

Get Lancashire Working

ROADMAP TO BOOSTING
LANCASHIRE'S
EMPLOYMENT RATES.

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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 Skills & Employment 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

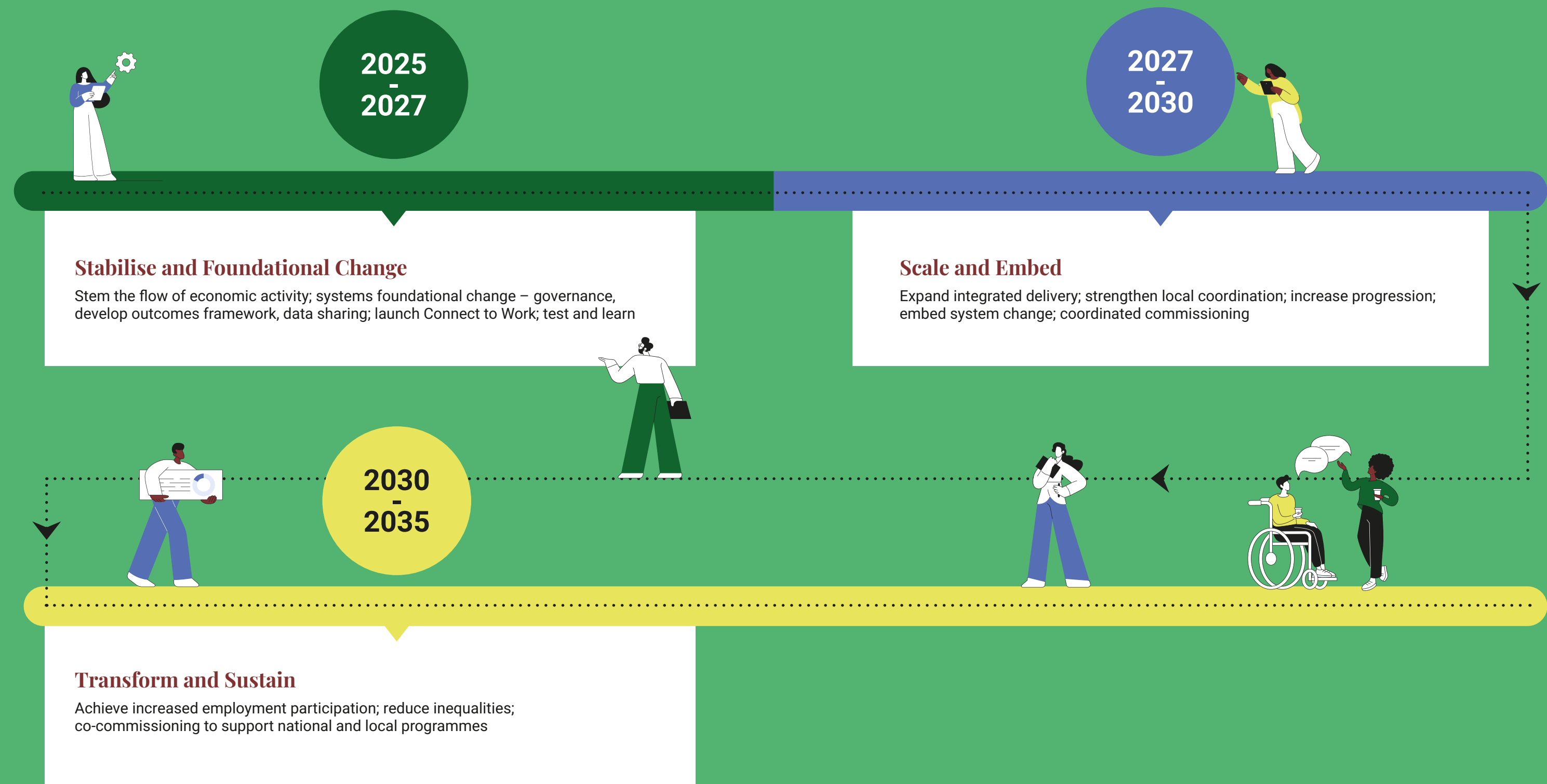
This plan is designed to deliver both immediate and long-term impact by stabilising the system, increasing employment participation, and improving outcomes for Lancashire’s priority cohorts. Over the next two years, the focus is on the following measurable outcomes:

