

# Employer Facing Provision



Leading learning and skills

3 September 2008

## Cheshire & Warrington Strategic Analysis – Employer Facing Provision

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- 1 This section of the Strategic Analysis looks at provision within Cheshire & Warrington that responds directly to employer need. This area of training provision has been given increasing focus in recent years as the Learning and Skills Council moves towards a “Demand Led” system and responds to the challenges set out by Lord Leitch.

### PSA Targets

- 2 The Public Service Agreement (PSA) indicators shown in the box below are national aspirations. Each Local Area within the North West has its own relative position against these figures. For some local areas these targets could appear to be very challenging, for others the gap may not be as large. However, each local area has its own contribution to make to the national picture, even if these targets are not disaggregated to lower geographical levels.

## PSA Indicators - 2011

- 79 per cent of adults qualified to at least Full Level 2
- 56 per cent of adults qualified to at least Full Level 3
- 130,000 apprentices to complete the full apprenticeship

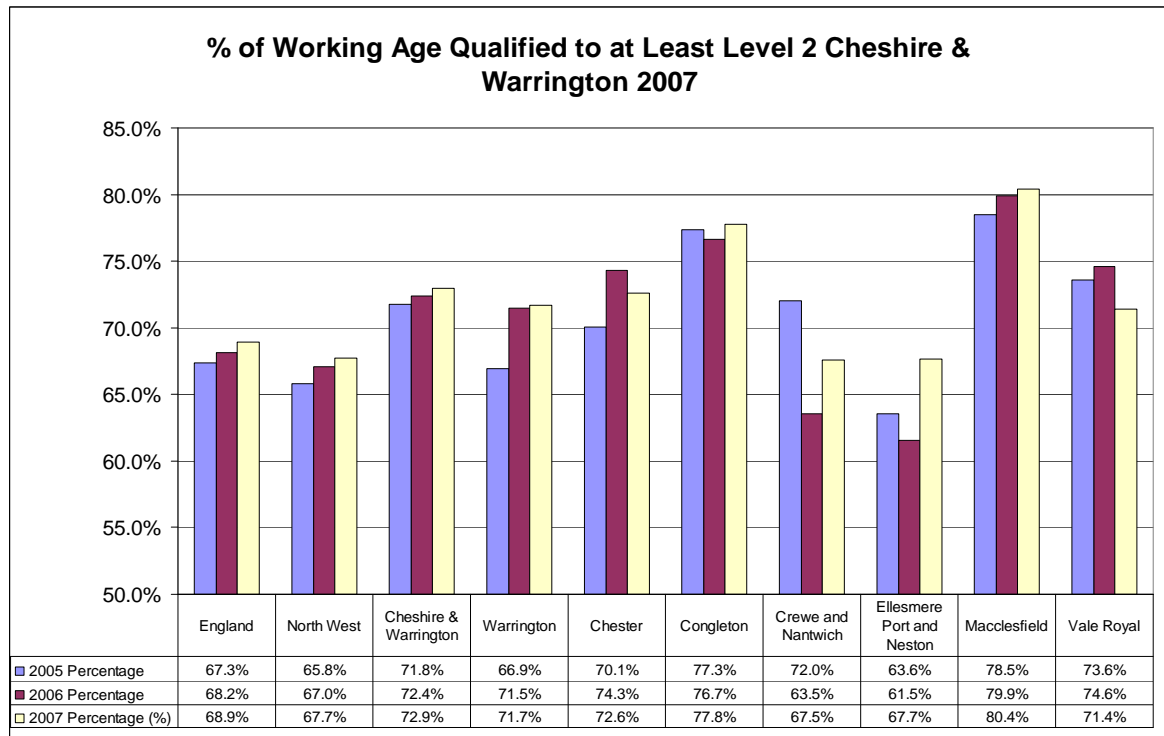
### Level 2

- 3 The latest data from the Annual Population Survey shows that 72.9 per cent of working age people in Cheshire and Warrington are qualified to at least level 2 (working age is defined here as 19-59/64<sup>1</sup>). This is a slight increase from the 2005 data and is above the regional and national rates, although the gap has narrowed with both since 2005.
- 4 When analysing Annual Population Survey data, especially at smaller geographical levels the confidence interval associated with the data has to be considered. For example, the data shown below for Warrington indicates that there has been a 4.8 percentage points increase between 2005 and 2007, however this data has a confidence interval of 2.7 per cent associated with it therefore any increase may not be quite as high as stated, however the key message is of positive movement in the period.
- 5 Cheshire East (including Congleton, Crewe & Nantwich and Macclesfield) has a rate of working age level 2 attainment of 75.6 per cent in 2007. This has increased by 1.7 percentage points from the previous year. These percentages mean that there are approximately 50,000 people of working age in Cheshire East without a level 2 qualification.
- 6 In Cheshire West (including Chester, Ellesmere Port & Neston and Vale Royal) the rate of working age people with at least a level 2 qualification is 70.9 per cent, this has declined slightly from the previous year. This data means that approximately 54,000 working age people in Cheshire West do not have a level 2 qualification.
- 7 In Warrington 71.7 per cent of working age people hold at least a level 2 qualification, which has increased by 4.8 percentage points since 2005. This rate is above the regional and national averages and the gap has increased in this period.
- 8 Please use the following link to access information regarding adult level 2 targets suggested for Local Area Agreements  
<http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelId=8399572> – (note: information correct as at 10/09/2008).

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<sup>1</sup> Age 59 for females, 64 for males

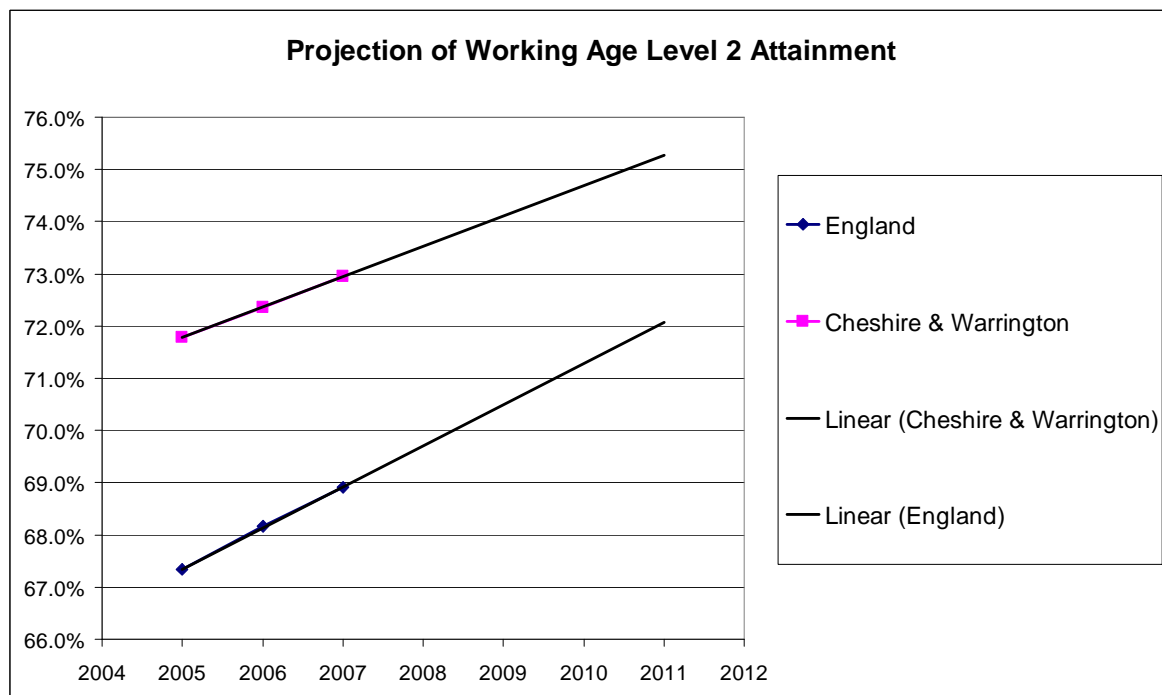
**Figure 1: Proportion of the Working Age Population Qualified to at Least Level 2 – West Lancashire Area**



Source: Annual Population Survey (APS) 2007

- 9 Based on current performance, we can estimate that up to 2011 the rate of working age level 2 attainment will stay in front of the national rate, however the gap will narrow.
- 10 Figure 2 shows that if current performance (+ 1.1% points over 3 years) is to continue Cheshire and Warrington will fall short of the national indicator for 2011 of 79 per cent by around 4 percentage points. The rate of attainment for Cheshire and Warrington would have to increase to +1.5 percentage points each year in order to meet the national target level.

