those furthest from the labour market access high-quality jobs and training opportunities.
- Continue to run tailored programmes and build a pipeline of skills from local communities by engaging with and supporting underrepresented groups and expanding access to employment opportunities.
- Tailor our interventions to boost the skills of future generations.
- Continue to offer our Summer Internship Programme and expand this offering to include 9 to 12-month industry internship placements.
- Continue to build and grow supported internships to offer individuals with additional support needs a pathway into employment.
- Engage with the 'untapped talent' to widen diversity within the workplace.
- Focus on neurodiversity to support real gaps we experience in niche areas.

Principle 1

Continue to build on what works

- Continue to support technical education reforms, including T-levels for 16 to 19-year-olds, to help young people develop the knowledge, attitude and practical skills needed to thrive in the workplace.
- Expanding our Summer Internship Programme and exploring longer-term placements to build a pipeline in key disciplines.
- Growing supported internships and pre-employment training to help individuals facing barriers into work.
- Running community-based employability programmes like Roots to Reading and Step into Employment.
- Partnering with Job Centre Plus to support local talent.
- Ensuring inclusive recruitment practices remain embedded — including redacted CVs, diverse shortlists, and inclusion training for hiring managers.
- Reviewing and refining our candidate priority groups and setting clear targets for outreach and support.
- Developing a community strategy that aligns with our workforce needs and strengthens our local talent pipeline.
- Build robust strategic workforce renewals plans to inform pipelining efforts based on business need.

Looking ahead

As we plan for the future, we will explore opportunities to:

- Enhance our engagement with schools and colleges in a more targeted way, aligned to our business needs and capacity.
- Investigate mentoring programmes to support untapped talent.
- Explore partnerships with organisations that can help us deliver industry learning experiences and career awareness.
- Assess the potential for a Thames Water learning offer that brings together further education, community programmes, and internal development pathways.
- Strengthen our community investment fund to support charities that help develop employability skills and connect people to real job opportunities.

Breaking down our principles

Principle 2

Create careers, not just jobs, by investing in our people and fostering a culture of lifelong learning

The background

Investing in home-grown talent is central to our people strategy. We recognise that not everyone has equal access to skill development due to barriers like financial pressures or limited opportunities. By removing these barriers and offering clear career paths, we aim to boost confidence, morale, and performance across Team Thames.

As our business evolves, so must our people. Apprenticeships and graduate schemes are vital for bringing in new talent and upskilling our workforce. National reforms, including the Growth and Skills Levy and the creation of Skills England, will further support tailored training aligned to future demand.

Did you know

our apprenticeship success rates are

23% higher

than the national average

Principle 2

Where we are today

Our apprenticeship programme

We've grown our apprenticeship programmes from 3 to 43 pathways, increasing annual starts from 15 to around 100. Our levy spend has risen by 60%, enabling internal and external training, including gifting to community providers. Success rates are 23% above the national average, and the scheme now supports both new hires and existing employees, including shared apprenticeships across our supply chain.

Our graduate programme

Focused on engineering and IMechE-accredited, our graduate scheme aligns with apprenticeships to create seamless career progression. We prioritise diversity and equal opportunity across both routes to build a talent pool that reflects our communities.

Training and development

We have invested in our colleagues through the apprenticeship programme, providing opportunities for upskilling and reskilling. As part of expanding our apprenticeship offering, we also ensure that existing employees have access to these opportunities to help them progress in their careers. For AMP8, we plan to further invest in our Learning and Development provision across the business, with a focus on foundational, functional, manager capability and leadership development.

The opportunity

We're building a culture of lifelong learning that supports career progression and improves quality of life. By expanding apprenticeships and gifting our levy, we're tackling local skills shortages, supporting community growth, and strengthening our recruitment pipeline, all while developing future leaders and maintaining high engagement and retention.

