

Norfolk & Suffolk Local Skills Improvement Plan

Annex A

Skills Supply & Labour Demand Analysis

Digital | Leadership & Management | Net Zero | Technical Qualifications

Academic Years 2022/23 – 2024/25 | Demand: Sep 2022 – Aug 2025

1. Introduction

This report analyses skills supply and labour demand across four priority sectors identified in the Norfolk and Suffolk Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP). The analysis draws on Department for Education qualification data from providers delivering across Norfolk and Suffolk (2022/23 to 2024/25), and Lightcast job postings intelligence (September 2022 to August 2025).

For each sector, we present a Skills Supply Outlook covering enrolment trends by year, geography, age, funding model and provider, followed by a Labour Demand Outlook showing the most sought-after skills and occupations in the regional labour market.

The supply data covers all providers delivering to Norfolk and Suffolk residents — ranging from the five main colleges (City College Norwich, East Coast College, College of West Anglia, West Suffolk College, and Suffolk New College) through to independent training providers, county councils, and national apprenticeship providers. In total, over 450 providers are represented.

Overview

Priority Areas	Courses	Providers	Enrolments	Achievements	Ach. Rate	Trend
Digital	156	111	10,860	6,205	57%	Stable
Leadership & Management	202	278	12,528	5,155	41%	Growing (+26%)
Net Zero	165	59	10,688	5,546	52%	Growing (+13%)
Technical Qualifications	488	223	46,743	22,736	49%	Stable (+3%)

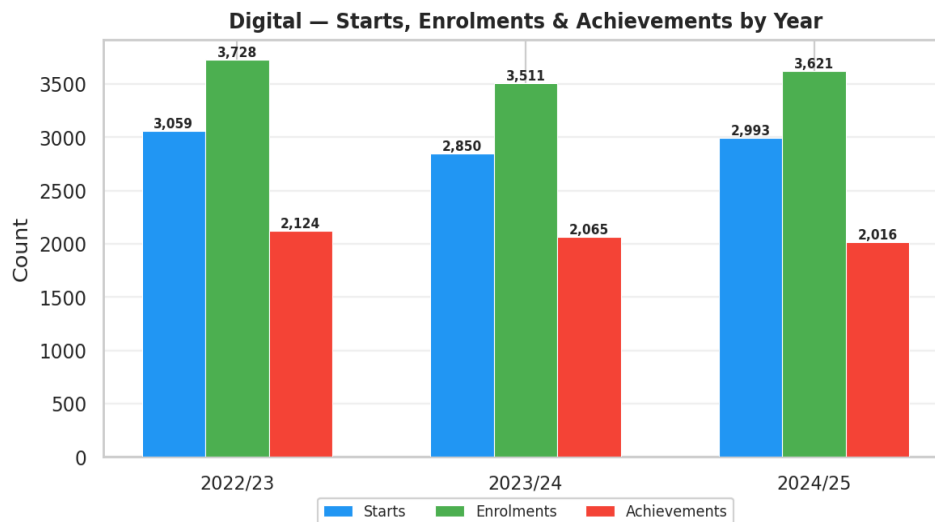
Technical Qualifications is the qualification type with nearly 47,000 enrolments across 488 courses and 223 providers. Leadership and Management has the highest number of providers (278), reflecting the cross-sector nature of management training. Net Zero shows the highest achievement rate at 52%, while Leadership and Management starts have grown 53% from 2022/23 to 2023/24. Digital provision is the most stable of the four sectors.

2. Digital Skills

A. Skills Supply Outlook

Digital skills provision across Norfolk and Suffolk encompasses 156 unique courses delivered by 111 providers. Over the three-year period, there were 10,860 enrolments and 6,205 achievements. The provider landscape extends well beyond the main FE colleges to include county councils, independent training providers and national apprenticeship bodies.

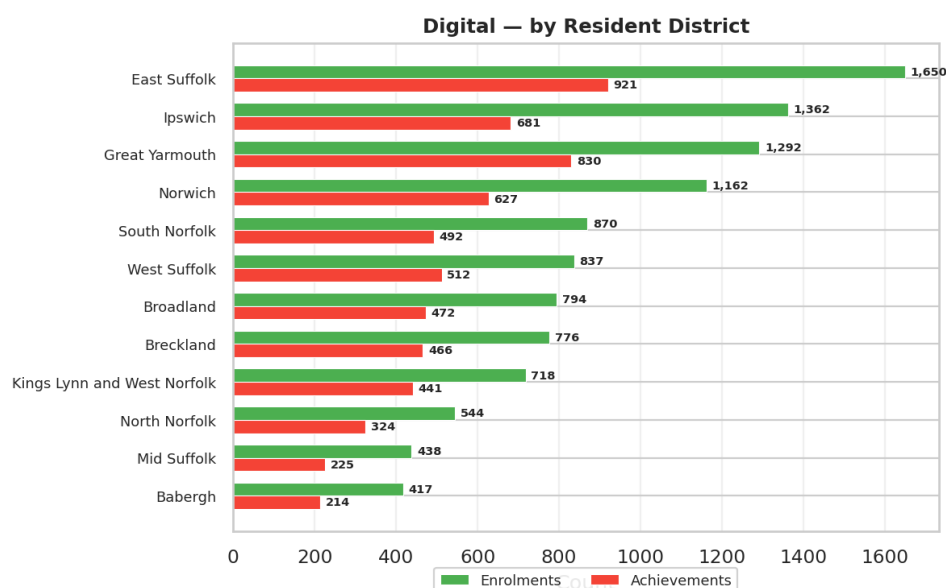
Year-on-Year Trends



Starts, Enrolments and Achievements across three academic years.

Digital skills supply has remained broadly stable, with enrolments averaging around 3,600 per year. Starts fluctuated slightly from 3,059 in 2022/23 to 2,993 in 2024/25. The achievement rate has stayed in the 56–59% range, peaking at 59% in 2023/24. This stability in both volume and achievement suggests a settled delivery model, though it also means provision is not expanding to meet growing demand.

Geographic Distribution

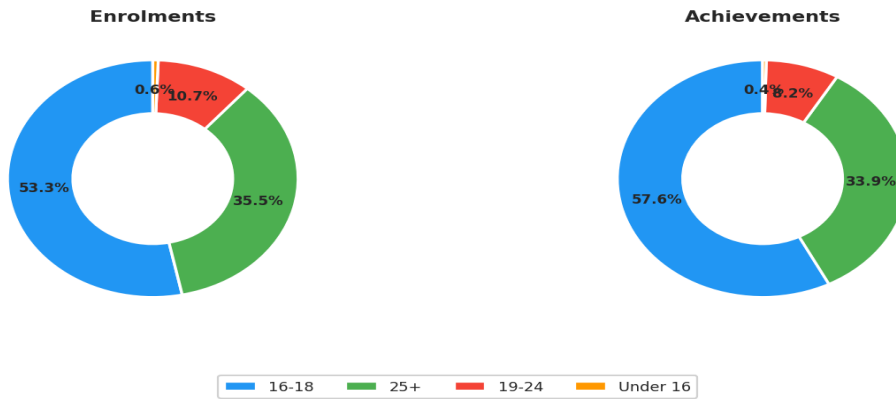


Enrolments and Achievements by learner's home district.

East Suffolk leads digital enrolments with 1,650, followed by Ipswich (1,362) and Great Yarmouth (1,292). Norwich (1,006) and Kings Lynn and West Norfolk (973) also contribute significantly. The distribution is spread across the region, with Suffolk districts showing particularly strong engagement. Babergh (306) and North Norfolk (395) show lower volumes, reflecting more rural or less well-served areas.