- 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	Launch and embed Connect to Work and extend WorkWell to support people with health barriers move into, remain in, or progress in work. Prepare for the devolution of Adult Skills Fund from August 2026
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	Establish Partnership Panel. Coordinate delivery across Lancashire of national and local programmes through integrated pathways and multi-agency teams
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

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 Skills & Employment 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 education and skills providers, 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

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	

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

Strategic Context

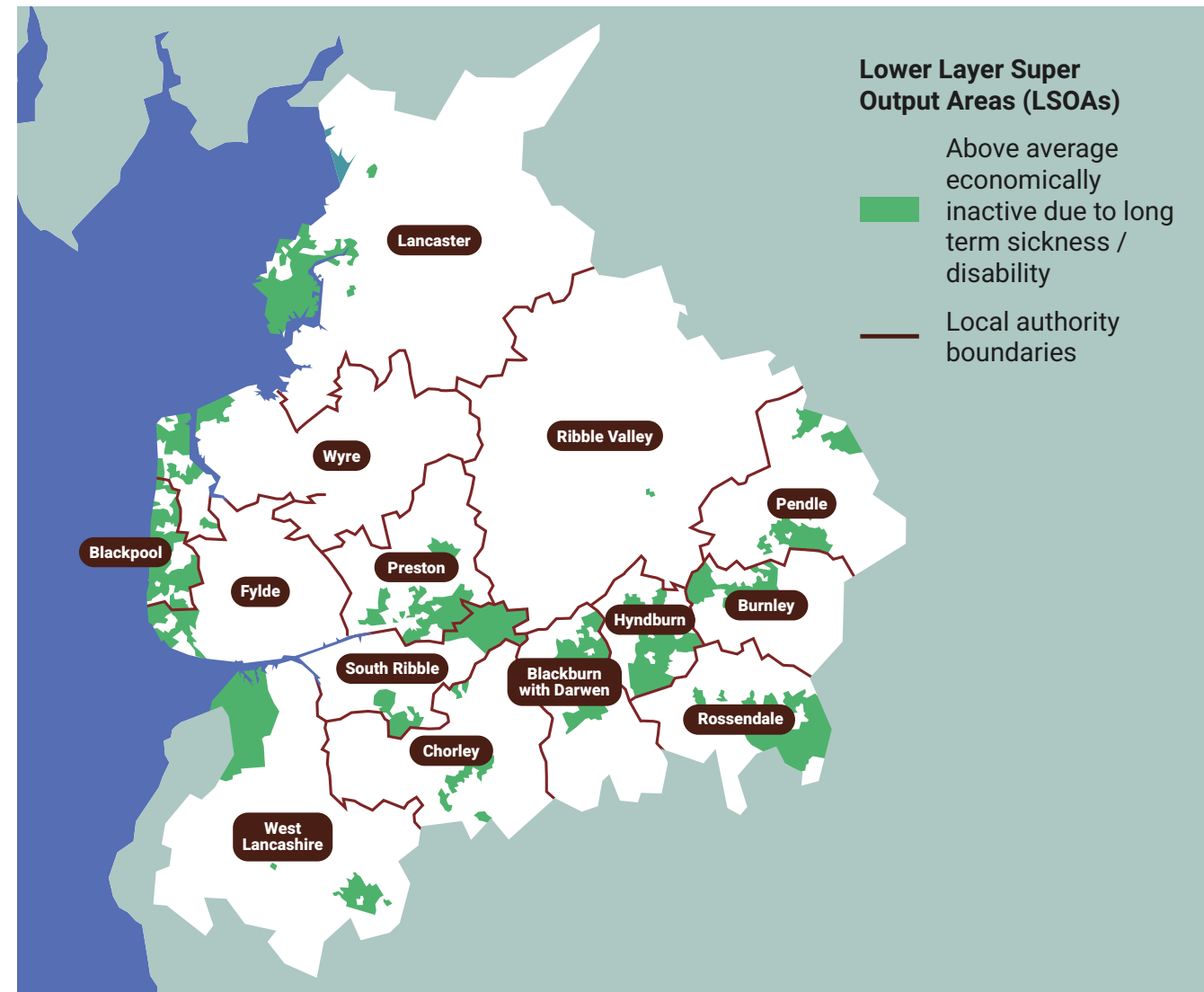
2.4 Geographical Variations in Economic and Labour Market Performance

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:

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.