Key actions we can take

Principle 2

Continue to build on what works

- Continue to review and refine our apprenticeship and graduate offer to support early career talent, ensuring opportunities span from Level 2 to degree level.
- Use technical and leadership apprenticeships to invest in the development of existing colleagues, supporting long-term career growth and strengthen our internal talent pipeline across a variety of levels.
- Continue to offer apprenticeship, graduate, and career impact programmes that build our alumni network and help fill future vacancies.
- Continue to utilise the Apprenticeship Ambassador Network to promote opportunities and share success stories.
- Enhance our mentorship programme to support personal development across the business.
- Engage with the business to understand current and future needs, and invest in foundational training to build commercial resilience and core capability.
- Use leadership and management programmes, including our Personal Leadership Development and Living Leader initiatives, to strengthen leadership capability across the business.
- Provide functional skills training tailored to business areas to ensure colleagues are confident and competent in their roles.

Looking ahead

- Enhance our training provision to remove barriers to learning, including support for maths, digital skills, and special educational needs (SEN).
- Explore new accreditation and upskilling opportunities to unlock untapped talent across the business.
- Engage with the Skills Builder Framework to inform the design of training, apprenticeship, graduate, and mentorship programmes.
- Ensure our apprenticeship and early careers pipeline is aligned to future skills needs and supports long-term workforce planning.

Breaking down our principles

Principle 3

Establish sustainable strategic skills partnerships

The background

Employer feedback shows just how many young people leaving education aren't equipped with the skills they need to successfully enter the workplace.

There are many initiatives to bridge the gap between education and industry, but with so much choice, it can be hard to know what's best. In addition, all of these initiatives put demands on employer's time as well as resources. This means many employers struggle to engage with younger people. They also lack a presence in further and higher education, which only widens the divide.

While many community organisations are now providing employability training to tackle this situation, there's still a limited pipeline into employment. This means we're stuck in a vicious circle.

The government's national youth strategy including their youth guarantee initiative and the introduction of T-levels now requires employers to take an active role in engaging with the education sector.

With London still experiencing pockets of deprivation, worklessness and underemployment, we need to work closely with the GLA and their new Inclusive Talent Strategy as well as educational, community and business organisations across the capital to provide more opportunities for younger people.

Given these challenges, it is crucial to build strategic partnerships with local organisations that have access to untapped talent. These collaborations are critical in building a pipeline of skilled individuals, particularly in areas such as STEM and digital, which are in high demand.

Where we are today

Since launching our skills framework, we have built meaningful relationships and partnerships with organisations that support underrepresented groups, such as young Black men, disabled individuals, refugees, care leavers, prison leavers and those at risk of re-offending, Armed Forces leavers and the long-term unemployed. These partnerships, including those with the Department for Work and Pensions, Drive Forward Foundation, Evenbreak, Working Chance, and Brighter Futures for Children, have allowed us to connect with diverse talent pools that may otherwise have been overlooked.

These collaborations have enabled us to attract candidates who bring unique skills and perspectives to Thames Water. For instance, our Summer Internship Programme, developed in partnership with organisations like 10,000 Black Interns Foundation and Drive Forward, has provided opportunities for diverse young talent. The programme has been a key success, with 40% of participants moving into permanent roles within our business. We aim to continue these partnerships and build on their successes.

Additionally, we have worked closely with Job Centre Plus and run sector work based academies to equip jobseekers with the skills and experience needed to join the water industry. These initiatives have not only strengthened our workforce but also contributed to a positive social impact by creating opportunities for sustained employment.

By building these partnerships and leveraging their expertise, we have created a more diverse and inclusive workforce that reflects the communities we serve, while ensuring a steady pipeline of talent to meet our future needs.

Key actions we can take

Principle 3

Continue to build on what works

- Strengthen strategic partnerships with Further and Higher Education to maintain and grow a sustainable pipeline of skills.
- Expand the use of these partnerships to offer apprenticeships from Level 2 to Level 7 across a broad range of disciplines for both internal colleagues and external recruits.
- Deepen engagement with local authorities, the Greater London Authority, and Local Enterprise Partnerships to align with the UK's wider skills agenda and identify shared priorities.
- Build on our partnership with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to further develop our skills pipeline.
- Collaborate with DWP to deliver flexible interventions that support reskilling and address skills gaps.
- Grow relationships with community organisations to co-design employability training that meets both industry standards and internal needs.
- Identify and expand support for priority groups through targeted upskilling, mentorship, and tailored development opportunities.
- Maintain and enhance collaboration with University Technical Colleges to support the education and progression of young people.
- Embed our partnership with the Institute of Technology to strengthen the engineering talent pipeline.
- Collaborate across industries to shape and support trailblazer apprenticeships and the rollout of T-levels.
- Engage with Skills England to understand the implications of the new Growth & Skills levy and its impact on our business.