**Figure 2: Proportion of Working Age Qualified to at Least Level 2 - Projection to 2011**

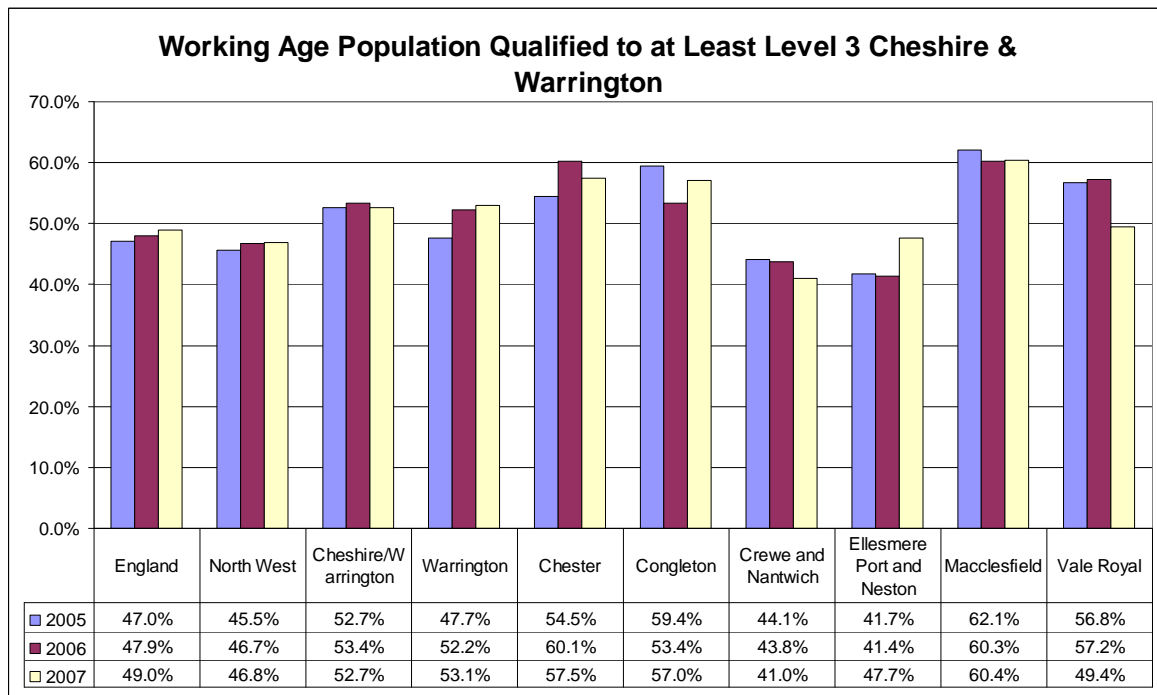


Source: Annual Population Survey (APS) 2007 & LSC NW Projections

### Level 3

- 11 52.7 per cent of working age people in Cheshire and Warrington are qualified to at least level 3. This rate has remained static since 2005. The rate for Cheshire and Warrington is above the North West and national averages but the gap has narrowed slightly over the last 3 years (Figure 3).
- 12 Within Cheshire East, which comprises Congleton, Crewe & Nantwich and Macclesfield, the highest rate of attainment is seen in Macclesfield (60.4%), however this is a reduction of 1.7 percentage points over 3 years. The lowest rate of attainment is in Crewe & Nantwich (41%) and has reduced by 3.1 percentage points since 2005. Around 108,000 people in Cheshire East have attained a level 3 qualification.
- 13 In Cheshire West, which includes Chester, Ellesmere Port & Neston and Vale Royal, the highest rate of level 3 attainment is in Chester (57.5%), which is an increase of 3 percentage points over 3 years. The Lowest rate of attainment is in Ellesmere Port & Neston (47.7%) although this area had a sharp increase in attainment in 2007 (+6% Points). It is important to consider a confidence interval of 8.2 percentage points with this statistic. A total of 96,000 people in Cheshire West have achieved a level 3 qualification or above.
- 14 53.1 per cent of working age people in Warrington are qualified to at least a level 3. This has increased by 5.4 percentage points since 2005 and represents a total of 60,000 people. This rate of attainment is also above the regional and national rates.

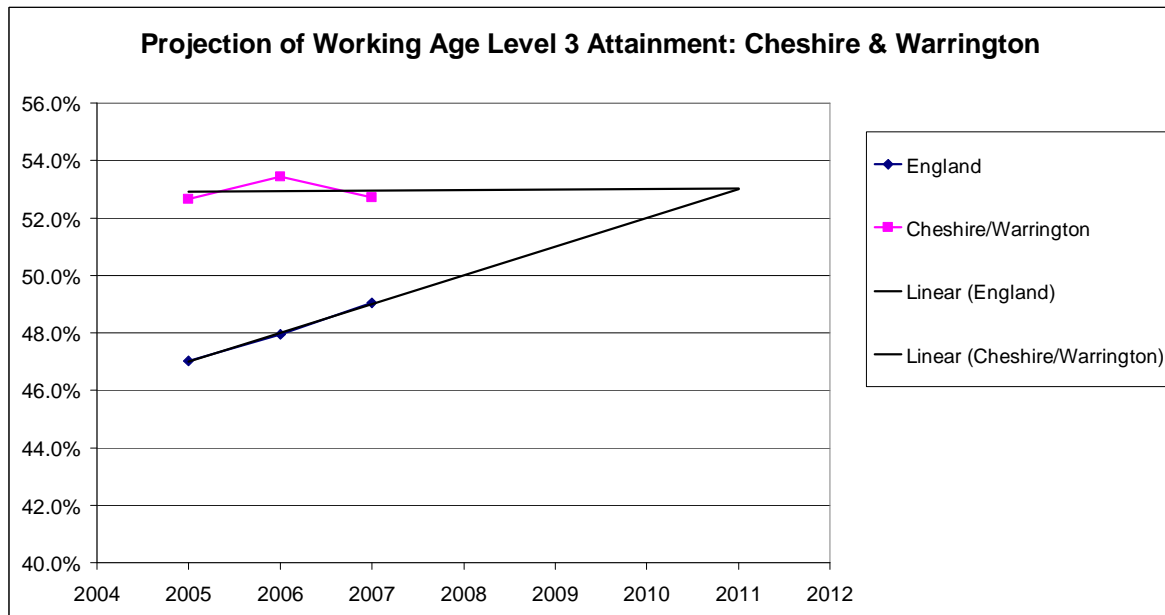
**Figure 3: Proportion of the Working Age Population Qualified to at Least Level 3**



Source: Annual Population Survey 2007

- 15 Figure 4 shows that if recent trends in level 3 attainment are maintained in Cheshire and Warrington only a slight increase will be achieved by 2011, the data shows that Cheshire and Warrington would be level with the national rate (around 53%) if current performance is sustained. Both the local and national totals would therefore fall short of the national target of 56 per cent of the working age population qualified to at least level 3 by 2011. If the target is to be achieved, Cheshire and Warrington would require an increase of around 0.8 percentage points per year up to 2011.

**Figure 4: Proportion of Working Age Qualified to at Least Level 3 - Projection to 2011**



Source: Annual Population Survey (APS) 2007 & LSC NW Projections

## Apprenticeships

- 16 Although the national Apprenticeship target of 130,000 completions in the year 2010/11 has not been dis-aggregated to lower geographical levels (at the time of writing) an assessment of Apprenticeship performance is still helpful in planning provision. Please see the performance section later in this chapter.

## Cheshire & Warrington

### Employer Size

- 17 Although the overall balance of employers by size is similar to the regional and national pictures, there are slight variations in Cheshire & Warrington (Figure 5).
- 18 A higher proportion of the overall number of businesses in Cheshire & Warrington employ between 1 and 10 people than the North West regional average. This could suggest higher levels of entrepreneurial activity.
- 19 The total volume of employers in Cheshire and Warrington, according to the Annual Business Enquiry 2006 is 37,706 of which 7,776 are in Warrington.

**Figure 5: Businesses by Size**

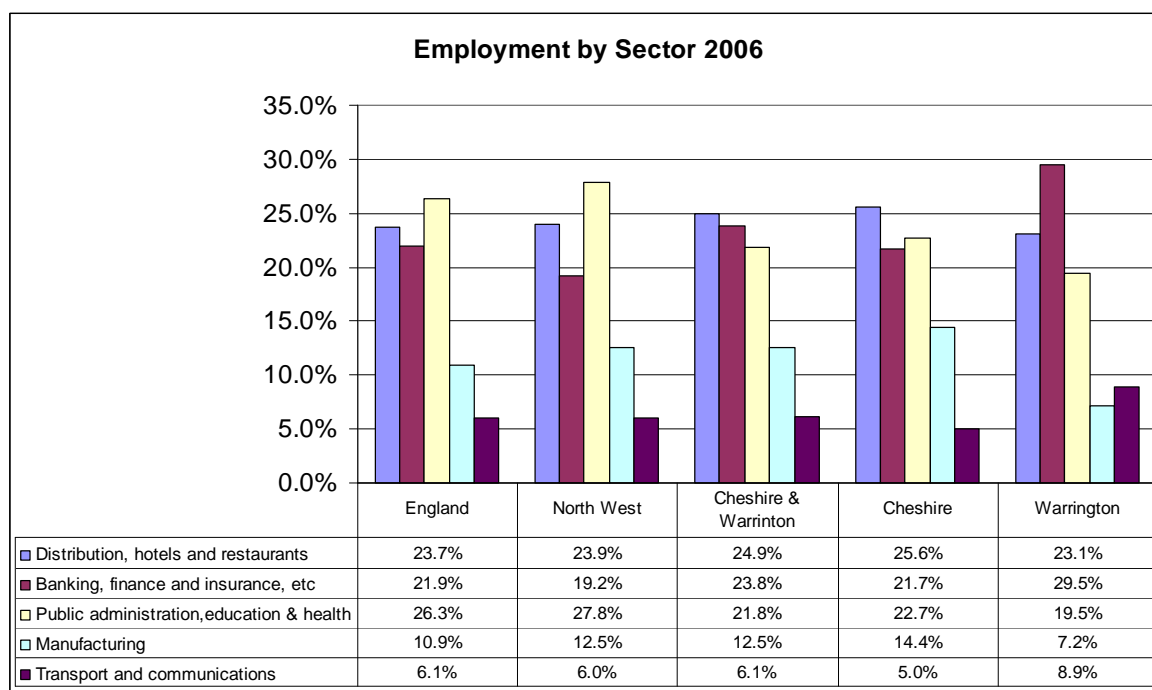
	<b>1-10 employees</b>	<b>11-49 employees</b>	<b>50-199 employees</b>	<b>200 or more employees</b>
England	84.6%	11.9%	2.8%	0.7%
North West	82.8%	13.3%	3.2%	0.7%
<b>Cheshire &amp; Warrington</b>	<b>84.2%</b>	<b>12.2%</b>	<b>2.9%</b>	<b>0.7%</b>
Chester	82.6%	13.5%	3.1%	0.8%
Congleton	87.5%	10.1%	2.1%	0.3%
Crewe and Nantwich	82.5%	13.5%	3.1%	0.9%
Ellesmere Port and Neston	78.8%	16.5%	4.0%	0.7%
Macclesfield	87.6%	9.8%	2.2%	0.4%
Vale Royal	85.3%	11.5%	2.7%	0.5%
Warrington	81.7%	13.4%	3.8%	1.2%

Source: Annual Business Enquiry (ABI) 2006

## **Industrial Sectors of Cheshire & Warrington**

- 20 Figure 6 shows the 5 sectors in Cheshire & Warrington that employ the highest volumes of people. These figures are taken from the Annual Business Enquiry (ABI) 2006 and should be used alongside other economic data such as working futures and Department for Work and Pensions Benefit Claimants data to give a complete picture of employment in an area.
- 21 The industry sector that employs the most people in Cheshire & Warrington is Distribution, Hotels and Restaurants (24.9% of the workforce). This is a higher proportion than both the North West and England.
- 22 The diversity of the Cheshire and Warrington LSC area is reflected by the fact that the picture in Warrington is quite different, by far the highest proportion of the workforce in Warrington are employed in the Banking, Finance & Insurance sector (29.5%), much higher than in Cheshire (21.7%) and in the North West (19.2%).