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Objectives and Target Groups

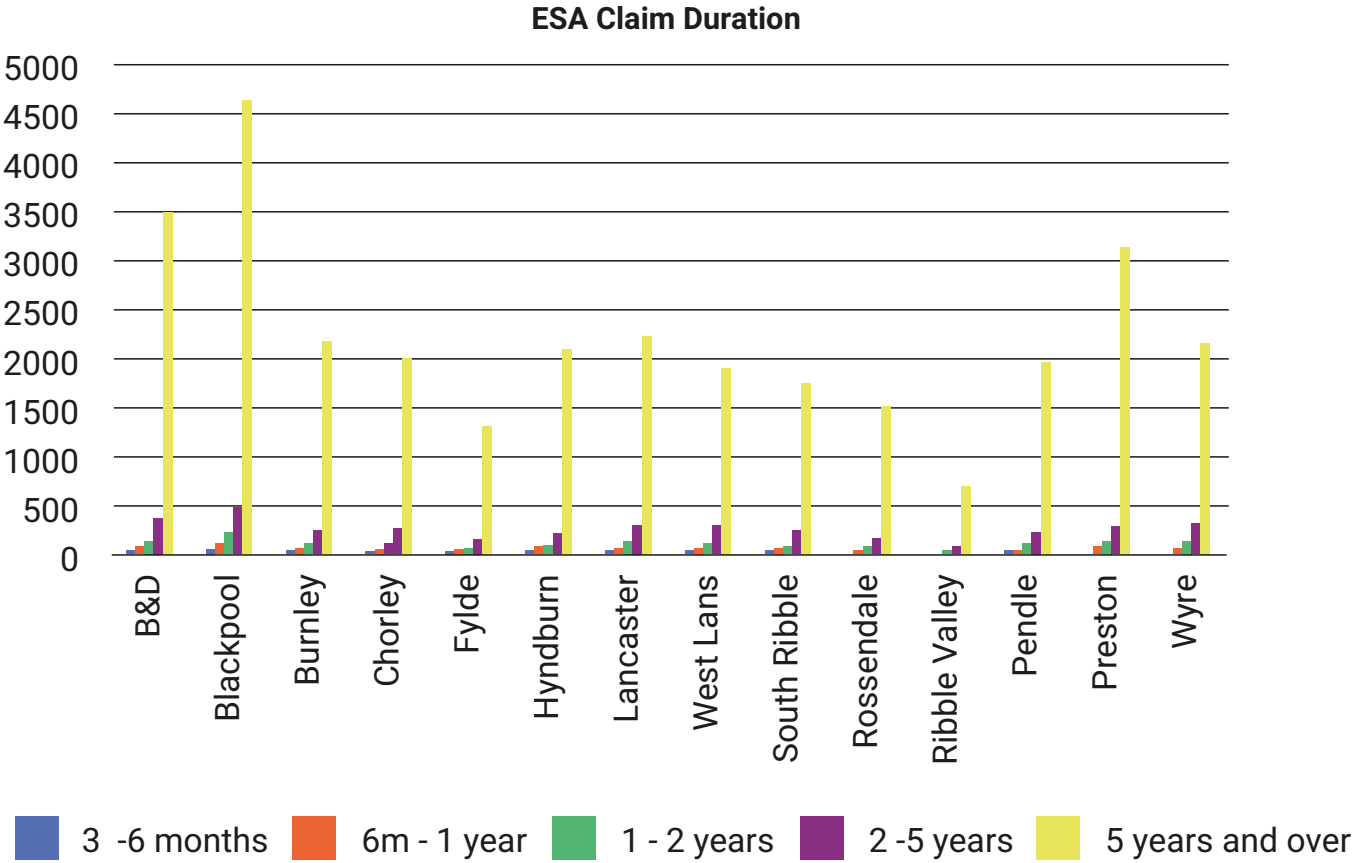
Area	Searching for work	Working – with requirements	No work requirements	Working – no requirements	Planning for work	Preparing for work	Total
Blackburn with Darwen	5969	4057	12552	4193	391	1332	28498
Blackpool	5585	3104	13598	3301	347	1404	27346
Burnley	3691	1998	7557	2650	253	1024	17164
Chorley	1719	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.

