

Historic Environment Skills Forum

Strategic Statement of Intent and Activity Tables 2023



Summary

The Historic Environment Skills Forum was launched in November 2022, led by a steering group representing employers and professional bodies/associations across the different occupational areas that make up the heritage sector. The Skills Forum aims to coordinate activity across the sector to ensure that skills acquisition activities are evidenced, effective, responsive and meet employer demands.

This document details our objectives and priority areas for action, alongside a road map taking us to the development of a full Historic Environment Skills and Careers Action Plan for England, in April 2024.

Contributors

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Acknowledgements

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Front cover image: Primary School children try their hand at stone templating with staff from Pinnacle at St Augustine's Church, Skirlaugh. © Pinnacle Conservation 2023

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The Historic Environment Skills Forum

In direct response to Action 1.1 of the [Heritage Sector Resilience Plan](#), a Cross-Sector Historic Environment Skills Forum was launched in November 2022, chaired by Historic England.

The purpose of the Skills Forum is to bring together employers, professional bodies, the many sub-sector specific forums and individual interest groups across the sector - from archaeology to conservation, to construction and craft, to local authority advice - and aims to coordinate activity across the sector to ensure that skills acquisition activities are evidenced, effective, responsive and meet relevant demand. It will also provide a place for sharing good practice and resources across the sector; using our online hub.

We are not interested in skills development and career progression for the sake of it; rather in ensuring we have the right skills to meet demand; and a resilient workforce that can ensure we have a historic environment that people connect with and learn from and that we are proud to pass on to future generations

Background

Before the Skills Forum was established, a Ministerial Round Table on skills was convened in June 2022 by Nigel Huddleston, Minister for Sport, Tourism, Heritage and Civil Society, and facilitated by DCMS and Historic England. At this Round Table delegates representing different professional areas across the sector identified a number of common strategic challenges and a need to work collaboratively to drive meaningful change.

The Minister endorsed the creation of the Skills Forum as a crucial response to the actions of the Heritage Resilience Plan and pledged to support it moving forward.

Historic England took the lead in establishing the Skills Forum and provides its Chair; as well as hosting the online collaborative workspace to coordinate activity and share resources.

Membership and Steering Group

Skills Forum membership is open to all organisations who work in the historic environment and desire to see improvements to the skills challenges facing the sector. There are however some particular occupational areas the Skills Forum is most concerned with, that is, those involved in: understanding, planning, design, construction, infrastructure, maintenance and repair, conservation and sustainability of the historic environment. This can be through work that is either commercially led or in response to government initiatives.

A Steering Group has been formed to lead the activity of the Forum, self-nominated from the membership. Make-up of the Steering Group is designed to include representatives from key occupational areas that most align to the activities above. i.e.:

- Archaeology (all specialisms)
- Conservation (preventative and remedial)
- Heritage Construction (trades and professionals)
- Historic Environment Advice/Management (public and private sector)

Steering Group members serve a term of 12 months but are able to self-nominate to continue for a second term. The Skills Forum operates under Terms of

Reference which outline its governance in more detail.

The current Steering Group members are:

- Phil Pollard – Historic England (Chair)
- Amy Atkins – MOLA
- Brendan Foley - DBR Ltd
- Tess Gale – Historic England
- Adam Hickey - Pinnacle Conservation
- Cara Jones – Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
- Alice Ullathorne - Heritage Lincolnshire
- Patrick Whife – Institute of Conservation (formal link to the Historic Environment Forum Skills Demand group)
- Rob Woodside - English Heritage

Overarching Strategic Challenges

The Skills Forum recognises the four strategic challenges below as being fundamental root causes of many skills issues across the sector. We advocate that any activity undertaken to address skills issues has these challenges at the forefront of its thinking.

The issue of **lack of diversity** within the heritage workforce has been noted both anecdotally across the sector, and through labour market intelligence such as the [Profiling the Profession](#) survey for archaeology. The Skills Forum will consider how making the sector more diverse will assist career entry and ongoing development; and conversely how improving those things will address barriers that prevent a more representative workforce from developing.