**Figure 6: Economic Structure of Cheshire & Warrington 2006**



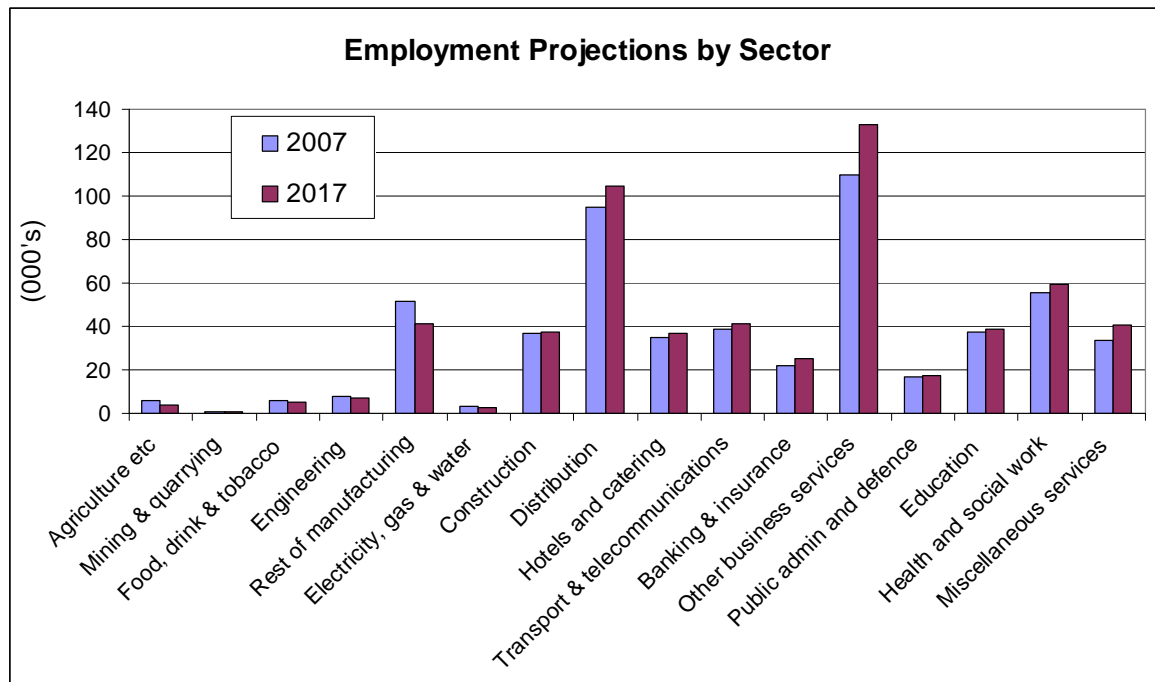
Source: Annual Business Enquiry (ABI) 2006

## Future of the Economy

- 23 The following economic projections are taken from the Working Futures 3 study from Warwick University's Institute for Economic Research, the information used here is based on the ABI data such as that shown above, but the two data sets may not align precisely. As with all economic forecasting information direction of travel (rather than exact volume changes) should be the key message drawn from analysis.
- 24 Absolute levels of employment (shown in thousands) are projected to 2017 in Figure 7. **Overall volumes of employed people in Cheshire and Warrington are forecast to grow** by 6.9 per cent (+38,000) to 594,000.
- 25 Other Business Services is expected to increase by 22,800 employees in the next decade, which equates to an increase of 20.8 per cent. This sector accounts for 59.5 per cent of the total increase in employed people in Cheshire & Warrington across all sectors and includes sub-sectors of Real Estate, Renting of Goods, Computing, Research & Development and Professional Services.
- 26 Given the current economic climate, this estimate of a modest increase for Banking and Insurance should be closely monitored and any short term forecasting would not be advised. As previously stated, this is an area of particularly high employment in Warrington and the impact of the current economic downturn could be seen here.

- 27 Sectors that are forecast to have a decrease in the volume of people employed in the next decade include: Rest of Manufacturing<sup>2</sup> (-10,300), Agriculture (-1,700) and Food, Drink & Tobacco (-1,000).

**Figure 7: Employment Projections by Sector 2007-2017**



Source: Working Futures 3

### National Employer Skills Survey (NESS)

- 28 The National Employer Skills Survey (NESS) for 2007 indicates that:
- 3.7 per cent of employers in Cheshire & Warrington have Skills Shortage Vacancies
- 29 The volume of skills shortage vacancies has halved since the previous NESS in 2005 (to 1,896 in 2007) and is below the regional rate (4%).
- 14.4 per cent of establishments have skills gaps
- 30 This has reduced from 16.2 per cent in 2005 and is similar to the regional rate. However this percentage does equate to 27,800 skills gaps in Cheshire and Warrington
- 49.2 per cent of employers have a training plan for their staff
- 31 This is below the regional rate of 50.7% but has increased from 46.7 per cent in 2005.

<sup>2</sup> Rest of Manufacturing Includes: Textiles, Clothing, Leather, Wood, Paper, Publishing & Printing, Manufactured Fuels, Pharmaceuticals, Chemicals, Rubber & Plastics, Non-metallic Mineral Products, Basic Metals, Metal Goods, Motor Vehicles, Aerospace, Other Transport Equipment, Manufacturing, Recycling

## Employer Responsive Provision

- 32 Employer responsive training provision must meet the needs of the local economy as set out in this chapter. The following pages analyse government funded training provision in light of the local economic environment as well as the wider policy context.

### The Required Growth Through Train to Gain

- 33 The Regional Strategic Analysis of Employer Responsive Provision<sup>3</sup> contains information on the planned growth of Train to Gain in the next few years. These trajectories have been provided at regional level, however it is not appropriate at to disaggregate this to sub-regional level due to regional contracting arrangements associated with Train to Gain provision.
- 34 Overall planned growth for Train to Gain in the North West is 54.9 per cent, with the highest level of growth seen in Skills For Life (+174.2%) between 2007/08 and 2010/11. Level 2 volumes have a planned increase of 27.4 per cent (+14,500 L2 Starts).
- 35 Although these targets have not been disaggregated below regional level, each sub-region should monitor their contribution to this target.

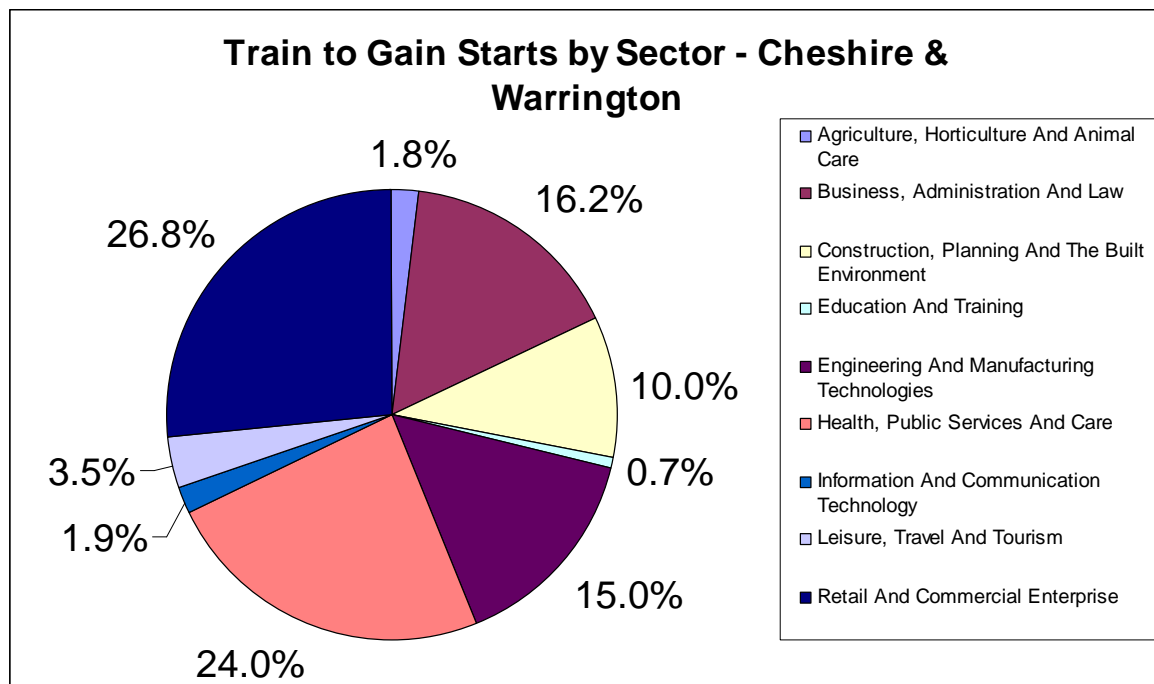
### Have We Delivered Provision To Learners In The Major Sectors Of Employment?

