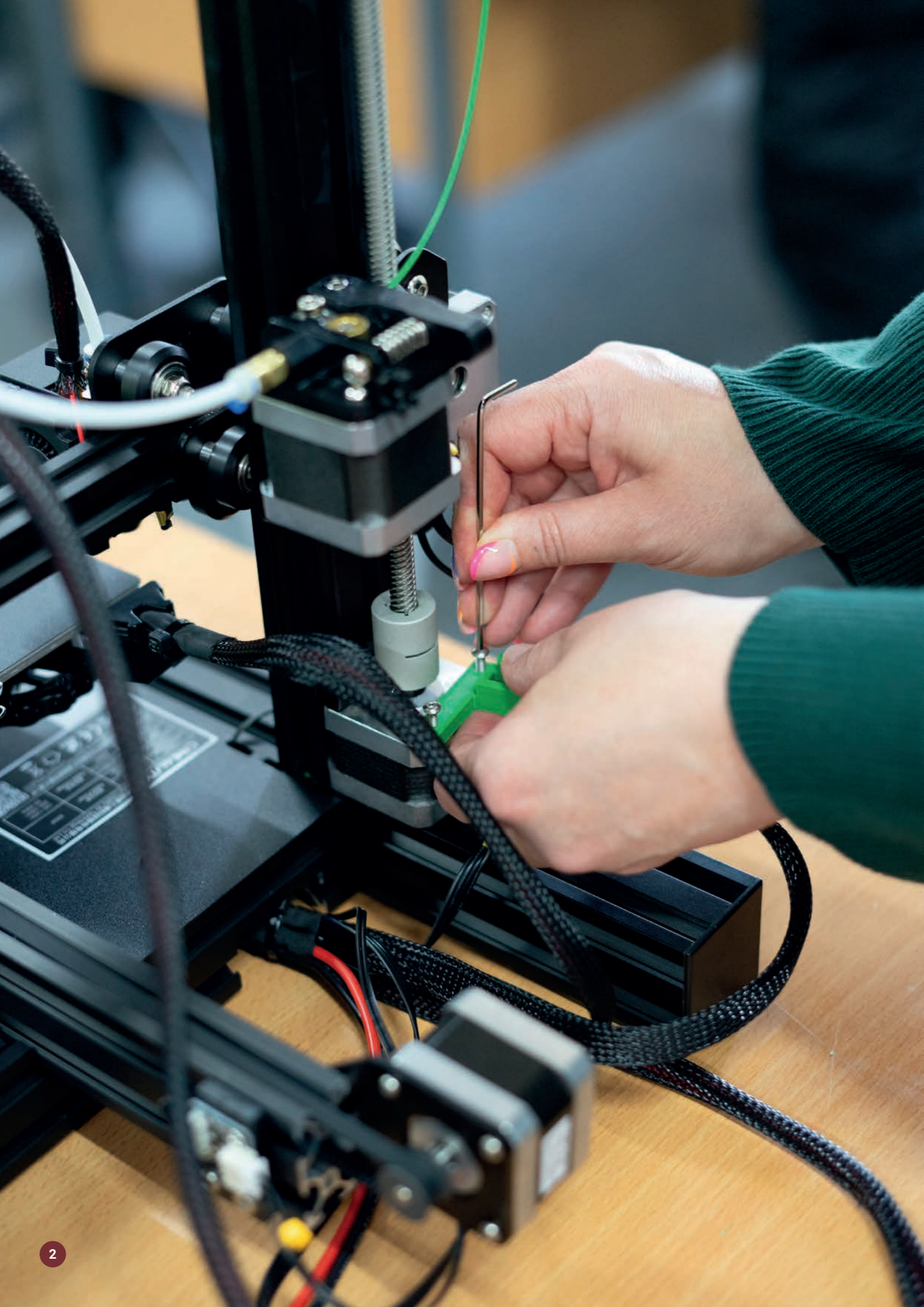


Get Lancashire Working.

ROADMAP TO BOOSTING
LANCASHIRE'S
EMPLOYMENT RATES.



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Foreword

Lancashire is a county of great resilience, rich heritage, and enormous potential. But like many places across the country, we are facing significant and complex challenges in our labour market from rising economic inactivity and widening health inequalities, to the changing demands of employers and an ageing workforce.



Cllr Stephen Atkinson
Leader of Lancashire
County Council



Cllr Lynn Williams
Leader of Blackpool
Council



Cllr Phil Riley
Leader of Blackburn
with Darwen Council

Too many of our residents are being held back by circumstances beyond their control. Whether it's a long-term health condition, a lack of opportunity in their community, or an inability to access the right support at the right time, the reality is clear: we need to do more to help people move into, remain in, or progress in work.

We fully support the Government's ambition to increase economic participation and reach at least **80% employment among the working-age population by 2035**. This is an ambitious, necessary goal, and one that Lancashire is committed to helping achieve.

The Get Lancashire Working Plan (GLWP) sets out how Lancashire will play its part. Developed in collaboration with partners across work, health and skills, and the Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise sector, it outlines a place-based response to economic inactivity, rooted in local strengths and driven by a shared ambition to do things differently. Alongside our Growth Plan and Local Transport Plan, it sets the right conditions for growth, productivity and opportunity across Lancashire.

This plan builds on the foundations already established through the work of the Lancashire Skills and Employment Hub, the Integrated Care System, local delivery partnerships, and Lancashire's dedicated network of providers and employers. What is now needed is the flexibility, investment, and shared purpose to drive this forward.

This plan marks the beginning of a longer journey - one that will evolve through ongoing delivery, learning, and partnership. But it reflects a shared commitment to building a more inclusive labour market, unlocking the full potential of our people, and powering forward Lancashire's contribution to Get Britain Working.



Plan Summary and Roadmap

The Get Lancashire Working Plan provides a roadmap to reduce economic inactivity and boost employment across Lancashire. It is led by the Lancashire County Combined Authority (LCCA) and developed collaboratively with Jobcentre Plus, the NHS Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board, and other stakeholders. This plan integrates work, health and skills, with community systems to address shared challenges in the labour market.

Vision and Objectives

The GLWP aims to ensure inclusive access to employment, targeting individuals facing barriers such as health conditions or socio-economic disadvantages. Lancashire seeks to contribute to the national target of achieving an 80% employment rate by 2035.

Strategic Objectives

- Stabilise the system and stem the flow of rising economic inactivity
- Improve integration of work, health and skills, with Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise Sector (VCFSE) services
- Deliver targeted support for priority cohorts:
 - o Economically inactive (including Universal Credit (UC) No Work Requirements)
 - o Young adults and young people who are NEET
 - o Female carers
 - o People with hidden disabilities
 - o Those at risk of long-term sickness absence
- Lay the foundations for long-term system change through joint commissioning, shared outcomes, and devolved delivery

Implementation

The GLWP is supported by strong governance structures, including a Strategic Partnership Panel and thematic working groups. Delivery is flexible, leveraging local partnerships and the proposed Lancashire Data Observatory (in collaboration with Lancashire-based universities) to monitor outcomes and responsiveness.

Outcomes and Impact

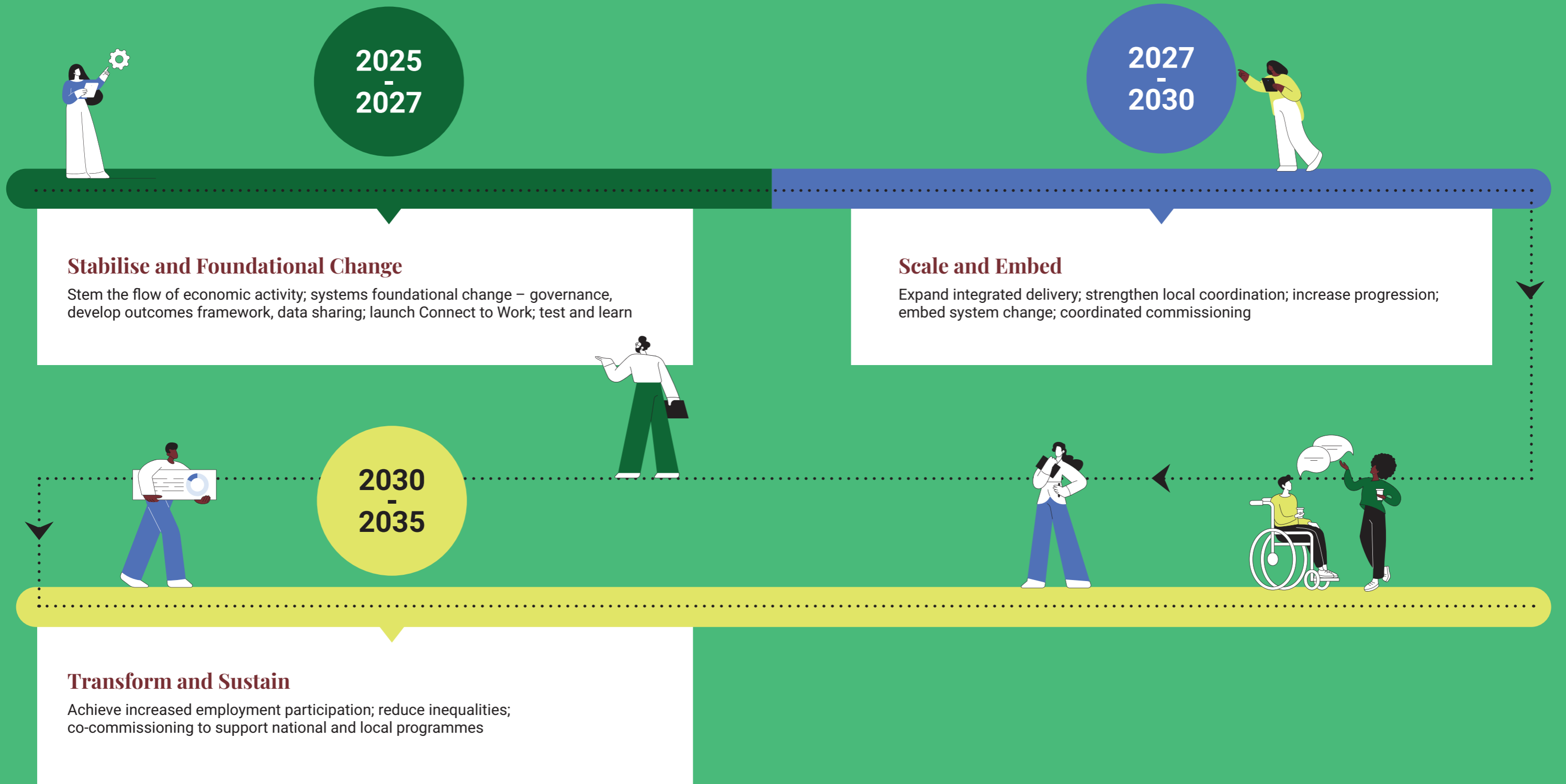
This plan is designed to deliver both immediate and long-term impact by stabilising the system, increasing employment participation, and improving outcomes for Lancashire’s priority cohorts. Over the next two years, the focus is on the following measurable outcomes:

- Stabilise and stem the flow of the rise of long-term economic inactivity
- Increased employment opportunities for disadvantaged groups
- A scalable model for addressing employment challenges through collaboration
- Progress toward the national ambition of 80% employment by 2035, by increasing the average employment rate across Lancashire and closing the gaps in areas with the lowest rates.

Theme	Key Actions
Programme Rollout	<p>Launch and embed Connect to Work and extend WorkWell to support people with health barriers move into, remain in, or progress in work.</p> <p>Prepare for the devolution of Adult Skills Fund from August 2026</p>
Early Intervention	Scale up Youth Hubs, Jobcentre Plus Employment Advisers ¹ in GP surgeries, and social prescribing links
System Change	Implement a shared Outcomes Framework; launch the Lancashire Data Observatory for an evidence-based approach
Partnerships & Governance	<p>Establish Partnership Panel.</p> <p>Coordinate delivery across Lancashire of national and local programmes through integrated pathways and multi-agency teams</p>
Wider Devolution	Positioning Lancashire to benefit from further devolution of funds, for example, the roll out of the Economic Inactivity and Youth Guarantee trailblazers, NHS Health and Growth Accelerator and further policy announcements
Inclusive Growth	Embed Social Value outcomes in commissioning to embed employment and skills commitments directly into contracts
Piloting & Innovation	Test new approaches for engaging hidden cohorts (e.g., long-term sick, carers, young adults) in collaboration with JobCentre Plus through the DWP Flexible Support Fund and roll out of DWP trailblazers
Employer Engagement	Co-design inclusive recruitment pathways with employers; promote flexible working and job retention. Growing commitment to the Lancashire Skills Pledge
Lived Experience & Co-production	Embed feedback loops from service users to co-design and refine interventions over time

¹ Jobcentre Plus services referenced in this plan are delivered within the scope of DWP’s Core Regime, which includes statutory obligations, nationally set policy, and procedural guidance. Local delivery must align with these requirements.

Plan Summary and Roadmap



Executive Summary

1.1 Vision and Purpose

The Get Lancashire Working Plan (GLWP) sets out the vision and roadmap for reducing economic inactivity and increasing employment participation across Lancashire. Led by the Lancashire County Combined Authority (LCCA) and co-developed with Jobcentre Plus, The NHS Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board (ICB), and a wide range of local and national stakeholders, it brings together the work, health and skills and community systems to tackle shared challenges and ensure that more people are able to access, remain in, and progress in work.

1.2 Priorities and Approach

In the first two years, LCCA's priority is to stem the flow of rising economic inactivity and bring greater stability, coordination and focus to the employment support system in Lancashire. This is not simply about launching new programmes - it is about building the conditions for long-term, integrated delivery that 'connects the dots' between health, skills, employment, and community services.

To do this, the LCCA will focus on laying strong foundations: strengthening governance and accountability, embedding more collaborative working between local and national partners, and aligning services more effectively at place level to reflect the different needs of Lancashire's communities. A key part of this will be deepening integration between the NHS, Jobcentre Plus, local authorities, colleges, training providers, and the VCFSE sector - ensuring they operate not in silos but as parts of a shared ecosystem.

Programmes like Connect to Work and the WorkWell Partnership Programme will act as early testbeds for this joined-up approach, bringing together employment coaching, health support, and employer engagement in one offer. These early interventions will allow LCCA to trial new referral routes, shared data systems, and

collaborative case management, with the aim of reducing duplication, closing service gaps, and improving outcomes for those furthest from the labour market.

Through these actions, the GLWP aims to stem the flow of people leaving work, while strengthening the pathways and support available for those who are already economically inactive. Importantly, this phase will also help LCCA build the evidence base, infrastructure, and trusted relationships needed to scale what works and sustain impact over time.

1.3 Long-Term Goals

Beyond 2027, the Plan sets a course for long-term, systemic change - focused on increasing Lancashire's overall employment rate, closing inequalities in labour market participation, and creating a more inclusive economy. The goal is to ensure Lancashire plays a full and effective role in supporting the national ambition of 80% employment among the working-age population by 2035.

1.4 Challenges and Opportunities in Lancashire

Economic and social outcomes vary widely across Lancashire. While areas like Fylde, Wyre and Chorley exceed the 80% employment benchmark, others - such as Blackpool, Blackburn with Darwen, and Hyndburn - continue to experience long standing structural barriers to work, including poor health, low confidence, limited skills (including essential digital skills), and a mismatch between supply and employer demand. As of 2024, over 58,000 people in Lancashire are economically inactive due to long-term sickness, with many more on the edge of disengagement. Despite these challenges, Lancashire is rich in opportunity - underpinned by growing sectors (Defence, Advanced Manufacturing, Energy, Construction, Digital and Health and Social Care), major investment programmes, and strong local delivery networks.

The LCCA has welcomed greater flexibilities granted by central government to pilot and deliver new programmes that will address economic inactivity and support wider system change. Connect to Work is the flagship programme that will underpin the first phase of the GLWP; but there is a consensus across all partners that further devolved funding, and investment is required to realise the ambition of increasing the employment rate.

The Comprehensive Spending Review outlined some high-level strategic commitments that will support LCCA's strategic mission. This includes an additional £3.5 billion of support by 2028-29 that has been ring fenced to support more people to access the necessary skills they need to progress back in to work and will be focussed on tackling economic inactivity. This includes piloting economic inactivity and youth trailblazers to trial new ways of working that has been designed using a "bottom up" approach. Extending these pilots to incorporate Lancashire would enable the LCCA to build upon the strong foundations that have already been created through the WorkWell Pilot.

The implementation of the 2023 Procurement Act in February 2025 also offers a significant opportunity for Lancashire to strengthen its approach to Social Value. The Act provides greater flexibility for local authorities and anchor institutions to shape procurement in ways that deliver broader economic and social outcomes. Social Value enables commissioners to embed employment and skills commitments directly into contracts. For Lancashire, this opens the door to aligning procurement more closely with the goals of the GLWP.

1.5 What the Plan Will Do

GLWP sets out a practical, system-wide approach to reducing economic inactivity and increasing employment across the county. The core plan objective, aims to ensure that everyone - particularly those facing the greatest barriers - can access and sustain good work, regardless of health status, age, or background. At the heart of the plan there is an aspiration to create a system where there is no wrong door for people to access. The aim is to create an ecosystem where people can find the right support at the right time without having to navigate through complex networks to access the help they need.

To achieve this, the GLWP will deliver a range of integrated, locally tailored interventions that bring together national and local employment support, health services, skills provision, and community outreach.

Key actions the GLWP aims to deliver include:

- **Aligning local and national programmes** (e.g. Connect to Work, WorkWell, Restart, Access to Work) by coordinating delivery through shared pathways, referral systems, and multidisciplinary teams. This will help ensure seamless, person-centred support across health, skills, and employment services. Having the autonomy and flexibility to coordinate national and local policy levers will be essential to avoid duplication and provide transparency about roles and responsibilities of local and national partners.
- **Scaling up early intervention programmes** such as the WorkWell Pilot, Youth Hubs and Jobcentre Plus Employment Advisors in GP surgeries, supporting people on the edge of disengagement, while addressing the challenge of short-term funding and future programme sustainability.
- **Piloting targeted initiatives** to position Lancashire to benefit from the expansion of the economic and youth trailblazers (to include sustaining and expanding Youth Hubs across Lancashire) and the Health and Work Accelerator. This will provide greater leverage to support economically inactive groups, such as those with musculoskeletal conditions, mental health, and cardiometabolic conditions.

Executive Summary

- **Developing tailored pathways** for priority groups, including:
 - People on long-term sickness absence and at risk of leaving the labour market (stemming the tide of long-term economic inactivity and worklessness).
 - Over-50s looking to remain in or return to work. This includes equipping them with the skills and training to access new labour market opportunities that will emerge, such as via Jobcentre Plus' 50+ offer.
 - Young adults and young people Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET), including care leavers. Supporting young people and young adults at an earlier stage in life will reduce the chances of them becoming economically inactive at a later stage in life.
 - Individuals furthest from work due to health, disability, or complex life circumstances that span a broader range of barriers including housing, debt and caring responsibilities. Experience highlights the need to develop a more holistic multidisciplinary approach that focusses on sequenced interventions and support. This is linked to helping people successfully navigate through the complex ecosystem that exists when identifying the right levels of support.
- **Engaging and supporting employers** to design inclusive recruitment pathways, offer flexible jobs, and improve job retention. This is particularly important in high-demand sectors such as Defence, Advanced Manufacturing, Energy, Construction, Digital and Health and Social Care. For example, through the Jobcentre Plus targeted employer offer, Skills Bootcamps and by working in partnership with employers to provide the wraparound care and pastoral support required for employees to sustain employment through Connect to Work.

1.6 How It Will Work

GLWP is governed by the Lancashire County Combined Authority (LCCA) and supported by a reformed strategic partnership panel, bringing together Jobcentre Plus, the ICB, the Chambers of Commerce (the Employer Representative Body for the Local Skills Improvement Plan), employers, local authorities, and the VCFSE sector. This framework fosters collaboration among stakeholders, ensuring clear oversight, accountability and strategic alignment. Collaborative leadership across these partners enables Lancashire to respond effectively to national and regional priorities while tailoring delivery to local needs with partners accountable for their actions.

Delivery of the GLWP will be underpinned by a strong, locally rooted partnership infrastructure. This flexible and agile approach will harness existing place-based partnerships, using local delivery forums such as Burnley Together to convene stakeholders, co-develop tailored local delivery plans, and ensure alignment with the wider Plan objectives. This strategy provides flexibility for local areas to respond to their unique challenges while maintaining strategic coherence across the county.

The Plan focuses on promoting service integration by enhancing the ability of multidisciplinary professionals to collaborate effectively within national and local support programmes, such as Connect to Work and Individual Placement and Support (IPS). This process was started through programmes such as IPS for Mental Health and the DWP WorkWell pilot which have been developed through a recognition that reversing the trend of inactivity, cannot be achieved by programmes acting in siloes. An integrated whole-system approach is required to address health-related barriers to work at a local level. WorkWell sets the stage for a phased strategy, starting with strengthening teamwork and eventually forming

multidisciplinary teams (MDTs). The focus is on cohesive partnership working across all levels, providing coordinated, person-centred support, especially for those with complex needs. The goal is to reduce service overlap, close gaps in provision, and ensure timely, appropriate support.

To drive accountability and evidence-based decision-making, the GLWP will implement a shared outcomes framework co-developed with DWP and other strategic partners and reflect wider strategic objectives outlined through the Lancashire Growth Plan, the Local Transport Plan and the Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIP). Aligning the ambitions of the GLWP with these strategies will focus outcomes and objectives and avoid any potential duplication. This will be supported by Lancashire's Data Observatory, a proposed new initiative that will enable real-time monitoring of progress against the contribution to the national 80% participation target and ensuring the programme remains responsive to emerging trends and policy changes over the next 12-24 months.

Crucially, the plan will embed lived experience at every level of design and delivery. Lancashire will work with individuals who have direct experience of economic inactivity, ill health, or exclusion from the labour market to co-design interventions, shape service delivery, and evaluate what works. Their insights will ensure that Plan is both operationally sound and genuinely grounded in the realities of people's lives. The LCCA wants to embed service user feedback to inform and enhance service provision across health and employment systems. This will be achieved through a multi-channel approach including online surveys, quarterly forums, one-to-one interviews and feedback via provider networks. These feedback loops are then used to review feedback and incorporate improvements into mainstream service delivery.

Taken together, the GLWP offers a compelling business case for additional DWP and wider government investment so that Lancashire can realise the ambition to contribute to the national target of 80% employment participation. There are strong existing foundations in place to make a scalable, evidence-based model for tackling

economic inactivity through integrated solutions and multi-sector collaboration - unlocking Lancashire's potential and delivering lasting, inclusive growth.

1.7 What Success Looks Like

By 2027, the Get Lancashire Working Plan will have:

- Taken the first critical steps to stabilising the growth in economic inactivity, helping more residents to move into, remain in, or take meaningful steps closer to work.
- Tangible progress towards an integrated ecosystem that is agile, flexible and joins up work, health and skills interventions over a two-year period and builds upon the foundations of the DWP WorkWell pilot.
- Stronger collaboration and coordination between national and local stakeholders through strategic commissioning and agreement on outcomes and performance.
- A focus on developing a test and learn culture from the bottom up that can be used to identify innovation, best practice and which informs future funding decisions.
- Prioritised early intervention to prevent disengagement from the labour market - working proactively with employers, primary care, Jobcentre Plus, and community partners to support people before they become economically inactive.
- Strengthened local capacity to deliver future provision, supporting organisations to develop the capability needed to respond to future commissioning linked to the Get Britain Working White Paper and the Pathways to Work Green Paper.
- Openness to sharing data at a local and national level to avoid duplication and develop a robust outcomes framework that is transparent.
- Contributed to the national goal of reaching 80% employment participation and sharing best practice and innovation with other geographies.