Looking ahead

- Work with the UK's national careers team to better align business needs with educational pathways and support a more joined-up approach between industry and education.
- Engage with the Further Education (FE) and Higher Education (HE) sectors in a more targeted way to support underrepresented groups and improve access to career opportunities.
- Explore opportunities to further grow and diversify our strategic partnerships to meet evolving business and workforce needs.

> "We at DWP are only too proud to be working closely with Thames Water, given their ongoing work for our welfare to work agenda, as well as their huge commitment to supporting all our Social Value/ Impact Initiatives such as our work on Covenants/ Alliances for our disadvantaged customers. Their community initiatives are changing lives for the better, and their partnership work with our network of Jobcentres is positively impacting those needing employability and skills support."
>
> Tony Hyland MBE
> *Partnership and Stakeholder Relationship Manager | Department for Work and Pensions*

Breaking down our principles

Principle 4

Adopt a leading position in the industry and with our supply chain on the development of skills

The background

The UK national skills shortage is a shared responsibility for our government and industries, but too often solutions are created in isolation with no joined-up approach or collaboration.

The skills gap is hindering the growth of our industry and our people, and we need to step up and take charge to make change happen.

By taking a leadership role and encouraging collaboration within our industry, we can begin to remove barriers to employment and make sure all people are afforded the same opportunity to succeed.

Over the past four years, we have established and successfully delivered our Skills Framework, despite limited resources and a challenging business environment. This achievement demonstrates what can be accomplished with determination and focus. If we can deliver impactful results in these circumstances, other organisations in more advantageous positions should be inspired to follow suit and amplify their efforts to tackle the skills gap.

Where we are today

Over the last four years, we have built strategic partnerships across our extensive geographic footprint, working with higher and further education institutions, training providers, local authorities, charities, Job Centre Plus, and more. These partnerships have been instrumental in bridging our skills gap while delivering social value to the communities we serve.

By creating and nurturing these relationships, we have successfully embedded many elements of our skills framework into business-as-usual practices, and these collaborations will continue to play a vital role in delivering our goals for the future.

As part of our leadership role in addressing the skills gap, we have and continue to actively participate in employer boards, industry groups and panels. These platforms have allowed us to showcase best practices, share practical tools and tips, and advise other businesses on effective strategies, while also learning from others to refine our own approach. By speaking at conferences and joining collaborative panels, we have demonstrated how our work can drive meaningful change. We remain committed to this vital activity, believing that collaboration and knowledge-sharing are essential to engaging more businesses and supporting their success in tackling the skills gap.

The opportunity

We want to be best-in-class for driving economic prosperity and boosting diversity. This means working closely with our partners on a clear agenda for change and establishing a collaborative way to create learning opportunities for people across the industry.

Our next area of focus will be ensuring we take a leadership position with our supply chain, championing responsible employment practices and driving innovation in skills development. By leading the way on key initiatives, we aim to set a benchmark for the industry.

We can also use our position as the UK's largest water provider to tackle critical societal issues, including unemployment, underemployment, and in-work poverty, and to lobby for practices that create long-term, meaningful change.