Learner Age Profile

Digital — by Age Band

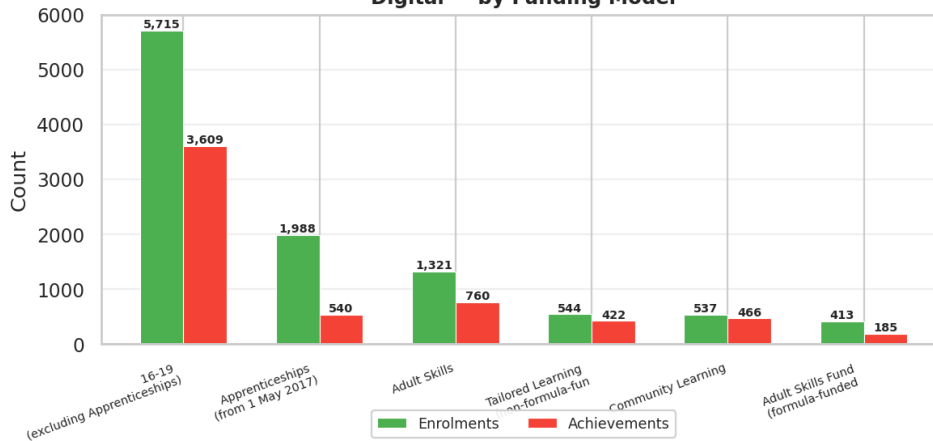


Enrolments and Achievements by age band at start.

Digital provision has a more balanced age profile than might be expected: 53% of enrolments are from 16–18 year-olds, while 36% are from adults aged 25 and over. The 19–24 group accounts for 11%. The substantial adult share reflects the inclusion of county council digital skills programmes and independent training providers offering reskilling courses, which is a positive signal for workforce development.

Funding Model

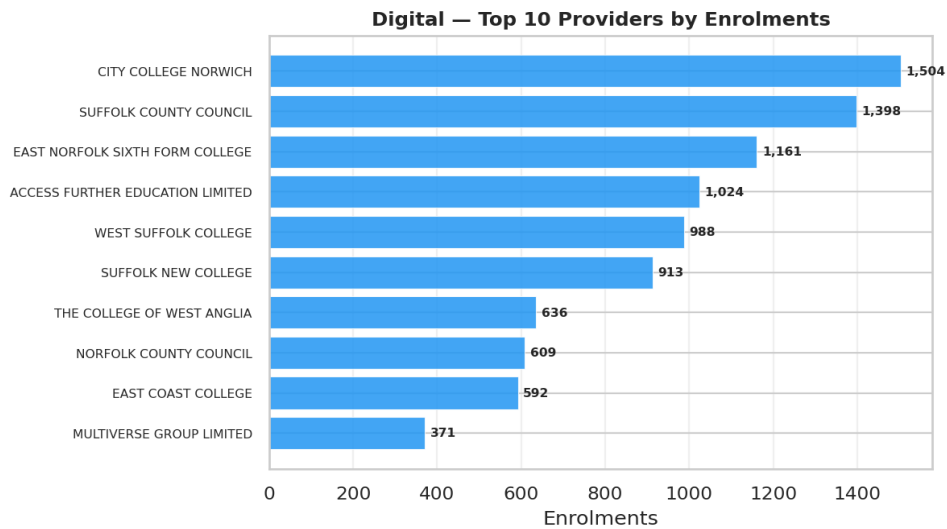
Digital — by Funding Model



Enrolments and Achievements by funding stream.

The 16–19 funding stream leads with 5,715 enrolments (53%), followed by Apprenticeships at 1,988 (18%) and Adult Skills at 1,321 (12%). Tailored Learning provision (544 enrolments) and Skills Bootcamps also contribute. The apprenticeship share is meaningful, and the adult skills component shows that some reskilling activity is taking place, though there is scope to grow both.

Provider Landscape



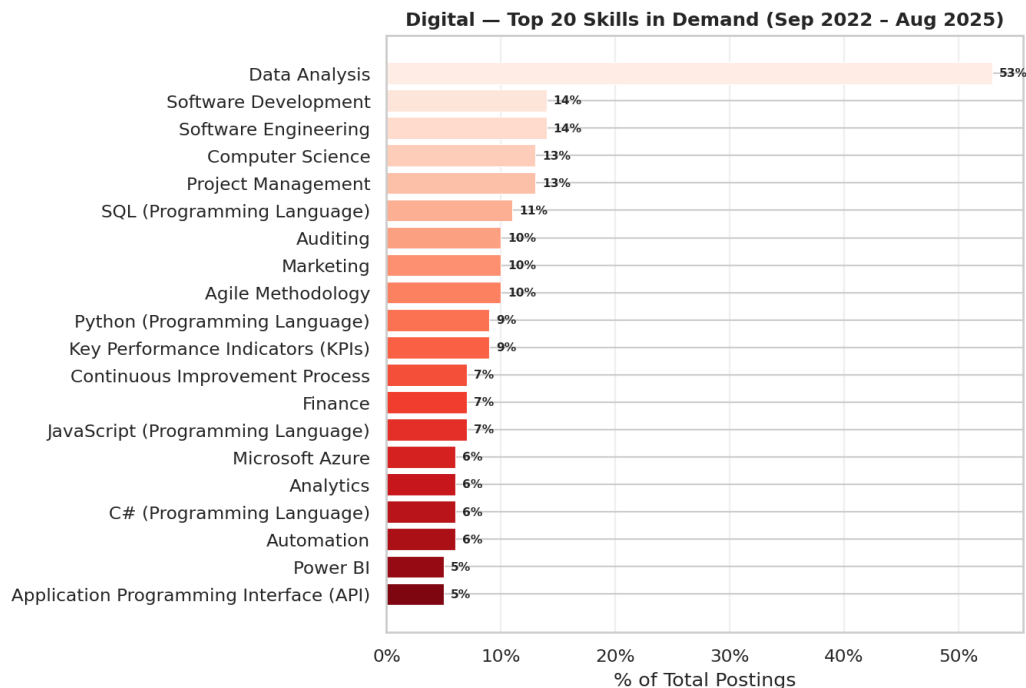
Top 10 providers by enrolments (all three academic years combined).

The provider landscape for digital is diverse: City College Norwich leads with 1,504 enrolments, followed by Suffolk County Council (1,398) delivering community digital skills. East Norfolk Sixth Form College (1,161), Access Further Education (1,024) and West Suffolk College (988) round out the top five. This diversity is positive, but also suggests provision may be fragmented across many small-scale offers.

B. Labour Demand Outlook

Lightcast job postings data for digital occupations (September 2022 to August 2025) reveals strong demand across 50 specialised skills and 50 occupations.

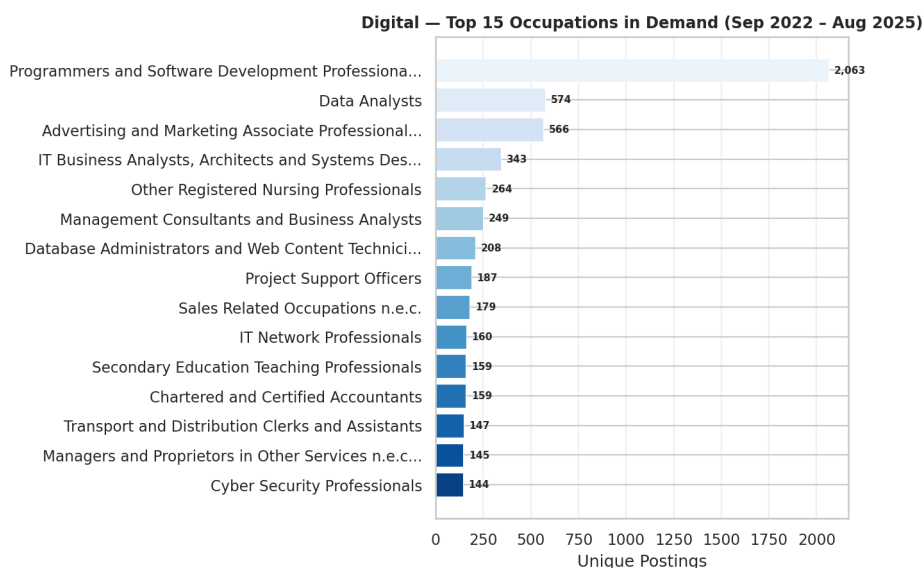
Top 20 Skills in Demand



Top 20 specialised skills in Norfolk and Suffolk job postings (Sep 2022 – Aug 2025). Full list in Appendix.