Strategic Context

Lancashire is a place of great potential. Home to more than 1.5 million people, the county boasts diverse communities, a rich industrial heritage, and significant growth opportunities across sectors such as Defence, Advanced Manufacturing, Energy, Construction, Digital and Health and Social Care. Yet despite these strengths, too many residents remain disconnected from the labour market due to structural inequalities, health-related barriers, or a lack of accessible, tailored support.

The GLWP sets out a bold, coordinated response to the county's employment challenges - most notably, high levels of economic inactivity in some areas, stark local disparities in health and opportunity, and the need to better connect people to the skills and jobs of the future. Developed by the Lancashire County Combined Authority (LCCA) in partnership with Jobcentre Plus, ICB or in full the NHS Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board, local authorities, skills and employment providers, employers, and the VCFSE sector, the plan aligns closely with the aims of the national Get Britain Working strategy.

At the heart of the GLWP is a commitment to place-based, person-centred delivery. It recognises that a one-size-fits-all approach will not work in a county as varied as Lancashire. The plan is rooted in local insight, lived experience, and robust data, and it sets out the actions needed over the next three years to improve participation, support vulnerable groups, and strengthen integration between work, health and skills systems.

The Get Britain Working strategy and the Pathways to Jobs green paper recognises the role of the welfare system and the incentives and disincentives that impact on peoples' motivation to work. Feedback from local stakeholders in employment and skills indicates a fear amongst residents of losing benefits, such as Universal Credit and housing support, if they take up employment and it doesn't work

out. The proposed 'Right to Try' guarantee will enable disabled residents and those with long term health conditions to try work without an immediate reassessment or review of benefits. Such changes in the welfare system will support the engagement of residents at a local level.

This document outlines Lancashire's shared ambition to support the national ambition to raise employment participation to 80% and beyond - making work more accessible, inclusive, and sustainable for everyone.

2.1 Work, Health and Skills Landscape

LCCA has a detailed and robust understanding of its demographics, labour market, and wider economy, supported by a mature body of evidence (including the Lancashire Skills and Employment Strategic Framework, the 2023 Economic Inactivity Insight Report, and detailed assessments of local area needs). As a region, Lancashire faces challenges like those of other Northern Shire Counties, including an ageing workforce, persistent levels of unemployment and economic inactivity, isolated areas of deprivation and associated multigenerational worklessness.

The employment rate for Lancashire sits just below the national average, and significant disparities exist between districts, age groups, and health status. The Get Lancashire Working Plan aims to increase the average employment rate across the area whilst also closing the gap in areas with the lowest employment rates.

Health and wellbeing are major factors influencing work participation. Long-term sickness, particularly due to musculoskeletal conditions, mental health, and cardiometabolic issues, now accounts for around 41% of all economic inactivity in the county.

Local Authority	Current Employment Rate
Blackburn with Darwen	67.2%
Blackpool	62.6%
Burnley	77.7%
Chorley	82.9%
Fylde	84.5%
Hyndburn	61.5%
Lancaster	81.7%
Pendle	69.0%
Preston	70.4%
Ribble Valley	77.5%
Rossendale	81.2%
South Ribble	78.7%
West Lancashire	81.3%
Wyre	84.4%
Lancashire	75.2%

Lancashire also experiences lower life expectancy, high rates of work-limiting illness, and growing numbers of people in employment at risk of exiting the labour market due to long-term absence. At the same time, many residents lack the foundational or vocational skills needed to access opportunities in a fast-evolving economy, with digital exclusion, low confidence, and fragmented support systems compounding these challenges. These are challenges that the GLWP aims to address.

2.2 Economic Inactivity, Unemployment, and Health

The economic inactivity rate in Lancashire stands at 24.4%, 2.9 percentage points higher

than the national average, equating to over 175,000 residents (DWP StatExplore, June, 2024). Contributing factors include health issues, labour market disengagement, and demographic trends. An analysis of recent labour market data highlights a critical need for integrated, preventative interventions to reduce long-term disengagement from the labour market.

Lancashire has a diverse population, with variations in people's communities, life experiences, ethnicity, and qualifications which often impact on labour market outcomes. Data shows characteristics such as qualification levels and prior work history, and other factors such as caring responsibilities; growing up in a workless household; being an ex-offender;

Strategic Context

and care experience are strong determinants and predictors of an individual's labour market outcomes. For some groups there is a co-ordinated focus on these disparities, and for others like the oft-cited "White Working Class" there is a less visible policy response. The GLWP outlines 5 priority cohorts, all of which are made up of a range of individuals. In this plan we commit to being person centric, recognising the many permutations of circumstance and characteristics that influence someone's labour market success.

Throughout Lancashire, economic inactivity is increasing, with a growing proportion of individuals disengaged from the labour market due to health conditions and complex needs. This trend goes back as far as 2004, and was analysed in depth through the local Economic Inactivity Insight Report previously referenced.

Across all groups, Lancashire residents spend more time on Universal Credit (UC) than the national average, with 25% of all UC claimants having been on the benefit for five or more years (compared to 22.7% nationally, DWP StatExplore, June, 2025). The number of UC claimants in the No Work Requirements category accounts for approximately 50% of the total UC caseload. This includes a significant increase in working age claimants aged between 16 and 49, 55% of which are likely to remain in receipt of benefits for 5+ years without targeted interventions.

2.3 Structural Challenges

Lancashire's economy faces several structural challenges, including:

Limited Job Availability: Data suggests that Lancashire has a shortage of high-quality job opportunities. In 2023, job density was just 77 jobs per 100 working-age residents (falling back to 2014 levels) – 10% below the national average. With more competition for available jobs, this disproportionately affects economically inactive groups (e.g. older adults, people with health

conditions, single parents) who may need more flexible, part-time, or supportive roles to re-enter the labour market.

Low Skill, Low Wage:

Available jobs often require low qualifications: 50% of all vacancies require Level 2 qualifications (or below). Whilst this aligns with Lancashire's qualification profile (46% of working-age residents are qualified at or below this level, higher than the national average of 43.5%), it reflects sectors with poor pay, insecure contracts and limited career progression, creating low incentive for economic re-engagement.

Changing Employer Demand: Conversely, projections suggest that Level 4+ qualifications will be required for approximately 28.2% of jobs by 2050, while job roles requiring Level 1 and 2 qualifications are projected to decrease to 10% and 35% respectively. Changing employer demands puts pressure on Lancashire's skills landscape to adapt. Reform to the skills market will need to be initiated swiftly in order to reduce the risks of working age residents becoming disconnected from the labour market.

Increasing Health Demands: Since 2022, there has been a 10% annual increase in the number of individuals assessed as unfit for work through DWP Health Assessments, with the majority of individuals with No Work Requirements citing mental health, musculoskeletal (MSK), and nervous system conditions (representing c.70% of all reported health issues). Over 80% of Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) claimants are currently living with three or more health conditions, significantly reducing their ability to re-enter the labour market without wraparound health and employment support. Nine of wider Lancashire's fourteen local/unitary authorities have seen growth rates in health claimants higher than the national average (e.g. 41.5% in Pendle versus a national average of 40%).

An Ageing Workforce:

Approximately 61.5% of Lancashire residents are of working age (between 16 and 64), compared to 62.9% across England and Wales, with 20.1% aged 65 and over (18.6% nationally). As a higher proportion of the population reaches retirement age, there is a pressing need to retain older workers, support those at risk of leaving the labour market due to health or caring responsibilities and help over-50s return to work. Without targeted intervention, economic inactivity is likely to rise, further straining the labour market.

Labour Market Fragility:

Insecure and low-paid employment remains a structural issue within Lancashire's labour market, particularly in lower-skilled sectors such as retail, hospitality, cleaning, and adult social care. While these sectors play a vital role in offering large volumes of entry-level jobs, they are often characterised by precarious working conditions, including part-time or zero-hours contracts, unpredictable shift patterns, and limited job security.

In-Work Poverty:

This labour market fragility contributes to persistent in-work poverty, where individuals may be employed but unable to earn a stable or sufficient income to meet basic living costs. Median annual pay across Lancashire (excluding self-employed) was £29,431 in April 2024, approximately 7% below the UK average (£31,602).

Labour Market Churn:

Labour market churn is a key feature of Lancashire's employment landscape. While job vacancies remain high, this is driven less by net employment growth and more by elevated turnover rates. Data indicates that approximately 10% of workers in Lancashire changed jobs over a 12-month period, reflecting a highly fluid and, in some sectors, unstable labour market. For employers, frequent staff turnover can lead to rising recruitment and training costs, lost productivity, and reduced workforce cohesion. For workers, particularly those in low-paid or insecure employment, churn often reflects underemployment, job dissatisfaction, or lack of progression pathways, contributing to cycles of low pay and unstable employment.

Rurality:

Access to employment opportunities via public transport remains a significant barrier in many of Lancashire's rural areas. National evidence shows that fewer than 50% of people living in rural England can reach large employment centres (defined as those with 5,000+ jobs) within 45 minutes by public transport, compared to around 90% in urban areas. This disparity is reflected in several rural wards across Lancashire. Limited transport connectivity particularly affects younger people and disadvantaged communities, restricting their ability to access education, training, and employment. As the LCCA develops its new Local Transport Plan (LTP), there is a clear opportunity to address these structural issues. The draft LTP specifically references improving access to employment and education for underserved populations.

Youth Unemployment:

Across the county, the 16-24 claimant rate reached 6.2% (above the national average of 5.6%). In some districts, particularly coastal and post-industrial towns, youth unemployment is even more pronounced and entrenched. Lancashire is currently experiencing a marked decline in early labour market access for young adults aged 16-24. Apprenticeship starts for under-19s are circa. 35% lower than in 2010, limiting access to vocational routes into employment. While this reflects a broader national trend, it also highlights local barriers, including insufficient employer engagement, limited entry-level roles in key growth sectors, and funding constraints that make it harder for providers to offer pre-apprenticeship support.

NEET Rates and Early Disengagement:

Alongside youth unemployment, NEET rates remain high, with 8.3% of 16-17-year-olds in Blackpool classified as NEET in 2024 - among the highest rates in the Northwest. This indicates that early disengagement from education or training remains a systemic issue in some of Lancashire's most deprived communities. Tackling NEET rates will require focused, multi-agency action - including earlier intervention in schools, improved post-16 pathways, targeted support for at-risk groups, and stronger wraparound services in communities.

Strategic Context

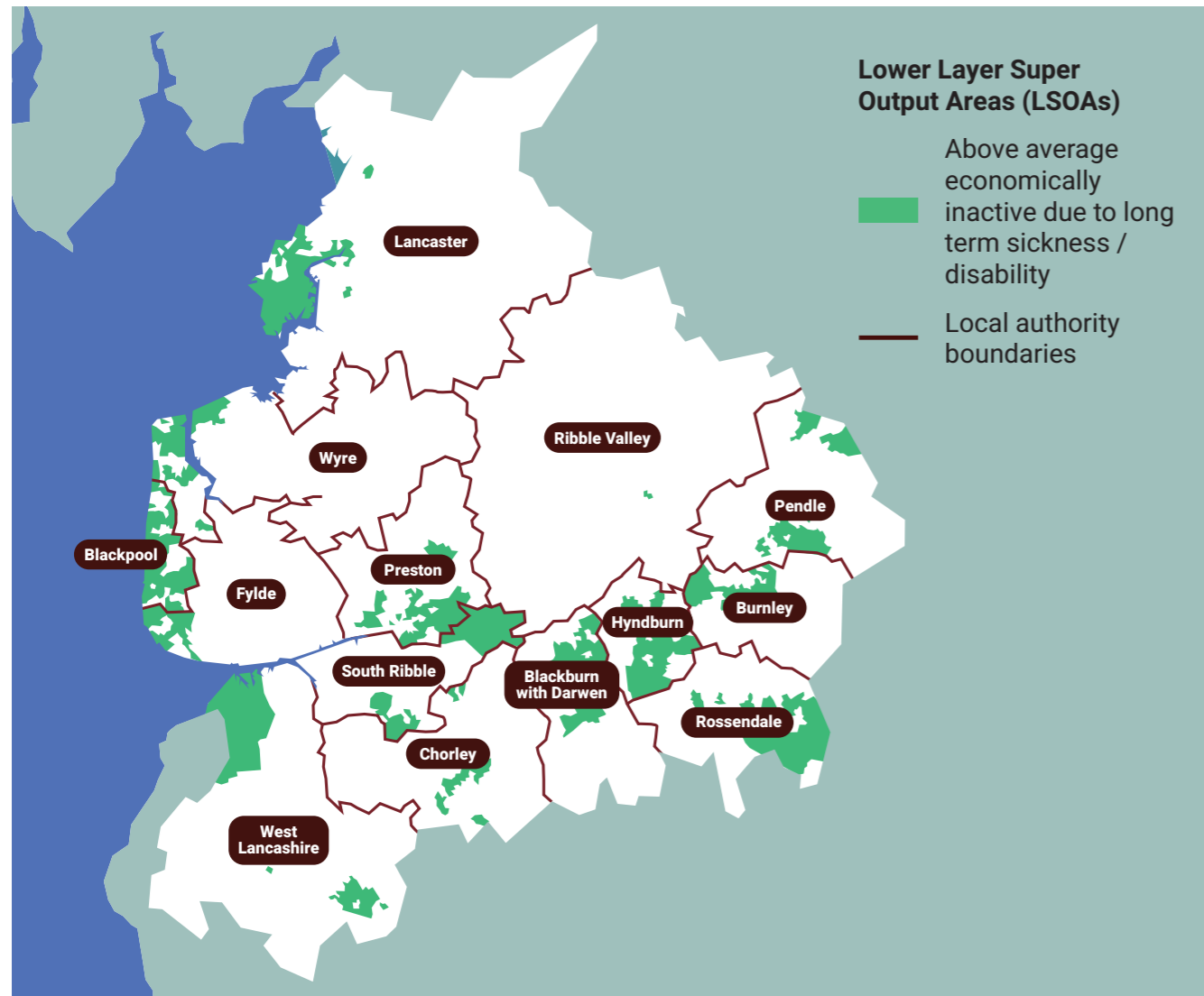
2.4 Geographical Variations in Economic and Labour Market Performance

Economic and social outcomes vary significantly across Lancashire, with notable geographical disparities in labour market outcomes, productivity, and levels of economic inactivity across its sub-regions. While some areas - such as Chorley and Fylde - are already meeting or

exceeding the government's ambition of 80% employment, Blackpool has the highest number of Universal Credit (UC) claimants with No Work Requirements (13,598). High levels are also seen in Blackburn with Darwen (12,552) and Preston (9,594).

Significant variation also exists at a ward level, with average employment rates often concealing areas of acute need. For instance, although South Ribble demonstrates relatively strong

Lancashire Economic Inactivity



outcomes in employment, neighbourhoods such as Broadfield and Moss Side rank among the 10% most deprived areas nationally. Similarly, headline employment rates can obscure the experiences of vulnerable groups. In Chorley, for example, despite an overall employment rate of 82.9%, the district also records the highest proportion of young people who are NEET in the Lancashire County Council footprint.

These contrasts highlight the importance of adopting a place-sensitive approach within the GLWP, ensuring that interventions are responsive to the specific social, economic, and demographic contexts of each locality. This extends further beyond just the specific area where individuals live, and into the type of geographies they live in, including the challenges that are often cited in rural communities regarding poor public transport and accessibility to employment opportunities, to seaside towns with multi-generational worklessness.

Data from the 2021 Census provides place-sensitive data, to enable closer targeting of smaller geographies where labour market challenges are most acute. For example, the map opposite shows LSOAs (Lower Layer Super Output Areas of 1,000-3,000 people) where economic inactivity rates due to ill-health are above the Lancashire average.

Looking at Lancashire by Travel to Work Area footprints shows the variety of places and communities that exist in Lancashire:

Burnley and Pendle:

East Lancashire is largely characterised by post-industrial economic and social conditions. The sub-region has experienced long-term economic restructuring, with a decline in traditional industries and challenges in replacing them with high-value employment. Pendle, for example, has one of the highest economic inactivity rates nationally, and Burnley has a diverse population, lower qualifications, and higher rates of claiming universal credit. Skills levels and health outcomes are below the Lancashire and national average, contributing to reduced participation in the labour market.

Blackburn with Darwen, Hyndburn, Rossendale and Ribble Valley:

There are some variations, with the Ribble Valley and Rossendale exhibiting more rurality, and typically better labour market and social outcomes. Blackburn with Darwen and Hyndburn are more post-industrial, with higher levels of deprivation, and lower labour market participation. Blackburn with Darwen is one of Lancashire's most diverse authorities, has high levels of economic inactivity due to health issues, and perhaps culturally-driven economic inactivity with a higher representation of "looking after family/home" as a reason for economic inactivity. Despite Rossendale and Ribble Valley's better social outcomes, pockets of rural deprivation and limited access to services in isolated communities present ongoing challenges to labour market growth.

Preston, Chorley and South Ribble:

Central Lancashire is the most productive subregion in the county, with strong infrastructure, connectivity, and access to major employers. Urban areas, including Preston and conurbations in Chorley and South Ribble, offer a large majority of Lancashire's jobs across professional services, construction, defence and advanced manufacturing sectors.

Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre:

This is a distinct sub-region of Lancashire with a legacy of tourism and hospitality, and the Irish Sea coast is well positioned for expansion in offshore wind energy. Blackpool faces some of the deepest deprivation and labour market challenges in the country with persistently low employment rates and high levels of economic inactivity, particularly due to health-related issues. Investment in Blackpool's £2bn + Growth and Prosperity Programme (including the Talbot Gateway Central Business District and the Skills and Education Campus, Blackpool Airport Enterprise Zone (including Silicon Sands) and Blackpool Central Leisure development) is creating thousands of jobs which are revitalising the local economy.

West Lancashire:

The economy in West Lancashire is rooted largely in agriculture and food production, with a growing logistics sector linked to its proximity to the Liverpool City Region. Labour market performance is varied, reflecting local disparities

Strategic Context

in skills, transport and deprivation. In Ormskirk and rural wards, economic participation and educational attainment are above average, while Skelmersdale – the district’s largest urban area – faces deep-rooted social and economic challenges (claimant count double the borough-wide average and a higher NEET rate).

Lancaster and Morecambe:

North Lancashire is comprised of a combination of urban and coastal economies. In Lancaster, for example, Lancaster University and Lancaster and Morecambe College represent a large proportion of jobs in both professional services and education. The Royal Lancaster Infirmary and The Lancaster Hospital (private hospital) contribute to a higher number of Health and Social Care jobs than is typical in Lancashire. Morecambe continues to face significant socioeconomic challenges including concentrated pockets of deprivation (e.g. 33% of children in West End live in poverty). The anticipated arrival of the Eden Project Morecambe in 2028, estimated to attract c.750,000 visitors per year, is expected to create more employment opportunities across the district and stimulate local regeneration.

2.5 Local Strengths and Assets: Sectoral Challenges and Infrastructure

Lancashire has the second-largest economy in the Northwest, after Greater Manchester, with Gross Value Added (GVA) of approximately £40 billion. It is home to over 55,000 businesses, providing more than 728,000 jobs. It demonstrates particular strengths across the following key sectors:

Health and Social Care:

the largest employment sector in Lancashire, with ongoing workforce demand and scope for improved entry routes, upskilling, and job retention.

Construction:

supported by major public and private investment, including housing, transport and town centre regeneration schemes, creating jobs across skill levels.

Digital and Creative Industries:

with expanding clusters in cities like Preston and Lancaster, and growing demand for digital skills across all industries and the basing of the National Cyber Force Headquarters in Lancashire.

Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering:

particularly strong in Central and East Lancashire, offering high-value jobs and long-term progression opportunities.

Sustainable Industries:

including energy, retrofit, and low-carbon logistics, offering future-focused employment with strong investment alignment.

These sectors are supported by a robust network of further education colleges and universities, skills providers, and local employment and business support organisations, many of whom are already engaged in delivering Adult Skills programmes, UKSPF interventions, and LSIP-aligned programmes.

Lancashire’s Retail, Health and Social Care, Education, and Tourism sectors also play a pivotal role in regional employment and are notably over represented in the employment history of Lancashire’s economically inactive and unemployed population. Analysis of 2021 Census data indicates that individuals currently out of work were disproportionately employed in these sectors prior to becoming economically inactive. In addition to sectoral strengths, Lancashire benefits from a well-established network of local infrastructure to support coordinated delivery. This includes:

- **Local forums and partnerships**, such as Burnley Together, Chorley & South Ribble Partnership and Lancaster District Strategic Partnership which convene public, private and VCFSE sector partners at the place level.
- **A strong and expanding network of community-based provision**, including VCFSE organisations that specialise in working with hard-to-reach groups.
- **Transport and digital infrastructure investments** that are improving access to jobs and services, such as the Preston Station Quarter, Blackpool’s £300m town centre transformation including tramway extension and a new Local Transport Plan and Lancashire Growth Plan focused on inclusive growth.

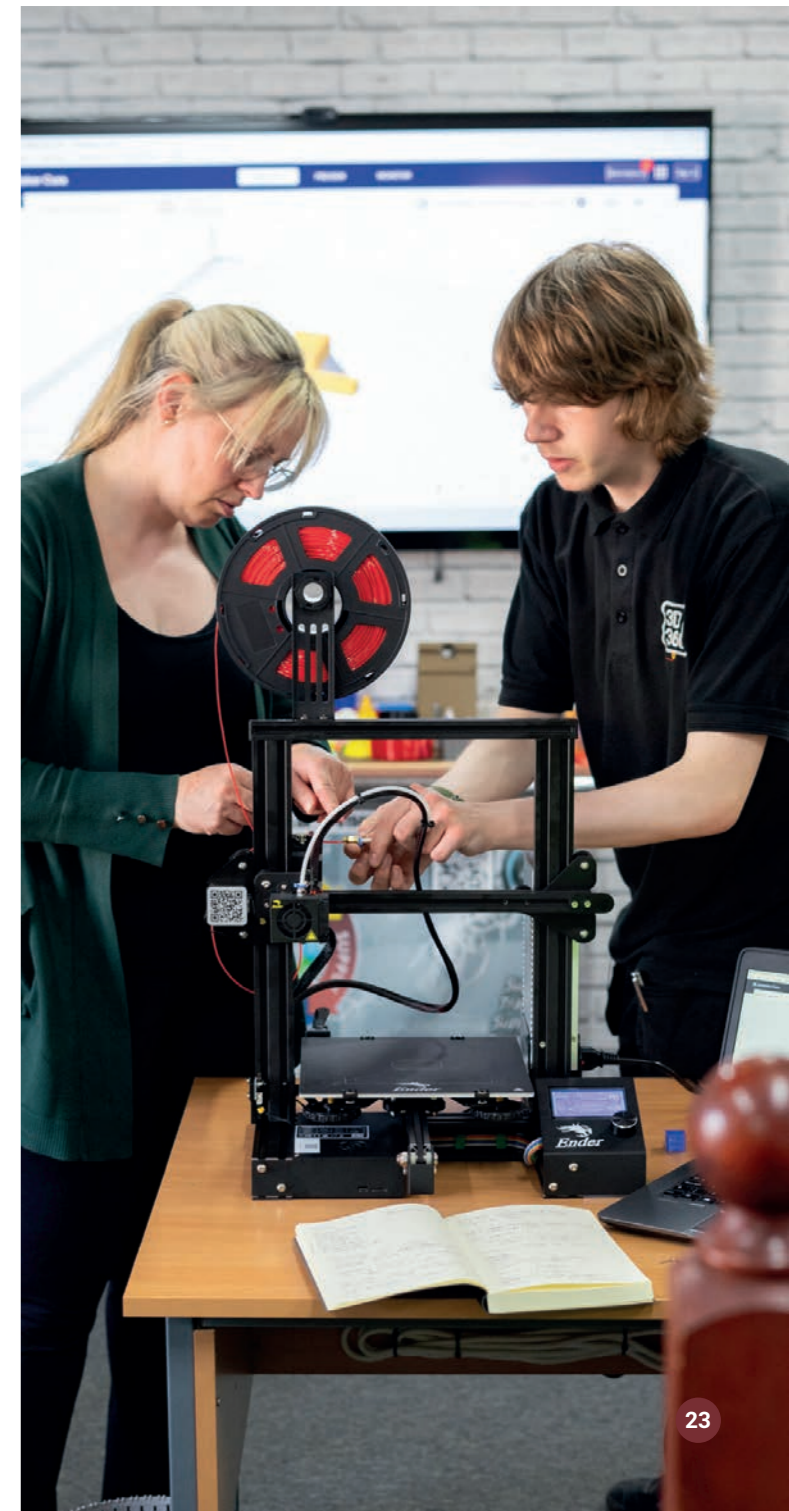
Together, these assets make Lancashire well-positioned to deliver targeted, sector-based pathways into sustainable employment, supported by a delivery infrastructure that is both locally grounded and strategically aligned.