Strategic Challenges for Historic Environment Skills

- Issues with limited **entry** pathways into, and lack of cohesive **progression** through historic environment roles
- The **perception** of and **recognition** of heritage roles (which directly impacts attraction and retention of workforce); including issues such as limited levels of qualification and accreditation, and issues of perceived low pay
- **Organisational capacity and capability to train** within a work-based learning context
- The **capacity and capability of formal training providers** in delivering what employers need

Statement of Intent

The Skills Forum aims to ensure that the right skills exist in the workforce to care for our historic environment, and that employers' value and demand those skills. Those wishing to join the Forum agree to abide by the following Statement of Intent.

*We, the members of the **Historic Environment Skills Forum** set out our intent to collaboratively address the systemic issues we face with regards to skills and career development across all aspects of the sector.*

We Will

1. *Openly discuss the skills challenges and the different initiatives that organisations are undertaking to address these; ensuring good practices and resources are shared across the sector and mutual support is provided*

We will do this by providing an online forum for discussion using Heritage Workspace, supported by quarterly webinars and annual in-person workshops; and creating an openly accessible “one stop shop” shared repository of materials around skills development

2. *Provide a clear shared evidence base using information gathered from discussion and through directing specific research into identifying the current and future demand for historic environment skills; analysing where gaps and shortages are; and identifying the metrics and indicators which will allow us to prioritise areas to address and be used to show progress*

3. *Produce and oversee a multi-year **Historic Environment Skills and Careers Action Plan for England (HESCAPE)** that drives activity across the sector. This will set a shared agenda, with shared performance indicators that will shape skills development for the future. Through HESCAPE we will:*

- *Seek investment and support to deliver against our objectives*
 - *Monitor and report on activity in order to regularly review evidence and update priorities*
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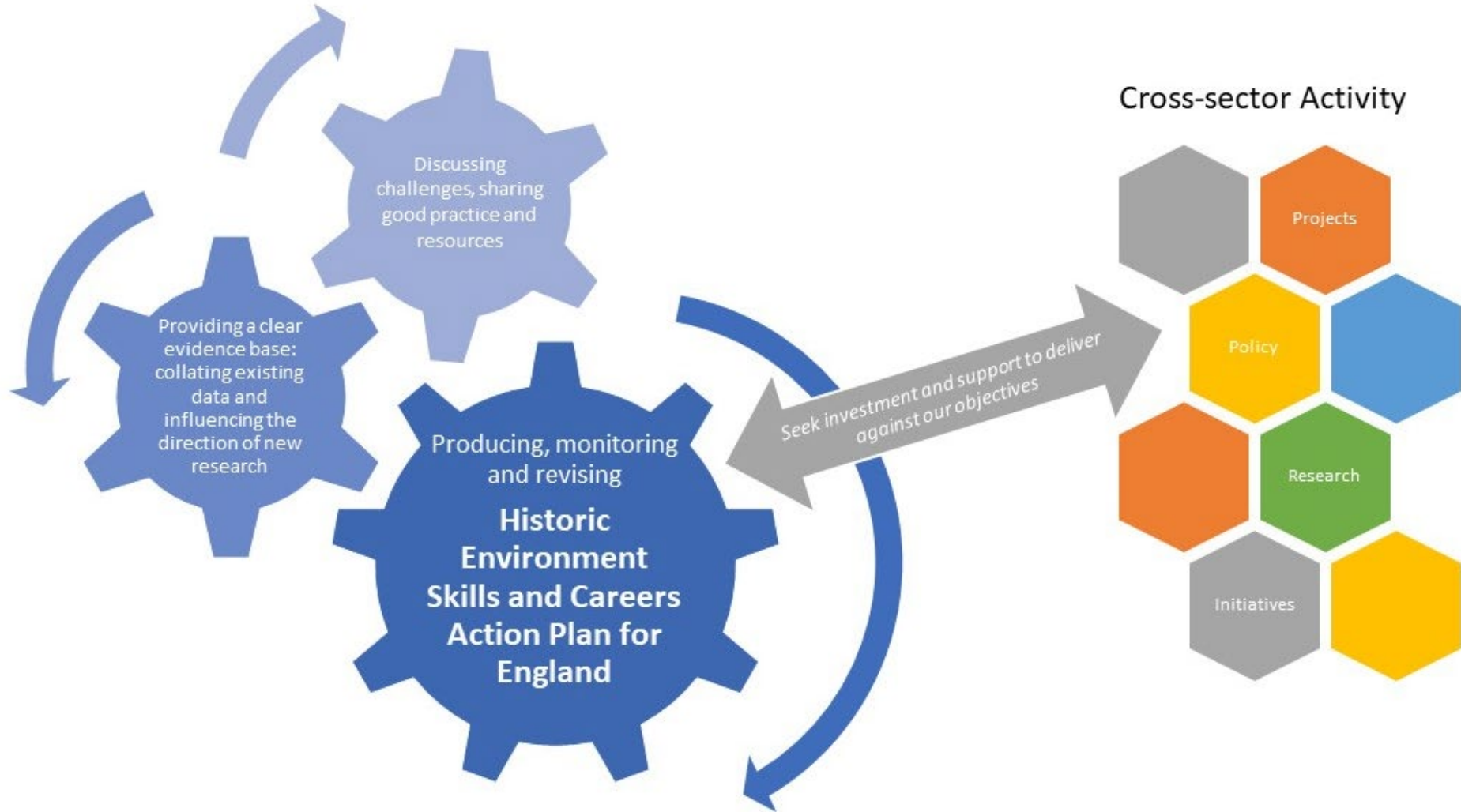