Data Analysis dominates digital skills demand, appearing in 53% of all relevant job postings — far exceeding any other skill. Software Engineering and Software Development each feature in 14% of postings, followed by Project Management and Computer Science at 13% each. The demand profile highlights a significant gap between what employers need most (data and analytical skills) and what current provision emphasises.

Top Occupations in Demand



Top 15 occupations by unique job postings.

Programmers and Software Development Professionals lead occupational demand with 2,063 unique postings, followed by Data Analysts (574) and Marketing Professionals (566). IT Business Analysts (343) also feature. The labour market requires both specialist technical roles and hybrid digital-business roles.

Key Takeaways

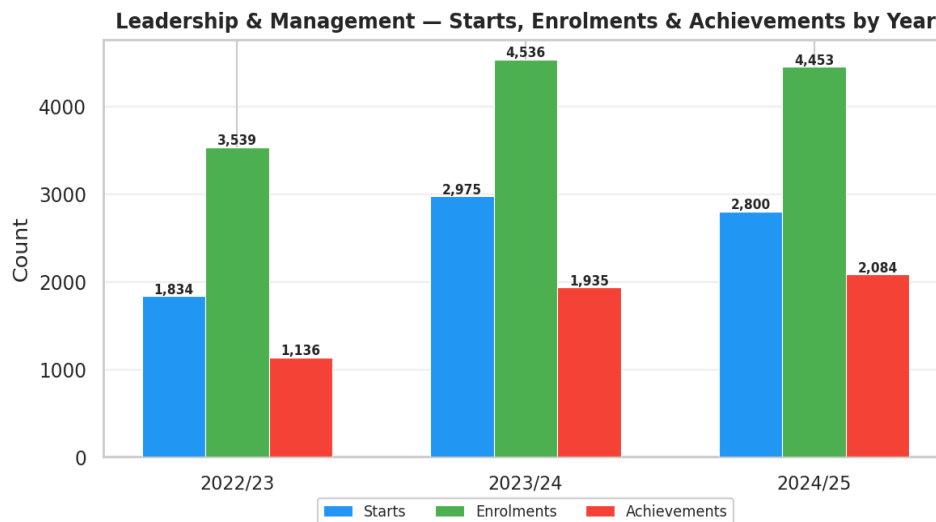
Digital provision is stable with a healthy adult participation share (36%), but employers overwhelmingly demand data analysis skills (53% of postings) which remain underserved. Priorities include expanding data analytics and SQL provision, growing software apprenticeships, and coordinating the fragmented provider landscape to ensure quality and progression pathways.

3. Leadership & Management

A. Skills Supply Outlook

Leadership and management provision is delivered by 278 providers across 202 unique courses, making it the most provider-diverse of the four sectors. Over three years, there were 12,528 enrolments and 5,155 achievements.

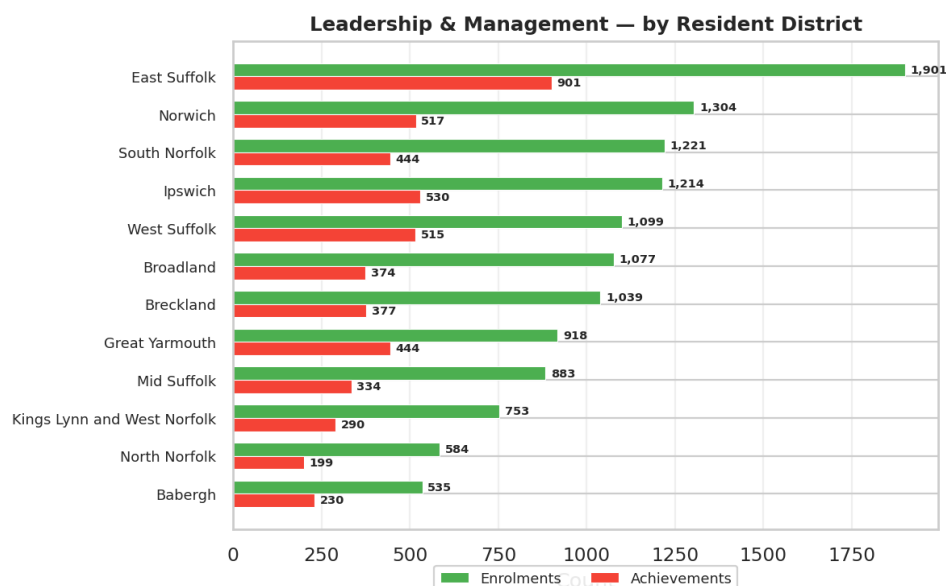
Year-on-Year Trends



Starts, Enrolments and Achievements across three academic years.

This sector shows notable growth: starts rose from 1,834 in 2022/23 to 2,975 in 2023/24 before settling at 2,800 in 2024/25 — a 53% increase from the first to second year. Achievement rates have improved steadily from 32% to 47%, suggesting both growing interest and better completion outcomes. Enrolments have grown 26% from 3,539 to 4,453 over the period.

Geographic Distribution

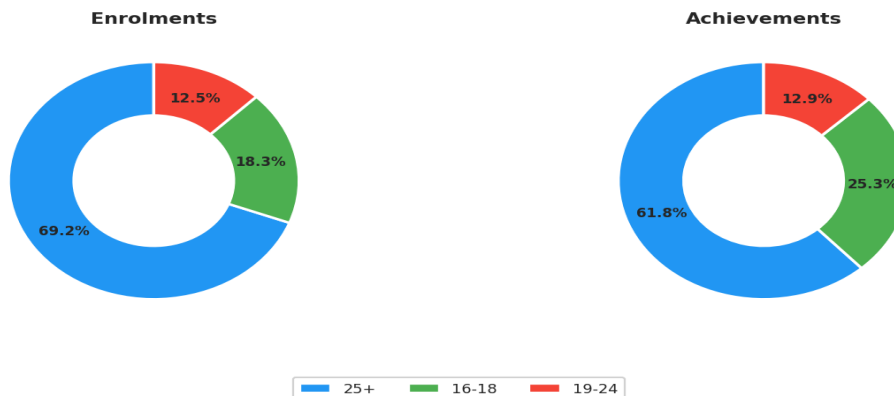


Enrolments and Achievements by learner's home district.

East Suffolk leads with 1,901 enrolments, followed by Norwich (1,304) and South Norfolk (1,221). The distribution is relatively even across the region, reflecting the cross-cutting relevance of leadership and management skills to all parts of the economy. West Suffolk (1,091) and Broadland (832) also show strong volumes.

Learner Age Profile

Leadership & Management — by Age Band



Enrolments and Achievements by age band at start.

Leadership and management has the strongest adult learner profile of all four sectors: 69% of enrolments are from the 25+ age group, with 18% from 16–18 year-olds and 13% from 19–24 year-olds. This is a very positive signal, as management skills are most relevant to those with workplace experience. The high adult share reflects the dominance of apprenticeships in this sector.

Funding Model

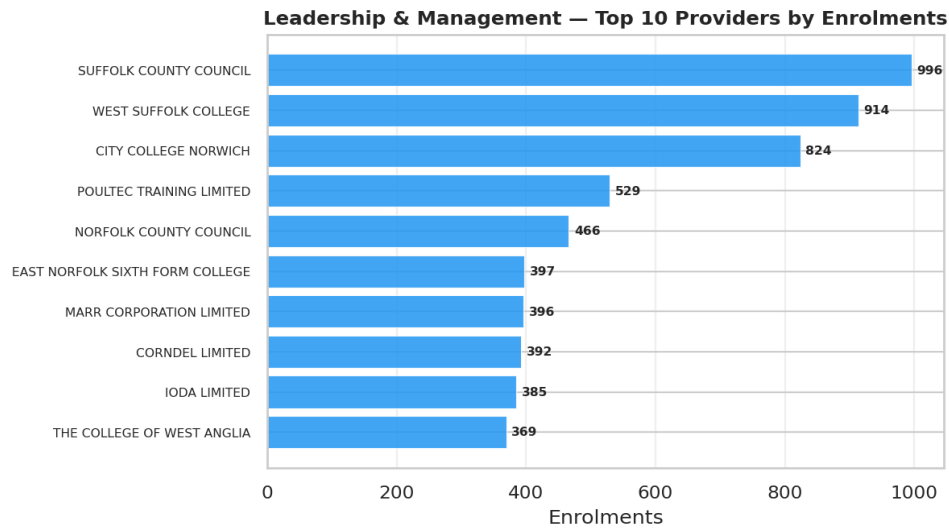
Leadership & Management — by Funding Model



Enrolments and Achievements by funding stream.