2.6 National Strategic Alignment

National policy developments will have a major bearing on efforts to address economic inactivity. Key among these are the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR), the Get Britain Working White Paper, and the forthcoming Pathways to Work White Paper. Each setting out long-term ambitions to reform welfare, improve employment outcomes, and expand support for people with health conditions and disabilities. However, greater clarity is still needed on how these ambitions will be funded and commissioned at the local level.

The Government’s commitment to investing over £1 billion annually by 2029/30 in new employment support programmes - particularly for people with disabilities and those with long-term health conditions - is welcome.

Connect to Work is the first programme to be delivered through the devolved Get Britain Working Fund and will make an important contribution, with an ambition to help 11,000 people into or to remain in work over the next five years in Lancashire.



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Yet reversing the trend of economic inactivity in Lancashire will require more than programme-level impact. It will demand transformational investment in system change and sustained support for disadvantaged cohorts with multiple and complex needs. To realise national ambitions locally, Lancashire will need long-term funding commitments, policy flexibility, and a shared resolve to tackle the structural inequalities that continue to hold people back from work.

2.7 Local Strategic Alignment and Investment Readiness

Lancashire has laid the groundwork for the GLWP through over three years of coordinated strategic planning, cross-sector engagement, and a proactive approach to aligning existing programmes and funding streams. It is designed not as a standalone initiative, but as a delivery mechanism that aligns with and adds value to a suite of complementary local and national strategies. At its core, the plan supports the long-term ambitions set out in the **Lancashire 2050 framework**, which outlines a shared vision for inclusive growth, health, skills, and resilience. It is directly informed by the **Lancashire Skills and Employment Strategic Framework 2024-2029**, which provides a county-wide roadmap for skills development, employer engagement, and labour market participation, with a strong emphasis on social mobility and addressing health-related barriers to work.

The plan is also closely aligned with the **Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP)**, which identifies priority sectors and employer-led skills needs, and will ensure that employment pathways into those sectors are effectively supported. In parallel, the **Lancashire Growth Plan** identifies strategic investment corridors, high-growth industries, and infrastructure priorities - all of which will generate jobs that the GLWP pathways will help residents access. A cross-cutting theme

is inclusive growth. As part of this, the plan will strengthen partnerships with employers by expanding uptake of the Lancashire Skills Pledge, particularly the 'Recruit Local People' strand, and embedding employment-focused Social Value into local planning, procurement and strategic development. This will ensure that the jobs created through public and private investment are inclusive, accessible, and targeted toward priority groups furthest from the labour market.

From a health perspective, the GLWP reinforces the goals of the **Integrated Care Strategy** for Lancashire and South Cumbria. By aligning with the region's health inequalities and prevention agenda - particularly through initiatives like WorkWell and the Health & Work Accelerator - the plan directly supports the Integrated Care Strategy's aim of improving population health and increasing economic participation among people with long-term conditions or complex needs.

In addition, the plan complements and builds on national and devolved programmes including Multiply, the **UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF)**, and DWP's **Connect to Work** and **WorkWell** initiatives, all of which are already being delivered across Lancashire through local partnerships. The devolved **Adult Skills Fund** will add to this from August 2026.

These strategies show that Lancashire is not starting from scratch; strong governance is in place, local infrastructure is well established, and partners across sectors are engaged and aligned. The GLWP builds on this solid foundation, turning strategic intent into coordinated action. It is a clear next step in delivering real results, and a strong signal that Lancashire is ready to work with DWP as a committed, capable, and ambitious delivery partner.



3 Objectives and Target Groups

In line with the ambition set out in the Get Britain Working strategy, the LCCA's core objective is to contribute to the national 80% employment participation by 2035. This will be driven in part by targeted interventions that address the underlying causes of economic inactivity.

3.1 Understanding of Economic Inactivity Causes

In February 2023, the LCCA commissioned a comprehensive Economic Inactivity Report, which was published in September 2023. The report provided a detailed analysis of inactivity trends across the county, identifying root causes and informing the design of future services. It also quantified the economic impact of inactivity, estimating a £5.2 billion loss in output, of which £3.2 billion was attributable to individuals closer to the labour market - making a strong business case for active labour market interventions.

The report highlighted stark spatial variation reinforcing the need for locally tailored approaches within a countywide strategy.

The evidence base revealed several key patterns:

- **A significant proportion of economically inactive individuals** are long-term benefit recipients, particularly within the UC "No Work Requirements" cohort.
- **Half of these claimants are under 40**, meaning they have substantial working lives ahead, making early intervention both urgent and impactful.
- **Mental health** is the most cited barrier to work. While UC health data is incomplete, qualitative insights and comparable Employment Support Allowance assessments indicate a strong link between mental health and long-term worklessness.

- Many face **complex health barriers**, including co-morbid conditions that become more acute over time, placing strain on already stretched local support systems.
- The need to **stem the flow** of residents leaving employment due to sickness absence and health conditions.

To ensure findings from the Economic Inactivity Report reflected evolving challenges post-pandemic, the LCCA revisited the report's findings in as part of the development of this plan. This review considered:

- Changes in root causes of inactivity
- The broader impact on additional cohort groups
- Potential beneficiaries of future programmes, including Connect to Work, the roll out of economic inactivity and Youth Guarantee trailblazers, which may include sustaining and expanding Youth Hubs across Lancashire, and potential NHS Health and Growth Accelerator.

3.2 Identifying Target Cohort Groups

To effectively tackle economic inactivity and increase employment participation, the GLWP must focus on the people and communities who need the most support, and for whom tailored interventions will have the greatest impact. To identify the Plan's target cohort groups, the LCCA used high-level Green Book guidelines². This enabled the creation of a framework matrix to assess the groups most disadvantaged in the labour market. The assessment considered:

- Significant increases in existing cohort groups highlighted in the original economic inactivity report
- Mapping services and programmes to specific cohort groups to determine service demand

- Identifying new cohort groups from the Get Britain Working guidance requiring additional support
- Aligning cohort groups with funding streams outlined in the Get Britain Working White Paper and the Pathways to Work Green Paper.

After finishing the options appraisal, it was agreed to focus on the following cohort groups over the next 12-24 months to maximise the impact and outcomes of the GLWP:

1. Economically Inactive (Universal Support No Work Requirements/Employment Support Allowance)*
2. Young Adults and Young People who are NEET
3. Female Carers
4. Hidden Disability
5. Sickness Absence Risk Group

*The economically inactive group will include those eligible for the Connect to Work programme.

3.3 Overview of Each Priority Cohort

Priority Cohort 1: Economically Inactive (Universal Support No Work Requirements/ Employment Support Allowance)

The economically inactive UC health caseload in Lancashire is rising at a rapid rate as a higher proportion of the working age population is claiming economically inactive benefits. This trend has not changed since the publication of the economic inactivity report in 2023. Lancashire's economically inactive population

includes claimants who have been disengaged from the labour market for long periods of time due to long term health conditions and/or disabilities. Economically inactive claimants possess complex interrelated barriers to employment including lower relevant levels of qualifications, low confidence/self-esteem, debt, housing issues and limited networks to access local employment opportunities.

The LCCA's data analysis shows that this trend is impacting cohort groups at every age level and not just confined to the over 50s population. Long term economic inactivity is emerging at a younger age and impacting the size of the future workforce pool, particularly for young people in their prime (24-49).

The Economically Inactive priority group comprises the following sub-cohorts:

- **Universal Credit No Work Requirements:** Approximately 46% of the UC claimant caseload in Lancashire (around 93,000 residents) falls into this category. The forecast indicates this could exceed 50% in the next five years unless the cycle of inactivity is addressed. Notably, over 30% of this group have been inactive for more than five years, indicating a need for ongoing support. This trend is particularly acute for those with musculoskeletal (MSK) issues: GP fit note data suggests that, at a Lancashire and South Cumbria ICB level, MSK-related fit notes are being issued at 122% of their April 2020 levels (compared to 109% nationally). Notably, in July 2024, MSK fit note issuance within the Lancashire region peaked at nearly double the April 2020 baseline.

² The Green Book is official UK government guidance on how to appraise and evaluate policies, projects, and programmes. It is produced by HM Treasury and is widely used across the public sector to ensure public funds are spent effectively and deliver value for money.

3 Objectives and Target Groups

Area	Searching for work	Working – with requirements	No work requirements	Working – no requirements	Planning for work	Preparing for work	Total
Blackburn with Darwen	5969	4057	12552	4193	391	1332	28498
Blackpool	5585	3104	13598	3301	347	1404	27346
Burnley	3691	1998	7557	2650	253	1024	17164
Chorley	1719	1287	4919	2028	143	456	10551
Fylde	1323	841	2656	1225	84	256	7091
Hyndburn	2915	1826	6274	2064	196	764	14034
Lancaster	2785	1657	7549	2479	206	754	15435
Pendle	3774	2172	6699	2510	298	825	16289
Preston	4932	2869	9594	3372	333	994	22092
Ribble Valley	613	558	1419	796	42	139	3544
Rossendale	1626	1065	4007	1445	97	441	8678
South Ribble	1614	1063	4406	1951	115	405	9558
West Lancs	2075	1313	5677	1985	151	492	11703
Wyre	1889	1207	5643	1801	130	482	11147
Total	40507	24986	93259	31808	2798	9768	203130

Figure 1: Universal Credit Caseload showing the high numbers of those in the No Work Requirements category in Lancashire, June, 2025 StatExplore

Employment & Support Allowance (ESA):
 Among the 39,000 ESA claimants in Lancashire, 31,000 (about 79%) have been receiving support for at least five years. Only 8% are placed in the Work-Related Activity Group, suggesting that the majority are not expected to engage in job-related activities. The primary health conditions affecting this group include mental health issues, MSK and nervous system disorders, accounting for over

75% of cases. Evidence from GPs and clinicians (Lancashire, 2025) highlight that the majority of claimants have at least three health conditions that inhibit their ability to get back into work. Over 85% of this caseload have been in receipt of ESA for five years or more. This highlights the depth of entrenchment within the long-term sickness cohort, underscoring the need for intensive, sustained, and specialist support.

Employment Support Allowance (ESA)

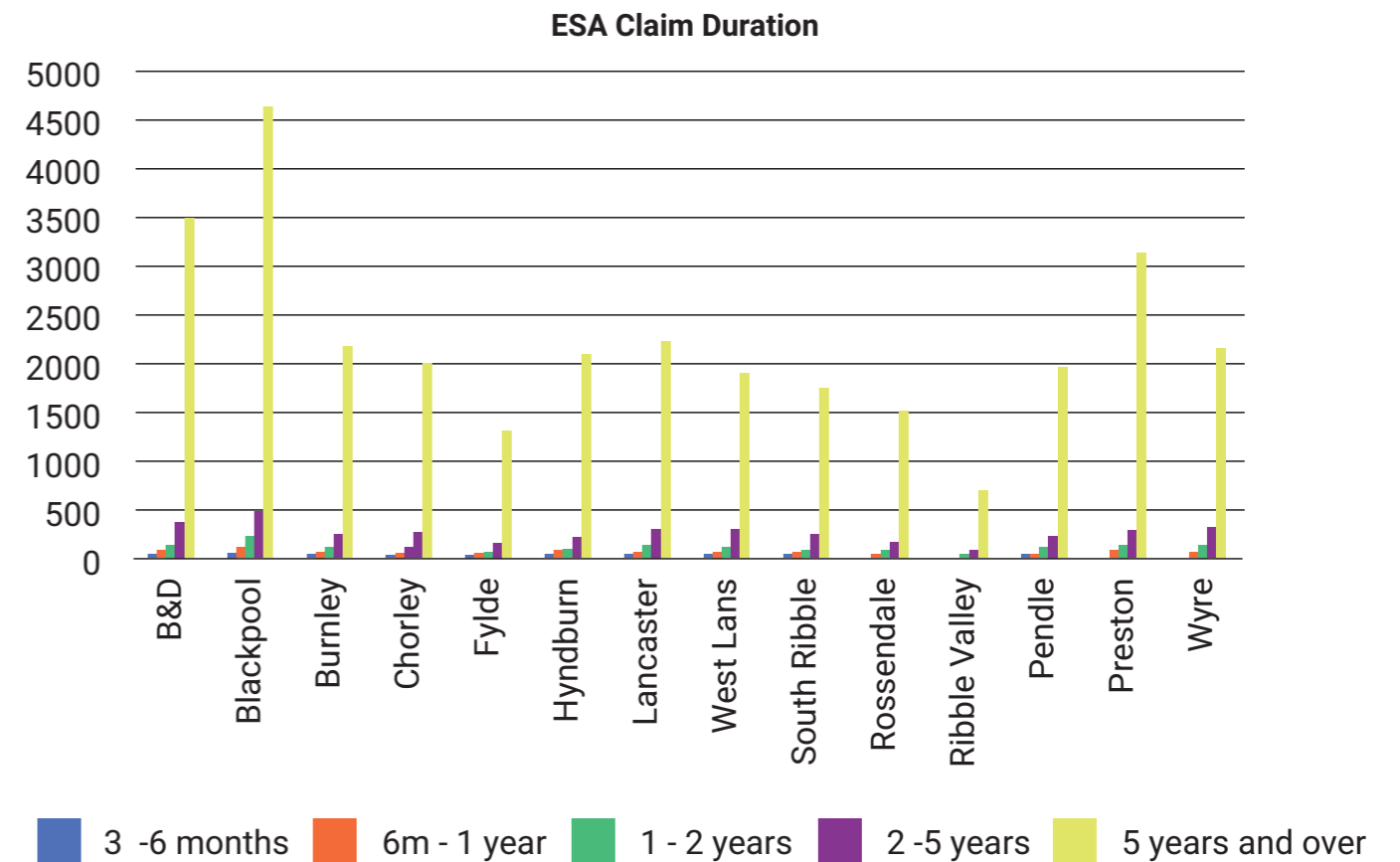
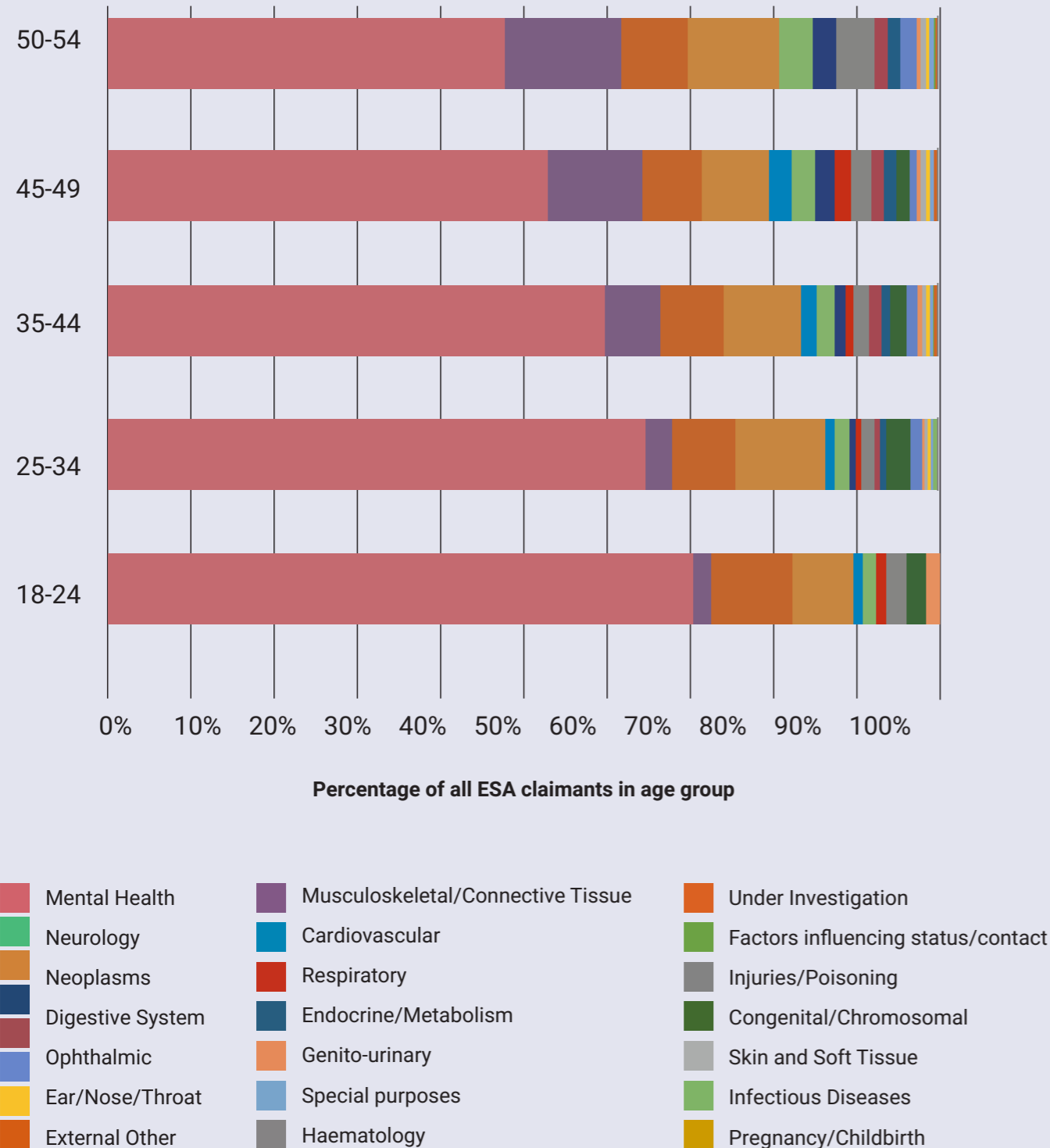


Figure 2: ESA Claim duration, StatExplore June, 2025

3 Objectives and Target Groups

Primary health conditions by age group, ESA claimants in Lancashire



Priority Cohort 2: Young Adults and NEET rates

Since January 2020, the number of 16–24-year-olds on UC with No Work Requirements in Lancashire has increased by c.8,000, currently accounting for 39.5% of all UC claimants in this age group. Growth in this cohort is slower than the wider claimant population, but they face a higher risk of long-term economic inactivity. Over 45% of unemployed/inactive 16–24-year-olds in Lancashire have never worked. Without intervention, the current 2.3% annual employment transition rate for inactive individuals would mean it takes over 40 years for this cohort to enter the labour market. Targeted early support is critical to reduce long-term disengagement and achieve Lancashire’s 80% employment goal.

NEET rates among the 16–17-year-old cohort in Lancashire are higher than the national average, with the exception of Blackburn with Darwen. In 2022/23, 15% of Lancashire’s 16-18 leavers (approximately 2,500 young people) did not move into a sustained destination, rising to 20.5% in Blackpool and 22.9% in Blackburn with Darwen – with Blackburn experiencing a 6% increase year-on-year.

Disadvantaged learners in Blackpool are most affected, with 32.8% not entering a sustained destination, 17.7% higher than their non-disadvantaged peers. For Key Stage 4 leavers, sustained destination rates in Lancashire and Blackburn with Darwen remain below the regional average, but Blackpool leads with 12.5% not progressing.

The latest data for 2023 (latest published data) show that there are 1,967 home schooled children across Lancashire. This represents a 62% increase since 2019.

Lancashire accounts for about 1.3% of all home-educated children in England, which is roughly in line with its share of the national population. However, the rate of increase in Lancashire (62% since 2019) is significantly higher than the national average over the same period. There is a high proportion of these young people who subsequently fall into the Not Known category.

Priority Cohort 3: Female Carers

Data from the Labour Force Survey and Annual Population Survey show that 18.1% of Lancashire’s economically inactive population are not in work due to caring responsibilities or managing the home. According to the 2021 Census, in multi-adult households where at least one adult has a disability (as defined by the Equality Act 2010), over one-third have no working adults. A further 27% have only one working adult, while just 29.4% have two. This indicates that in such households, it is more common to have no working adults than to be fully employed.

Women are disproportionately represented among those who are economically inactive due to caring responsibilities, making up 58.5% of this group (2021 Census). While the gender employment gap has narrowed over time, women - particularly those with caring duties for children or relatives with health conditions - continue to face significant barriers to entering or remaining in work. This is reflected in Lancashire’s persistent gender employment gap.

There are limitations to the economic inactivity data and the ability to layer characteristics in annual data sets, for example, by gender and ethnicity, there would be a much stronger evidence-base to help develop potential interventions for target communities, in specific places, in greatest need in Lancashire if more granular data was available. For example, in some communities across Lancashire - particularly within certain ethnic minority communities - traditional norms around gender roles and family caregiving can contribute to women, especially, stepping away from paid employment to undertake informal caring responsibilities.

3 Objectives and Target Groups

These expectations, while often rooted in strong family values, may limit labour market participation for women with caring duties for children, older relatives, or disabled family members. The GLWP will work with local authorities to ensure that programmes better understand these dynamics and offer flexible, inclusive pathways into work, informed by the needs of individuals. Overtime, working with Government partners, we would hope to improve the quality of available labour market data to shape our analysis and actions in this area.