- 36 According to the ABI information shown in Figure 6, The Distribution Hotels & Restaurants Sector employs the highest proportion of people in Cheshire & Warrington. Public Administration, Education and Health also accounts for high levels of employment.
- 37 In Warrington, Banking, Finance and Insurance is a key sector of employment.
- 38 All 3 of these sectors are expected to increase their volume of employees locally in the next decade.
- 39 However, the largest proportion of growth is set to occur in the Other business services sector, consideration could be given to supporting this growth through training provision.
- 40 Figure 8 shows the proportion of Train to Gain Starts in each industry sector in 2007/08 (P12) in Cheshire & Warrington. **The highest proportion of starts was in Retail & Commercial Enterprise (26.8%)**, this appears to be concurrent with both the ABI data above and the Working Futures 3 analysis described earlier, which shows that this sector accounts for high volumes of employment and is set to grow in future.

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<sup>3</sup> Available at <http://www.lsc.gov.uk/regions/NorthWest/NorthWestStrategicAnalysis.htm>

**Figure 8: Cheshire & Warrington Train to Gain Starts by Sector 2007/08**



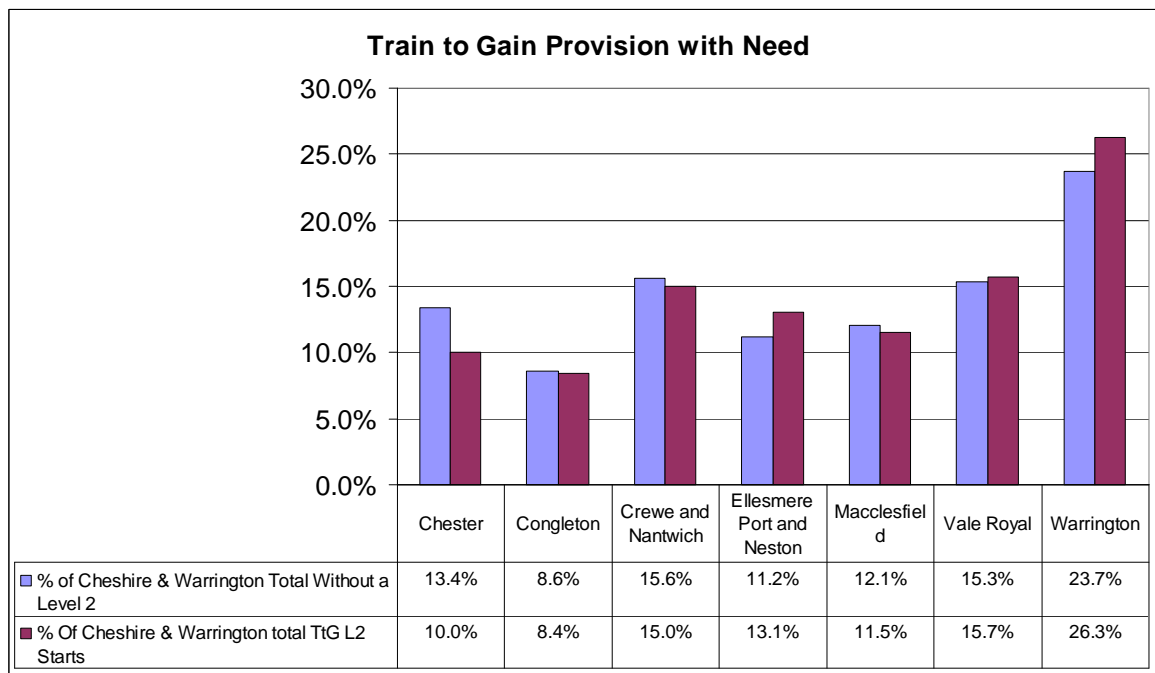
Source: Train to Gain ILR 2007/08 (P12)

### Have We Engaged and Delivered In The Areas Where Provision Is Needed?

- 41 Figure 9 shows the proportion of the total Cheshire & Warrington Train to Gain Starts in each local area (residency based learner volumes) together with the proportion of the total Cheshire and Warrington working age population without a level 2 qualification in each local area.
- 42 This information can be used as part of a wider assessment of Train to Gain delivery to see if provision is being delivered according to need.
- 43 Figure 9 suggests that **Train to Gain provision is broadly in line with need**, however Chester and Crewe & Nantwich appear to have a slight shortfall in learner numbers, however this statement should be placed in context of 1) other provision eg Further Education / Apprenticeships as well as the proportion of employed people in the area.
- 44 This analysis should be conducted alongside the qualifications profile of the economically active population of Cheshire & Warrington<sup>4</sup>, this information for 2007 is unavailable at the time of writing. For example, the apparent shortfall in Chester might be explained by the relatively high rate of economic inactivity in the area (22.5%), and the gap could be made up by provision aimed at this group.

<sup>4</sup> Analysis of the Economically Active Population would be more appropriate because Train to Gain provision is aimed at those who are employed. – 2007 Data unavailable at the time of writing

**Figure 9: Train to Gain Delivery with Qualification Profile by District**

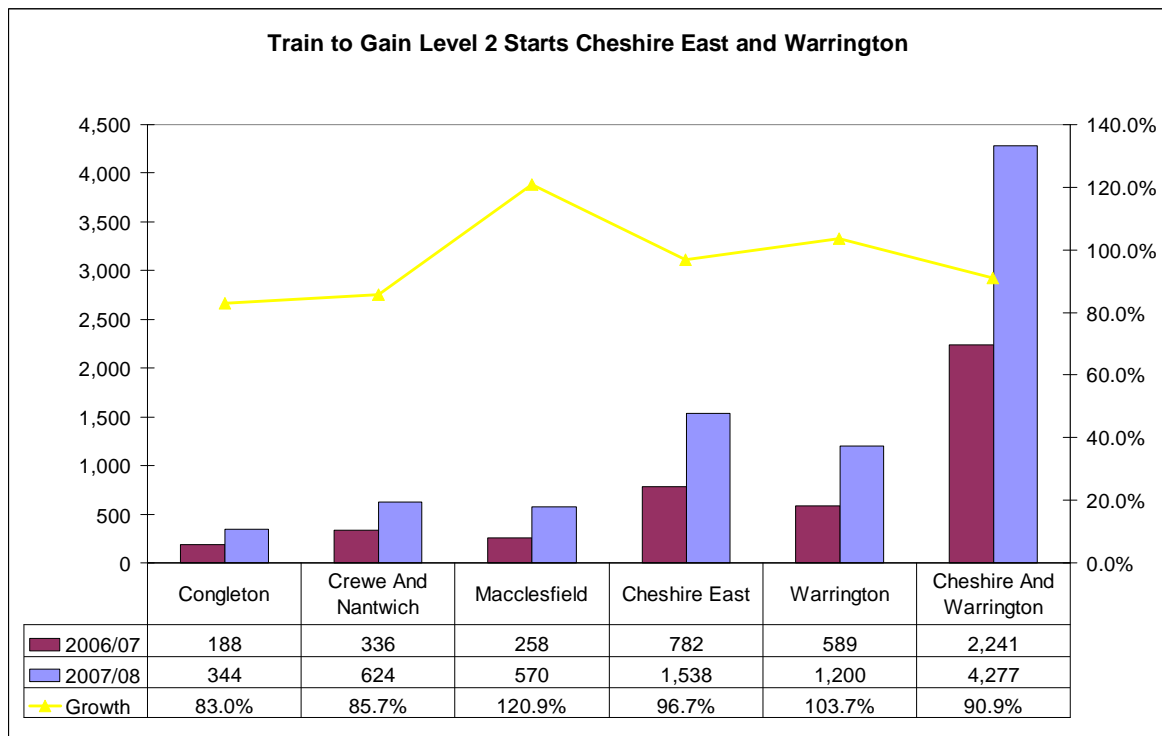


Source: Train to Gain ILR 2007/08 (P12) & Annual Population Survey 2007

### Train to Gain Starts

- 45 Figure 10 shows the volume of Train to Gain (TtG) level 2 starts in Warrington and in Cheshire East in 2006/07 and 2007/08.
- 46 In 2007/08 there were 1,538 level 2 Train to Gain starts in Cheshire East, this represents an increase of 96.7 per cent from the previous year. Within Cheshire East the highest volume of starts was in Crewe & Nantwich (570), this area also had the highest rate of growth from 2006/07 (+120.9%).
- 47 Cheshire East accounted for 50 per cent of the overall volume of starts for Cheshire and 35.9 per cent of the total starts for Cheshire and Warrington.
- 48 Train to Gain Level 2 starts in Warrington grew by 103.7 per cent to 1,200 in 2007/08 (Period 12). This represents 28.5 per cent of the overall Cheshire and Warrington figure for 2007/08.