Apprenticeships dominate with 7,652 enrolments (61%), making this the most apprenticeship-driven sector. The 16–19 stream accounts for 1,801 (14%), with Non-funded provision at 1,020 (8%) and Community Learning at 993 (8%). The strong apprenticeship component indicates employers are actively investing in management development through the levy and apprenticeship standards.

Provider Landscape



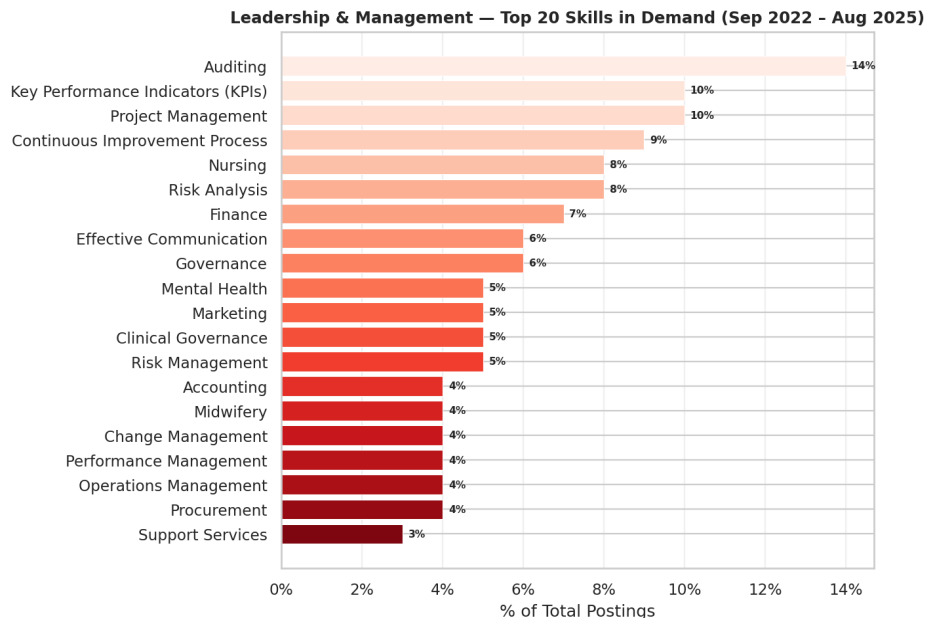
Top 10 providers by enrolments (all three academic years combined).

The provider landscape is highly diverse: Suffolk County Council leads with 996 enrolments, followed by West Suffolk College (914), City College Norwich (824), Poultec Training (529) and Norfolk County Council (466). The presence of county councils, independent providers and national training organisations reflects the employer-driven nature of management training.

B. Labour Demand Outlook

Leadership and management skills are in high demand across Norfolk and Suffolk, spanning health and social care, retail, professional services and public sector management roles.

Top 20 Skills in Demand



Top 20 specialised skills in Norfolk and Suffolk job postings (Sep 2022 – Aug 2025). Full list in Appendix.

Auditing (14%), Project Management (10%) and KPIs (10%) top the demand list. Continuous Improvement (9%) and Nursing (8%) also feature, reflecting significant healthcare management demand. Employers want managers who can analyse performance, manage projects and drive continuous improvement rather than just holding generic management qualifications.

Top Occupations in Demand



Top 15 occupations by unique job postings.

Nursing Professionals lead with 1,474 unique postings, followed by Health Services Managers (1,338) and Retail Managers (1,241). General Services Managers (1,038) and Health Care Practice Managers (1,014) also feature. The occupational profile is heavily influenced by health and social care, which is the region's largest employment sector.

Key Takeaways

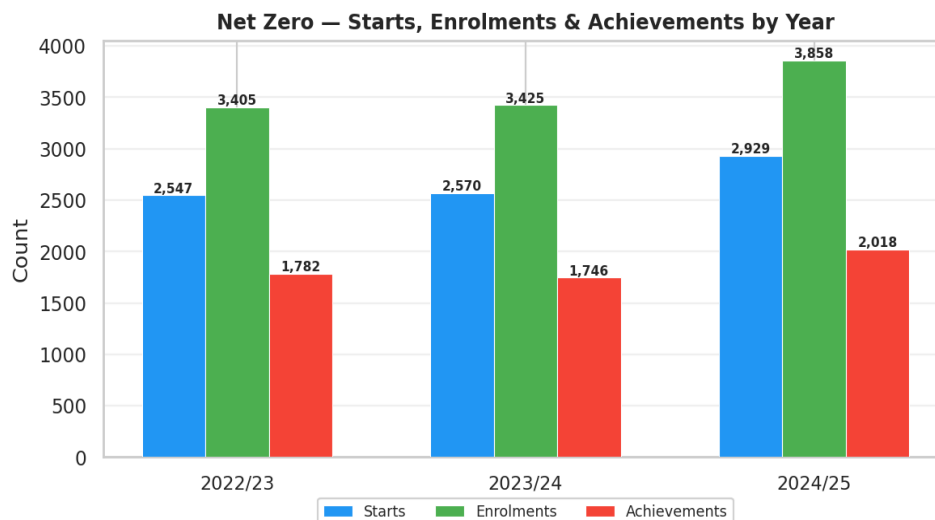
Leadership and Management is growing strongly with the best adult participation (69%) and highest apprenticeship penetration (61%). The sector is well-aligned with employer investment patterns. Priorities include strengthening applied skills (project management, KPIs, continuous improvement) within apprenticeship standards, developing sector-specific pathways for health and care management, and supporting the continued growth trajectory. Although this strengthens the position that there is a good amount of provision employers still cite that provision needs to be quality and adequate enough to address sector and business demand.

4. Net Zero & Sustainability

A. Skills Supply Outlook

Net zero and sustainability provision covers 165 unique courses delivered by 59 providers, spanning plumbing, heating, environmental science, agriculture, land management, animal care and conservation. Over three years, there were 10,688 enrolments and 5,546 achievements.

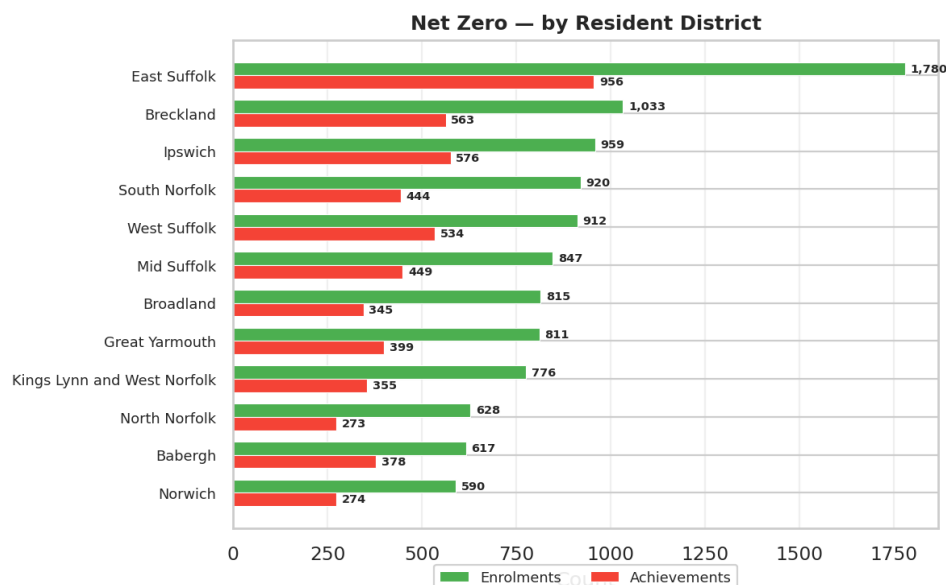
Year-on-Year Trends



Starts, Enrolments and Achievements across three academic years.