Priority Cohort 4: Individuals with Hidden Disabilities

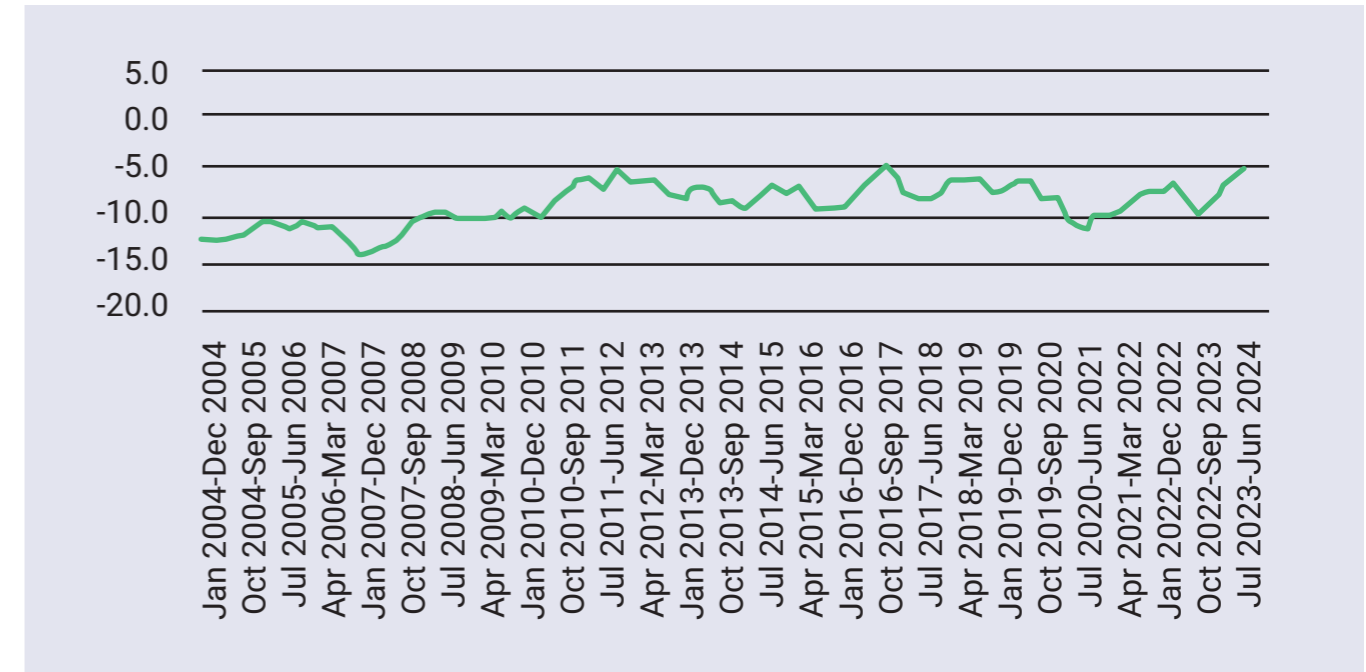
Census data from 2021 highlights that between 15% and 25% of the population across Lancashire has a hidden disability. This can be physical, cognitive or mental in nature. For example, 25.1% of residents in Blackpool are classed as disabled which is the highest proportion in the Lancashire. However, of the 35,459 registered, only 24,122 (17%) claim a disability benefit. This means more than 11,300 people are not receiving the benefit entitlement. In all 14 boroughs of Lancashire, an estimated third of the disabled population is classified as "hidden". This means that approximately 33% of people who are registered as disabled are not claiming a disability benefit that are eligible for or potentially accessing the specialist support, they require to effectively manage their condition.

Some individuals do not meet the disability criteria but live with long-term physical or mental health conditions that do not limit their daily activities. This group exhibits a higher employment rate (77.8%) compared to those without long-term conditions (75.4%), suggesting a degree of resilience in the labour market. However, they may still require tailored in-work support related to health and job security.

Priority Cohort 5: Sickness Absence Risk Group

Fit Notes being issued by GPs continue to rise across Lancashire as more employees are claiming sickness benefit. Data published from NHS England (September 2024) highlighted that 494,862 Fit Notes had been issued between Sept 2023-Sept 2024 (a 9% increase from the previous year). Mental Health/Behavioural Disorders and MSK conditions account for over 65% of Fit Notes. This trend has remained consistent over the last five years. A critical priority to contributing to the 80% target will be stemming the flow of those at risk of falling out of the labour market and into long-term economic inactivity without adequate support.

Gender Employment Gap - Difference between Female Employment Rate and Male Employment Rate



4 Systems and Support Mechanisms

4.1 Existing Programmes

Lancashire benefits from a well-established ecosystem of work, health and skills, and community support services that provide a strong foundation for delivering the GLWP.

These systems demonstrate a clear commitment across sectors to supporting people into work, improving population health, and reducing inequalities. The table below sets out the core provision available for the target cohort groups.

Programme	Cohort Group & Objectives	Timescale
WorkWell	WorkWell provides tailored support helping individuals to address their work and health needs, and to overcome barriers to work. Cohort groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental Health (mild) • MSK • Fit note (in work) • Physical disability 	June 2025-March 2026 (extension requested)
DWP Restart Programme	A mainstream programme providing help and support for long term unemployed. Due to end in June 2026.	June 2021- June 2026
DWP Flexible Support Fund Dynamic Purchasing System 2	A Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) to procure Work Focused Activities across Lancashire. This is based upon local district needs and includes ESOL, digital, health related support for health conditions, soft skills development, basic skills (literacy & numeracy)	September 2021 onwards
Youth Employment Programme	13-week DWP programme for 16-24 year olds on Universal Credit. It offers Youth Work Coach support, traineeship, apprenticeships and work experience	Reaffirmed until April 2028
IPS in Mental Health Services/ Primary Care	Supports unemployed/economically inactive individuals with moderate to severe mental health problems, with an integrated health and employment approach. Includes support to SMEs to help employee retention	September 2020 - April 2026

Programme	Cohort Group & Objectives	Timescale
IPS SMI / Substance misuse	Support for people with an acute mental health condition or drugs or alcohol misuse	June 2025- March 2026
Employment Advisors in IAPT (Talking Therapies)	Supports unemployed people with mild to moderate mental health issues, through structured, time-limited interventions (e.g. Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, counselling and mindfulness)	May 2023-March 2027
Youth Hubs	Currently operating in Accrington, Barrow, Blackburn, Blackpool, Burnley, Fleetwood, Pendle and Preston. Youth Hubs bring together services in one place - Jobcentre Plus work coaches, training providers, advice, and mental health support – to support 16-24 year olds	Ongoing – but risk to sustainability
Inactivity Support through UKSPF	Aimed at residents facing multiple barriers. The focus varies by local authority area. Currently operating in Pendle, Burnley, Rossendale, Preston, Blackpool, West Lancashire, Lancaster and Fylde	Until March 2026 – subject to future policy decision
Patient Advice Service	Outreach presence in a number of GP surgeries across Lancashire, delivered by Jobcentre Plus Disability Employment Advisors. Targets both those in and out of work	Ongoing
Access to Work	Discretionary pot of funding to support people with a health condition or disability integrate into the workplace. Cohort Group: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MSK • Mental Health • Physical disability 	Ongoing

4 Systems and Support Mechanisms

4.2 Planned programmes

The following table lists all the planned programmes – both those already announced by DWP and those proposed by LCCA:

All current and planned programmes are delivered through a mix of local authorities, Jobcentre Plus, employment and skills providers, and the VCFSE sector. This diversity ensures wide coverage but also presents challenges around coordination and duplication, which the GLWP aims to address.

Programme	Cohort Group & Objectives	Timescale
Connect to Work (CtW)	Supported employment programme tailored towards participant needs. Key cohort groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Universal Credit No Work Requirements • Fit Note (in work) • Physical disability • Mental Health • MSK • Disabled (Hidden / mild / acute) • Groups with barriers to sustained employment e.g. ex-offenders, veterans, care leavers etc. 	July 2025-March 2030
National Disability Programme	Support people with a health condition or disability back in to work through health interventions and wraparound support (subject to more detail). Potential cohort groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disability (hidden / physical / acute) • MSK • Acute mental health 	Unknown, potentially mid 2026
IPS in MSK	Integrated health and employment support for unemployed people who are MSK NHS services users.	Unknown – cited in Spring budget 2024

4.3 Proposed Programmes

The Get Britain Working White Paper reaffirmed the government’s commitment to investing in pilot programmes that test and scale innovative approaches to reducing economic inactivity and driving system change. This includes initiatives such as Economic Inactivity Trailblazers, Youth Trailblazers, and Health & Growth Accelerator Sites.

To contribute fully to the national goal of reaching 80% employment among the working-age population, Lancashire requires additional levers and targeted investment to trial new delivery models. The LCCA would therefore welcome the opportunity to be included in the expansion of these pilots. Doing so would enable the LCCA to leverage additional funding, accelerate progress, and provide more tailored support to those furthest from the labour market, helping them move into meaningful and sustainable employment.



4 Systems and Support Mechanisms

Programme	Cohort Group & Objectives	Timescale
Economic inactivity Trailblazer	<p>Test & Learn approach to address economic inactivity and worklessness within local areas. Cohort groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Universal Credit No Work Requirements • Fit Note (in work) • Physical disability • Mental Health • MSK • Disabled (Hidden / mild / acute) • Young adults 	Request one year pilot from October 2025-2026
NHS Health & Growth Accelerator	<p>Increase people's health by tackling the conditions that most impact people's ability to work (cardiovascular problems and diabetes to back pain and mental health issues). Cohort groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MSK • Diabetes • Neurodiversity • Obesity 	Request one year pilot from October 2025-October 2026
Youth Guarantee	<p>To support young people to access apprenticeships, training and employment support. Cohort Groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18-21 year olds, especially those: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not in education, employment, or training (NEET) • At risk of long-term unemployment • Claiming Universal Credit under work-related conditions • Facing additional barriers (e.g. care leavers, those with SEND, or those affected by mental health or housing issues) <p>Lancashire would seek to work with DWP on flexing this to include 16-17 year olds to help stem the cycle of NEET</p>	Request one year pilot from October 2025-2026
Youth Hub Extension Funding	<p>Continue to provide multi-agency support to young people to help them back into training and employment:</p> <p>Cohort Group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18-24 year olds (with policy emphasis on 18-21 year olds) • Young People who are NEET or those at risk of becoming NEET • Young Universal Credit claimants on the Intensive Work Search regime • Vulnerable cohorts 	Request further funding / Youth Guarantee

4.4 Collaborative Capacity

Lancashire benefits from strong relationships between statutory services, employers, and the VCFSE sector. The ICB is increasingly embedding employment as a health outcome, and Jobcentre Plus leaders have shown openness to greater local flexibility and collaboration. Community organisations also play a vital role in engaging harder-to-reach groups, offering culturally competent, place-based support.

4.5 Challenges to Address

To deliver meaningful systematic change, the LCCA acknowledges that local systems need to evolve and improve outcomes.

The DWP WorkWell pilot has initiated progress by enhancing coordination and integration across local health and employment systems. However, the complexity and scale of local networks mean that embedding these changes will take time. The ICB is undergoing rapid organisational transformation while facing significant budget reductions under the Comprehensive Spending Review.

This financial pressure will influence the pace of system change, requiring an adaptive approach. To meet the government's target of reducing economic inactivity and reaching 80% employment participation in Lancashire, systemic improvements in capacity, coordination, capability, and commissioning are essential. These improvements are informed by extensive local engagement and a collective understanding of current constraints. The primary goal is to establish a partnership coalition committed to long-term change and agreed outcomes across health and employment systems.

4.6 Capacity and Capability Challenges

Collaborative Culture:

The WorkWell pilot has demonstrated the importance of multi-disciplinary teams committed to joint outcomes across health and employment sectors. This collaborative culture must be embedded among frontline practitioners.

Employment as a Health Outcome:

As recognised in the 2025 Healthcare Professionals' Consensus Statement³, employment should be recognised as a positive health outcome and integrated into broader health conversations to support individuals who could benefit from meaningful work and its transformative effects.

Complex Needs:

Individuals with multiple long-term health conditions often require comprehensive support to stabilise their lives before re-entering employment. High service demand within constrained primary and secondary care budgets leaves services overstretched, limiting their capacity.

Localised Solutions:

Lancashire's diverse geography, including rural and coastal areas, necessitates tailored, place-based solutions rather than one-size-fits-all strategies to address varying local needs effectively.

Voluntary, Community, Faith, and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) Sector:

VCFSE organisations are well-positioned to engage inactive groups but often lack stable resources to scale their efforts due to volatile funding and shifting policy priorities.

Fragmentation of Support:

Delivering consistent, person-centred support remains a challenge. Professionals across sectors - such as employment advisers, clinicians, and community workers - often work in silos with limited shared training, pathways, or data systems. This fragmentation risks individuals falling through gaps or disengaging from support entirely.

³ <https://www.aomrc.org.uk/publication/2025-healthcare-professionals-consensus-statement-for-action-on-health-and-work/>

4 Systems and Support Mechanisms

4.7 Structural and Cultural Barriers

Fragmented Commissioning and Funding Cycles:

Siloed commissioning and short-term funding cycles hinder long-term planning and innovation. Shifting national and local funding trends undermine sustainable change. For instance, the WorkWell pilot, set to end in February 2026, risks losing momentum unless extended and mainstreamed into local health and employment systems. Greater consistency and collaboration in commissioning services are essential.

Training Coordination: Frontline health and employment practitioners require targeted, coordinated training to foster better integration across systems. Returning to work must be recognised as a positive outcome for individuals with mild health conditions.

Lack of Shared Data Systems:

Limited data integration across work, health and skills services restricts visibility into existing support and gaps. For example, GPs issuing fit notes for individuals with mild health conditions need better tools for signposting appropriate services.

Inflexible Programme Design:

National-level programme rigidity limits local adaptation, particularly in areas of high need and low provider density. Greater oversight and consultation are necessary during programme design to ensure alignment with place-based strategies and allow local adjustments.

Shared Ownership and Integration: Stronger joint ownership of outcomes among partners is needed. While collaboration occurs, inconsistencies remain in prioritising and resourcing integrated working, particularly at the frontline between health and employment services.

Significant Organisational Changes:

Impending organisational changes in the ICB, NHS and for Local Authorities present a systemic challenge in sustaining the relationships, common goals and impetus for change which is required in Lancashire. This is particularly acute in the first three years of this plan. System leaders in Lancashire will need to create safeguards for the key actions set out in this plan to accelerate improvements based on existing programmes and good practice

4.8 Changes Required to Facilitate Future Investment

To deliver long-term impact at scale, Lancashire must shift from fragmented provision to a more integrated, outcomes-focused system. This will require a series of **foundational and structural changes** that align stakeholders, simplify delivery, and create the conditions for sustained progress. The following outlines the short- and medium-to-long-term system changes needed to enable effective delivery of the GLWP and attract future investment.

4.9 Foundational System Change (short-term priorities)

In the short-term, the priority is to build a strong foundation for collaborative delivery. This begins with **creating consensus** among a broad coalition of partners, including JobCentre Plus, the ICB, local authorities, employers, and the VCFSE sector. A shared commitment to long-term system reform is essential.

A key enabler will be the development of a communal **outcomes framework**, underpinned by transparency, clarity, and shared accountability. This could include a concordat or formal agreement between partners, outlining their respective roles and responsibilities in delivering on agreed outcomes.

Procurement Act which will support LCCA commitment to Social Value building by creating local employment and skills opportunities through **strategic commissioning and procurement**. This will build on local best practice.

To increase employment participation, the LCCA will work in partnership with employers to grow, shape and open up job opportunities that are accessible to a wider range of residents. The GLWP will build on and expand employer engagement through the Lancashire Business Board and employer networks, by formalising partnership agreements and **increasing the number of businesses signed up to the Lancashire Skills Pledge**. A particular focus will be placed on the “Recruit Lancashire People” strand, with direct links to the Connect to Work programme. The plan is also aligned with the Lancashire Growth Plan, which sets out ambitions to generate both higher-value and foundational jobs through strategic investment. Social Value will be embedded into planning and procurement processes to ensure that employment benefits flow to local people, particularly those from disadvantaged or inactive cohorts. This combined approach will ensure that the supply of jobs is better matched with local demand, and that those jobs are inclusive, flexible, and sustainable.

To support joint working, Lancashire requires robust, GDPR-compliant **data-sharing protocols** between key stakeholders, including JobCentre Plus, ICB, NHS, and local authorities by project. These protocols will enable partners to access and act on real-time insights, driving a shared performance culture and supporting continuous improvement. Data Sharing Agreements will formalise these arrangements, setting out best practices for tracking performance and managing the information that underpins the outcomes framework.

Alongside these structural enablers, there is a need to invest in the people delivering services. A **coordinated workforce development offer** is needed for frontline employment and health practitioners to deepen their understanding of each other's systems, improve cross-sector collaboration, and build capability around supporting people with complex needs.

4.10 Structural System Change (medium to long-term priorities)

In the medium to long term, Lancashire seeks to move towards more **flexible and devolved commissioning arrangements**, particularly with DWP and other departments. Co-designed or locally delegated commissioning powers would enable the county to shape provision that better reflects local priorities, workforce needs, and population demographics, anchored in the agreed outcomes framework.

Lancashire also requires **multi-year funding settlements** to support stability and long-term planning. These settlements would give partners the confidence to invest in service development, retain skilled staff, and scale innovation without the disruption caused by short-term funding cycles.

Sustained investment will also be necessary for **core coordination roles**, including key workers, local system coordinators, and members of multidisciplinary teams. These roles are essential for ensuring people with complex needs receive consistent, joined-up support across services.

Finally, the system must shift from reactive support to **preventative action**. This means investing in early interventions that “stem the flow” into economic inactivity - targeting individuals on sickness absence, at risk of job loss, or disengaging from work. Preventing disconnection before it happens is not only more cost-effective but also key to supporting long-term population health and resilience.

These systemic changes are not quick fixes, but they are achievable, grounded in existing good practice, and crucial for maximising the impact of future investment.

Working With Partners

Delivering the ambition of the GLWP will require coordinated effort across systems and sectors. Reducing economic inactivity, particularly among those with health-related barriers, can only be achieved through collective action, where each partner brings its unique levers, assets, and insights to the table. Lancashire's approach focuses on embedding a collaborative delivery model that ensures shared ownership, responsiveness, and improved outcomes for residents.

Since 2023, the LCCA has been working closely with partners from across the health, employment, local government, business, and VCFSE sectors. This will ensure the GLWP is reflective of local needs and aligns with existing initiatives (e.g. WorkWell and the IPS).

5.1 Engagement to Date

Work And Health Steering Group

A **Work and Health Steering Group** has been in place for the last two years, which has enabled us to gain a deeper insight into economic inactivity across Lancashire. Led by the Lancashire Skills and Employment Hub, the group is comprised of the Upper Tier Local Authorities and representatives of District Authorities; NHS Lancashire and South Cumbria ICB; Public Health; Jobcentre Plus; the North and West Lancashire Chamber of Commerce (responsible for the LSIP); the Lancashire Growth Hub, and several VCFSE organisations (including Active Lancashire and the Lancashire and South Cumbria Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise Alliance).

Research into economic trends and potential reasons for inactivity was jointly funded by the three Upper Tier Local Authority Public Health teams and led by the Lancashire Skills and Employment Hub, with support from consultants. Using qualitative and quantitative data collected between February and July 2023, a comprehensive report was produced, published

and shared with key stakeholders – including local authorities, the ICB, Jobcentre Plus, and the national DWP Policy team – to inform future programme development and share learning and best practice.

WorkWell Partnership Programme Vanguard

Following the publication of the Economic Inactivity Insight Report in September 2023, the Work and Health Steering Group evolved into a development forum for the WorkWell Vanguard. This forum became a central mechanism for ongoing collaboration between health and employment partners, including provider networks, Primary Care Networks, Talking Therapies services, and the ICB.

Ongoing engagement with stakeholders from across Lancashire's employment and skills system, the ICB, and local government enabled forum members to build the relationships and insights needed to support the effective implementation of the WorkWell model. This collaborative approach has established a strong foundation for testing delivery and identifying systematic challenges to integration.

As the programme progresses, the development forum will transition into the new governance arrangements and feed into the Partnership Panel, acting as a strategic partner during the delivery of the wider GLWP.

Market Engagement: Connect To Work

In January and May 2025, LCCA and the Lancashire Skills and Employment Hub hosted two market engagement events (attended by over 70 providers and key stakeholders) for the Connect to Work programme – a key delivery strand under the emerging Get Britain Working programme. These events provided early visibility of the proposed approach and enabled local providers, employers, and partners to contribute to table discussions.

Get Lancashire Working: The Big Conversation

On Friday 16th May 2025, the Get Lancashire Working: The Big Conversation conference brought together c.70 partners to help inform thinking for the GLWP. Co-hosted by the Lancashire Skills and Employment Hub (LCCA), the ICB, and Jobcentre Plus (and with support from Public Health), the event focused on tackling economic inactivity, integrating work and health support, identifying local priorities, and sharing good practice. Roundtable discussions provided valuable insights on priority cohorts, existing good practice and gaps in provision.

Capturing Best Practice

As part of continued engagement with local stakeholders across Lancashire, a structured consultation process was implemented via the Get Britain Working: Capturing Best Practice initiative. Invitees to the conference were also invited to complete a standardised template designed to identify and showcase examples of best practice, innovation, and scalable models that could be embedded more consistently across the region using existing resources and infrastructures. 29 templates were received.

Follow-up interviews were conducted with the consultants commissioned to support the development of the plan to explore their approaches in greater depth and assess their potential for wider adoption across Lancashire.

5.2 Approach to Collective Working

The LCCA and the Lancashire Skills and Employment Hub, the designated skills and employment lead within the LCCA responsible for coordinating and delivering skills and employment initiatives across Lancashire, are committed to engaging a broad range of internal and external stakeholders in the development and implementation of the GLWP.

Internal Stakeholders

Within the LCCA and its constituent authorities, engagement includes:

- **Local Authority Departments:** The LCCA will work closely with Economic Development, Adult Social Care, Public Health, Education, and Housing Teams across Lancashire's constituent councils to ensure alignment with existing strategies and frontline insight into local needs.
- **Council-delivered employment and skills services:** Respective councils in Lancashire deliver a wide range of employment and skills initiatives (e.g. Blackpool's Positive Steps into Work Service; Burnley's Burnley Together partnership; and Blackburn with Darwen's Employment, Skills and Support Hub) and will provide LCCA with place-based intelligence and local reach, with deep insights into the needs of residents in their specific localities.

External Stakeholders

Beyond those represented on the governance board, LCCA is actively engaging with several external stakeholder groups, including:

- **Lancashire Adult Skills Forum:** Chaired by the Lancashire Skills and Employment Hub, the forum brings together partners to align adult unemployment provision with the strategic outcomes of the Lancashire Skills and Employment Strategic Framework. LCCA will use the forum to share developments in the Get Britain Working Plan and gather feedback from employment and skills providers on local needs and delivery challenges.
- **Business Board:** Formed in June 2024, the Lancashire Business Board is actively involved in developing Connect to Work and WorkWell, with members contributing via a 'task and finish' group alongside Lancashire Skills Pledge members. The Business Board also plays an ambassadorial role in promoting inclusive employment to employers across Lancashire.

Working With Partners

- **Local Employers and Business Networks:** The three local Chambers of Commerce have a combined membership of 2,500 businesses and are responsible for delivering the LSIP. The Lancashire Skills and Employment Hub has partnership agreements with 11 business networks across the area. As part of the agreement, the business networks encourage members to sign up to the Lancashire Skills Pledge, including 'Recruit Lancashire People'. Engagement with these stakeholders will enable the LCCA to co-develop pathways that align with real labour market needs and create progression opportunities for residents.
- **Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise Sector (VCFSE):** The LCCA will work with infrastructure bodies (e.g. the VCFSE Alliance and Lancashire LOCAL) and VCFSE providers such as Active Lancashire and Calico to design inclusive support that builds trust with priority groups, especially those facing complex barriers.
- **Education and Skills Providers:** Colleges, Lancashire Work Based Learning Forum, Adult Skills Fund and Tailored Learning Providers, and the sub-region's four universities will support the development of flexible, demand-led training routes and re-skilling opportunities aligned with local growth sectors.
- **DWP and National Stakeholders:** The LCCA and the Lancashire Skills and Employment Hub will maintain ongoing dialogue with Jobcentre Plus district leads and DWP policy teams to ensure coordination with national provision and effective referral pathways.