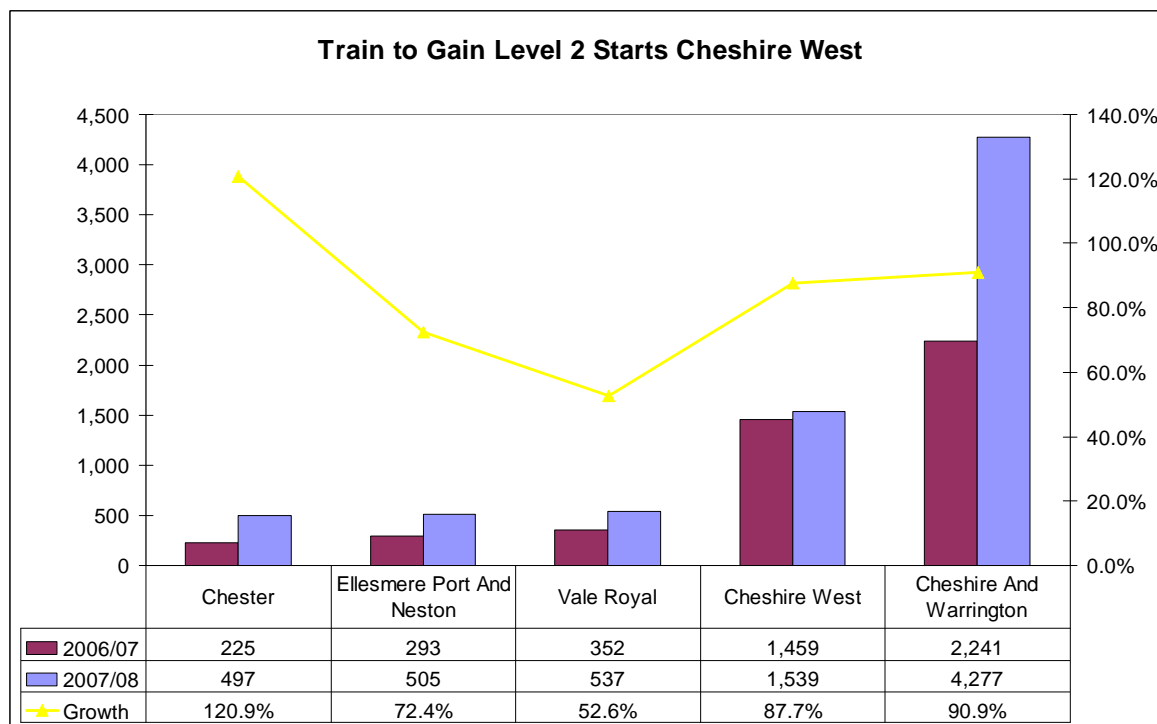
**Figure 10: Train to Gain Level 2 Starts –Warrington & Cheshire East**



Source: Train to Gain ILR 2006/07 (P12) & 2007/08 (P12)

49 Train to Gain Level 2 starts in Cheshire West grew by 87.7 per cent to 1,539 in 2007/08. This represents 50 per cent of the overall volume for Cheshire and 35.9 per cent of the total for Cheshire and Warrington. The distribution between districts in 2007/08 is approximately even, however the levels of growth in each area vary considerably. The volume of starts in Vale Royal grew by 52.6 per cent, where as the growth seen in Chester was 120.9 per cent.

**Figure 11: Train to Gain Starts Cheshire West**



Source: Train to Gain ILR 2006/07 (P12) & 2007/08 (P12)

## FE Employer Facing Provision

50 The 2007/08 FE F04<sup>5</sup> Data return shows that Cheshire and Warrington accounts for 7.5 per cent of the region's FE 19+ Employer Facing Full Level 2 provision and 10.1 per cent of the regional Full Level 3 total. This mirrors trends seen in the skills attainment profile of the working age population (higher levels of people already qualified at level 2 than other areas).

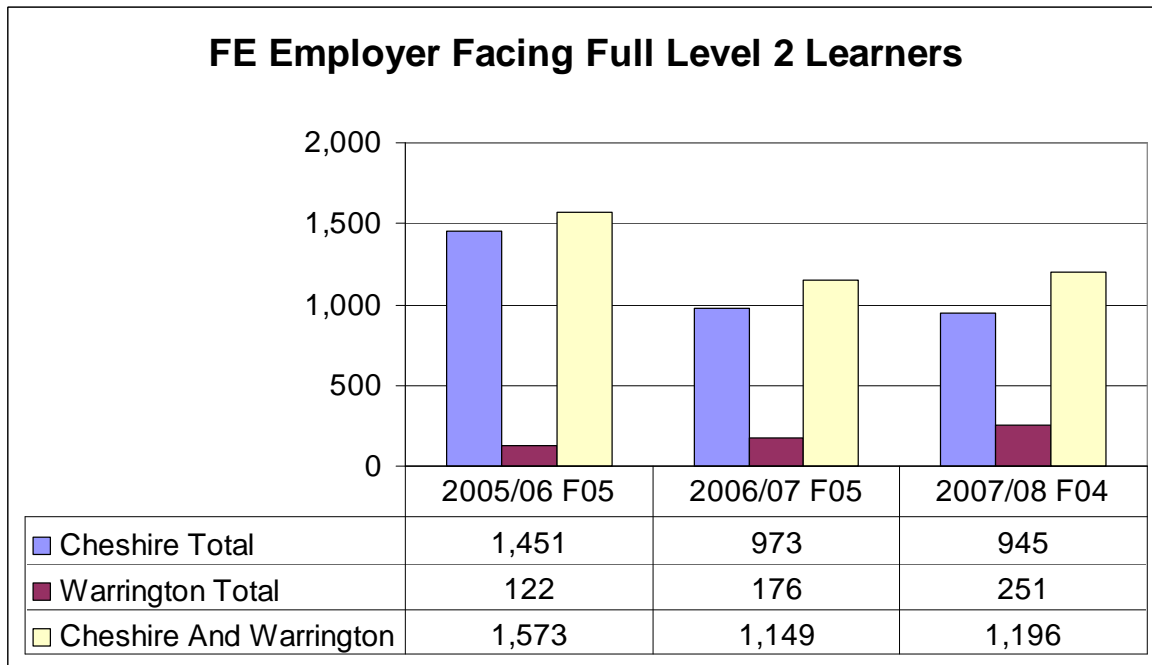
### Employer Facing FE Full Level 2 Starts

- 51 Cheshire and Warrington accounted for 7.5 per cent of the regional FE employer facing Level 2 total in 2007/08 (F04), this is a lower proportion than at level 3.
- 52 The volume of employer facing FE level 2 starts in Cheshire and Warrington reduced by 23.9 per cent between 2005/06 (F05) and 2007/08 (F04) to 1,196. This is due to the large reduction seen in Cheshire in this period.
- 53 Between 2005/06 and 2006/07 Cheshire experienced a reduction of 478 starts (or -32.9%). It is possible that this reduction could be a result of displacement caused by the introduction of Train to Gain in 2006/07. Cheshire's Train to Gain level 2 starts in 2006/07 were 2,241, more than double the FE employer facing level 2 starts for the same year.
- 54 In Warrington FE employer facing learner volumes are quite low, this may indicate that other employer facing provision meets needs in this area.

<sup>5</sup> Further Education Data is made available to analysts at 3 main points in a year – F01 – F04 and F05 Data returns

However, FE employer facing level 2 learner volumes have seen steady growth during the period (+105% to 251 in 2007/08).

**Figure 12: Employer Responsive FE Full Level 2 Provision**

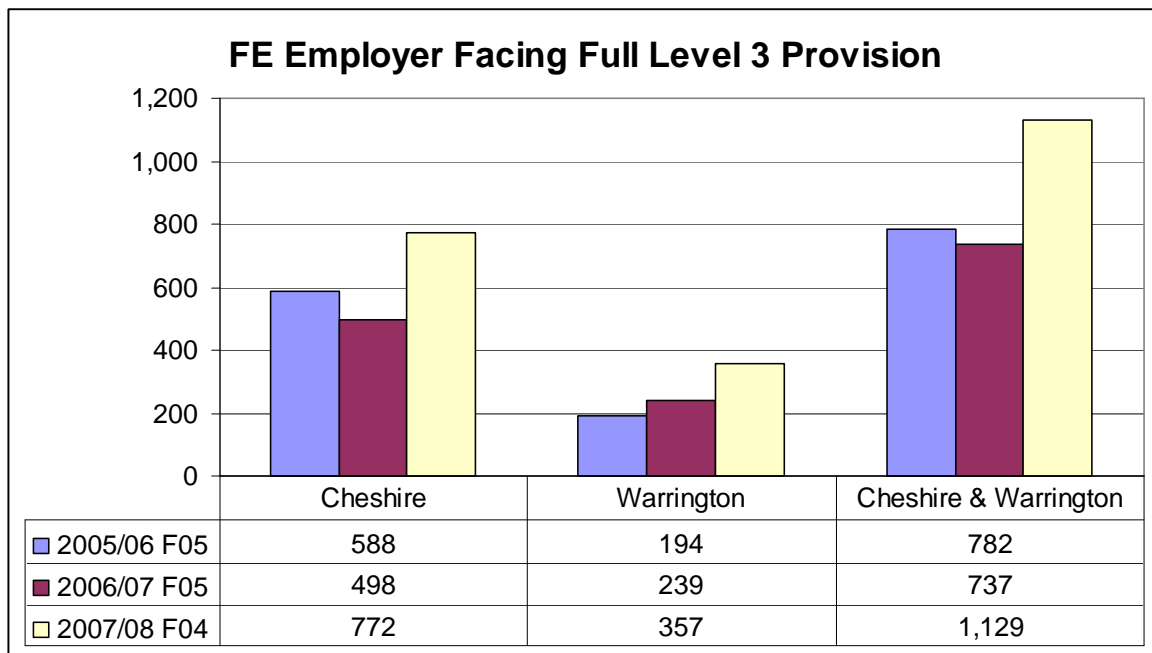


Source: FE ILR 2005/06 (F05) to 2007/08 (F04)

### Employer Facing FE Full Level 3 Starts

- 55 **Cheshire and Warrington LSC area has 101,570 people who are qualified to level 2 only, which is 12.4 per cent of the regional total. However, the LSC area only accounts for 10 per cent of FE level 3 employer facing provision.** Further analysis may be required to determine if this indicates issues of progression in certain areas or if this apparent gap is being addressed through other funding streams.
- 56 Cheshire has had overall growth of 31 per cent across the three year period shown in Figure 13, which represents an increase of 184 learners.
- 57 Warrington has grown its level 3 employer facing FE provision by 84 per cent which equates to 163 learners and has increased consistently in each year.