Key actions we can take

Principle 4

Continue to build on what works

- Launch the Infrastructure Strategic Skills Forum across our supply chain, to address collective skills gaps, build a diverse local talent pipeline, and promote responsible employment practices across the industry.
- Expand our shared apprenticeship scheme across the supply chain, focusing on hard-to-fill disciplines and future workforce needs.
- Champion equity, diversity, and inclusion across our supply chain and wider industry, building on our position as a Disability Confident Employer.
- Encourage supply chain partners to engage with local education providers and community organisations to support outreach and education initiatives.
- Lead collaborative efforts with sector skills councils and Skills England to shape trailblazer apprenticeships and influence national skills policy.
- Promote inclusive employment by supporting individuals facing barriers to access and progression.
- Raise awareness of in-work poverty and advocate for essential skills, sustainable development goals, and reskilling opportunities.
- Lead by example on employment covenants and encourage other businesses to adopt responsible practices.
- Pilot new initiatives such as T-levels and share learnings through case studies to support wider sector adoption.
- Share expertise through industry skills boards and cross-sector forums to influence education and employment strategies.
- Support industry-led initiatives and co-develop pilot projects with sector partners to drive innovation in skills development.
- Build strategic partnerships that align with government priorities and contribute to national skills goals.
- Coordinate responses to policy changes affecting education, employment, and skills to ensure our voice is represented.
- Share our apprenticeship levy to support small and medium-sized enterprises within our supply chain.
- Consider wider partnerships especially within the supply chain when building strategic workforce renewals plans.
- Collaborate with industry and regulatory stakeholders to shape national skills policy, influence training standards, and ensure our workforce development aligns with sector expectations and future capability needs.

Looking ahead

- Become a cornerstone employer with The Careers & Enterprise Company to support national careers engagement.
- Share best practice across the sector and wider industry to help others replicate successful approaches.
- Explore new opportunities to expand strategic partnerships that support inclusive growth and skills development.

Our priorities, partners and pledges

We are alway building and evolving our partnerships and prioritiy groups. Here is a snapshot of where we are now

Community priorities

- Armed services leavers
- Ethnically diverse communities
- Career returners
- Care leavers and those in care
- Carers
- Disabled people and those with long term health conditions
- Domestic abuse survivors
- Homeless people and those at risk of homelessness
- LGBTQ+ community
- Lone parents
- Long-term unemployed and those at risk of long-term unemployment
- Neurodiverse people
- Older members of the community
- Prison leavers and those at risk of re offending
- Refugees
- Women into STEM
- Young Black Men
- Youth incl. NEETs

Partners

- 5% Club
- 10,000 Black Interns
- Ambitious About Autism
- Apprenticeship Ambassador Network
- Brighter Futures for Children
- Business in the Community
- Business London
- Carer Confident
- City & Guilds
- Chamber of Commerce
- Crisis
- Department for Work and Pensions
- Drive Forward
- Energy & Utilities Skills
- Evenbreak
- Forward Trust
- Further Education
- Greater London Authority
- Higher Education
- Inclusive Employers
- Industry Skills Board
- Institutes of Technology
- Key4Life
- Local Enterprise Partnerships
- Living Wage Foundation
- Movement to Work
- New Futures Network
- Our supply chain
- Private providers
- Seetec
- Skills Builder Partnership
- Sustainability Academy
- Targeted schools / virtual schools
- TENT Partnership for Refugees
- The Careers & Enterprise Company
- University Technical College
- Working Chance
- Youth Futures Foundation

Pledges and covenants

- 5% Club
- 10,000 Black Interns
- Ambitious About Autism
- Armed Forces Covenant
- Ban the Box
- Care Leaver Covenant
- Co op apprenticeships pledge
- Disability Confident Employer
- Employers Domestic Abuse Covenant
- Homelessness Alliance
- Local authorities
- Race At Work Charter
- Social Mobility Foundation
- Social Mobility Pledge
- Sustainable Development Goals
- TENT Partnership for Refugees
- The Homelessness Alliance
- WISE (Women in Science and Engineering)
- Workwhile