Engagement Mechanisms

LCCA will use a structured and responsive set of stakeholder engagement mechanisms to ensure co-design, alignment and long-term buy in of the GLWP.

At the core of this engagement strategy is the multi-agency **Partnership Panel**, chaired by the technical expert on the LCCA Skills Advisory Board, bringing together key partners from across local authorities, the ICB, Jobcentre Plus, VCFSE organisations, employer bodies, colleges, training providers, and other relevant agencies. This group will provide strategic oversight, alignment of work, health and skills programmes, and act as a forum for shared governance and decision-making.

To complement this, the Lancashire Skills and Employment Hub will undertake a series of **thematic discussions** to focus on key areas such as health and work, **employer engagement**, young adults, over-50s, and in-work progression. These groups will bring together practitioners and subject-matter experts to develop tailored approaches for each priority cohort, ensuring that interventions are evidence-led and locally responsive.

To ensure design is grounded in community insight, LCCA will link into employer roundtables and co-design workshops via the LSIP and engage delivery partners and residents with lived experience of economic inactivity. This will include targeted engagement with local authority employment services, training providers, and community-based organisations, as well as direct involvement of economically inactive individuals, such as people with health conditions, and older adults, in shaping solutions. Employer engagement will play a key role in identifying real-world job opportunities and ensuring the plan reflects local labour market demand.

To ensure place-based flexibility and responsiveness, LCCA will work through existing **local delivery forums and partnerships** within districts and boroughs (e.g. Burnley Together; Preston's Community Network). These forums will act as channels for local intelligence and coordination, helping to adapt delivery models to local economic and demographic contexts.

Engagement with existing **provider networks and VCFSE infrastructure bodies**, such as the Lancashire and South Cumbria VCFSE Alliance, will be used to draw in specialist expertise, gather frontline intelligence, and identify potential gaps or duplication in provision. Using the Escalate digital tool will help ensure that all partners are informed about the opportunities available to residents.

LCCA will establish ongoing **feedback and review mechanisms** throughout the delivery phase. These will include regular programme review sessions, feedback loops with providers and Jobcentre Plus work coaches, and continuous dialogue with residents and employers. This iterative approach will allow for real-time learning and adaptation of the plan to maximise impact.



Priority Actions and Long-Term Goals

The LCCA Skills Advisory Board has agreed a phased approach to tackling economic inactivity and increasing employment across the county. The immediate focus is to stem the flow in the rise in economic inactivity and strengthen the foundations of a more integrated, coordinated support system. This will ensure services are better aligned, delivery is more consistent, and residents receive timely, joined-up support. The actions below outline the priorities for the next 12–24 months, alongside the strategic goals that will guide LCCA's journey to 2035.

6.1 Priority Actions (2025 – 2027): Stabilising and Building Foundations

Embed System wide Partnership Governance and Delivery Infrastructure

To ensure delivery is coordinated, accountable, and strategically aligned, the first priority is to establish and embed **robust governance and partnership** infrastructure across Lancashire's work, health and skills system. Actions include:

- **Operationalise the reformed Skills and Employment Board as a Partnership Panel** as the core strategic governance group, ensuring active involvement from local authorities, Jobcentre Plus, the ICB, providers, and the VCFSE sector.
- **Encourage multi-agency delivery teams (MDTs):** at both the thematic and place-based levels (e.g. health and work, youth transitions, over-50s), to support joined-up working across systems. Coordinate thematic discussions to shape delivery responses.

- **Use existing forums in each LA** (e.g. Burnley Together) to enable a two-way relationship with partners, and the collaborative development of local plans that align with the strategic objectives of the GLWP, while retaining local autonomy and responsiveness
- **Leverage Communities of Practice** for delivery partners (e.g. for the Connect to Work and WorkWell programmes) to strengthen collaboration, enhance implementation, and share best practices.
- **Develop a shared data and outcomes framework** at a Lancashire level to assess progress.

Strengthen Partnerships

To ensure collaboration is established across work, health and skills systems, the following actions will be prioritised:

- **Best Practice/Learning Networks:** Strengthen collaboration between work, health and skills services by developing communities of practice.
- **Professional Development:** Create modular learning and information materials that health and employability professionals can access to support their understanding of integration and keep abreast of the latest local developments.
- **Expand the Digital Directory:** Develop the Escalate digital tool to support employability and health professionals' understanding of local opportunities. The Lancashire Escalate Tool is an intuitive, user-friendly platform developed to connect unemployed individuals and referral organisations with the most appropriate employment and skills support available across Lancashire. By answering a few straightforward questions, users are matched with tailored opportunities that align with their specific needs and geographic location.

- **Launch the Lancashire Data Observatory:** Establish the Observatory as a central hub of labour market intelligence to ensure programmes are aligned with local priorities and to inform the development of plans.
- **Employer Engagement Partnerships:** Strengthen partnerships with employers and business networks to ensure programmes are aligned with real labour market opportunities. This includes growing participation in the Lancashire Skills Pledge, embedding Social Value into procurement, and supporting inclusive recruitment through programmes like Connect to Work.
- **Business Continuity:** Maintain and sustain coordination at a senior level to drive transformation and change, ensuring long-term progress and embedding collaboration into strategic priorities. Additional investment will enable the scaling of these initiatives, maximising impact and delivering meaningful system-wide change.

6.2 Target Key Priority Groups with Tailored Interventions

Specific actions will target priority groups, ensuring bespoke support for vulnerable and economically inactive individuals:

- **WorkWell Expansion:** The WorkWell pilot, funded by the Joint Work & Health Unit (DWP and the Department for Health and Social Care – DHSC), has successfully integrated health and work support services for individuals in Lancashire and South Cumbria with low-level physical or mental health challenges, enabling early intervention to reduce economic inactivity. By consolidating service coordination, enhancing data-driven insights through tools like the Workstar assessment tool, fostering NHS clinical partnerships, and building practitioner knowledge-sharing networks, WorkWell has driven system-wide improvements. Extending the programme would build on this success and deepen integration across health and work systems.
- **Connect to Work (CtW) Implementation:** Develop Lancashire delivery plan and launch CtW in July 2025, focusing on residents with health conditions and disabilities, and residents with barriers to sustained employment, for

example ex-offenders, care leavers and veterans. Establish a CtW Community of Practice to monitor outcomes, share best practices, and integrate services. The CtW service is worth £38 million over 4.5 years and is designed to support over 11,000 residents (50% of which will be supported to find sustained employment). The delivery approach will be through commissioned contracts with external providers and internal delivery via the three Upper Tier Local Authorities.

- **Collaborate with NHS clinical teams and GPs:** to embed early interventions for individuals with mild disabilities or health conditions. For example, Jobcentre Plus have Disability Employment Advisors in six GP practices to date (five pending). Explore with health partners how tools like Accurx text messaging system (currently used by GPs) could be used to notify patients of relevant opportunities such as WorkWell to engage residents in integrated work, health and skills support.
- **Evaluate the MSK Pilot:** An MSK pilot is set to be launched in Preston, delivering employment support through rheumatology and community pain services led by multi-disciplinary clinical teams. This pilot aims to test innovative approaches to joint working between Employment Advisors and clinicians, including data sharing and the development of personalised support pathways. Jobcentre Plus Disability Employment Advisors (DEAs) will play a key role in providing wraparound support to participants, helping bridge clinical interventions with benefit guidance, skills support, and job-search preparation tailored to individuals with health-related barriers.
- **Expand Talking Therapies Support:** The Lancashire & South Cumbria Talking Therapies programme is designed to provide psychological support therapy to people aged 16 and over. Employment Advisors are embedded within the service and work with health practitioners to support them to progress back into or stay in work. Through the GLWP there is scope to expand this service to engage with a higher volume of participants, particularly those facing mental health-related employment barriers. Jobcentre Plus DEAs will be aligned with this service to ensure continuity of support beyond clinical treatment, offering personalised employment advice and facilitating access

Priority Actions and Long-Term Goals

to wider provision such as training, employer engagement, and local support services.

- **Strengthen Provision for young adults and young people who are Not in Employment, Education and Training (NEETs):** particularly in areas of high need, through foundation apprenticeships, supported internships, and Youth Hub outreach (e.g. Youth Hubs in Accrington, Blackburn, Blackpool, Burnley, Pendle, Preston and Fleetwood). There is also a need for increased pre-16 work within schools to identify risk of NEET and potential provision that will help 'stem the flow' of this group into economic inactivity.

6.3 Continue Upskilling and Training Initiatives

To prepare the workforce for emerging opportunities, investment in skills development will be prioritised. This includes:

- **Skills Bootcamps:** The Lancashire Skills Bootcamp programme, worth c£7m in 2025/26 provides intensive courses that focus on equipping individuals with sector-specific skills in high-demand areas such as Digital Technologies, Construction, and Healthcare. The initiative aims to swiftly address employer skill requirements while offering participants a direct pathway to employment opportunities. On-going commitment is required from the Department for Education to fund Skills Bootcamps.
- **Apprenticeships and Levy Maximisation:** Continued focus on encouraging employers to invest in apprenticeships. Unused apprenticeship levy funds can be redistributed to smaller employers, enabling them to invest in workforce upskilling and meet their business needs effectively through the Lancashire Levy Transfer Network.
- **Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs):** The Lancashire and Cumbria Institute of Technology is driving the development of Level 4–5

qualifications. HTQs are closely aligned with employer demands in sectors experiencing skills shortages, ensuring a pipeline of qualified professionals for industries critical to economic growth.

- **Devolved Skills Budgets:** Preparations are underway for the devolution of the Adult Skills Fund in 2026, which will allow the LCCA to allocate funding based on sub regional labour market priorities.

6.4 Enhance National Programme Integration

The LCCA will leverage national programmes to maximise impact locally by focussing on:

- **Restart:** The DWP Restart programme has been extended until June 2026 and will play an integral role in supporting long-term unemployed participants with multiple barriers to employment. The LCCA will work with Restart providers and wider services to support individuals exiting the programme without a job outcome.
- **Access to Work (AtW) including AtW Mental Health Support:** Supporting people with a health condition and/or disability to sustain employment is crucial in reducing economic inactivity. While Access to Work is a national programme and cannot be locally altered, the LCCA will work in collaboration with DWP and AtW contractors to help participants and employers navigate the scheme effectively. By providing local support to improve understanding and engagement with the AtW process, we aim to reduce the practical impact of delays and ensure participants can take up roles promptly.
- **Flexible Support Fund (FSF):** The DWP Dynamic Purchasing System provides JobCentre Plus with the flexibility and autonomy to commission programmes that reflect the needs of specific geographies and cohort groups. The LCCA

will liaise closely with JobCentre Plus service leaders to ensure that the procured provision is mapped against GLWP priority groups.

6.5 Programme Integration

Lancashire is committed to delivering a fully integrated, locally tailored offer that connects residents to the right support at the right time. A central part of this will be successfully connecting work, health and skills programmes under the GLWP, including Connect to Work, WorkWell, and relevant UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) interventions (subject to extension). A joined-up model will ensure that individuals benefit from seamless progression routes through the system, reducing duplication and increasing efficiency. To enable this integration in practice, the LCCA will:

- Adopt a '**no wrong front door**' approach, ensuring that individuals receive personalised, appropriate support regardless of their first point of contact, whether through the NHS, Jobcentre Plus, local authorities, VCFSE organisations, or digital self-referral routes
- Build on and align with successful models already in place, such as the **Youth Hubs**, the **WorkWell Partnership Programme**, and community-based employment initiatives. These programmes will be embedded into a wider pathway that includes adult skills support, employer engagement, and wraparound services, ensuring that support is both holistic and responsive to individual needs.

6.6 Future Delivery Readiness

The LCCA is particularly keen to act as a delivery partner for future trailblazers, including the **Economic Inactivity and Youth Employment Trailblazers** announced by DWP. These offer a significant opportunity to build on Lancashire's infrastructure and evidence base, testing new approaches to engage under-served cohorts and scale what works. The LCCA also recognises the potential of the proposed **NHS Health & Growth Accelerator**, which would help expand capacity for integrated health and employment support and strengthen the health system's role in tackling economic inactivity. Alongside this, the **Flexible Support Fund** will be used to offer more

tailored, locally designed support - for example, to unpaid carers who have traditionally been overlooked by mainstream programmes.

6.7 Embed Lived Experience in Design and Delivery

The LCCA will work with residents, service users, employers and people with direct experience of economic inactivity, ill health, or exclusion from the labour market to shape and refine GLWP interventions. This includes:

- **Establishing co-design panels** to support the development of new programmes, drawing on insights from people with lived experience of navigating unemployment, disability, caring responsibilities, or health-related barriers to work.
- **Capturing user feedback** to support continuous improvement and evaluation, using methods such as anonymous digital surveys, one-to-one interviews, exit interviews, and focus groups.
- **Using provider networks** to amplify frontline feedback e.g. providers of Connect to Work and other GLW programmes will be expected to incorporate lived experience mechanisms into their delivery, and share insight into system-wide evaluation processes.
- **Engaging employers as lived experience partners**, recognising the value of those who have supported individuals with complex needs into and in work. The GLWP will facilitate opportunities for employers to share business-to-business learning, case studies and practical insight into inclusive hiring, workplace adjustments, and retention strategies. These employer perspectives will feed into system design, workforce development, and commissioning priorities.

Embedding lived experience in this structured way will enable the LCCA to build services that are more responsive, inclusive and better able to support people facing the greatest barriers to work.

Priority Actions and Long-Term Goals

6.8 Systematic Monitoring and Policy Alignment

To ensure flexibility and responsiveness to policy changes, the following measures will be embedded:

- **Continuous Evaluation:** Establish a structured review process via the Data Observatory. This mechanism will refresh labour market analysis while enabling timely adjustments in resource allocation, ensuring interventions remain relevant to emerging trends and challenges.
- **Welfare Reform Impacts:** DWP will provide market stewardship through mechanisms such as the Flexible Support Fund (FSF), helping to shape agile, person-centred support systems that respond to the needs of Universal Credit (UC) claimants, particularly those in the Planning and Preparing for Work group. Building on this national framework, the LCCA will coordinate with Jobcentre Plus and delivery partners to design and commission complementary, place-based support for UC claimants. These local interventions will be informed by real-time data and local intelligence, enabling the early identification of individuals at risk of long-term unemployment or disengagement. LCCA will also ensure services are co-produced with partners and focused on removing key practical barriers to work, such as digital exclusion, mental health needs, caring responsibilities, and low confidence.

- **Continual review:** As the policy landscape evolves, the GLWP will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains responsive to key developments, including the Comprehensive Spending Review, the Pathways to Work Green and White Papers, the Get Britain Working Strategy and the Post 16 Skills White Paper.

6.9 Priority Actions Delivery Plan

The following priority actions are those the LCCA are focused on achieving in the first two years (2025-2027) - the Stabilise and Foundational Change phase of the roadmap.

1. Strategic Enabler Actions

These are system-level actions that create the conditions for successful programme delivery, integration, and long-term change.

Action	Objective	Outcome	Timescale
Agree Outcomes Framework	Align shared goals and metrics across partners	Consistent and reliable data to review and monitor performance	Oct 2025-Dec 2025
Improve data sharing mechanisms	Develop consistent and accurate reporting; enable integrated support across services (sharing data across national and local programmes)	Better understanding of performance and participant requirements; more coordinated interventions	Oct 2025-Oct 2027
Launch Lancashire Data Observatory	Provide real-time, localised insight into need and performance	Data-led decision-making and commissioning	Live by mid 2026
Workforce development training	Equip cross-sector practitioners with shared tools and understanding	Improved quality and consistency of support	Oct 2025-Oct 2027
Structural system change programme	Align governance, processes, and delivery across sectors	Reduced fragmentation and stronger partnerships	2025-2027
Embed Social Value in procurement and commissioning	Ensure local commissioning reflects inclusive growth objectives around employment and skills	More local employment and skills outcomes achieved through social value	From 2026 commissioning cycle
Secure multi-year funding agreements	Enable long-term planning and delivery stability	Greater continuity for providers and residents	Government dependent
Fund Local Coordination Capacity	Maintain programme leadership and cross-partner working	Sustained system governance and delivery oversight; stronger collaboration and integration	Funded roles in place from late 2025
Embed lived experience in delivery design	Ensure resident voice shapes support	Services that are more relevant, trusted and accessible	Rolling programme

Priority Actions and Long-Term Goals

2. Programme Delivery Actions

These actions relate direct service or intervention rollouts that support individuals and employers, aligned to Get Britain Working outcomes.

Action	Objective	Cohort	Lead Org	Key Milestone	Timescale
Establish Connect to Work (CtW)	Residents into sustained employment	Economically inactive	LCCA / DWP	Programme live across Lancashire	Phased from July 2025
Expand WorkWell Programme	Deliver integrated health and employment support	Sickness absence group	ICB / LCCA	Extended to all boroughs	Expansion from mid-2025, extension requested beyond March 2026
Strengthen and Expand Youth Hubs	Re-engage NEETs and unemployed young adults with education, employment or training	Young adults / young people who are NEET	Local Authorities	Secure funding to sustain Youth Hubs in existing districts and to expand provision	2025–2026
Jobcentre Plus Employment Advisors in GP Surgeries	Connect health and work in primary care	Sickness absence risk group	DWP / NHS	Scaled from pilot to full coverage	Pilot 4th quarter 2025; expand 2026
Agree Pathway for Restart Leavers	Provide seamless post-Restart progression routes	Un-employed	DWP	Operational protocol agreed	In place by Q1 2026

Action	Objective	Cohort	Lead Org	Key Milestone	Timescale
Pilot Economic Inactivity approaches & Youth Trailblazers	Test new delivery models for hard-to-reach groups	Economic inactive	LCCA / DWP	Pilot model scoped and submitted	Request 2025; implement 2026
Joint NHS Health & Growth Accelerator	Rapidly test new integrated support approaches	Young Adults	ICB / DHSC / LCCA	Lancashire accepted as site	Request 2026 pilot year
Strengthen employer engagement through Lancs Skills Pledge and local networks	Increase numbers of employers signed up to the Lancashire Skills Pledge	Sickness absence group	LCCA / Business Board / Business Networks	100 new employers signed up	By Q4 2027
Engage employers via Connect to Work	Increase number of employers hiring target cohorts	All cohorts	LCCA	Employer portal goes live on CtW	By Q4 2026
Embed Social Value into planning and procurement	Ensure new jobs generated by investment are accessible to residents facing barriers	All cohorts	LCCA/ local Authorities / ICB	Embedded into Growth Plan projects	By Q2 2026

7 Governance and Local Engagement

7.1 Governance Overview

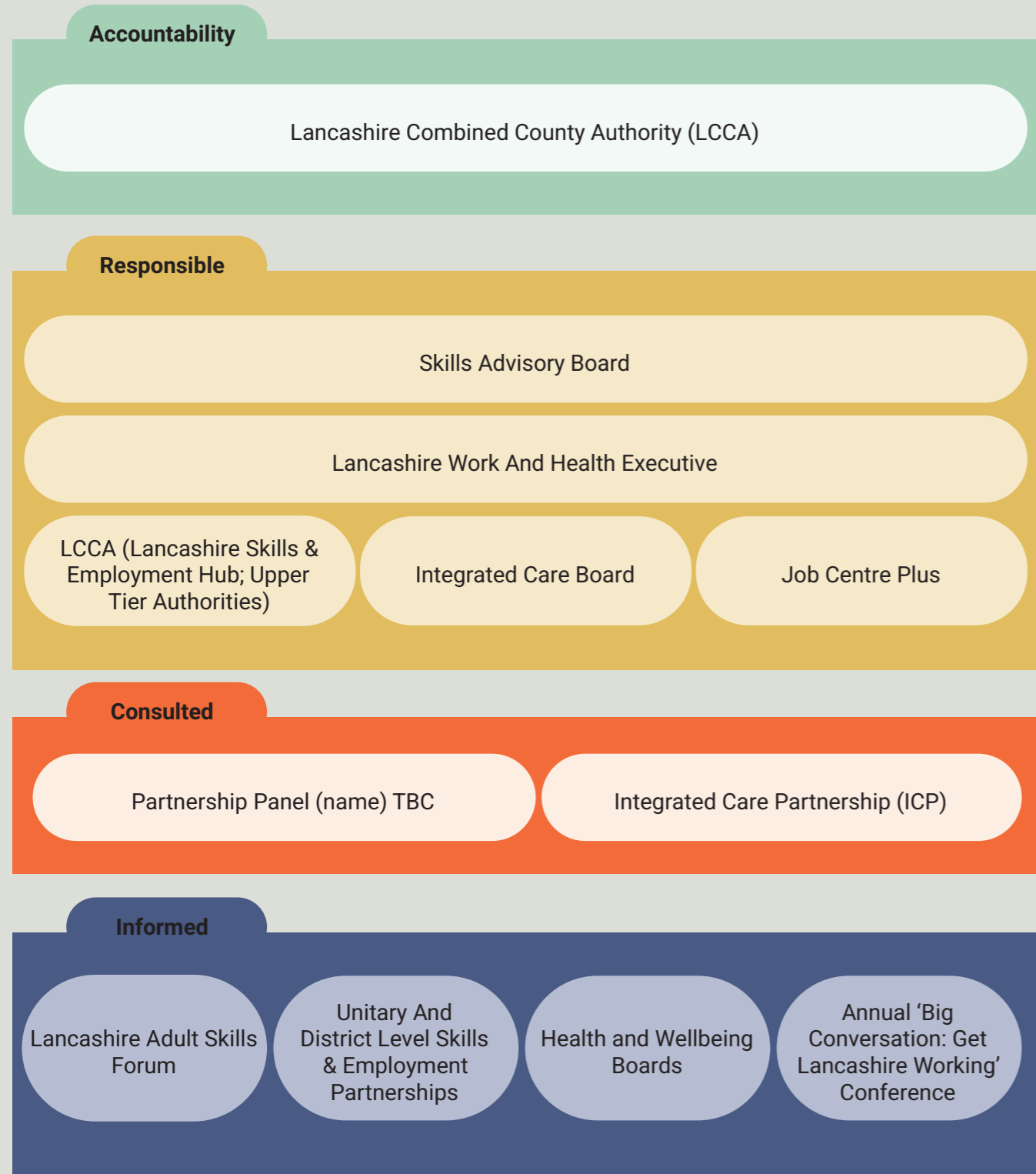


Figure 3: LCCA's RACI Governance Structure

To ensure robust, transparent, and inclusive governance of the GLWP, the LCCA will adopt a RACI (Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, Informed) framework. This structured model clearly defines roles and responsibilities across all partners involved in the development, delivery, and review of the plan. It will help ensure that decisions are made efficiently, tasks are clearly owned, and all relevant voices - particularly those of employers, communities, and service users - are appropriately engaged.

R - Responsible: The Work & Health Executive Group is the responsible body for operational delivery and everyday decision-making. This small, senior leadership group - comprising steering group members from LCCA (Lancashire Skills and Employment Hub), Upper Tier Local Authorities (Lancashire County Council, Blackpool & Blackburn with Darwen Councils), Jobcentre Plus (DWP), and the ICB - will lead the co-development of the plan. It is empowered to work with agility, identify local best practice, highlight innovation, prioritise and approve key projects, and make clear recommendations to LCCA. It will be primarily focused on programme execution, ensuring that activity is co-ordinated, high quality, and responsive to local need.