**Figure 13: Employer Responsive FE Full Level 3 Provision**



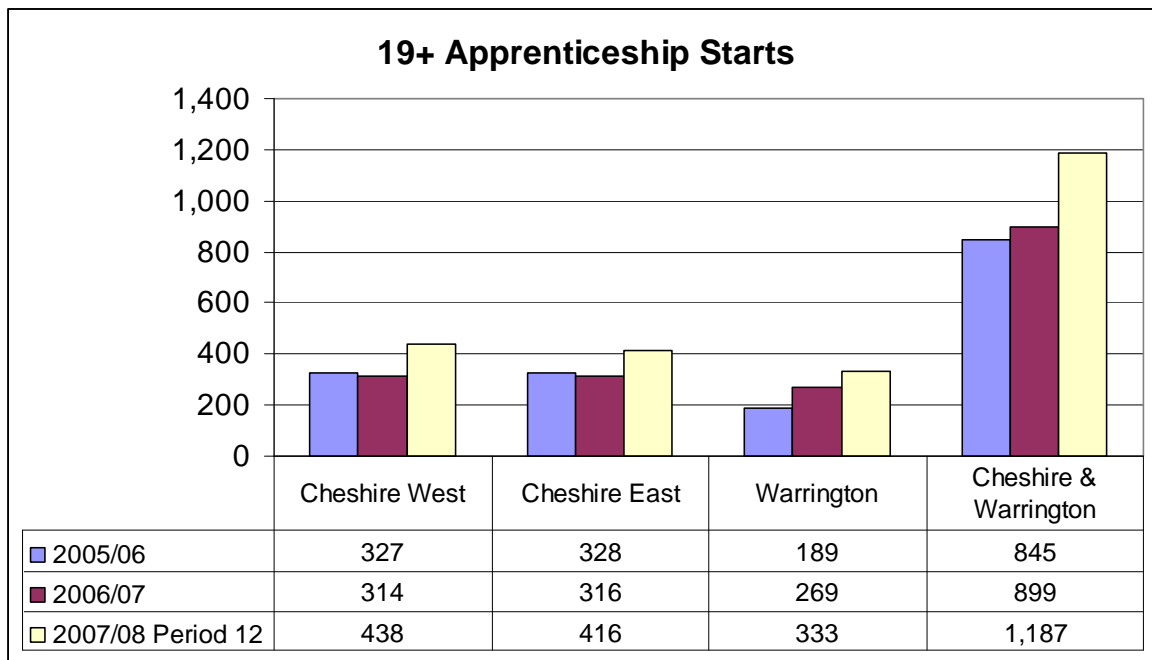
Source: FE ILR 2005/06 (F05) to 2007/08 (F04)

### The Required Growth in Apprenticeships

- 58 The growth expected in Apprenticeship provision in England is assessed in the regional strategic analysis (Employer Responsive Provision) and is referred to in this document (Paragraph 16). The following analysis looks at Apprenticeships in Cheshire and Warrington for learners aged 19+<sup>6</sup>.
- 59 Figure 14 shows the volume of starts on 19+ Apprenticeships (Level 2) in Cheshire and Warrington between 2005/06 and 2007/08 Period 12. The data shown is based on the residency of the learner, rather than where the employer is based.
- 60 In 2007/08 Cheshire & Warrington had 1,187 19+ Apprenticeship starts, which was an increase of 40.5 per cent from 2005/06 and represents 12.3 per cent of the North West total starts, but accounts for 13.4 per cent of the region's growth in starts, therefore has grown at a slightly higher rate than the North West as a whole.
- 61 Both Cheshire East and West have very similar levels of starts (416 and 438 respectively) and similar rates of growth over 3 years (26.8% & 33.9% respectively). Both areas also experienced a slight 'dip' in volumes in 2006/07 and have recovered in the following year.
- 62 Warrington has had consistent growth in each of the three years shown. Over the whole period there has been a 76.2 per cent increase in 19 apprenticeship starts, rising by 144 to 333 in 2007/08 (P12).

<sup>6</sup> Note: Apprenticeships for those aged under 19 are addressed in the 14-19 Strategic Analysis

**Figure 14: Apprenticeship Starts**

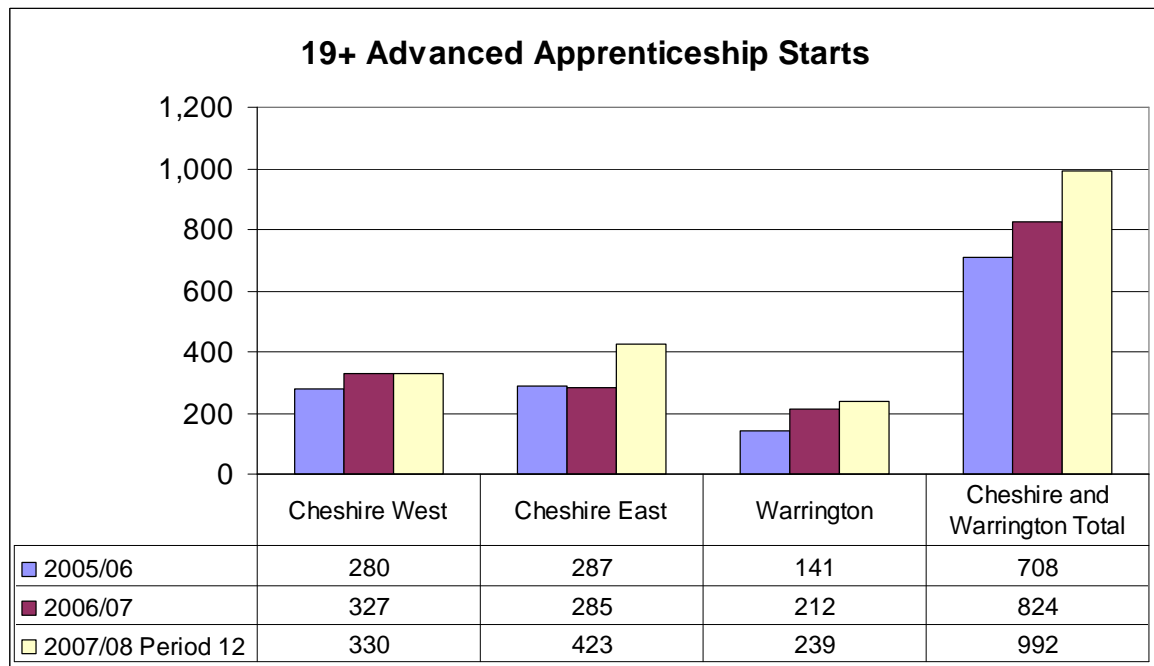


Source: Work-based Learning ILR 2005/06 to 2007/08 (P12) (Residency Based)

- 63 Figure 15 shows the volume of starts on 19+ Advanced Apprenticeships<sup>7</sup> in Cheshire & Warrington 2005/06 to 2007/08 period 12. The data shown is based on the residency of the learner rather than provider / employer location.
- 64 Cheshire and Warrington had 992 starts in 2007/08 (P12) which was an increase of 40.1 per cent from 2005/06.
- 65 Cheshire and Warrington accounted for 15 per cent of the total North West Adult Advanced Apprenticeship starts in 2007/08, this has increased slightly since 2005/06.
- Cheshire East had 47.4 per cent growth in the period between 2005/06 and 2007/08. An increase of 136 starts to 423.
  - Cheshire West had 17.9 per cent growth (+50) to 330.
  - Warrington experienced growth of 69.5 per cent (+98) to 239 learners in 2007/08.

<sup>7</sup> Advanced Apprenticeships are those which include a Level 3 qualification, whereas Apprenticeships comprise a Level 2.

**Figure 15: Advanced Apprenticeship Starts**



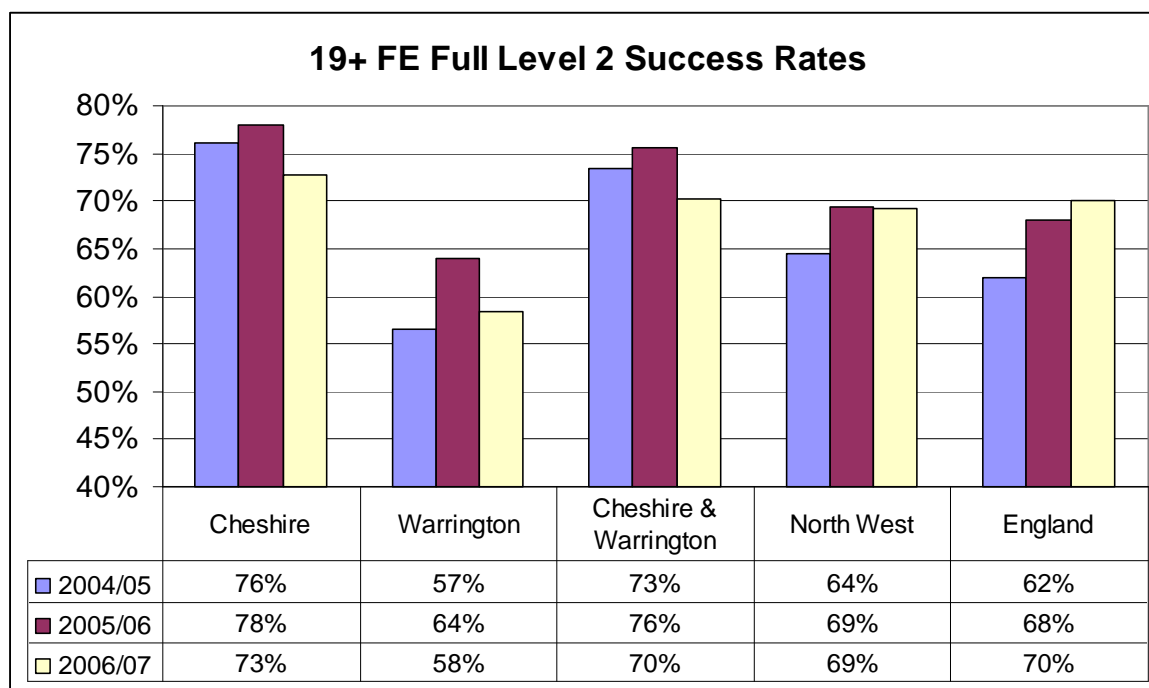
Source: Work-based Learning ILR 2005/06 to 2007/08 (P12) (Residency Based)