Figure 1: How the Historic Environment Skills Forum will coordinate and prioritise sector skills development activity

A Route-Map to a Historic Environment Skills and Careers Action Plan for England

In order to develop a comprehensive action plan, we acknowledge that some work is needed immediately and the following Route Map outlines priority activity that will be undertaken in advance of publication of the first iteration of HESCAPE (due April 2024).

Much of this work is being delivered by organisations that are Skills Forum members; rather than being discrete projects delivered by the Skills Forum as an individual body.

The role of the Skills Forum Steering Group will be in keeping an overview of this activity and ensuring it is coordinated most effectively; opportunities for collaboration are considered and progress is reported on to Skills Forum members and the wider sector.

The route map comprises four workstreams; however, these will be run in parallel. Commencement of one workstream is not dependant on completion of any other.

Activity listed under each workstream in the table overleaf will have a named Reporting Lead from the Skills Forum Steering Group. This person will take responsibility for reporting on activity progress and making connections between organisations and initiatives. However, they are **not responsible** for the delivery of the activity*.

We will keep the activity tables as live dynamic documents in order to add in any additional initiatives that are identified.

* There may be occasions where a Skills Forum Reporting Lead is also leading on delivery of an activity within their own organisation.

Route-Map Workstreams

Workstream 1: Enabling knowledge sharing around skills across the sector

Workstream 2: Developing the evidence base

Workstream 3: Showcasing initiatives that illustrate success and transferability

Workstream 4: Preparing the Historic Environment Skills and Careers Action Plan for England

Workstream 1: Enabling knowledge sharing around skills across the sector

Through the Skills Forum we will create a space to share information and resources and clearly map existing skills development work is being undertaken across the sector, ensuring we capture all disciplines aligned to the Historic Environment.

Activity/Outputs	Delivery Organisation	Key Partners	Timeframe	Steering Group Reporting Lead
<p>Programme of quarterly Skills Forum webinars; each with a specific theme for discussion. This will enable dissemination of good practice and make connections between organisations.</p>	Historic England	Skills Forum Steering Group	12 month programme published by 1 st October 2023	Phil Pollard
<p>Log of sector skills initiatives held on Heritage Workspace. This will provide impetus to make connections between organisations and share good practice. it will also enable us to understand what is already being done, so as to avoid duplication, or to identify repeatability or scalability.</p>	Historic England	Skills Forum membership	Established by 1 st September 2023 and updated regularly	Phil Pollard
<p>Development of “One Stop Skills Shop”. A repository of materials around skills development, such as case studies, guides, research and templates. Material may be uploaded directly or linked out to existing resources. This will be held on Heritage Workspace but made publicly accessible.</p>	Historic England	Placecube (for development) Steering Group organisations (to populate)	Platform designed and populated with initial material by 1 st February 2024	Phil Pollard

Workstream 2: Developing the Evidence Base

The Skills Forum will identify the need for, contribute to and support delivery of sector wide skills research, in order to establish a coherent, up to date evidence base from which to inform activity. We will influence the design of research and labour market intelligence being conducted to ensure it covers the breadth of historic environment skills and considers both supply and demand. We will collate and categorise existing skills research to ensure it is accessible for analysis and encourage and enable additional evidence in order of sector-wide priority.