A - Accountable: LCCA is the Accountable Body, holding overall responsibility for the strategic direction, funding, and compliance of the GLWP. It will oversee governance arrangements, ensure alignment with wider devolution, the Lancashire Skills and Employment Strategic Framework and other LCCA strategies and plans, and report regular progress updates to central government, local leaders and key decision makers across local areas.

C - Consulted: The reformed Partnership Panel will meet quarterly and act as the Consulted body for the Plan. It brings together a broad set of stakeholders who will shape, challenge and support the direction of the plan. The panel will be consulted on thematic priorities, area-based interventions, and innovative pilots. It has been agreed that the existing Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) board will be merged into the reformed Lancashire Skills and Employment Partnership Panel to ensure full alignment. The Panel will formally report into both the LCCA Skills Advisory Board and the Lancashire and

South Cumbria Integrated Care Partnership and ICB, ensuring coherent governance across the work, health and skills systems.

I - Informed: A number of key stakeholders will be integral to the governance structure, with a two-way flow of information, insight and influence over the GLWP's ongoing development. The Lancashire Adult Skills Forum acts as a county-wide convening space where partners from local government, education, and the third sector can both receive updates on GLWP progress and contribute intelligence from the front line of delivery. At the local level, district Skills and Employment Partnerships, where they exist, serve as critical conduits for sharing area-specific data, community feedback, and employer insight, helping to refine place-based interventions. Health and Wellbeing Boards are engaged to align strategies and inform how health and employment services can better integrate to support residents. The annual "Big Conversation: Get Lancashire Working" conference facilitates open dialogue, allowing partners, practitioners, and residents to reflect on progress, share lived experience, and co-develop solutions.

7.2 Organisations involved in the Partnership Panel

Spanning the multiple domains of work, health, and skills, the Partnership Panel will comprise a wide range of cross-sector partners to ensure the GLWP remains inclusive and reflective of local priorities. Members will be strategically selected to ensure that delivery of the Plan is informed by lived experience, employer need, and community impact. This will foster a collaborative approach to the development and delivery of the Plan. The Panel will include representatives from:

- **Lancashire County Combined Authority (LCCA)** via the Lancashire Skills and Employment Hub, which is part of LCCA and the lead body responsible for the overall development of the GLWP
- **Jobcentre Plus (DWP)** via senior leadership, with the Group Director acting as the Jobcentre Plus signatory

7 Governance and Local Engagement

- **Department for Education (DfE)** via the Head of Area - Place-Based Team: Cumbria, Lancashire, and Liverpool City Regions
- **Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board (ICB)**, providing NHS system leadership on the alignment and integration of health with available employment provision
- **Public Health**, with a representative nominated by the three Directors of Public Health in Lancashire
- **Education and Skills providers**, comprising two college representatives (nominated by The Lancashire College group); two university representatives; and a Lancashire Work-Based Learning Forum representative
- **Employer and Business Representation**, including five employers operating across key growth sectors (with steer from LCCA's Growth Plan), and the North and West Lancashire Chamber of Commerce (representing LSIP delivery)
- **Voluntary, Community, Faith, and Social Enterprise (VCFSE)**, nominated representative to ensure community voice and inclusion
- **Local Government**

As the plan evolves and the Partnership Panel is established, the LCCA will seek to incorporate the voices of residents and individuals with lived experience into discussions on specific topics by inviting guests and specialist contributors to relevant meetings. Resident and service user voices can then be used to shape and inform future programme and strategy direction. Governance will be underpinned by clearly defined terms of reference, and reporting frameworks to support transparency, accountability, and a commitment to continuous improvement. The GLWP will complement and build on the existing Lancashire Skills and Employment Strategic Framework (refreshed in February 2024), in line with the ambitions of Lancashire 2050 and the LCCA devolution deal.

7.3 Governance Structure and Responsibilities

The GLWP will be governed through a well-defined, multi-tiered structure designed to ensure strategic oversight, democratic accountability and cross-sector alignment. The LCCA will act as the lead body responsible for the overall development of the GLWP, with the Skills Advisory Board and Lancashire and South Cumbria ICB overseeing the sign-off process alongside JobCentre Plus. The reformed Board will feed into the LCCA Skills Advisory Board, which builds on the foundations of the existing Lancashire Skills and Employment Board.

- **The Work and Health Executive Group:** As the responsible body, this small multi-agency group will lead the co-development of the plan, making clear recommendations to the LCCA.
- **LCCA:** The LCCA will hold overall accountability for the GLWP and provide final sign-off. Prior to sign-off, the LCCA will review the plan to ensure it meets local strategic priorities and aligns with Government expectations
- **LCCA Skills Advisory Board:** Led by members – including a Business Board representative and a Further Education expert who will chair the reformed Board – it will provide strategic oversight and challenge throughout the development of the GLWP. The Board will be responsible for reviewing the final draft of the plan and recommending sign-off to the LCCA
- **Integrated Care Board and Partnership:** Key strategic partners, the ICB and ICP (spanning Lancashire and South Cumbria), lead Lancashire's Work and Health Strategy which will be embedded within the GLWP to create a single, coherent regional plan. The ICB will co-sign the plan to ensure alignment with broader health system objectives across Lancashire
- **Jobcentre Plus (JCP):** JCP will also act as a signatory to the plan. Through the Service Leader for Lancashire and Cheshire, JCP will

review the plan to ensure it aligns with national employment support priorities and local delivery considerations

- **Partnership Panel:** The Partnership Panel will lead meaningful engagement with key strategic partners - including the ICB and Jobcentre Plus – to ensure continued alignment between the GLWP, DWP strategic objectives, and the LSIP, while fostering collaboration across Lancashire.
- **Local Skills and Employment Groups:** Established groups across Lancashire will provide granular, place-based insight into what is and isn't working across varied communities and demographics. Insight will be fed back to the Work and Health Executive Group and Partnership Panel to ensure that the GLWP is shaped by the lived experience of residents and frontline practitioners.

7.4 Ongoing Reviews

Following initial submission, the Partnership Panel will lead on periodic reviews of the GLWP, ensuring it remains fit for purpose, responsive to local needs and aligned with national policy. Any future amendments or refreshed versions of the plan will follow the same governance and sign-off routes.



Measuring Success: Outcomes, Measurement and Evaluation

8.1 Setting the Context for the Outcomes Framework

Local Methodology and Evidence Base

The GLWP has been developed in alignment with the Government's ambition to achieve a national 80% national employment rate. While core metrics are defined nationally and overseen by DWP's Labour Market Advisory Board, there is recognition that local labour markets require tailored outcome frameworks. The LCCA's approach balances national consistency with local relevance, informed by robust local evidence.

The LCCA's methodology builds on ten years of data analysis, including the publication of Lancashire's Economic Inactivity Report (2023).

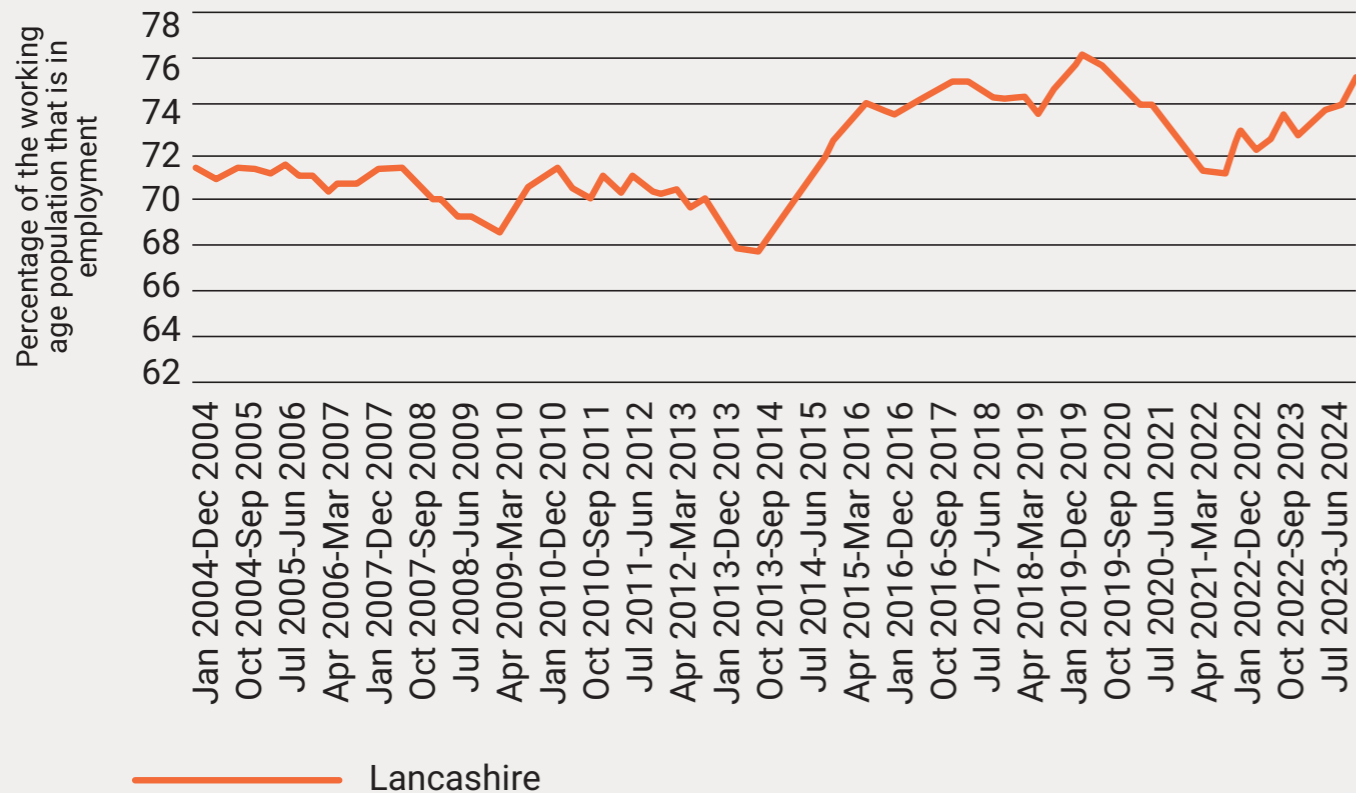
As part of this plan, datasets were reviewed and expanded to reflect national GBW priorities and local trends. An options appraisal helped identify key cohorts for initial focus, aligned to available programme delivery and outcome feasibility.

Delivering meaningful and sustained change requires outcomes. The GLWP is grounded in a clear outcomes framework that aligns with the national metrics set out in the Get Britain Working strategy, while also reflecting Lancashire's local priorities and population needs.

Trend and Forecast Analysis

Although the employment rate in Lancashire has recovered since COVID-19, achieving 80% employment by 2035 remains highly ambitious. Historical trends show this level has not been met in over two decades:

Employment Rate 2004-2024



Job Forecasts Required to Reach 80% Employment Rate

The employment rate across each local authority varies. For example, whilst Fylde, Wyre and Chorley are already above 80%, some authorities

would require greater investment in work, health and skills services to reach the 80% employment rate. For example, over 28,000 of the 53,600 jobs in Lancashire (over 50%) would need to be generated in Blackpool and Blackburn with Darwen to reach 80%.

Local Authority	Employed (16-64)	Employment Rate	Implied Employment for 80% Employment	Difference from 80%	Difference in Employed People
Blackburn with Darwen	63800	67.2	77760	-12.8	-13960
Blackpool	54400	62.6	69600	-17.4	-15200
Burnley	41500	77.7	46640	-2.3	-5140
Chorley	60900	82.9	57920	2.9	2980
Fylde	38500	84.5	37440	4.5	1060
Hyndburn	32400	61.5	40480	-18.5	-8080
Lancaster	74200	81.7	71760	1.7	2440
Pendle	39200	69.0	46480	-11	-7280
Preston	66400	70.4	77200	-9.6	-10800
Ribble Valley	28100	77.5	29440	-2.5	-1340
Rossendale	36400	81.2	34960	1.2	1440
South Ribble	52400	78.7	53920	-1.3	-1520
West Lancashire	56400	81.3	57760	1.3	-1360
Wyre	54300	84.5	50960	4.5	3340
Lancashire	698800	75.2	752400	-4.8	-53600

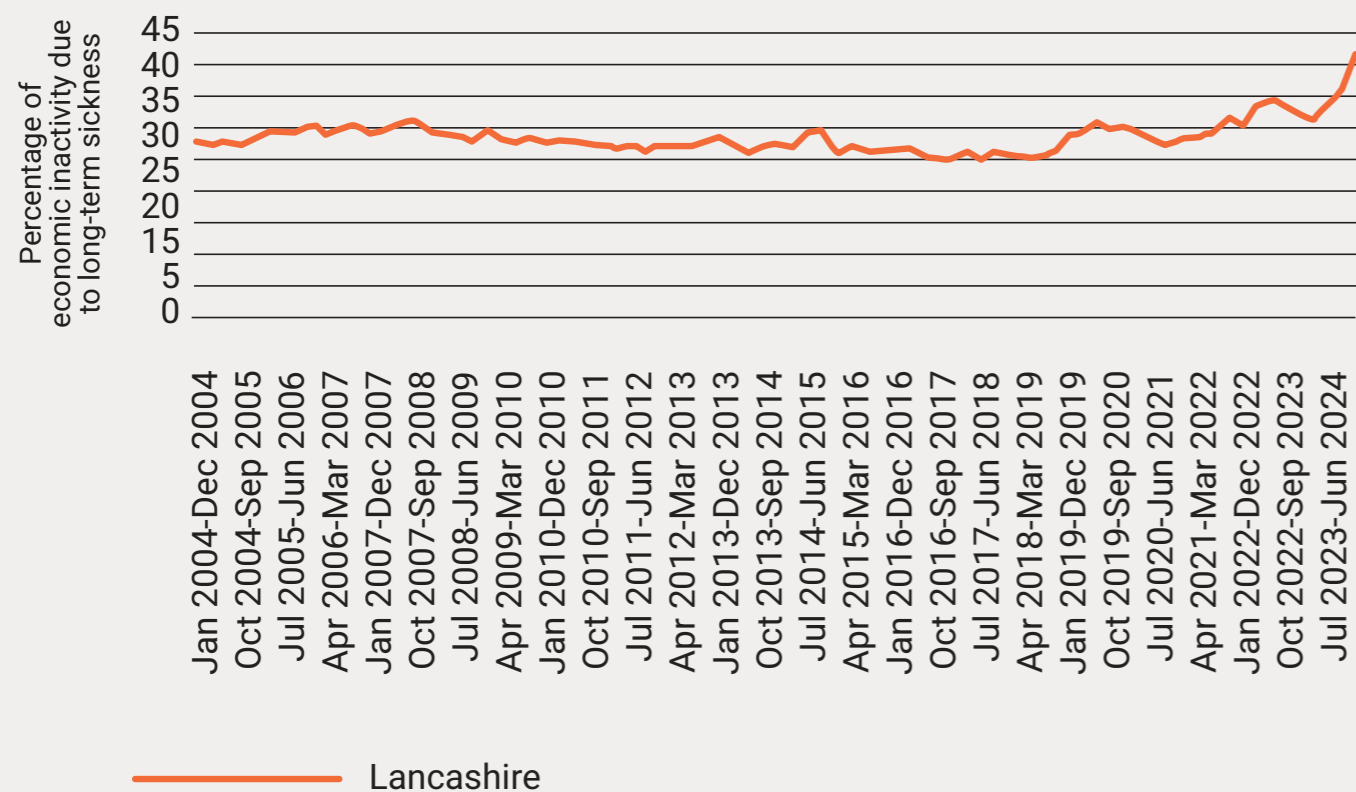
Measuring Success: Outcomes, Measurement and Evaluation

Understanding Economic Inactivity Trends

As illustrated in the graph below, economic inactivity due to long-term sickness in Lancashire has risen, reaching its highest level in two decades. This trend is mirrored in the rising proportion of UC claimants with no work

requirements; this is projected to exceed 50% of the caseload soon. Addressing this challenge will require deepened collaboration with DWP, including the LCCA working with DWP on the outcomes of the forthcoming Pathways to Work review, and a shift towards preventative, integrated support through programmes such as WorkWell and Connect to Work.

Employment Inactivity due to long term sickness



8.2 Implications for Lancashire’s Outcomes Framework

This contextual analysis is foundational to the design of Lancashire’s proposed outcomes framework:

1. Targeted and Place-Based Outcomes

The variation in employment rates across districts, particularly the entrenched challenges in a few districts, requires a place-sensitive framework. Outcomes must reflect:

- Differential baselines and local trajectories
- Local capacity and capability to achieve meaningful and long-term change
- Place-specific interventions
- The need to monitor performance at district level, not just county-wide.

LCCA’s proposed outcomes framework highlights the need for disaggregation of data wherever possible and sets expectations proportionate to local conditions.

2. Cohort-Focused Measures

The sharp rise in long-term sickness and caring responsibilities, especially among UC claimants, highlights the need to track not just headline employment rates, but also the engagement, progression and retention of priority cohorts:

- Economically inactive individuals (especially those with health conditions)
- Young Adults and Young People who are NEET
- Female carers
- Hidden disabilities
- Sickness absence risk groups.

As a result, cohort-specific metrics are embedded across the framework, enabling the LCCA to evaluate impact where it is needed most.

3. System Integration and Early Intervention

Given the structural and health-related drivers of economic inactivity, outcome measures must extend beyond job starts to capture the underlying system changes needed to enable long-term participation.

This includes:

- Earlier intervention (e.g. warm referrals from GPs)
- Integration of work, health and skills pathways
- Coordinated commissioning and data alignment.

This underpins the inclusion of strategic system-level outcomes within the framework, for example, % of programmes with integrated referral pathways and shared outcomes.

8.3 Proposed Outcomes Framework

Lancashire’s proposed outcomes framework reflects the evidence, priorities and delivery ambitions set out in this plan, but it is not static. It is intended to serve as an indicative structure that will evolve through the life of the programme and be formally agreed, owned and refined by the multi-agency governance structures established under the GLWP.

The framework has been designed to:

- Align with national outcome metrics under the Get Britain Working strategy
- Respond to Lancashire’s specific economic, health and social context
- Complement existing strategies that will support the GLW ambitions and outcomes
- Enable consistent monitoring, performance management and shared accountability across partners

It provides a clear foundation for tracking the impact of GLWP over time, supporting local and national partners to understand what’s working, for whom, and in which areas. Outcome measures, success thresholds and reporting cycles will be confirmed through the GLWP governance structure, in collaboration with delivery partners and informed by lived experience, frontline insight and national guidance.

Measuring Success: Outcomes, Measurement and Evaluation

A. Strategic System Outcomes

Purpose: Evidencing integration, collaboration and system-wide improvement

Outcome Measure	How It Will Be Measured	Data Source for Measuring Success
% of programmes with integrated work, health and skills referrals	Evidence of cross-referrals between work, health and skills programmes, as stipulated by commissioners	Project and programme reports
Number of employers signed up to the 'Recruit Lancashire People' Skills Pledge	Monitoring sign-ups through Lancashire Skills Pledge platform	Lancashire Skills Pledge digital platform
Evidence of Social Value skills and employment commitments through procurement activity	Local authority and anchor institution procurement documentation; tracking inclusion of employment/skills or Social Value commitments in tender criteria	Local authority procurement teams; LCCA social value reports
Engagement of residents with Lived Experience in the development of programmes	Surveys, focus groups, feedback forums	Collation of activity and feedback from partners

B. Cohort-Specific Outcomes

Purpose: Measuring engagement and outcomes for priority cohort groups

Outcome Measure	How It Will Be Measured	Data Source for Measuring Success
Reduction in economic inactivity rate (overall and UC No Work Requirement)	Annual ONS Labour Force Survey; DWP Stat-Xplore data	ONS, DWP, LCCA analytics
% of 16–24s (NEET and Young Adult UC claimant rates)	NEET statistics; claimant count data	Upper Tier Local Authority NEET data; DWP
% of female carers supported into employment	Programme entry/exit data by gender and caring status for CtW (and future programmes under the LCCA)	CtW reporting
% of hidden disability participants supported into employment	Programme entry/exit data by hidden disability for CtW (and future programmes under the LCCA)	CtW reporting
Reduction in the number of Lancashire residents issued Fit Notes	Fit Note data	NHS England

C. Employment & Progression Outcomes (Connect to Work)

Purpose: Evaluating employment transitions, quality of work, and career mobility

Outcome Measure	How It Will Be Measured	Data Source for Measuring Success
Number of participants engaging with the programme	Data from Delivery Partners	Project CRM
% achieving lower payment threshold in employment	Employer follow-ups, DWP wage data (HMRC)	Provider data, DWP
% achieving higher payment threshold in employment	DWP wage data (HMRC)	DWP

Measuring Success: Outcomes, Measurement and Evaluation

D. Place-Level Labour Market Outcome

Evidencing long-term change in local labour market participation

Outcome Measure	How It Will Be Measured	Data Source for Measuring Success
Employment rates across Lancashire districts	Annual employment data by district	ONS Annual Population Survey, NOMIS
Reduction in health-related economic inactivity	Long-term sick and economic inactivity data	ONS, DWP Stat-Xplore, NOMIS
% of households with no working adult	Annual household survey data	ONS Census/APS; StatExplore, NOMIS

8.4 Data Infrastructure and Monitoring

LCCA and the ICB are developing and implementing a new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system to support the delivery of Connect to Work and WorkWell. The system will collate individual-level data on referrals, engagement, outcomes, and progression for these programmes, enabling routine performance monitoring, real-time trend analysis, and collaborative performance management. While the CRM will initially focus on these two core programmes, insights gained may inform future approaches to data and system integration across wider employment support activity.

The Lancashire Data Observatory will serve as the central hub for managing, analysing, and interpreting data. It will ensure data is consistently reviewed, monitored for quality, translated into actionable insights and support both the GLWP and the Growth Plan's ambition for data-led decision-making.

8.5 Evaluation and Learning

A test-and-learn approach will be embedded across the GLWP. Programmes and pilots will be evaluated using both quantitative and qualitative methods. The Communities of Practice for each of the programmes will share good practice, lessons learnt and challenges and will receive evaluation reports. Where appropriate, independent evaluations will be commissioned to assess impact and value for money.

In the health system specifically, the LCCA will work with ICB partners to promote the Association of Healthcare Professionals' Consensus Statement to build awareness and shift professional mindsets toward employment as a health-enabling intervention.

Next Steps and Implementation Plan

The publication of the GLWP marks the beginning of a long-term journey - one that will require sustained collaboration, flexibility, and accountability across the system.

9.1 Finalising Governance and Delivery Structures

In the coming months, actions will include:

- Confirming membership and terms of reference for the partnership panel
- Establish Communities of Practice to drive forward programme development and share good practice
- Develop the Lancashire Data Observatory with partners.

9.2 Mobilising Key Programmes

The LCCA, ICB and JobCentre Plus will:

- Oversee the launch of Connect to Work, potential expansion of the WorkWell early intervention model and prepare for the Adult Skills Fund to be devolved in academic year 2026/27
- Align existing national programmes, including Restart, Access to Work and Youth Hubs, into more integrated delivery pathways
- Work in partnership with JobCentre Plus and the National Careers Service to support the mobilisation of the Jobs and Careers Service

9.3 Coordinating and Measuring Impact

The LCCA aims to:

- Finalise the GLWP Outcomes Framework, including baseline indicators, local targets, and reporting schedules
- Publish the first Get Lancashire Working Delivery and Impact Report by mid-2026.