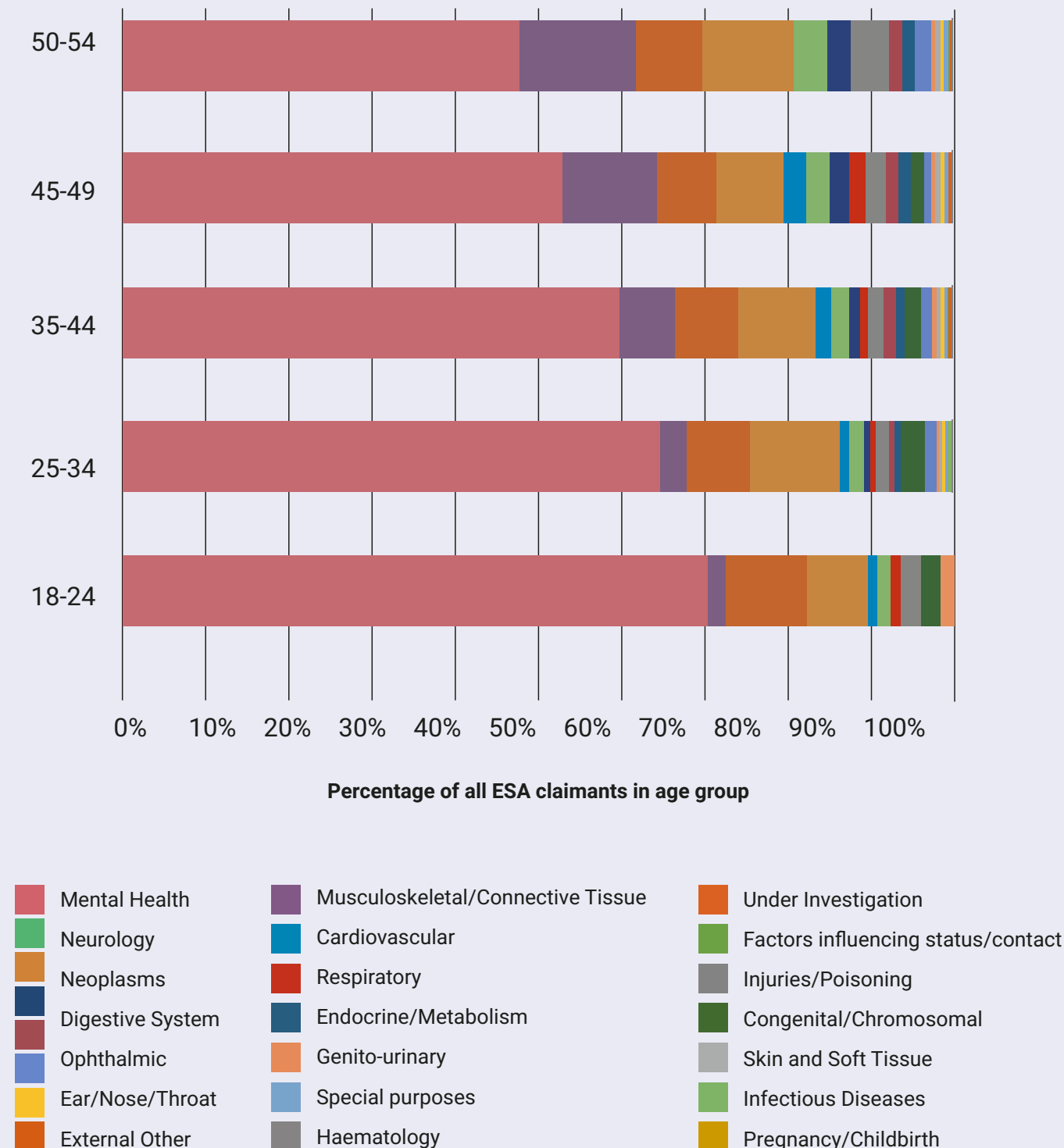
Employment Support Allowance (ESA)