Net zero provision is growing: starts increased from 2,547 in 2022/23 to 2,929 in 2024/25, a rise of 15%. Enrolments grew from 3,405 to 3,858 (13% increase) and achievements from 1,782 to 2,018. The achievement rate has remained steady at 51–52%, which is the highest of all four sectors. This growth reflects both policy signals around net zero and genuine learner demand for green skills.

Geographic Distribution

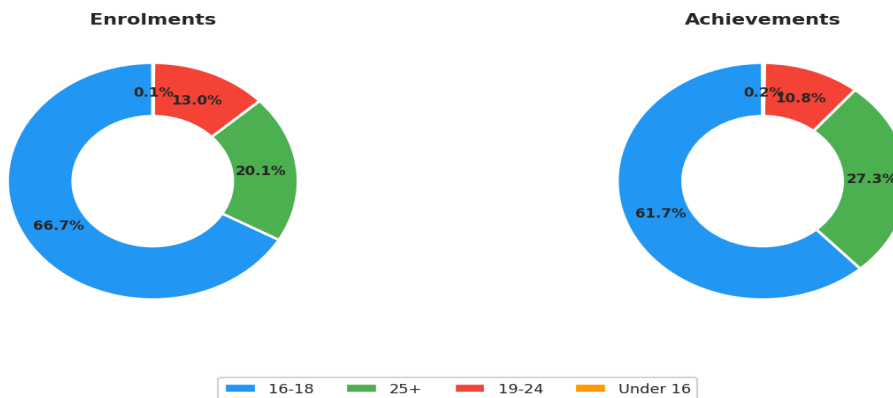


Enrolments and Achievements by learner's home district.

East Suffolk leads with 1,780 enrolments, followed by Breckland (1,033) and Ipswich (959). South Norfolk (947) and Broadland (913) also show strong engagement. The geographic pattern reflects both the land-based rural provision and the growing urban demand for plumbing, heating and retrofit skills.

Learner Age Profile

Net Zero — by Age Band

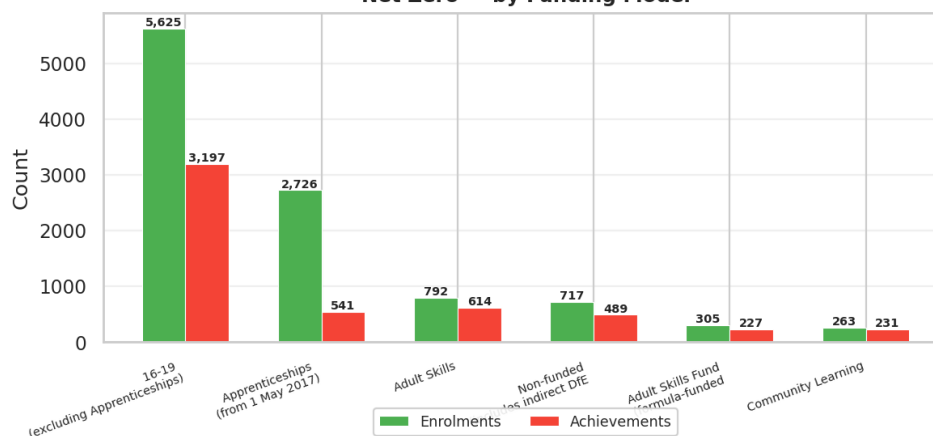


Enrolments and Achievements by age band at start.

The 16–18 age group accounts for 67% of enrolments, with adults (25+) at 20% and 19–24 year-olds at 13%. The adult share is higher than might be expected for what is traditionally a young-learner sector, reflecting the growth in adult reskilling for green trades. However, given the scale of the net zero transition (e.g., gas engineers retraining for heat pumps), adult participation still has significant room to grow.

Funding Model

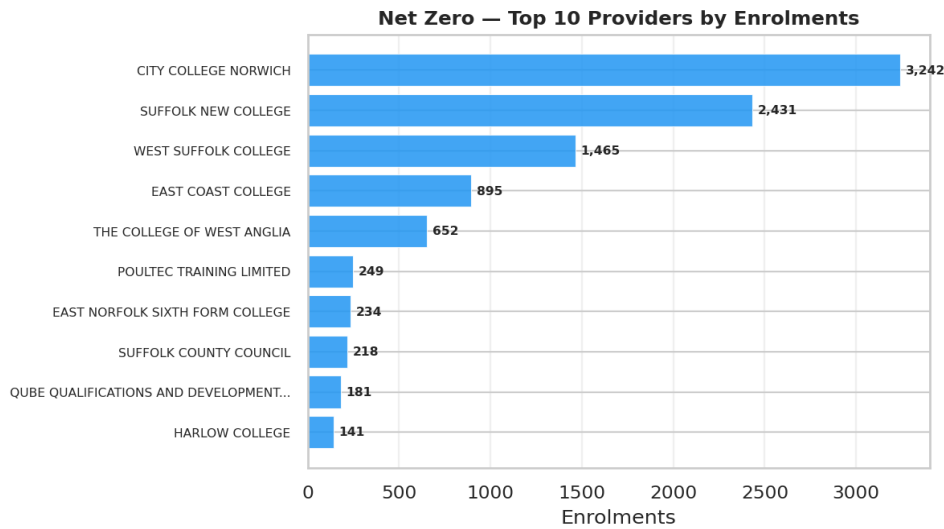
Net Zero — by Funding Model



Enrolments and Achievements by funding stream.

The 16–19 stream leads with 5,625 enrolments (53%), followed by Apprenticeships at 2,726 (26%). Adult Skills accounts for 792 (7%) and non-funded provision for 717 (7%). The apprenticeship share is substantial and reflects the practical nature of net zero qualifications in plumbing, heating and electrical work.

Provider Landscape



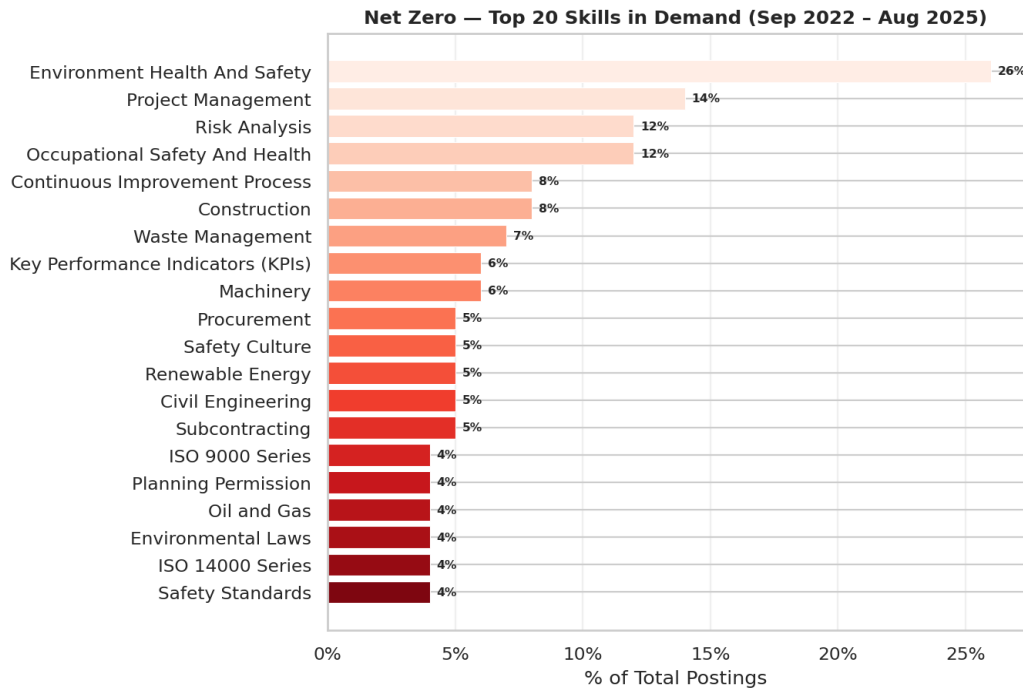
Top 10 providers by enrolments (all three academic years combined).