9.4 Influencing National Policy and Investment

As national reforms progress, the LCCA will work closely with DWP, DHSC and DfE to:

- Shape the design of future trailblazer pilots and funding opportunities
- Inform the development of devolved commissioning and investment models
- Ensure Lancashire's experiences feed into wider national learning and innovation.

This is a 10-year journey, but the next 12–24 months are critical. By embedding the systems, partnerships and evidence needed for success now, the LCCA can create the conditions for long-term change and position Lancashire as a national leader in inclusive employment.

Appendices

10.1 Economic Inactivity in Lancashire: An Overview

The Lancashire labour market is experiencing a sustained rise in economic inactivity, reflecting national trends but also presenting region-

specific challenges that require targeted responses. Recent in-depth research, jointly commissioned by Lancashire’s three upper-tier authorities in collaboration with the Integrated Care Board (ICB) and local partners have explored the underlying causes, identifying health as a primary driver of inactivity.

There are 93,000 claimants to Universal Credit in Lancashire with No Work Requirements (see Figure 1 below), representing 46% of all Universal Credit Claimants in Lancashire. More than one third of these UC claimants with No Work Requirements have been claimants for more than 5 years.

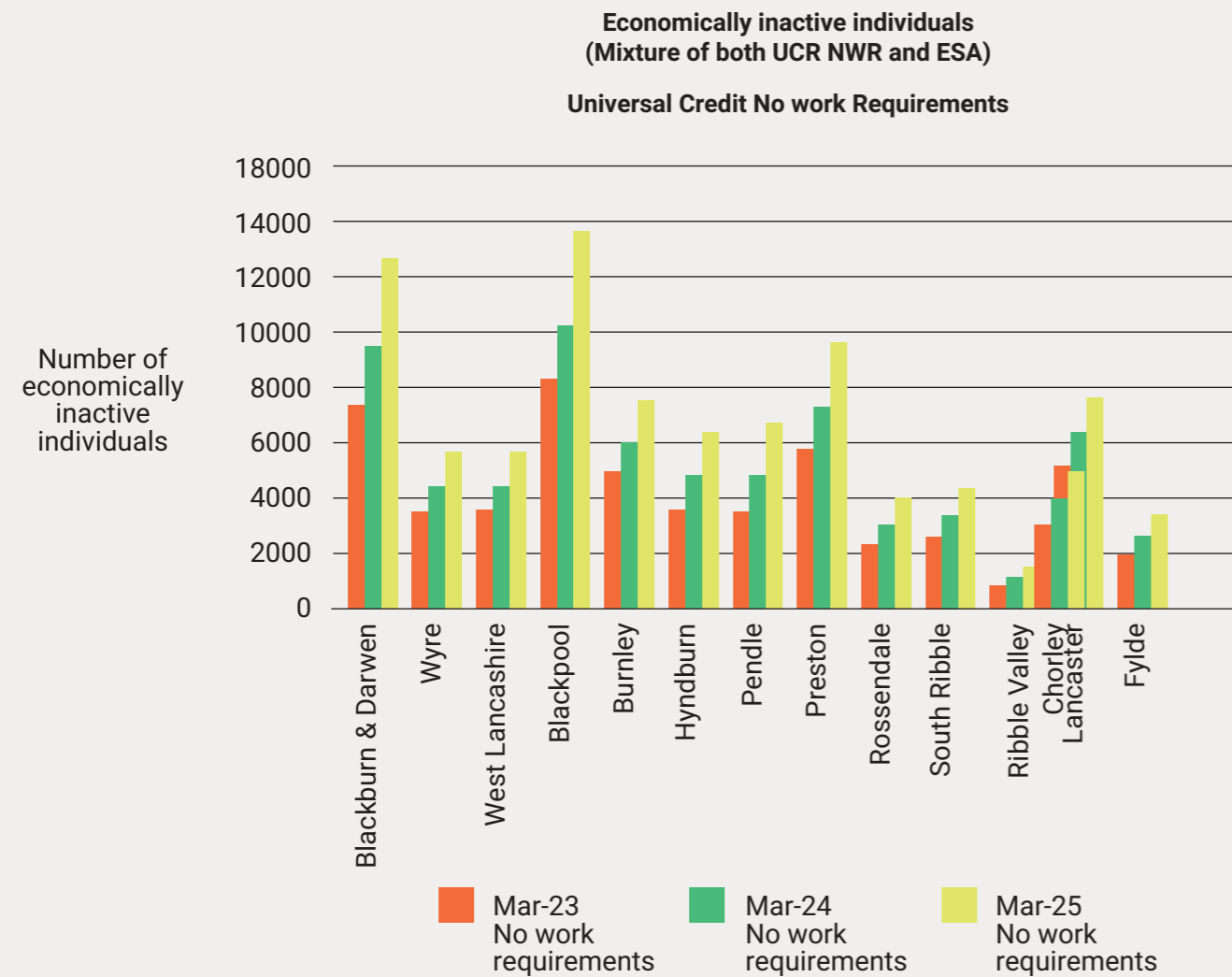


Figure 1 – Number of Lancashire residents claiming Universal Credit with “No Work Requirements” by geographical region

Area	Searching for work	Working – with requirements	No work requirements	Working – no requirements	Planning for work	Preparing for work	Total
Blackburn with Darwen	5969	4057	12552	4193	391	1332	28498
Blackpool	5585	3104	13598	3301	347	1404	27346
Burnley	3691	1998	7557	2650	253	1024	17164
Chorley	1719	1287	4919	2028	143	456	10551
Fylde	1323	841	2656	1225	84	256	7091
Hyndburn	2915	1826	6274	2064	196	764	14034
Lancaster	2785	1657	7549	2479	206	754	15435
Pendle	3774	2172	6699	2510	298	825	16289
Preston	4932	2869	9594	3372	333	994	22092
Ribble Valley	613	558	1419	796	42	139	3544
Rossendale	1626	1065	4007	1445	97	441	8678
South Ribble	1614	1063	4406	1951	115	405	9558
West Lancs	2075	1313	5677	1985	151	492	11703
Wyre	1889	1207	5643	1801	130	482	11147
Total	40507	24986	93259	31808	2798	9768	203130

Figure 2 – A direct comparison of Lancashire residents claiming Universal Credit with “No Work Requirements” against those “Working-with Requirements”

Appendices

Figure 2 illustrates presents a detailed breakdown of the Universal Credit claimant population across Lancashire by conditionality group, highlighting the scale and nature of economic inactivity in the county. Of the 203,130 total claimants, over 93,000 (approximately 46%) fall into the “No Work Requirements” group - individuals not expected to actively seek work due to long-term sickness, caring responsibilities, or disability. This is particularly acute in areas like Blackpool and Blackburn with Darwen, where economic inactivity is especially concentrated.

The data reinforces the case for a system-wide, preventative approach to tackling inactivity, as set out in the GLWP. It underscores the need to invest in targeted support for those furthest from the labour market and align local delivery models with programmes like Connect to Work and WorkWell.

Health Issues (Labour Force Survey)

The labour force survey/annual population survey suggests that 40.8% of Lancashire’s economically inactive cohort are inactive due to long-term ill health, more than 80,000 people. Through the lens of Employment and Support Allowance data, overwhelmingly the two main lead health conditions are around mental health and musculoskeletal problems.

The dominance of long-term ill health - particularly mental health and MSK issues - as a driver of economic inactivity in Lancashire underscores the need for integrated, preventative, and place-based health and employment support. It justifies the design of the GLWP and makes the case for sustained investment in system-level change.

Young People (ONS 18-24 Cohort) and NEET (NEET and Participation Data)

There is a notably higher proportion of younger people in Lancashire with no recorded work history, which reflects the ongoing challenges associated with young people who are NEET. This pattern is partly attributable to their age and limited time in the labour market, but also highlights underlying structural barriers to entry, such as low qualifications (see Figure 4 opposite), limited access to local opportunities, and socio-economic disadvantage, which can hinder their transition into sustained employment

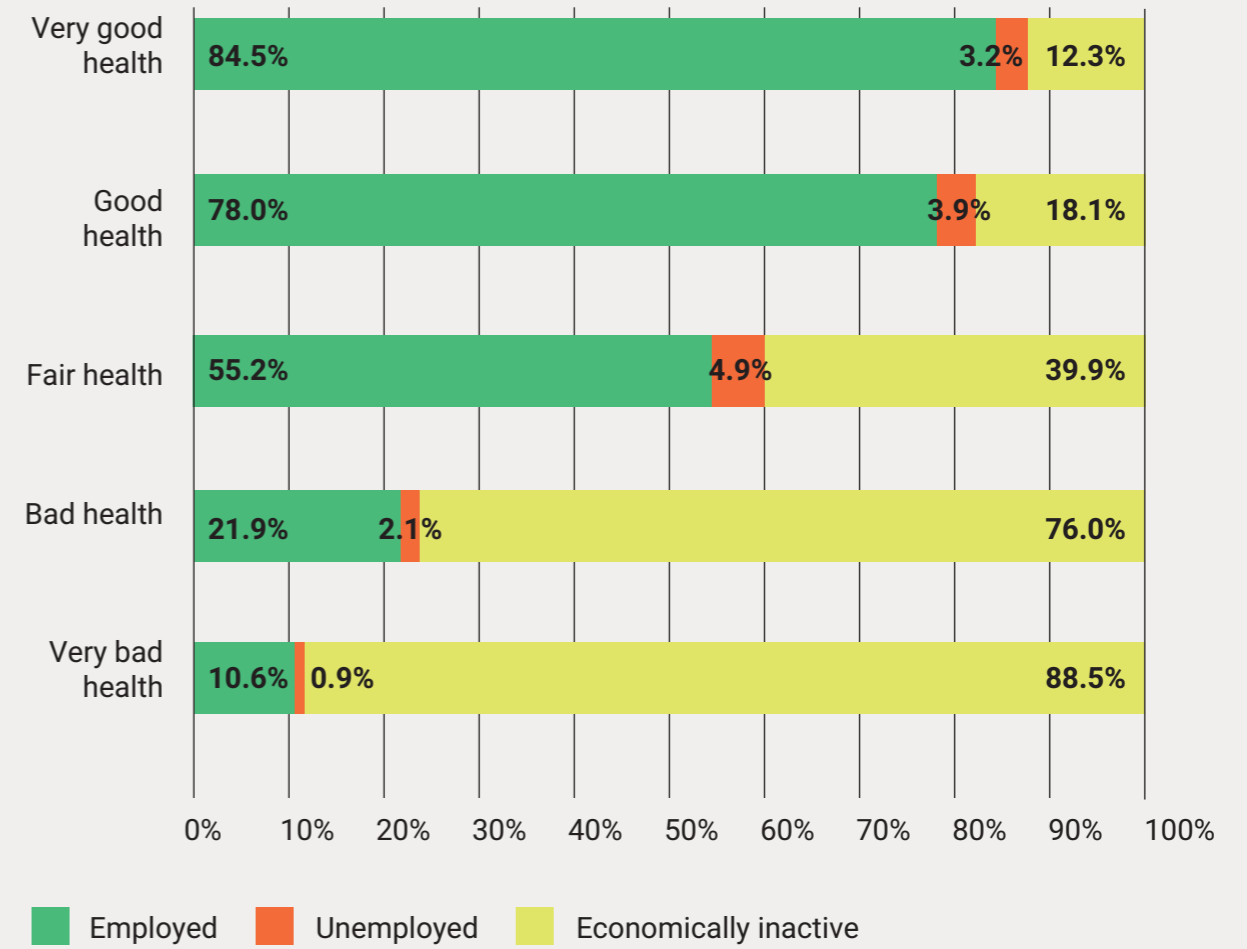


Figure 3 – Labour Market Status by Self-Reported General Health (excluding Students) across Lancashire

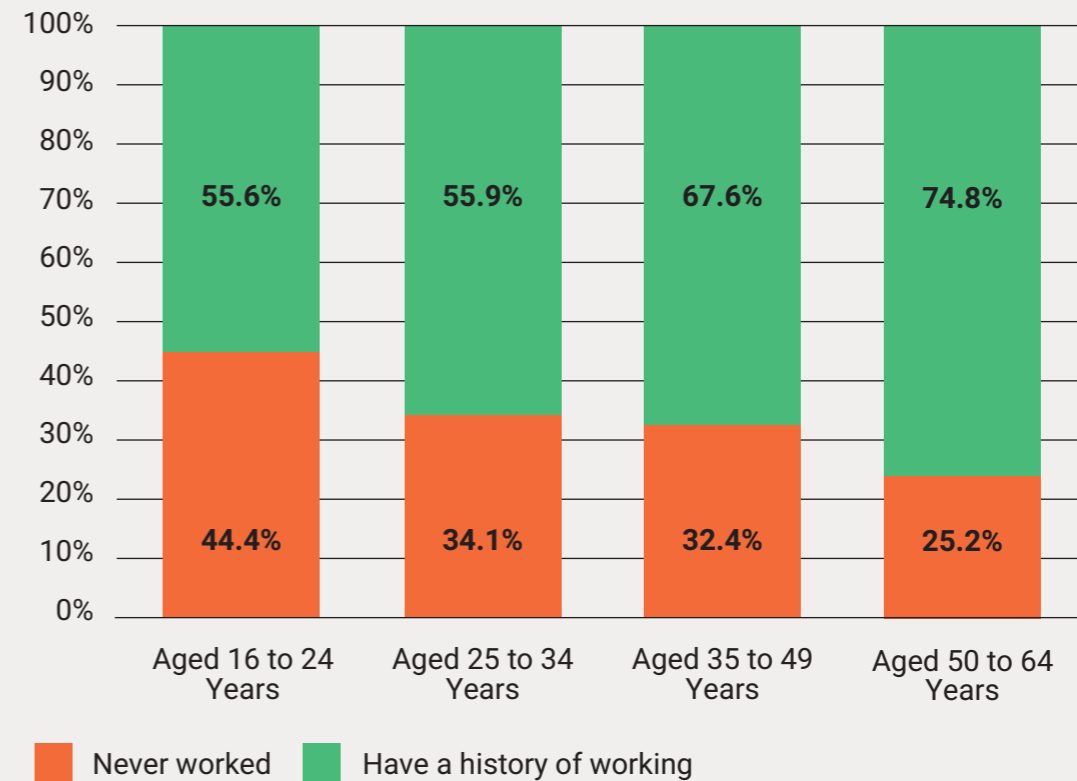


Figure 4 – Economically Inactive and Unemployed by Work History (excluding Students and Retirees)

Appendices

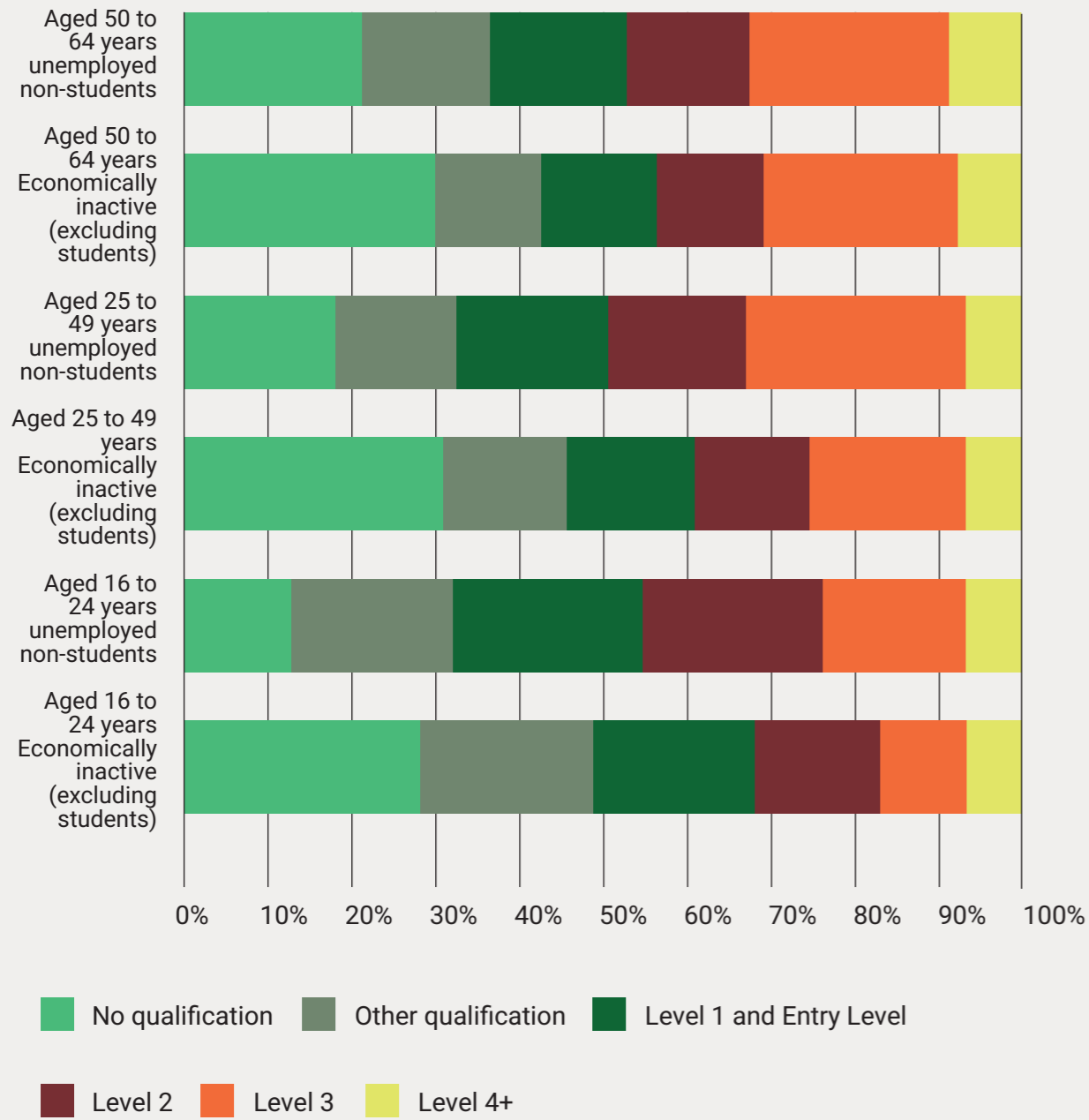


Figure 5 – Unemployed and Economically Inactive by Age and Qualification Level across Lancashire

The data in figure 5 highlights a growing challenge for Lancashire in supporting young people - particularly those aged 16-18 - into sustained education, employment, or training. The fact that 15% of young people across the county are not making this transition, and that this figure is significantly higher in Blackpool (20.5%) and Blackburn with Darwen (22.9%), signals a systemic issue in early labour market engagement. For the GLWP, this underlines the urgency of strengthening youth-focused interventions. It reinforces the need to scale up preventative and re-engagement support through Youth Hubs, apprenticeships, and the Youth Guarantee, while also ensuring stronger

transitions from education into work or further learning. Addressing this early drop-off point is essential not only to reduce future economic inactivity but to build a more inclusive and sustainable labour market in the long term.

Female Carers

Labour Force Survey and Annual Population Survey data indicate that 18.1% of Lancashire's economically inactive population are not in work due to caring responsibilities at home. In many cases, this may overlap with households where one adult is inactive due to ill health, and another is inactive due to caring for them.

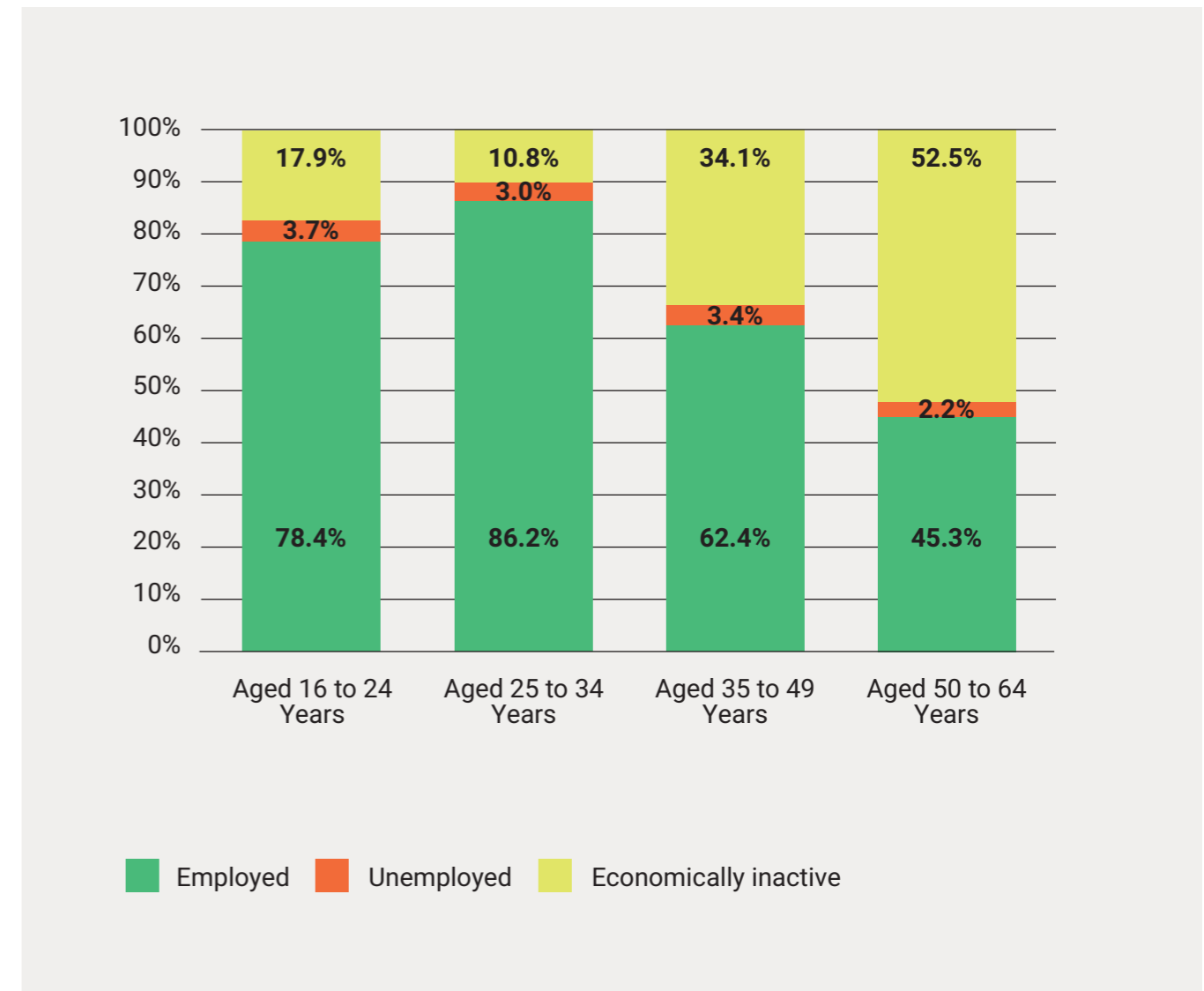


Figure 6 – Labour Market Status by Unpaid Care Responsibilities (excluding Students and Retirees)

Appendices

Women are disproportionately represented among those who are economically inactive due to caring responsibilities, making up 58.5% of this group (2021 Census). While the gender employment gap has narrowed over time, women - particularly those with caring duties for children or relatives with health conditions - continue to face significant barriers to entering or remaining in work. This is reflected in Lancashire's persistent gender employment gap.