## Further Education Success Rates

### Full Level 2

- 66 At present it is not possible to obtain FE success rates for employer responsive provision only, due to data limitations, therefore the following analysis is based on general FE Success Rates at Full Level 2 and 3 for learners aged 19+ (including both learner and employer responsive provision). The data shown is based on the location of the provider rather than the residency of the learner.
- 67 The Full Level 2 success rate for 19+ FE learners in Cheshire and Warrington is 70 per cent. This is level with the national average and just above the regional rate (69%). The Cheshire & Warrington rate has fallen by 3 percentage points since 2004/05.
- 68 The success rate for Cheshire has fallen by 3 percentage points since 2004/05 to 73 per cent.
- 69 Warrington has a success rate of 58 per cent, which over 3 years is an increase of 1 percentage point.
- 70 All areas of Cheshire and Warrington have experienced a dip in success rate in 2006/07, the factors for this may require further investigation.

**Figure 16: FE Full Levels 2 Success Rates**

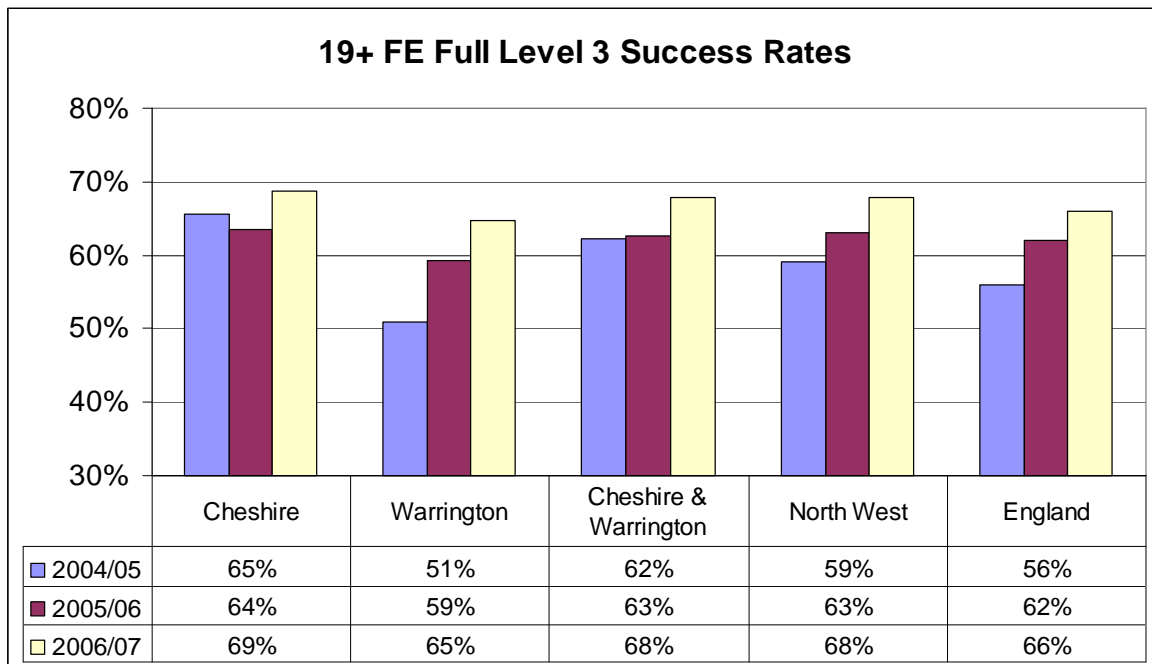


Source: FE ILR 2004/05 to 2006/07

### Full Level 3

- 71 Cheshire and Warrington has a 19+ FE Full Level 3 success rate of 68 per cent in 2006/07, this has increased by 6 percentage points in three years and has remained above the national rate, and similar to the regional rate, in the period shown in Figure 17.
- 72 Cheshire has a success rate of 69 per cent in 2006/07, this is higher than both the North West and England rates. However, there was a 'dip' in success rate in 2005/06, an analysis of the subsequent peak in 2006/07 may give examples of good practise to be shared.
- 73 The success rate for Warrington is 65 per cent, which is just below the national rate. Warrington has experienced a large increase in success rates in the three year period, rising by 14 percentage points which is a greater rate of increase than the North West and England, if this rate is maintained Warrington will close the gap with the national and regional rates.

**Figure 17: 19+ FE Full Level 3 Success Rates**



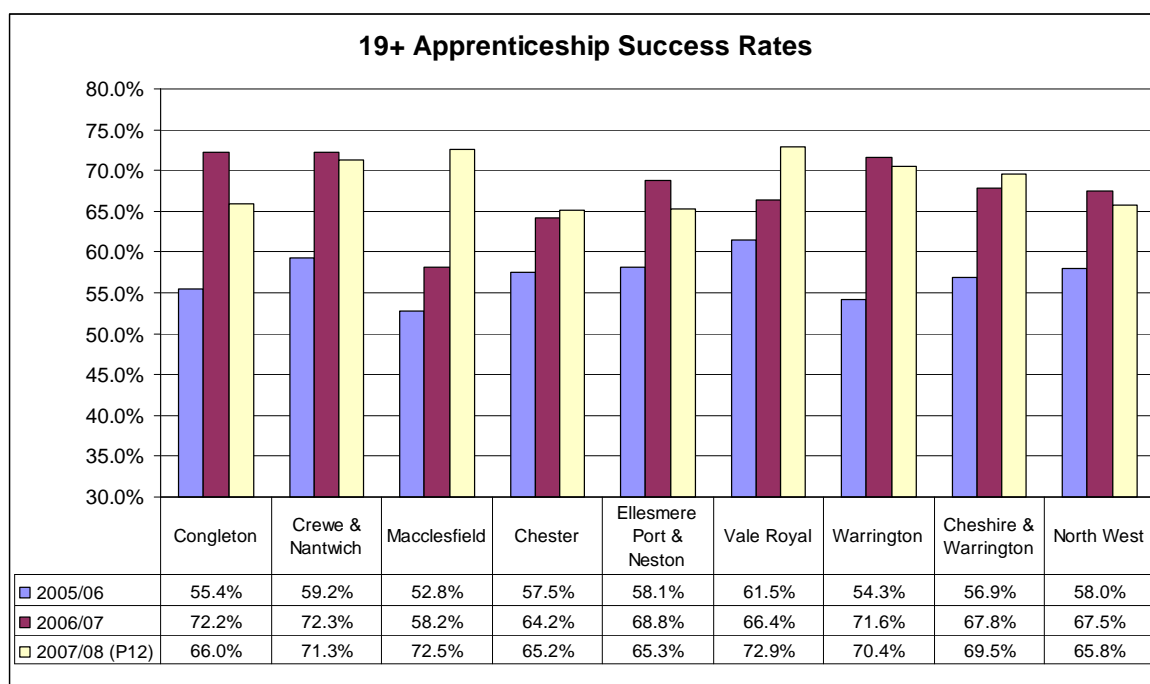
Source: FE ILR 2004/05 to 2006/07

### Apprenticeship Success Rates

- 74 Figure 18 shows 19+ Apprenticeship success rates in Cheshire and Warrington between 2005/06 and 2007/08 (P12). Please note that the data used here is based on the residency of the learner.
- 75 In 2007/08 the success rate in Cheshire and Warrington rose to 69.5 per cent, an increase of 12.6 percentage points from 2005/06 and above the regional rate of 65.8 per cent.
- 76 Within Cheshire East the highest success rate is in Macclesfield (72.5%). This area also had the largest increase (+19.8 percentage points) which has moved Macclesfield from below the North West rate to far above.
- 77 Congleton, as well as Crewe & Nantwich have also seen strong improvements (+10.5 and +12.1 percentage points respectively). All 3 districts within Cheshire East are above the regional average in 2007/08 (P12).
- 78 The highest success rate in Cheshire West is in Vale Royal (72.9%), this follows an increase of 11.4 percentage points in the last three years which is the largest increase of any of the Cheshire West district areas. Vale Royal also had the highest volume of leavers in 2007/08, making their high success rate more notable.
- 79 Both Chester and Ellesmere Port & Neston have similar success rates to the North West in 2007/08 as well as their rates of growth in the past three years.
- 80 Warrington has a success rate of 70.4 per cent in 2007/08, this is above the North West and follows a large increase of 16.2 percentage points in the last

three years. However, Warrington experienced a slight dip in 2007/08 after a peak of 71.6 per cent in 2006/07.