City College Norwich leads with 3,242 enrolments (30%), followed by Suffolk New College (2,431, 23%), West Suffolk College (1,465, 14%), East Coast College (895, 8%) and the College of West Anglia (652, 6%). The top five are all FE colleges, reflecting the capital-intensive nature of net zero provision which requires specialist workshops and equipment.

B. Labour Demand Outlook

Net zero labour demand in Norfolk and Suffolk centres on environmental compliance, construction and engineering roles supporting the green transition.

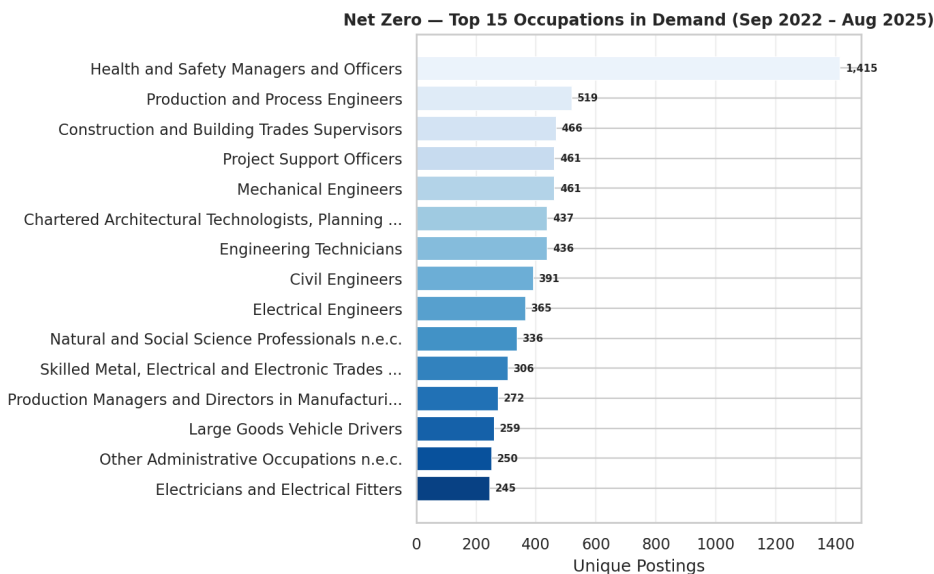
Top 20 Skills in Demand



Top 20 specialised skills in Norfolk and Suffolk job postings (Sep 2022 – Aug 2025). Full list in Appendix.

Environmental Health and Safety leads at 26% of postings, followed by Project Management (14%), Occupational Safety and Health (12%) and Risk Analysis (12%). Continuous Improvement (8%) and Quality Assurance (8%) also feature. Employers need not just green technical skills but also compliance, risk management and project delivery capabilities.

Top Occupations in Demand



Top 15 occupations by unique job postings.

Health and Safety Managers lead with 1,415 unique postings, followed by Production Engineers (519), Construction Supervisors (466) and Mechanical Engineers (461). Project Support Officers (461) also feature, confirming that net zero roles span construction, engineering and compliance.

Key Takeaways

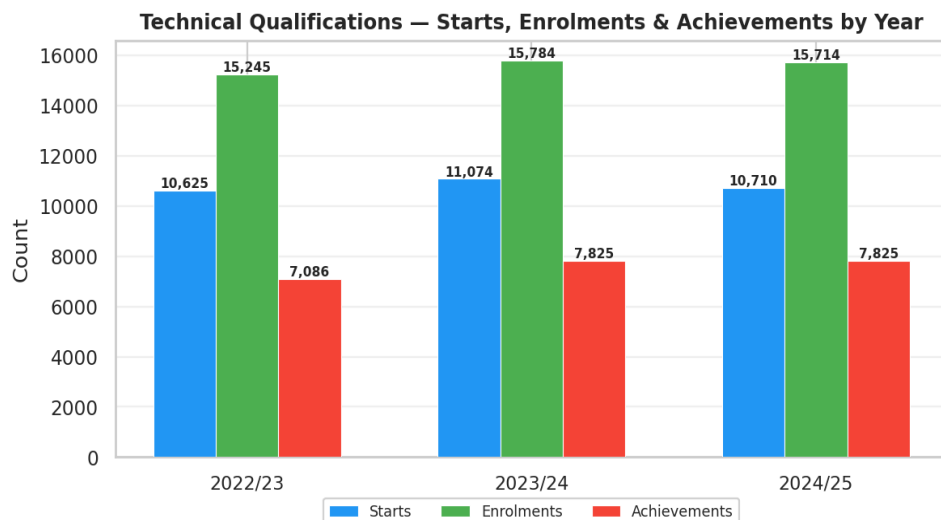
Net zero is growing with the highest achievement rate (52%) and good apprenticeship penetration (26%). However, adult reskilling pathways remain underdeveloped given the scale of the green transition. **Subject to market demand**, priorities include expanding adult provision for heating retrofit and insulation, developing heat pump training capacity, strengthening environmental compliance modules, and embedding sustainability across all technical programmes.

5. Technical Qualifications

A. Skills Supply Outlook

Technical qualifications represent the largest priority, with 488 unique courses delivered by 223 providers. Over three years, there were 46,743 enrolments and 22,736 achievements - making this the dominant skills pipeline for the Norfolk and Suffolk economy.

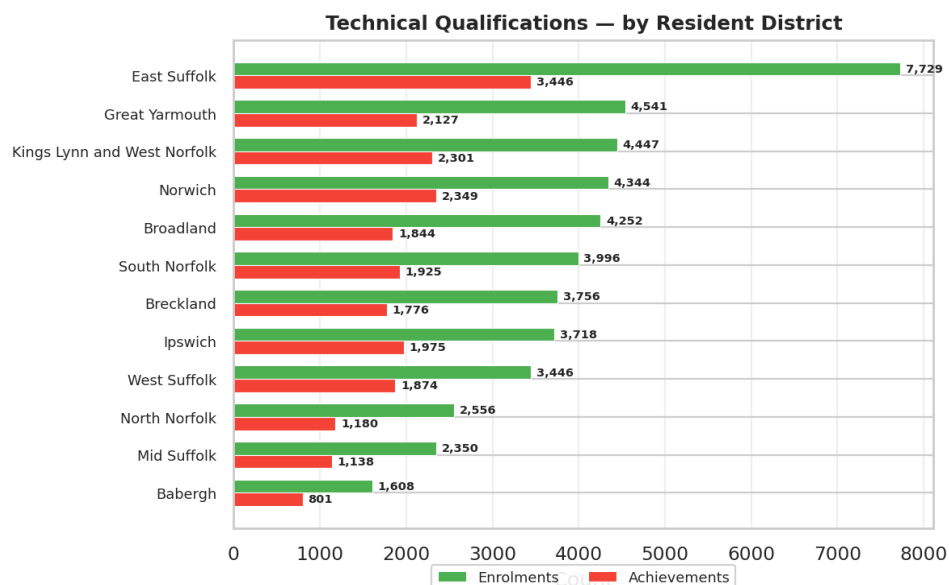
Year-on-Year Trends



Starts, Enrolments and Achievements across three academic years.

Technical provision is stable at a high level: starts have remained around 10,700 per year and enrolments around 15,500. Achievements have grown from 7,086 to 7,825, with the achievement rate improving from 47% to 50%. This steady trajectory at scale, with improving outcomes, indicates a mature and well-functioning delivery system.

Geographic Distribution

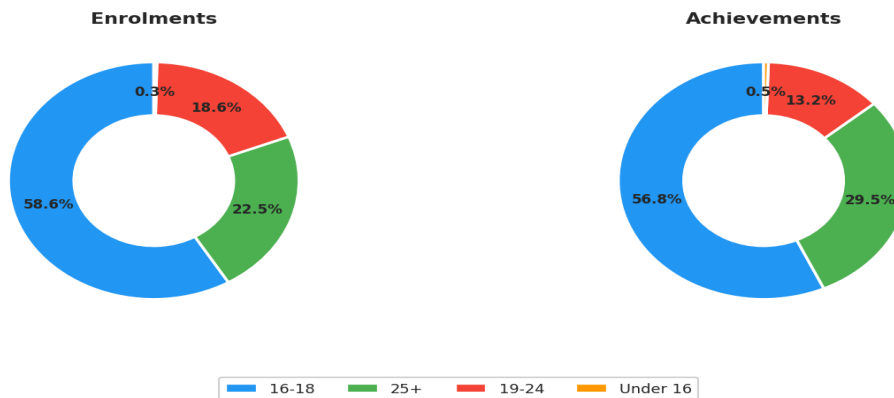


Enrolments and Achievements by learner's home district.