Glossary

Abbreviation	Subject	Description
10,000 Black Interns	10,000 Black Interns	The 10,000 Black Interns campaign will help transform the horizons and prospects of young Black people in the United Kingdom by encouraging businesses to offer paid work experience placements to young black people.
5% Club	5% Club	The 5% Club is a movement of employers working to create a shared prosperity across the UK by campaigning for greater skills training through 'earn and learn' job opportunities. Members aim to place 5% of their workforce in 'earn and learn' positions within five years of joining the club.
Apprentices	Apprentices	An apprentice is an individual of any age who is placed onto an apprenticeship course for a fixed amount of time, learning a trade or service from an employer via practical work and study. They are employed to work on-site for a company while completing a part-time qualification and implementing these skills into their everyday work. Through their apprenticeship, they upskill, develop and increase their knowledge in a particular sector, working towards improving their career prospects and opportunities. They eventually tailor their skills and experience towards a career path in their chosen sector.
Apprenticeship	Apprenticeship	An apprenticeship combines practical training in employment with study and encourages individuals to 'earn while you learn'. Apprentices work alongside experienced colleagues to gain specific skills, knowledge and behaviours by combining work-based employment and training, of which 20% must be 'off the job'. This equates to approximately one day a week and will help individuals work towards obtaining job-specific skills and a nationally recognised qualification. There are various levels of apprenticeships, ranging from level 2 to 7 (level 2 being intermediate and 7 equating to master's degree level), all of which have different programme durations (from 12 months for a level 2 and up to 60 months for a level 7). Apprenticeships are nationally recognised training schemes and are listed on the government's 'find an apprenticeship' website. Suitable candidates must be 16 or over, with no upper age limit, and must be a resident in the UK or EU for the last three years.
Ban the Box	Ban the Box	Ban the Box is a campaign to increase opportunities for people with previous convictions to compete for jobs. The campaign is part of creating fair access to employment and encourages 'fair chance recruitment' practices by employers in the UK.
BiTC	Business in the Community	Business in the Community is a business community outreach charity promoting corporate social responsibility. As one of the Prince's Charities supported by King Charles III, BiTC works with companies across the UK and internationally who are committed to improving their impact on society.
CEC	The Careers & Enterprise Company	The Careers & Enterprise Company exists to facilitate a world-class careers education, inspiring and preparing young people for the world of work. Careers and enterprise education inspires, informs and immerses young people in the ever-changing world of work. CEC supports schools and colleges to deliver world-class careers education, responsive to individual pupil needs and underpinned by the internationally recognised Gatsby Career Benchmarks. They work with schools, colleges who are looking to enhance their careers provision and employers looking to inspire young people to join their industry.
CLC	Care Leaver Covenant	The Covenant is a promise made by private, public and voluntary organisations to provide support for care leavers aged 16-25 to help them to live independently. In July 2016, the government published 'Keep on Caring' to support young people from care to independence.
Community groups	Community groups	We partner with multiple organisations that support our communities in gaining skills, training and employability skills. These groups work with employers to drive social inclusion and make sure candidates are offered the some opportunities others cannot afford.
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions	The Department for Work and Pensions is responsible for welfare, pensions and child maintenance policy. As the UK's biggest public service department, it administers the State Pension and a range of working age, disability and ill health benefits to around 20 million claimants and customers.
EU Skills	Energy & Utility Skills	Energy & Utility Skills brings industry leaders together to identify and address the skills challenges our sector faces. They provide membership, assurance and skills solutions to help employers attract, develop and retain a sustainable, skilled workforce, ensuring the seamless delivery of essential services to 65 million people each day and UK industry. The UK-wide membership comprises major infrastructure companies within water, power, gas and waste management and their top tiers of delivery partners.