This illustrates the importance of:

- Making female carers a priority cohort
- Designing coordinated support packages that address the needs of both carers and the people they support, including joint access to employment, health, and respite services.
- Embedding flexible employment opportunities and training routes that can accommodate the schedules and responsibilities of unpaid carers.
- Partnering with Jobcentre Plus and health services to identify and support these households earlier, particularly through programmes like WorkWell and Connect to Work.

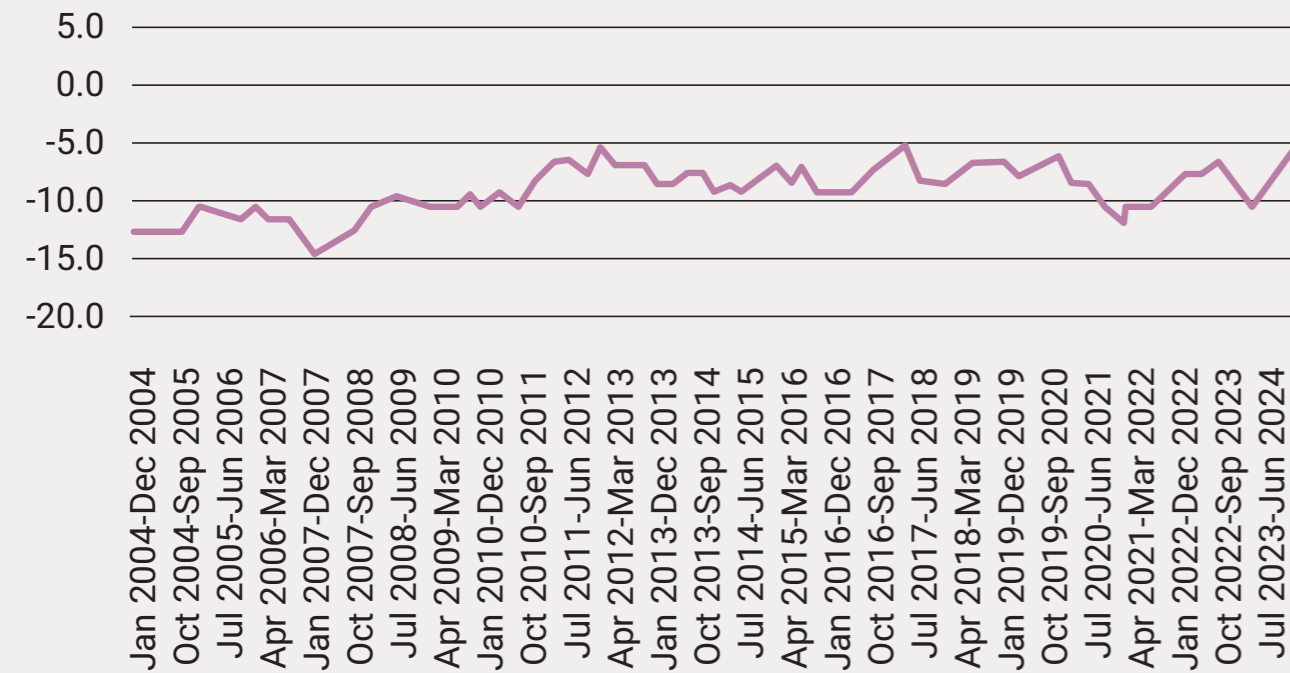


Figure 7: Lancashire's Gender Employment Gap over the last 20 years

Geographical Variations in Economic Inactivity

The map in figure 5 highlights localised pockets of economic inactivity across Lancashire, specifically focusing on people who are

economically inactive due to long term sickness or disability. The shaded areas (in burgundy) represent Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) where the proportion of economically inactive individuals in this category is above the Lancashire average.

Lancashire Economic Inactivity

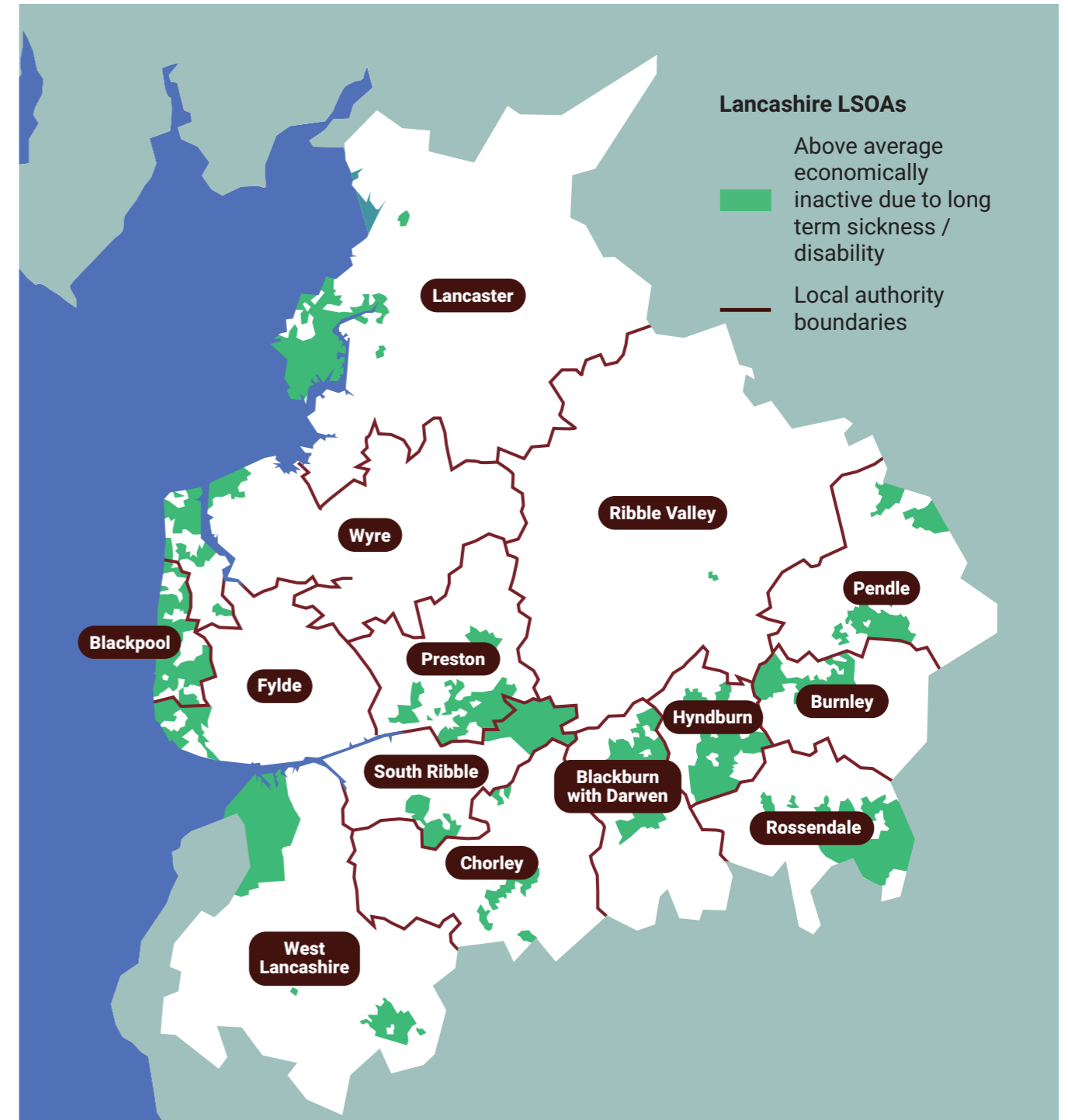


Figure 8: Map showing geographic distribution of economic inactivity

Appendices

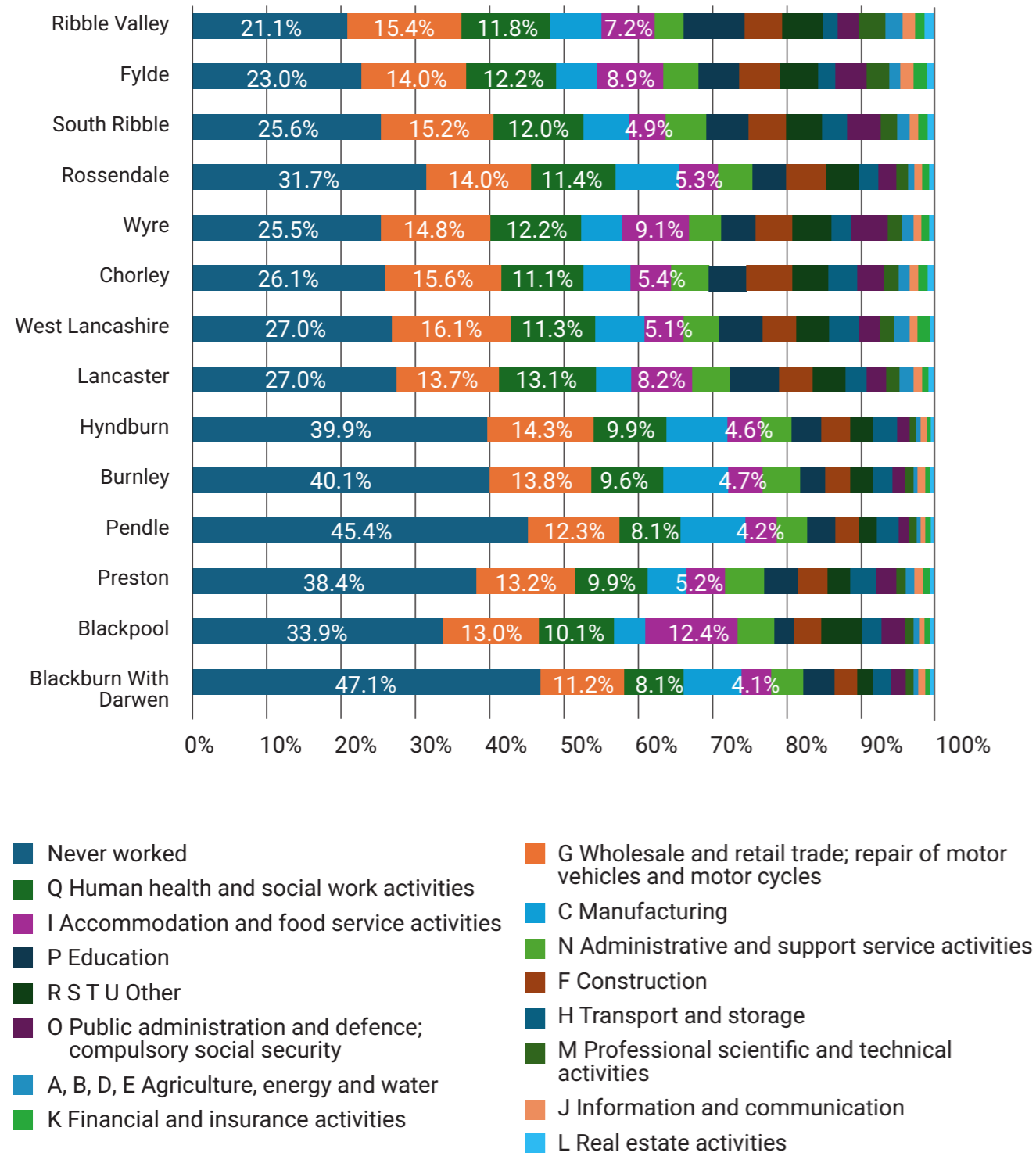


Figure 9: Economically Inactive By Prior Industry Sector And Local Authority

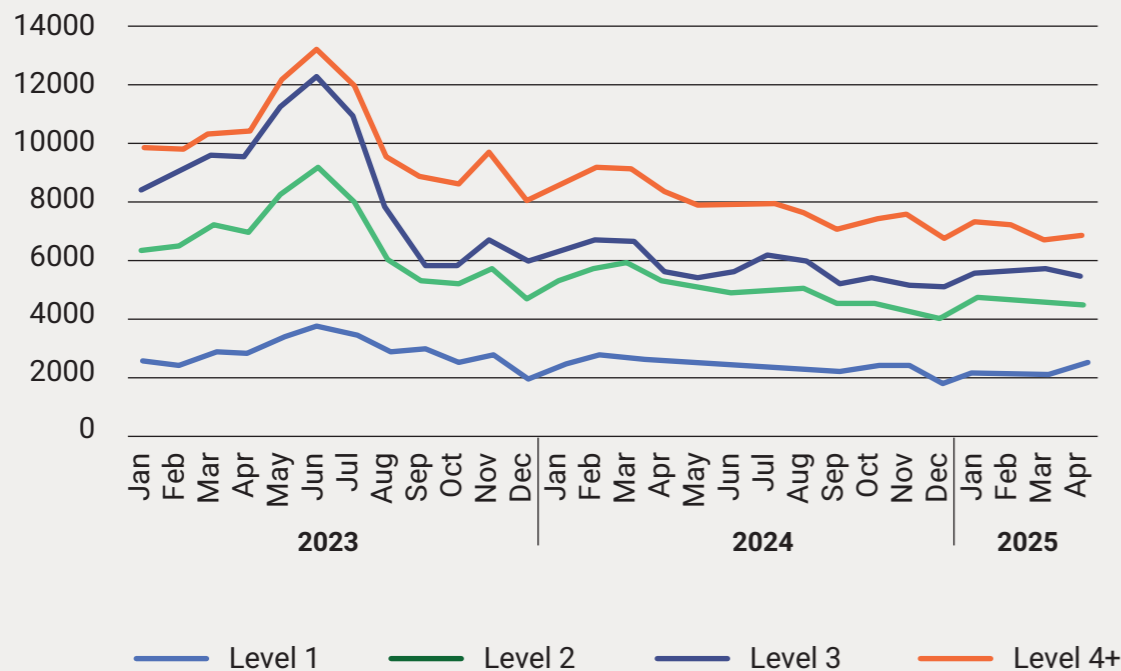
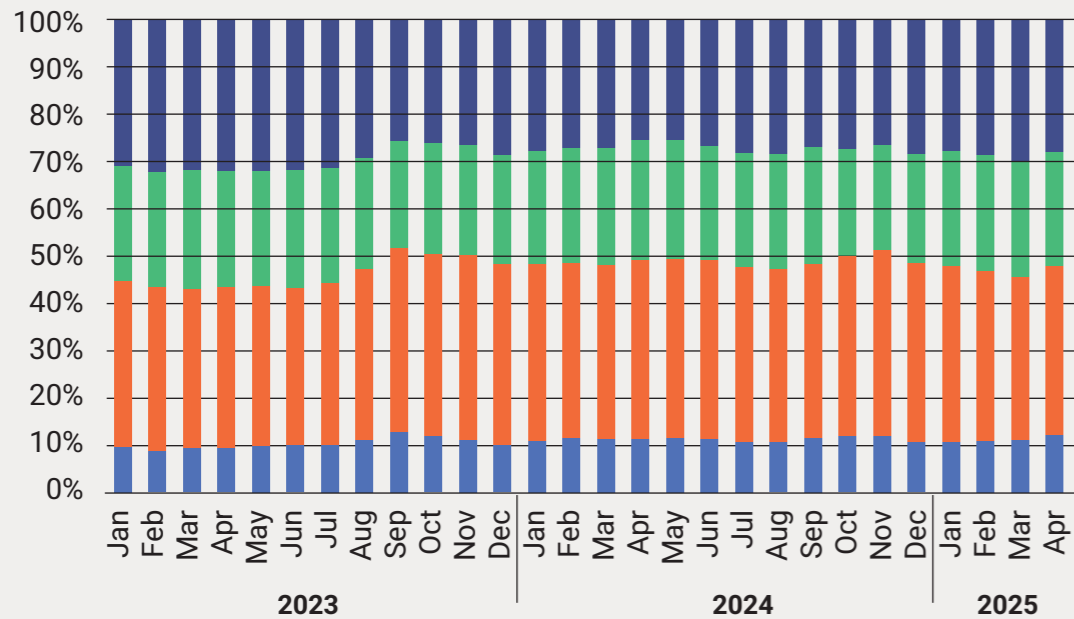
In the context of GLWP, this means that place-based targeting is essential: economic inactivity related to unpaid care is not evenly distributed. It is heavily concentrated in specific communities, including urban areas in Blackpool, Blackburn

with Darwen, Hyndburn, Burnley, Preston, and parts of West Lancashire and Rossendale. This geographic variation reinforces the need for localised interventions rather than a one-size-fits-all model.



Appendices

Lancashire: Lightcast job vacancy data implied qualification levels



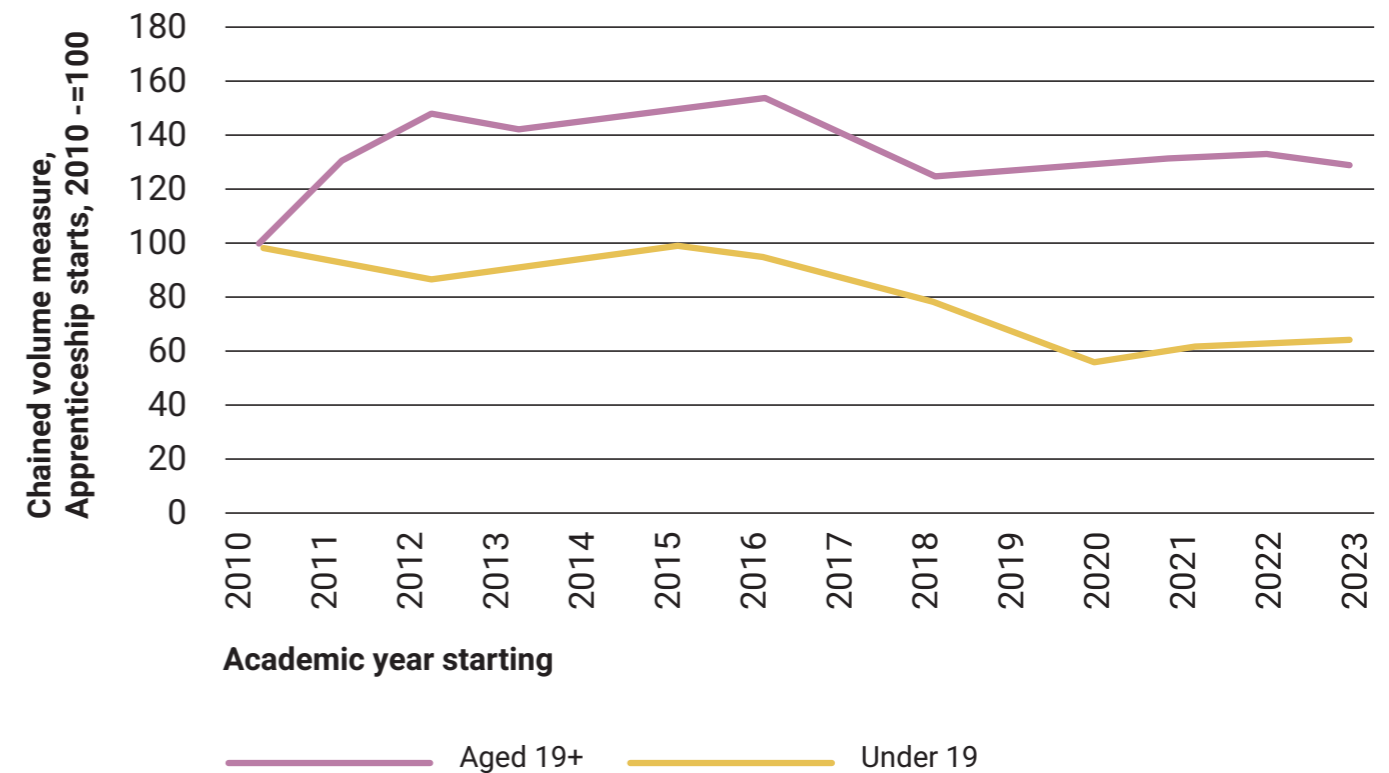
10.2 Local Labour Market Information

Lancashire’s labour market is diverse, dynamic, and evolving. It encompasses a broad mix of urban centres, coastal towns, and rural communities, each with distinct economic characteristics and workforce challenges. While areas such as Wyre, Chorley, and Fylde are already exceeding the 80% employment benchmark, other districts - most notably Blackpool, Blackburn with Darwen, Hyndburn, and Burnley -continue to face persistent structural barriers to labour market participation. These include long-term health conditions, lower skills levels, and reduced access to opportunity due to transport or childcare constraints. Lancashire is home to a wide range of employment sectors. Health and Social Care, Manufacturing, Education, and Retail remain some of the largest employers, while emerging sectors such as Digital, Green Technologies, Construction, and Logistics are driving future growth. However, skills mismatches, a high proportion of lower-paid or insecure jobs in some areas, and rising rates of economic inactivity risk undermining inclusive economic recovery and growth.

The Lightcast job vacancy data (January 2023 – April 2025) reveals a consistent pattern in employer demand across Lancashire, with vacancies requiring Level 2 qualifications dominating throughout the period. Although overall vacancy numbers have declined since their mid-2023 peak, Level 2 roles remain the most frequently advertised, indicating sustained employer need for candidates with intermediate skills. This trend highlights a critical opportunity to strengthen upskilling at Levels 2 and 3 to support residents into sustainable work.

Despite a broader slowdown in vacancy growth, there remains a steady flow of entry- and intermediate-level opportunities. In particular, Level 1 and Level 2 roles continue to make up around half of all job postings, suggesting a relatively resilient base of “attainable” employment. However, the limited number of Level 1 vacancies also exposes a gap for individuals with few or no qualifications, many of whom are economically inactive and face additional barriers such as ill health or caring responsibilities.

Apprenticeships starts: Opportunities for young people



Appendices

For the Get Lancashire Working Plan, this data reinforces the need to connect local employment and training provision to current market demand. Supporting individuals to access Level 2 jobs, while enabling progression to higher-skilled roles over time, will be central to breaking the cycle of low pay and instability and aligning support with the real structure of the local labour market.

The charts on page 77 highlights a stark and growing disparity in apprenticeship starts between young people and adults over 19. Since 2010, apprenticeship starts for young people have dropped by 35% nationally, while adult starts (over 19) have increased by 30%. This shift raises serious concerns for youth labour market inclusion and the availability of meaningful progression routes for young people leaving education.

This trend poses a direct challenge to Lancashire's ambitions to reduce NEET rates, raise youth employment, and support inclusive growth. Apprenticeships have traditionally been a key entry point into skilled employment for younger cohorts. The sharp decline suggests that many young people are now missing out on this critical opportunity—especially those who are not progressing into higher education or face disadvantage.

For the GLWP, this underscores the need to:

- Reinvigorate access to apprenticeships for 16–24-year-olds, particularly in key growth sectors such as health and care, construction, and digital.
- Work with employers to create pre-apprenticeship pathways and wraparound support that address the specific needs of young people (e.g. mental health, transport, confidence).
- Ensure that apprenticeship commissioning and local incentive schemes are better targeted, using data and employer engagement to shift the balance back towards younger entrants.

Without focused action, this generational gap in access to training and skilled employment could exacerbate long-term economic inactivity and social exclusion among Lancashire's youth.



NHS
Lancashire and
South Cumbria
Integrated Care Board



Department for
Work & Pensions



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