East Suffolk leads with 7,729 enrolments, followed by Great Yarmouth (4,541) and King's Lynn and West Norfolk (4,447). Norwich (3,693) and Ipswich (3,395) also contribute strongly. The wide geographic spread reflects the distributed nature of technical skills demand across both urban and rural areas, with every district showing substantial volumes.

Learner Age Profile

Technical Qualifications — by Age Band

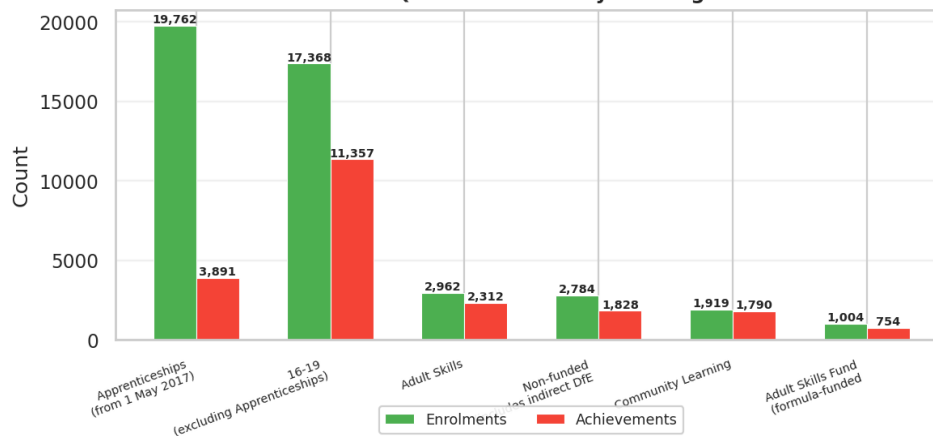


Enrolments and Achievements by age band at start.

The 16–18 group accounts for 59% of enrolments, with adults (25+) at 22% and 19–24 year-olds at 19%. The age profile is more balanced than other sectors, reflecting the strong role of apprenticeships and employer-sponsored training in technical fields. The 19–24 group is notably larger, indicating good progression from initial training into work-based learning.

Funding Model

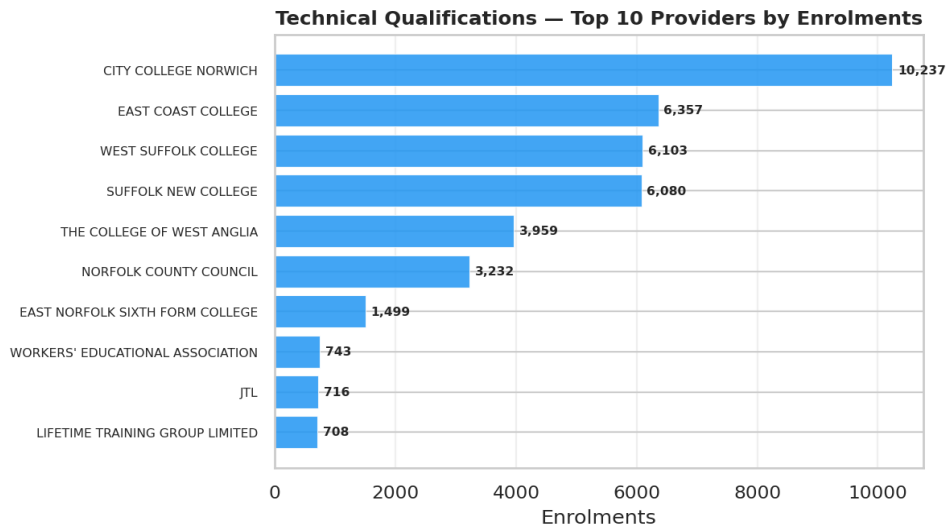
Technical Qualifications — by Funding Model



Enrolments and Achievements by funding stream.

Apprenticeships lead with 19,762 enrolments (42%), closely followed by 16–19 provision at 17,368 (37%). Adult Skills accounts for 2,962 (6%) and non-funded provision for 2,784 (6%). This is the strongest apprenticeship representation of all four sectors, reflecting the employer-driven nature of engineering, construction and technical training.

Provider Landscape



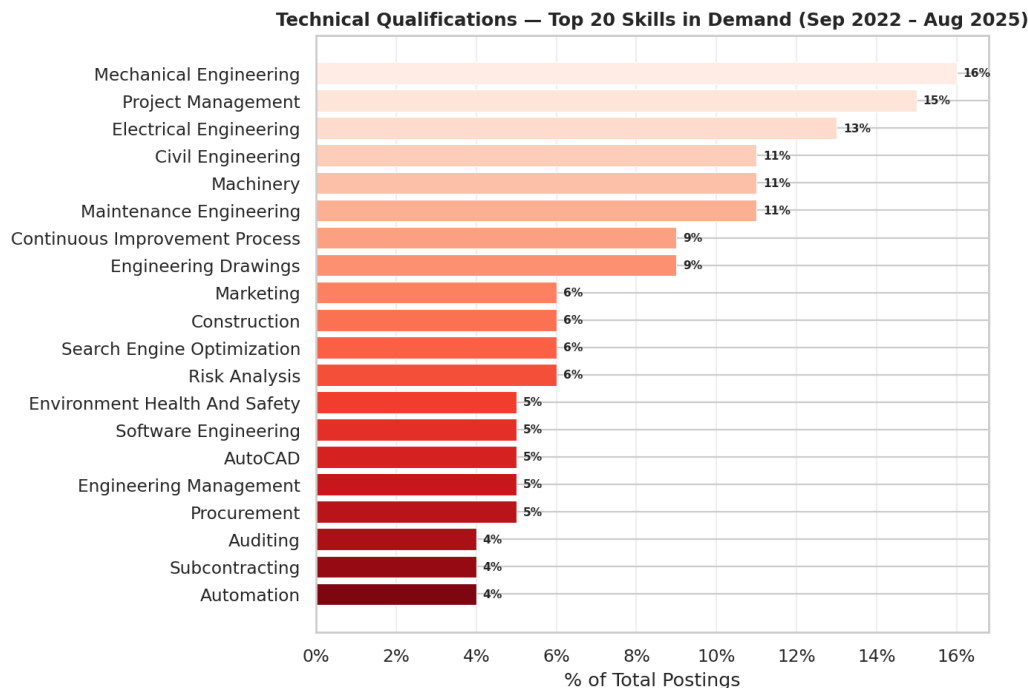
Top 10 providers by enrolments (all three academic years combined).

City College Norwich leads with 10,237 enrolments (22%), followed by East Coast College (6,357, 14%), West Suffolk College (6,103, 13%) and Suffolk New College (6,080, 13%). The College of West Anglia contributes 3,959 (8%). The top five FE colleges collectively deliver 70% of technical provision, with a long tail of specialist and independent providers covering the remainder.

B. Labour Demand Outlook

Technical qualifications demand is driven by engineering, construction and manufacturing — the backbone of the regional economy.