Abbreviation	Subject	Description
FE	Further Education	Further education is education below degree level for those people above school age. It includes any study after secondary education that's not part of higher education (i.e. not taken as part of an undergraduate or graduate degree). Courses range from basic English and maths to Higher National Diplomas (HNDs) and includes three types of technical qualifications for 16 to 19-year-olds: level 3 to specialise in a specific technical job; level 2 to help get employment or progress to another tech level; and applied general qualifications to continue general education at an advanced level through applied learning.
Gatsby Bench-marks	Gatsby Benchmarks	The Gatsby Benchmarks are a framework of eight guidelines that define the best careers provision in secondary schools. Every young person needs high-quality career guidance to make informed decisions about their future. The eight Gatsby benchmarks of Good Career Guidance are a stable careers programme; learning from career and labour market information; addressing the needs of each pupil; linking curriculum learning to careers; encounters with employers and employees; experiences of workplaces; encounters with further and higher education; and personal guidance.
Green jobs	Green jobs	Green jobs are jobs in businesses that produce goods or provide services that benefit the environment or conserve natural resources.
GWFA	Good work for all	Creating meaningful employment is one of the most significant ways businesses contribute to the livelihoods of individuals and communities and is for many the only sustainable route out of poverty. Offering quality experience of work, adopting new approaches to recruitment and breaking down barriers to work for people from disadvantaged groups can benefit business by tackling skills shortages, building new talent pipelines, boosting retention rates and achieving higher productivity.
HE	Higher Education	Higher education is third-level education after you leave school. It takes place at universities and further education colleges, normally includes undergraduate and postgraduate study, and usually results in a named degree, diploma or certificate of higher studies. Higher education also includes teacher-training schools, junior colleges and Institutes of Technology.
IAG	Information, Advice and Guidance	Information, advice and guidance activities help individuals gain information about opportunities open to them for learning or work as well as various issues such as housing, benefits, debt, childcare, health and so on.
ISSF	Infrastructure Strategic Skills Forum, an initiative where Thames Water, collaboratively address the critical skills gaps across our industry with our supply chain.	As we enter AMP 8 and beyond, it's clear that the challenges we face in building skills and workforce capability cannot be solved by any single organisation. That's why we're bringing together key partners to work collectively and take leadership in tackling these issues. The ISSF will focus on creating a diverse and sustainable talent pipeline while fostering innovation, inclusion, and community impact.
IFATE	Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education	The Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education is an employer-led, non-departmental public body. It oversees the development, approval and publication of apprenticeship standards and assessment plans as well as the occupational maps for T-levels and apprenticeships.
IoT	Institute of Technology	IoTs are collaborations between further education providers, universities and employers. They specialise in delivering higher technical education at levels 4 and 5 with a focus on STEM subjects.
JCP	Jobcentre Plus	Jobcentre Plus is part of the Department for Work and Pensions and acts as a working-age support service for the UK.
LEP	Local Enterprise Partnership	A Local Enterprise Partnership is a locally-owned partnership between local authorities and businesses. An LEP plays a central role in deciding local economic priorities, driving economic growth and creating local jobs. There are 38 LEPs currently operating within England, and each one is a member of the LEP Network. Board members include local leaders of industry (including SMEs), educational institutions and individuals from the public sector.
LWF	Living Wage Foundation	The Living Wage Foundation is a campaigning organisation that aims to persuade employers to pay a living wage. The organisation was established in 2011, publishes an annual Living Wage figure and accredits employers who pay the wage.
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training	This stands for Not in Education, Employment or Training and refers to a person who is unemployed and not receiving education or vocational training.
PET	Pre-employment training (PET)/ Employability training	This focuses on providing employability skills through a specific programme. PET targets those who have little employability and work-ready skills and helps improve opportunities to gain employment. Candidates receive training to be not just job-ready but also brand-ready as each programme is tailored to current vacancies. PET provides interview technique practice, confidence building activities and coaching on communication skills. Candidates also receive CV writing workshops and mock interviews, ensuring they're equipped for the world of work.