**Figure 18: Apprenticeship Success Rates**



Source: Work-based Learning ILR 2005/06 to 2007/08 (P12) (Residency Based)

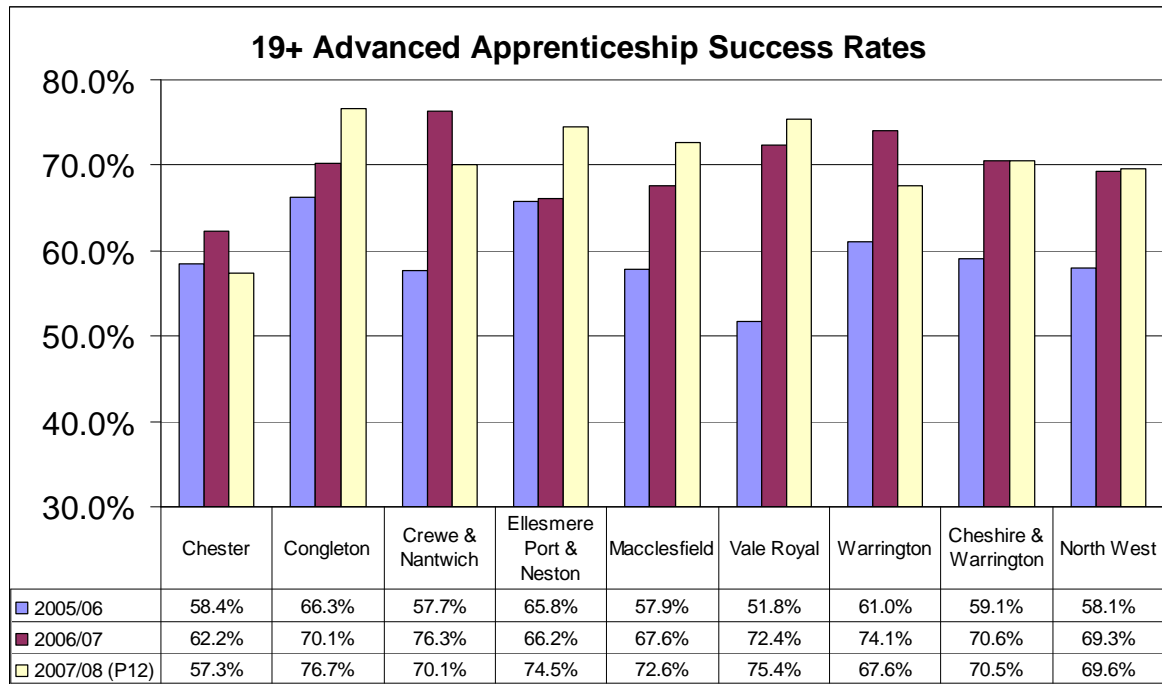
### Advanced Apprenticeship Success Rates

- 81 In 2007/08 (P12) the 19+ Advanced Apprenticeship success rate for Cheshire & Warrington is 70.5 per cent, which is just above the regional average (69.6%) and has increased by 11.4 percentage points in the last three years; a similar rate of improvement to the North West as a whole. (Figure 19).
- 82 Chester is the only district area of Cheshire West to have a reduction in success rate in the last three years, a slight decline of 1.1 percentage points. This, coupled with the large increases in success rates in Ellesmere Port & Neston and Vale Royal has meant that in 2007/08 there is a disparity between districts in Cheshire West in terms of success rates<sup>8</sup>.
- 83 Congleton has the highest success rate of the Cheshire East districts in 2007/08 (76.7%), and has increased by 10.4 percentage points in three years. Cheshire East had 271 total leavers in 2007/08 (up to period 12) and all three area's success rates are above the regional average.
- 84 Warrington was one of many local areas in the region to experience a peak in success rate in 2006/07, rising to 74.1 per cent before an apparent fall in 2007/08 (P12). This may be explained by a full year's data for 2007/08 being available, making up the gap between 2006/07 and 2007/08. It may also be explained by activity around Minimum Levels of Performance (MLP) that

<sup>8</sup> Note: This analysis is based on the residency of the learner rather than the location of delivery, or the location of the employer / provider.

drove up success rates in 2006/07. It is important in this analysis to view performance over at least a three year period which shows a positive picture in many areas, and an increase of 6.6 percentage points in Warrington.

**Figure 19: Advanced Apprenticeship Success Rates**

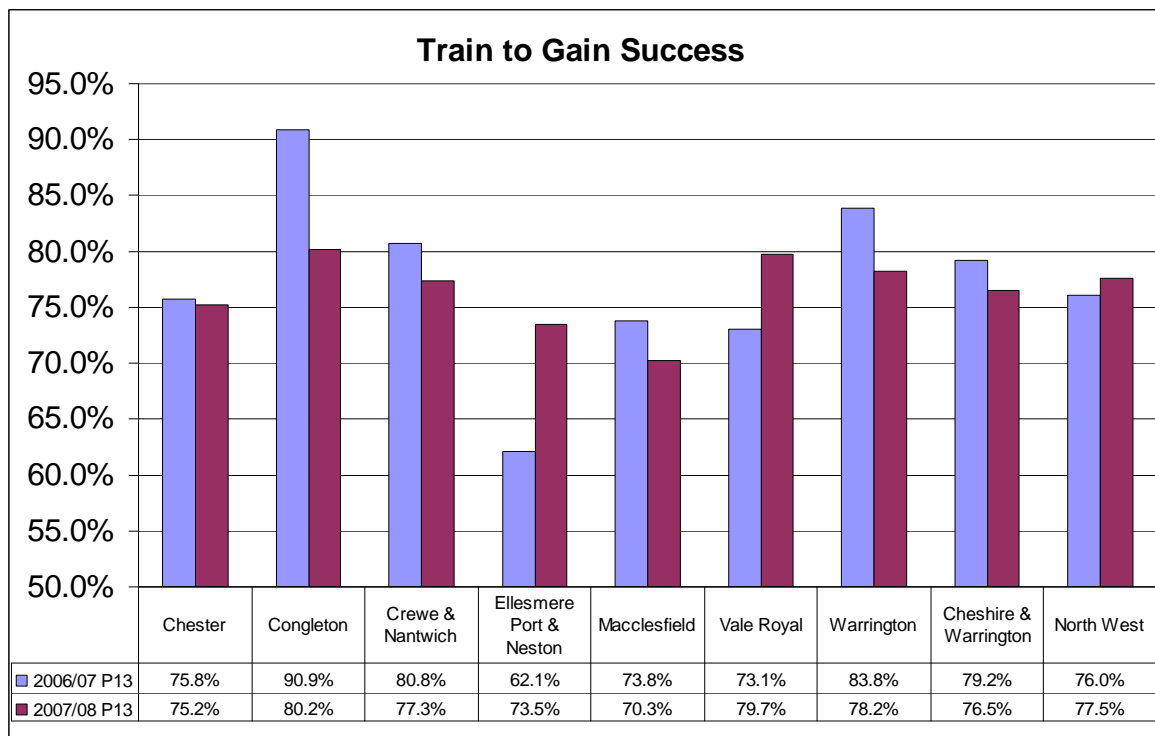


Source: Work-based Learning ILR 2005/06 to 2007/08 (P12) (Residency Based)

### Train to Gain

- 85 Train to Gain success is shown here as the volume of people who have achieved their qualification as a proportion of the total who left the course. This information shown by local area is based on the residency of the learner.
- 86 The Train to Gain (TtG) level 2 success rate for Cheshire and Warrington has reduced slightly between 2006/07 and 2007/08 from 79.2 per cent to 76.5 per cent. However there has been a large increase in learner volumes through the development of Train to Gain provision in this period. **The volume of achievers has risen from 359 in 2006/07 to 2,331 in 2007/08 (growth of 549%).**
- 87 At district level the rise in learner volumes between years makes the maintaining of a high success rate more challenging, retaining similar levels of performance in 2007/08 should be considered good performance.
- 88 With this in mind, Ellesmere Port and Neston have risen 11.4 percentage points to 73.5 per cent success whilst increasing their volume of starts from 29 in 2006/07 to 529 in 2007/08. The volume of achievers rose from 18 to 272. This indicates that providers operating in Cheshire and Warrington are performing well, in terms of capacity, to deliver against the challenging targets associated with Train to Gain.

**Figure 20: Train to Gain Success Rates**



Source: Train to Gain ILR 2007/08

### Summary

- 89 In recent years the balance of LSC funded adult skills provision has shifted dramatically towards target-bearing employer facing provision. This is evidenced by both the increase in Apprenticeships as well as the large growth seen in Train to Gain. In addition to this Further Education providers have been increasingly shifting their provision for adults towards that which directly responds to the needs of local employers.
- 90 Levels of growth in Apprenticeships and Advanced Apprenticeships are set to continue, key developments driving this include the exponential increase planned in Train to Gain funding as well as the creation of the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS).
- 91 Another key development is the creation of Skills Accounts. Skills Accounts will give learners access to a new range of services which will help them take control of their learning and working life. They will also include a confidential record of an individual's achievements so that they can share these with employers and careers services. Each account holder will also have a Unique Learner Number which will be used to link the different services and build a verified record of their learning.
- 92 In previous periods of economic downturn there is evidence of employers undertaking less training amongst their workforce. In light of these previous trends the effects of the current economic climate on levels of training amongst employers should be monitored closely in order for progress against challenging PSA targets to be maintained and improved upon.

- 93 In past years the volume of Apprenticeship opportunities being offered by employers has been particularly affected by the economic climate. With the formation of the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) a result of increasing government focus, NAS will enable close monitoring and the ability to react quickly to any changes that arise in future.
- 94 The proportion of working age people qualified to at least level 2 and 3 in Cheshire and Warrington is high compared to other areas. However, recent trends in this area have not matched regional and national rates of increase. The rate of improvement has to increase if Cheshire and Warrington is to stay ahead of regional and national averages as well as meeting PSA targets.
- 95 Much of the growth anticipated at level 2 and 3 is expected to be delivered through employer responsive training provision. Recent performance, particularly of Train to Gain in Cheshire and Warrington carries a positive message in terms of capacity and demand for future years.
- 96 Close attention should be paid to the Finance, Banking and Insurance sector in Warrington, at this time of economic uncertainty this major area of employment could be vulnerable and government funded training provision should be able to quickly respond to arising training needs where appropriate.