

## MANIFESTO FOR LIFELONG EDUCATION

This general election is a watershed moment for the UK's skills agenda. The **Lifelong Education Institute** believes that solving the UK's skills challenges means addressing them in a holistic way. The path to prosperity requires an education system that puts **people** first, allowing everyone to become a learner at any stage of life. Raising **productivity** depends on a well-trained workforce that has opportunities to reskill and upskill throughout the course of their careers. And growth will only return to every left-behind **place** across the UK by tapping into the talent and potential of all of its residents.

This document sets out the LEI's recommendations for sound, pragmatic, visionary policies that will transform the UK's education and skills landscape, and put the country on the path back to growth.

### Pillar 1: People

**Lifelong learning, training, and upskilling is a right to be enjoyed by all.**

- Empower learners to grasp their upskilling opportunities
  - Simplify the **regulatory and funding landscape** for post-16 education.
  - Create a digital **individual learner account** (ILA) that enables learners to manage their Lifelong Learning Entitlement (LLE).
  - Create a **tripartite co-investment system** for lifelong learning that combines contributions from learners, businesses, and government, administrated via an ILA/digital skills account.
- Work with employers train up their employees
  - Require businesses to offer **support for continuing professional development** (CPD) as part of their workers' career development.
  - Set a **minimum training level** for every worker to take at least 1 week of upskilling per year, and 30 days per year on average.
  - Allow workers to request '**4+1**' or '**3½+1½**' **weekly work and upskilling 'splits'** as part of all future job contracts.
- Help learners find their way up the qualification climbing-frame
  - Commit to implementing the **Lifelong Learning Entitlement** (LLE) by 2026, and lower the minimum level for course eligibility to 10 credits.
  - Implement **accessible modular options** for all courses at levels 4–8, and allow learners the choice of any module for at least 25% of their courses in qualifications lasting over a year.
  - Introduce sectoral/subject-specific **Lifelong Learning Pathways** (LLPs), initially for all post-16 learning at levels 1–8.

### Pillar 2: Productivity

**Productivity is the route to progress.**

- Make boosting productivity the central mission of 21<sup>st</sup>-century Britain

- Turn the apprenticeship levy into a **lifelong learning levy**, split 50/50 between apprenticeships and other work-based courses.
  - Create an **Institute for British Productivity** to oversee Regional Skills Improvement Plans (RSIPs), with business, trade union, education provider, learner, and community representatives.
  - Consolidate all skills funds into a **Productivity Investment Fund** (PIF) for large public projects.
2. Incentivise employers to invest in their staff
    - Introduce a **skills tax credit** for businesses in strategic growth sectors, to incentivise staff training.
    - Require businesses to set aside a percentage of their profits (in line with the EU average) for a business-wide **Human Capital Investment Fund** (HCIF).
    - Allow **employer contributions** to the lifelong learning levy to fund **individual learner accounts (ILAs)**.
  3. Bridge the divide between academic and vocational skills
    - Add **productivity as an explicit evaluation criterion** for future research, teaching, and knowledge exchange evaluation.
    - Reform course development to ensure all qualifications deliver a **mixture of academic and vocational learning**.
    - Introduce a mandatory subject-relevant **industry placement** as a core requirement of qualifications at level 4+.

### Pillar 3: Place

#### **Prosperity starts at home.**

1. Develop skills strategy in line with industrial policy to play to the UK's regional strengths
  - Consolidate Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs) into **Regional Skills Improvement Plans** (RSIPs), overseen by Regional Skills Councils (RSCs).
  - Publish a **revised UK industrial strategy** that prioritises regional comparative advantage, strategic/legacy, and future growth sectors.
  - **Devolve 50% of the PIF budget** to RSCs, to let regional stakeholders target spending at key skills gaps.
2. Work together to find new solutions to specific skills challenges
  - Create **regional Skills Observatories** to identify skills gaps and skills matching opportunities within their RSIP areas.
  - Let businesses agree **Knowledge Exchange partnerships** with their local tertiary education providers, including plans for reciprocal staff secondment.
  - Create **Skills and Innovation Hubs** in high-density business clusters, targeting skills gaps found by the Observatories.
3. Bring skills to local learners when and where they need them
  - Create **Regional Education Partnerships** (REPs) to act as a unified voice for education providers.
  - Introduce **Skills Academies** for key sectors in each region, to act as hubs for curriculum co-design, industry-expert teaching, and pedagogical training.

- Require every tertiary education provider to draw **5% of their intake from local 'community learners'**, and 20% from their region.

### [A lifelong learning society by 2030](#)

#### **Transforming the UK's skills needs dedicated leadership.**

- Government to introduce a **Minister for Lifelong Learning** based across DfE, DBT, and DSIT.
- Businesses to introduce a **senior management role** responsible for CPD, in-work upskilling, and workforce development.
- Every university to create a **Department/School of Lifelong Learning**, in collaboration with local post-16 education providers.