

Annex 11

The Marches Education Partnership



Marches Education Partnership – Case Study SDF



The Marches Education Partnership was established in the spring of 2021 to codify the informal working between Herefordshire, Ludlow and North Shropshire College, Shrewsbury Colleges Group and Telford College. The colleges had already been looking at ways in which they could collaborate to meet local needs in response to the FE White Paper. The Memorandum of Understanding and Terms of Reference provided a framework for collaboration and employer engagement which enabled the MEP to successfully bid for SDF1, alongside SBC an Independent Provider based in Shropshire. SDF1 was endorsed by Shropshire Chamber of Commerce and Enterprise Limited acting as the ERB, with the support of the Herefordshire Chamber of Commerce and the Telford Business Board and the Hereford Business Board and was therefore early evidence of providers working with the current Marches ERB to deliver against local needs with the support of a range of other ERBs.

SDF1 delivered a £1.8mn project. This was a bespoke training programme for Shrewsbury and Telford NHS Trust and for Wye Valley NHS Trust, meeting their identified needs to support recruitment of new staff and the retention of existing staff. Training programmes were developed in: Occupational Maths, English and Digital; Pre-employment; Health and Social Care; and Leadership and Management. A Mobile Technology unit and a Virtual Learning Platform were developed to provide more flexible training for existing employees and to meet the needs of training in a rural geography. The project's outputs are set out in the case study. To date, the programme has delivered the NHS pay savings of more than £1mn.

The MEP also delivered a £2mn SDF2 project to support the creation of Centres of Excellence for Renewable and Environmental Technologies. Facilities were developed to support the delivery of bespoke training programmes in Electrical Vehicles, Solar PV, Environmental Technology Systems, Electrical Energy Storage Systems, EV Charging and Heat Pump technology. The bid was supported by the CITB, large, medium and SMEs across the three geography and delivered against a key strategic priority, renewable construction.

As a consequence of the two SDF projects, the MEP created a governance and management infrastructure. This included a Project Board, Project Management capacity and Project Workstreams. The providers collaborated on Curriculum, Resourcing, Digital and Communications. Terms of Reference were established for the Project Board and for the Project Workstreams. The Project Board consisted of the CEOs of the providers who were responsible for oversight and scrutiny and who reported in turn to their corporate boards.



The Marches Education Partnership delivered two projects, in response to demonstrable local skills needs, in collaboration with a wide range of employers including the largest employer in the Marches and SMEs. The MEP has a track record of delivering in line with the vision of the LSIP and offers a model which can be further developed to ensure that the LSIP priorities are delivered. It has also demonstrated the excellent value for money that can be achieved with small amount of pump priming funding to create the facilities and curriculum required to meet the identified needs of employers.

Case Study SDF1

The SDF Health project ran between June 2021 and March 2022 delivering the following outputs:

1. In collaboration with clinical leads, **seven new training packages** were designed and developed to bridge knowledge and skills gaps for both existing and new health and care sector staff.
2. This led to **258 local members of the community** undertaking a pre-employment course to gain a meaningful career in the health and care sector.
3. **94 members of the NHS workforce** enrolled onto a course to support personal development allowing progression within their career and access to higher qualifications.
4. Collaborative initiatives delivered supported progression opportunities to a further **345 adults and young people** into local NHS trusts and social care through a **newly created Social and Health Care Training Academy**. To date this has reduced the local NHS agency pay bill by more than **£1m per annum**.
5. Innovative working has been generated by the joint design of **three immersive software** scenarios to train new NHS recruits on the expectations and the reality of working in a pressurised hospital environment.
6. Interventions, such as **Career Fairs**, were maximised to increase the number of students applying to education partners to study healthcare qualifications leading to local NHS and social care employment.
7. The FE Colleges in the Marches area are now **included in the Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin Integrated Care System (ICS) People Plan** (updated June 2022 V2.1) and recognised as key strategic partners in delivering the upskilling of the NHS workforce.
8. Creation of an immersive **Mobile Teaching Unit (MTU)** to deliver learning in disadvantaged areas which face transport barriers to education.



Cast Study SDF2

The SDF Renewable Energy and Construction project ran between June 2022 and March 2023 and delivered the following outputs:

1. In collaboration with employers, **seven new training packages** were designed as an introduction to renewable energy for those working in the sector.
2. The **online, on demand** mode responded to employer demand by facilitating some learning in the workplace or home allowing shorter, more efficient on-site, practical delivery, reducing time away from the workplace.
3. Study programme and apprentice **curriculum has been upgraded** to include knowledge and skills and introductory learning packages in environmental technology training, **delivered to more than 500 students.**
4. College **staff and employers took part in joint upskill training. 800 students have benefited** from being taught by teachers who have received this CPD. Staff upskilling allowed awarding body approval to run low carbon qualifications and gaining Microgeneration Certification Scheme (MCS) accreditation.
5. Extensive engagement with schools resulted in **1002 primary/secondary students** having raised awareness of **career opportunities and pathways in environmental technology** disciplines, and their impact on the wider world.
6. Providing **three Centres of Excellence across The Marches**, delivering high quality, local training for low carbon technologies, improving accessibility, reducing barriers to participation by addressing the rural barrier and making the training more affordable. This is brand new provision that didn't previously exist in The Marches.
7. As a result of upskilling and investment in facilities, **the capacity now exists to support employers to take on apprentices when the** new low carbon heating technician standard is approved.

Employers have a better understanding of their skills gaps because of the training needs analyses completed and are working with the colleges to address these gaps.

THE MARCHES 
EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP

Website: <https://marches-education.co.uk>



Funded by
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Marches LSIPs
Local Skills Improvement Plan



Shropshire
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