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 Blackpool 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

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: • Mental Health (mild) • MSK • Fit note (in work) • Physical disability	June 2025-March 2027
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: • MSK • Mental Health • Physical disability	Ongoing

4 Systems and Support Mechanisms

Programme	Cohort Group & Objectives	Timescale
Economic inactivity Trailblazer	Test & Learn approach to address economic inactivity and worklessness within local areas. Cohort groups: • 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	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: • MSK • Diabetes • Neurodiversity • Obesity	Request one year pilot from October 2025-October 2026
Youth Guarantee	To support young people to access apprenticeships, training and employment support. Cohort Groups: • 18-21 year olds, especially those: • 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) Lancashire would seek to work with DWP on flexing this to include 16-17 year olds to help stem the cycle of NEET	Request one year pilot from October 2025-2026
Youth Hub Extension Funding	Continue to provide multi-agency support to young people to help them back into training and employment: Cohort Group: • 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

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:

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

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

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 (NEET**

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

6

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

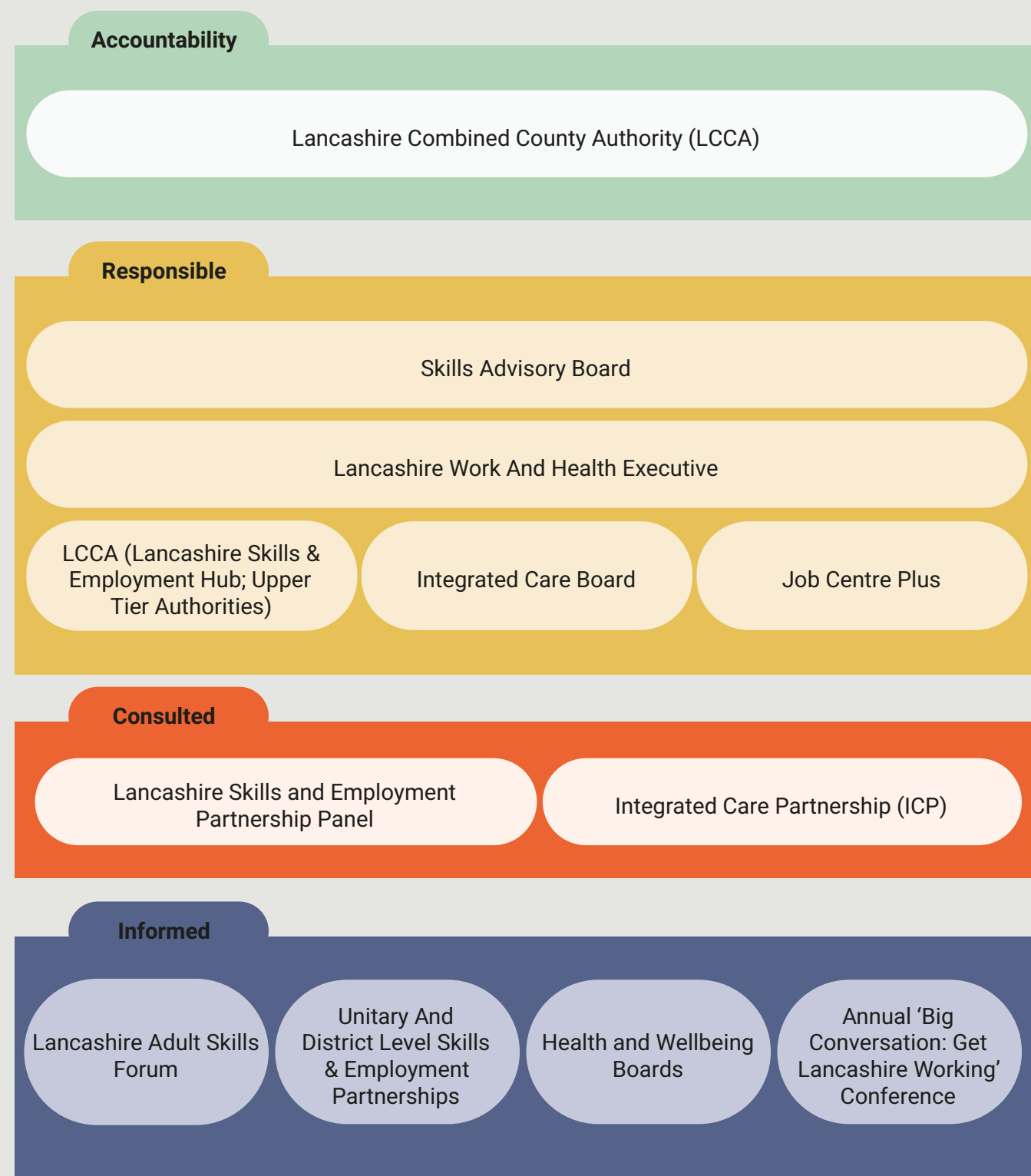


Figure 3: LCCA's RACI Governance Structure

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.

8

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).

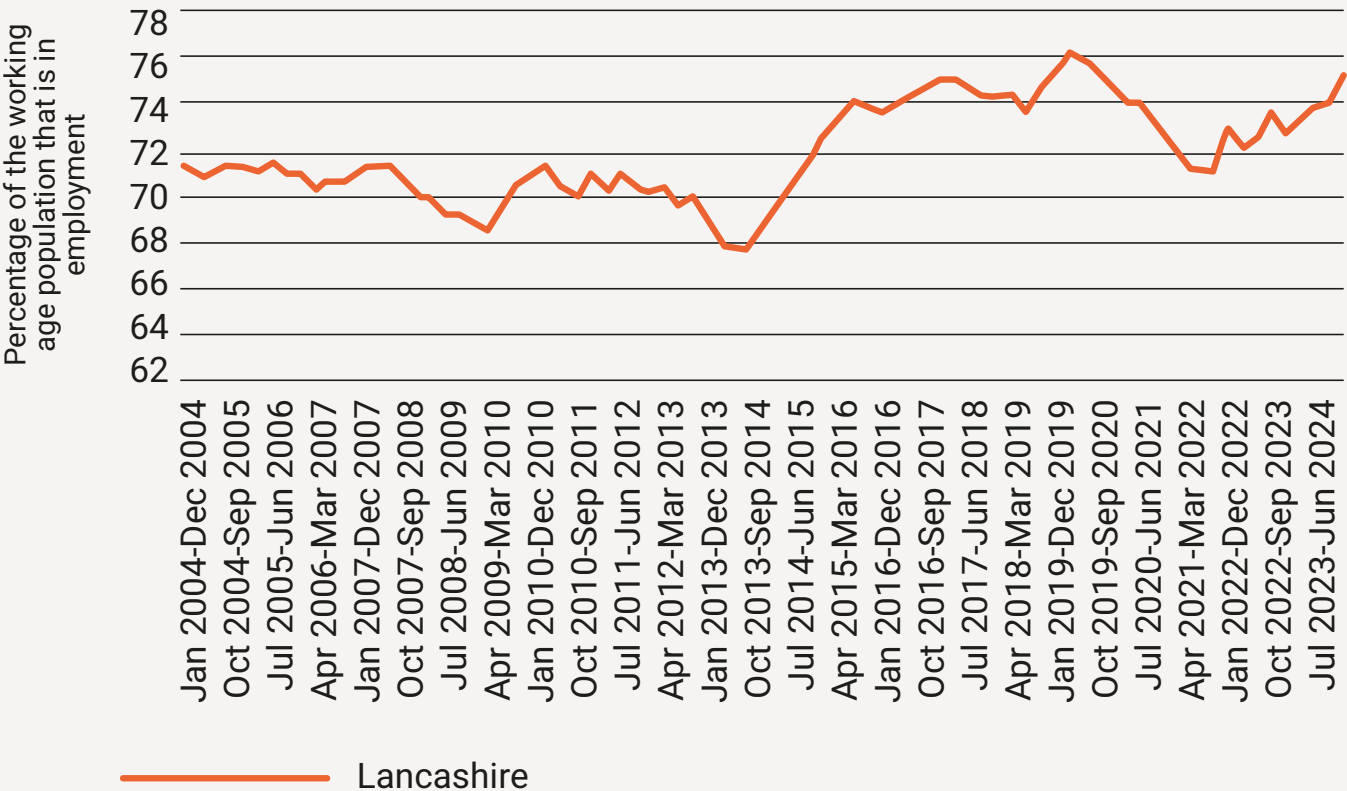
As part of this plan, datasets were reviewed and expanded to reflect national GBW priorities and local trends. An options appraisal helped identify key cohorts for initial focus, aligned to available programme delivery and outcome feasibility.