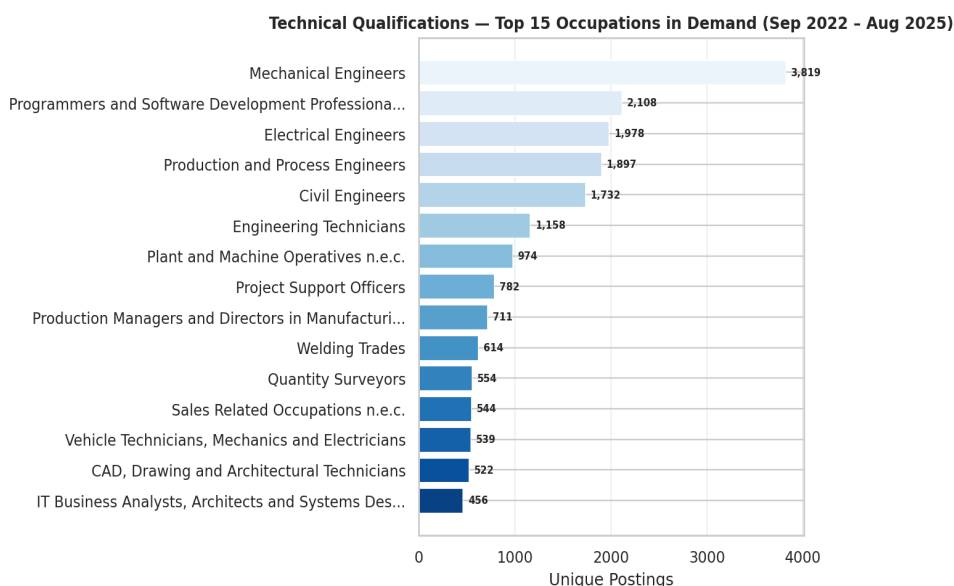
Top 20 Skills in Demand



Top 20 specialised skills in Norfolk and Suffolk job postings (Sep 2022 – Aug 2025). Full list in Appendix.

Mechanical Engineering (16%), Project Management (15%) and Electrical Engineering (13%) top the skills demand. Machinery (11%), Civil Engineering (11%) and Manufacturing (9%) also feature. The demand profile confirms employers need core engineering disciplines alongside project management and quality control skills.

Top Occupations in Demand



Top 15 occupations by unique job postings.

Mechanical Engineers lead with 3,819 unique postings, followed by Software Developers (2,108), Electrical Engineers (1,978) and Production Engineers (1,897). Civil Engineers (1,732) and Design Engineers (1,452) confirm the breadth of engineering demand across the region.

Key Takeaways

Technical qualifications show the healthiest overall picture: high volume, improving achievement rates and the strongest apprenticeship penetration (42%). The sector is well-aligned with employer demand. Priorities include maintaining the strong apprenticeship pipeline, expanding capacity in electrical and mechanical engineering where demand is highest, embedding project management within technical programmes, and ensuring progression pathways from Level 2 through to Level 4+.

6. Appendix

Data Sources

Skills Supply: Department for Education Data Cube data covering all providers delivering to Norfolk and Suffolk residents, academic years 2022/23 to 2024/25. This includes FE colleges, independent training providers, county councils, and national apprenticeship bodies.

Labour Demand: Lightcast job postings intelligence for Norfolk and Suffolk, September 2022 to August 2025. Four sector-specific extracts covering Digital, Leadership & Management, Net Zero, and Technical Qualifications.

Methodology

Courses were assigned to priority sectors using keyword matching (30–40 terms per sector) against Learning Aim Titles. Some courses may appear in more than one sector where content spans multiple areas. The 'Funding Model' categories reflect DfE funding streams. Achievement rates for 2024/25 should be interpreted with caution as some courses may not have completed at the time of data collection.

The full skills demand tables for each sector (all 48–50 skills) are available in the accompanying Lightcast data files. The charts in this report show the top 20 skills per sector.

Further Evidence

Comprehensive Summary of DWP Vacancy Data and LSIP Supply-Demand Analysis (2025-2026)
 Target Sectors: Digital, Net Zero/Energy, Technical, Leadership & Management

1. Regional Labour Market Context

The Norfolk and Suffolk regions maintain strong employment foundations, though localized challenges persist. As of the latest reporting cycles (Suffolk Dec 2025, Norfolk Mar 2026):

Metric	Suffolk (Dec 2025)	Norfolk (Mar 2026)
Employment Rate	79.6%	77.2% (Trend: -0.7%)
National Average	75.8%	75.8%
Avg. Weekly Earnings	£729	£719
Primary Vacancy Drivers	Care Workers, IT, Cleaners	Care Workers (10%), Road Transport, Nursing

2. Priority Sector Analysis

Digital

- **Demand Focus:** Programmers and Software Developers are the primary volume drivers.
- **Critical Gap:** Data Analysis is requested in 53% of all digital postings, yet supply remains focused on general IT.
- **Barriers:** Transport is a significant barrier for entry-level roles in business parks.

Net Zero & Energy

- Growth: Sustainability-linked enrolments grew by 13% year-on-year.
- Key Fields: Environmental Health, Safety, and Green Trades (Solar/Heat Pumps).
- Strategy: Transitioning workers from declining Warehouse/Retail sectors into the Energy Coast supply chain.

Technical & Engineering

- Volume: The largest sector with ~47,000 enrolments.
- Demand: Mechanical and Electrical Engineering remain top-tier needs.
- Funding: Heavily reliant on Apprenticeships (42% of funding).

Leadership & Management

- Growth: Fastest growing sector (+26% enrolment).
- Demographics: Adult-led (69% aged 25+).
- Skill Shift: Move from generic degrees to applied Project Management and KPI management.

3. Occupational & Industrial Mapping

Sector	SOC Codes	SIC Codes
Digital	2136, 2135, 2139, 3131	62.01, 62.02, 63.11
Net Zero	2121, 2127, 5314, 2461	35.11, 43.21, 43.22
Technical	2122, 2123, 5223, 5231	28.99, 33.12, 45.20
Leadership	2424, 1139, 3539	70.10, 70.22, 82.99

4. Vacancy Volume Evidence (Evidence of Need)

Occupation	Norfolk Vacancies	Suffolk Vacancies
Programmers/Devs (2136)	608	463
IT Business Analysts (2135)	331	308
Project Management (2424)	301	251
Mechanical Engineers (2122)	149	156
Plumbers / Heat Installers (5314)	188	134

More comprehensive and detailed data sets from DWP can be found at the following links.

[DWP - Vacancy Data Review - Norfolk March 2026.pdf](#)

[DWP - Vacancy Data Review - Suffolk December 2025 - Read-Only.pdf](#)

Summary

Norfolk and Suffolk have high employment rates but a skills mismatch with specialised technical demand.

The core priorities for the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) and DWP focus on bridging these gaps through the following key insights:

1. Digital & Technical Evolution

- **Data Dominance:** While IT supply is stable, there is a critical "Data Divide," with **53%** of digital job postings specifically requesting **Data Analysis** skills that the current workforce lacks.
- **Technical Volume:** Technical training is the region's largest pipeline with **47,000** enrolments, yet high-volume vacancies persist for **Mechanical and Electrical Engineers** (SOC 2122 and 2123).
- **Apprenticeship Reliance:** The technical sector relies heavily on **Apprenticeships**, which account for **42%** of its funding.

2. Net Zero & Energy Growth

- **Green Surge:** Enrolments in sustainability-linked training have grown by **13%**, driven by the region's status as the "Energy Coast".
- **Skill Shift:** Demand is pivoting toward specialized **Green Trades**, such as heat pump installation and solar PV, alongside infrastructure roles for offshore wind and nuclear projects.
- **Workforce Transition:** There is a strategic need to pivot workers away from declining roles, like traditional warehousing, and into the renewables supply chain.

3. Leadership & Management Expansion

- **Rapid Growth:** This is the fastest-growing sector for training, with a **26%** increase in enrolments.
- **Adult Upskilling:** It is predominantly an "Adult-First" sector, with **69%** of learners aged **25 or older**.
- **Applied Competencies:** Employers are moving away from generic qualifications in favour of applied skills like **Project Management** (SOC 2424) and **KPI Management**.

4. Further Barriers

- **Deprivation Hotspots:** High levels of education and skills deprivation persist in coastal and rural areas, with **Great Yarmouth** ranked **3rd** and **Breckland** **37th** nationally.
- **Logistical Hurdles:** Inadequate **transport** links remain a primary barrier for entry-level roles in Digital and Health & Social Care, where car access is often a mandatory requirement.
- **Automation/AI Displacement:** Demand for entry-level retail and warehouse roles is slowing due to AI and automation, highlighting the urgency of reskilling these workers for the priority sectors