Abbreviation	Subject	Description
Pupil premium	Pupil premium	The pupil premium is a grant given by the government to schools in England to decrease the attainment gap for children disadvanted by income or family upheaval. Evidence shows that children from disadvantaged backgrounds generally face extra challenges in reaching their potential at school and often do not perform as well as their peers. For each pupil who is eligible for free school meals, the school receives funding. This allows schools to support disadvantaged pupils and improve their progress and exam results. Publicly-funded schools in England get extra funding from the government to help them improve the attainment of their disadvantaged pupils.
Returner	Returner	A returner is an individual who has previous work experience but has taken an extended break due to personal circumstances, such as caring responsibilities, and is now looking to return to work. Returners are economically inactive (not in work and not previously seeking work) and will have been so for at least one year.
SAS	Shared Apprenticeship Scheme (SAS)	An SAS is specially designed to support employers who wish to hire apprentices but may be unable to commit to employment for the duration of an apprenticeship. Through the SAS, employers commit to hosting an apprentice for a minimum of six months. This initiative works across Thames Water and its supply chain as well as a wide range of employers and organisations, supporting continued employment and enabling apprentices to complete their learning and achieve their qualifications. This also allows apprentices to experience different types of employers and learn about various aspects and views of customer and supplier, creating more rounded individuals.
SBF	The Skills Builder Framework	The Skills Builder Framework breaks down eight essential skills (listening, speaking, problem solving, creativity, staying positive, aiming high, leadership and teamwork) into 16 teachable and measurable steps. This can be used with children, young people and in industry to clarify what success looks like for each skill and to map out the trajectory for proficiency. SBF work to ensure that one day, everyone will have the essential skills, experiences and aspirations they need to succeed.
SE	Social exclusion	Social exclusion describes a state in which individuals are unable to participate fully in economic, social, political and cultural life, as well as the process leading to and sustaining such a state.
SED	Socioeconomic diversity	Socioeconomic background relates to a combination of an individual's income, occupation and social background. It's a key determinant of success and future life chances. Socioeconomic diversity is a mix of employees from different income levels, social backgrounds, and in some cases, racial and ethnic backgrounds.
SEND	Special educational needs and disabilities	All schools have a duty to be accessible and inclusive for the children within their community to ensure the best possible education. Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) can affect a child's or young person's ability to learn as well as their behaviour or ability to socialise; ability to understand things; concentration levels or physical ability.
SI	Social inclusion	Social inclusion is the process of improving the terms on which individuals and groups take part in society - improving the ability, opportunity and dignity of those disadvantaged on the basis of their identity.
SM	Social mobility	Social mobility is the link between a person's occupation or income and the occupation or income of their parents. When there's a strong link, there's a lower level of social mobility. When there's a weak link, there's a higher level of social mobility. It's the transition of hierarchy from social status and cultural status from a vertical movement up the ladder. In some cases, social mobility is intergenerational, and children attain a higher or lower status than their parents held.
SMF	Social Mobility Foundation	The Social Mobility Foundation is a charity that aims to practically improve social mobility for young people. It was founded in 2005 to provide opportunities and networks of support for 16-17 year olds who can't get them from their schools or families.
SMP	Social Mobility Pledge	Founded by former UK Cabinet Minister, Rt Hon. Justine Greening, and UK entrepreneur David Harrison, the Social Mobility Pledge represents a powerful and pioneering shift towards being a truly purpose-led organisation committed to social mobility. There are three key elements of the Pledge: outreach, access and recruitment. Taking steps to boost social mobility is more important than ever as we face a growing opportunity gap in the wake of COVID-19.
STEM	Science, technology, engineering and mathematics	STEM is an approach to learning and development that integrates the areas of science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Through STEM, students develop key skills like problem solving.
STEAM	Science, technology, engineering, art and mathematics	STEAM stands for science, technology, engineering, art and mathematics. An extension of STEM education, which was created in 2001, STEAM education adds art to the existing set of focus areas.
SWAP	Sector-based work academy program	The sector-based work academy programme (SWAP) helps businesses develop a skilled workforce. Sector-based work academies prepare those receiving unemployment benefits to apply for jobs in a different area of work. Placements are designed to help businesses meet immediate and future recruitment needs as well as recruit a workforce with the right skills to sustain and grow. A sector-based work academy can last up to six weeks. Placements include pre-employment training matched to business sector needs; a work experience placement to identify talent and cement knowledge and understanding; and a guaranteed job interview or help with an employer's recruitment process. An important feature of SWAP is that each sector-based work academy offers a flexible approach and can be adapted to meet the needs of a business. Placements are particularly useful for young people but are open to all jobseekers aged 18 upwards.

Abbreviation	Subject	Description
SWP	Strategic Workforce Planning	SWP is a comprehensive and structured approach to identifying the likely future labour and skills demands in the next 10 years, enabling businesses to align people strategies against requirements. SWP produces a comprehensive assessment of the workforce renewal challenges, including the nature and extent of current and future vacancies and the development of appropriate resourcing strategies to meet the predicted skills and workforce demands.
T- Levels	T-levels	T-levels are new courses that follow GCSEs and are equivalent to three A-levels. These two-year courses, which launched September 2020, have been developed in collaboration with employers and businesses so that the content meets the needs of industry and prepares students for work, further training or study. T-levels offer students a mixture of classroom learning and 'on-the-job' experience during an industry placement of at least 315 hours (approximately 45 days).
Team Thames	Team Thames	Team Thames refers to our diverse workforce across sites, offices and labs around London and the Thames Valley. Every individual who works directly for Thames Water as well as our valued contractors is considered to be part of Team Thames.
UTC	University Technical Colleges	University Technical Colleges are government-funded schools with a STEM focus. They provide a unique and relevant approach to education that addresses the changing needs of students and employers in the 21st century.

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