Activity/Outputs	Delivery Organisation	Key Partners	Timeframe	Steering Group Reporting Lead
Collate and categorise the existing evidence base for skills gaps/shortages, career entry/development barriers etc across the multiple areas of the sector. Resulting categorised data can be uploaded to the One Stop Shop	TBC	Historic England Sector Professional Bodies National Lottery Heritage Fund	To be completed by end February 2024	TBC
Re-running an updated "Heritage Skills Needs Analysis" (focused on repair, maintenance and retrofit of historic buildings and last undertaken in 2013).	Historic England	Cadw Historic Environment Scotland Dept. of Communities, Northern Ireland CITB	Initial return February 2024.	Phil Pollard
Analysis of sector recruitment 2021-2023 to analyse types and numbers of roles recruited and skills and experience required for these.	TBC	CifA BAJR IHBC ICON Leicester University Museums Jobs Desk	Once commissioned this work should be completed by end of January 2024	TBC

Workstream 3: Showcasing current initiatives that illustrate good practice and transferability

There are a number of specific skills development projects already in operation or commencing ahead of the publication of HESCAPE as a result of previous research or opportunity for action. The Skills Forum will monitor and report on progress and outcomes of these initiatives, providing valuable evidence to the bank, and supporting organisations leading them to identify where they are scalable and/or transferable. Initiatives we have already identified to report on are highlighted below.

Activity/Outputs	Delivery Organisation	Key Partners	Timeframe	Steering Group Reporting Lead
<p>Hamish Ogston Foundation range of Heritage Skills Programmes https://www.hamishogstonfoundation.org/heritage/commonwealth-heritage-skills-training-programme</p> <p>The Hamish Ogston Foundation has pledged over £43million to heritage skills training across 6 different programmes.</p>	<p>Historic England English Heritage Commonwealth Heritage Forum National Trust Cathedral's Workshop Fellowship Historic Environment Scotland</p>	<p>Host organisations Training Providers</p>	<p>Ongoing, however interim reporting/ lessons learnt to be shared March/April 2024</p>	<p>Rob Woodside</p>
<p>Historic England Emerging Talent Programme. Opportunities for sector organisations to provide summer introductory work placements for under-represented groups, and host 6 month Step Up work placements for "alumni"</p>	<p>Historic England</p>	<p>Cifa ICON IHBC FAME Heritage Alliance</p>	<p>3-year project, with hosts recruited Spring 2024</p>	<p>Phil Pollard</p>
<p>York Minster Centre of Excellence for Heritage Craft Skills https://yorkminster.org/discover/centre-of-excellence-for-heritage-craft-skills-and-estate-management/</p> <p>York Minster are investing £8.5 million in creating a new centre for excellence to train apprentices in</p>	<p>York Minster</p>	<p>Training Providers Potential partner firms</p>	<p>Expected to be completed summer 2024</p>	<p>TBC</p>