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



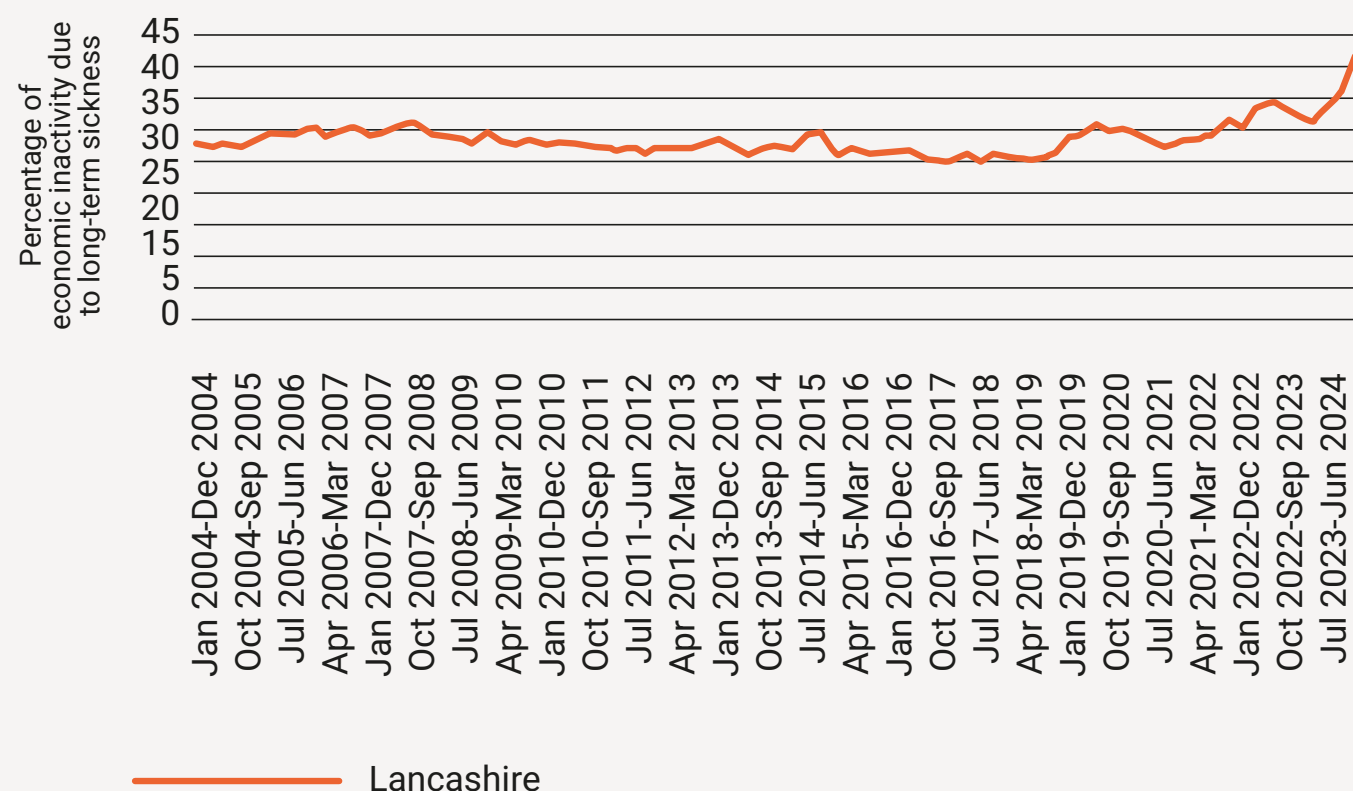
Measuring Success: Outcomes, Measurement and Evaluation

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

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 OutcomesA

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

8

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.