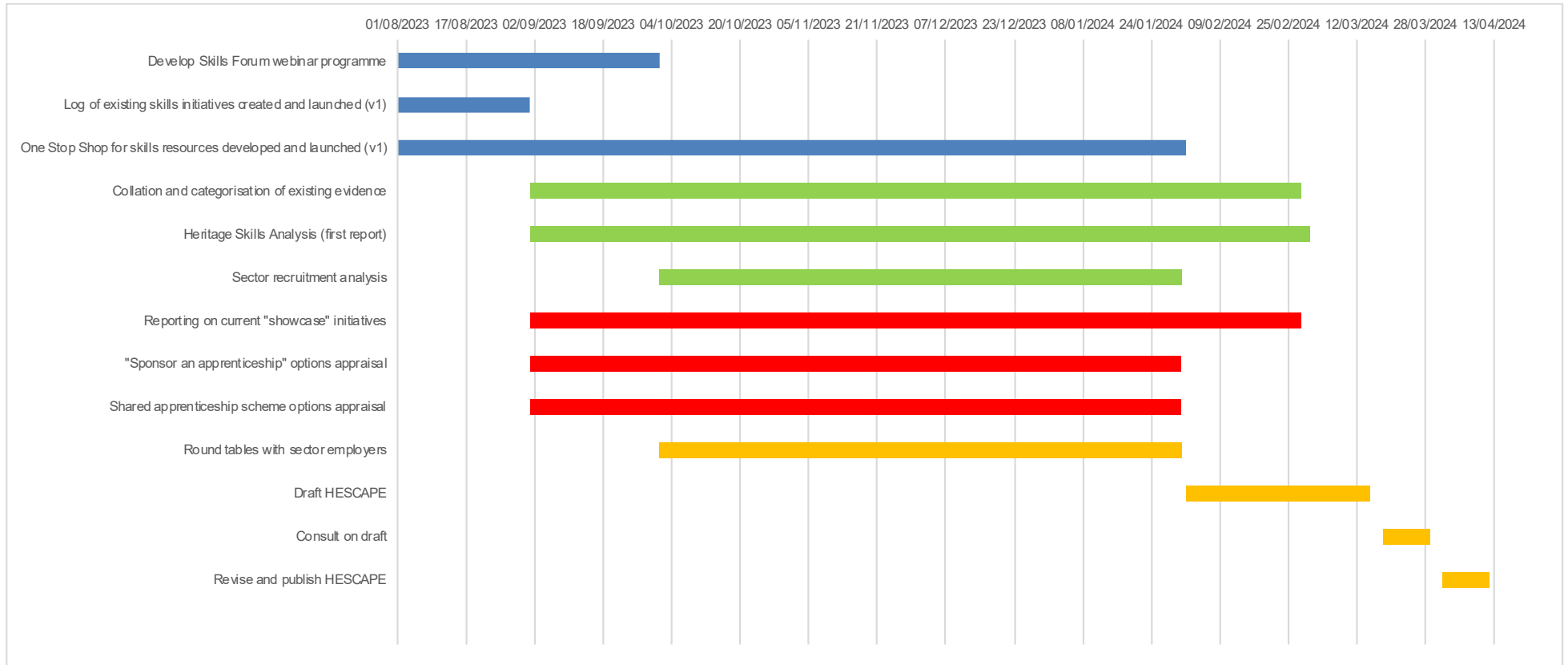
applying modern techniques and “cutting edge” digital facilities to traditional buildings; developing their own future workforce and providing training for the sector.				
Development of “Sponsor a Heritage Apprentice” Scheme. This would be a scheme drawing in a range of philanthropic funders to create a pot of money that could be used to provide grants to sector employers to host and train an apprentice	Historic England	Skills Forum membership	Scheme investigation and options appraisal completed by February 2024.	Phil Pollard
Development of Historic Environment Shared Apprenticeship Scheme. Such schemes already operate in sectors such as construction, where groups of employers are not able to take on apprentices for the full required time. Shared Apprenticeship Agencies employ the apprentices and place with different hosts.	Historic England	Registered Shared Apprenticeship Agencies	Pilot scheme investigation and options appraisal completed by February 2024	Phil Pollard

Workstream 4: Preparing the Historic Environment Skills and Careers Action Plan for England

The Skills Forum, through the Steering Group, will publish the initial iteration of HESCAPE in April 2024.

Activity/Outputs	Delivery Organisation	Key Partners	Timeframe	Steering Group Reporting Lead
Undertake a series of 4 round tables (N,S,E,W) with employers focused on discussion of existing evidence and prioritisation of future activity	Steering Group	Skills Forum Members to act as host venues	October 2023 – January 2024	N/A
Drafting the HESCAPE document Review evidence from workstreams 1-3 and round tables Identify and prioritise activity that can be undertaken Identify further research needed Identify funding requirements Set review and update points	Steering Group	N/A	1 st February – 15 th March 2024	N/A
Consult Skills Forum membership on HESCAPE draft through an online survey	Historic England	Skills Forum Membership	18 th – 29 th March 2024	N/A
Revise and Publish the HESCAPE first iteration document	Steering Group	N/A	1 st – 12 th April 2024	N/A

Route-Map Gantt chart



Workstream 1	Enabling knowledge sharing around skills across the sector
Workstream 2	Developing the evidence base
Workstream 3	Showcasing initiatives that illustrate success and transferability
Workstream 4	Preparing the Historic Environment Skills and Careers Action Plan for England

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