9

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

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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.

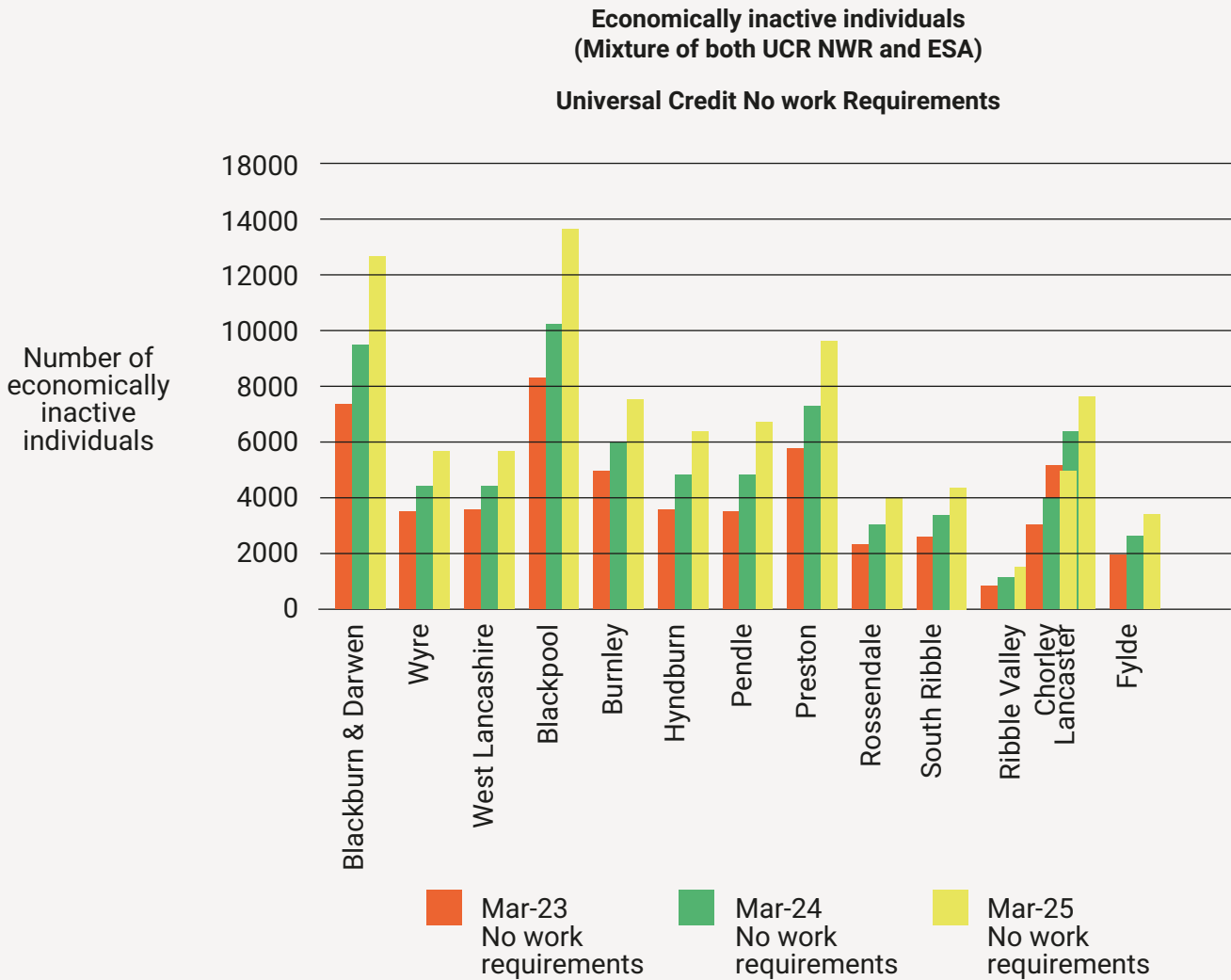


Figure 1 – Number of Lancashire residents claiming Universal Credit with “No Work Requirements” by geographical region

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	1

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

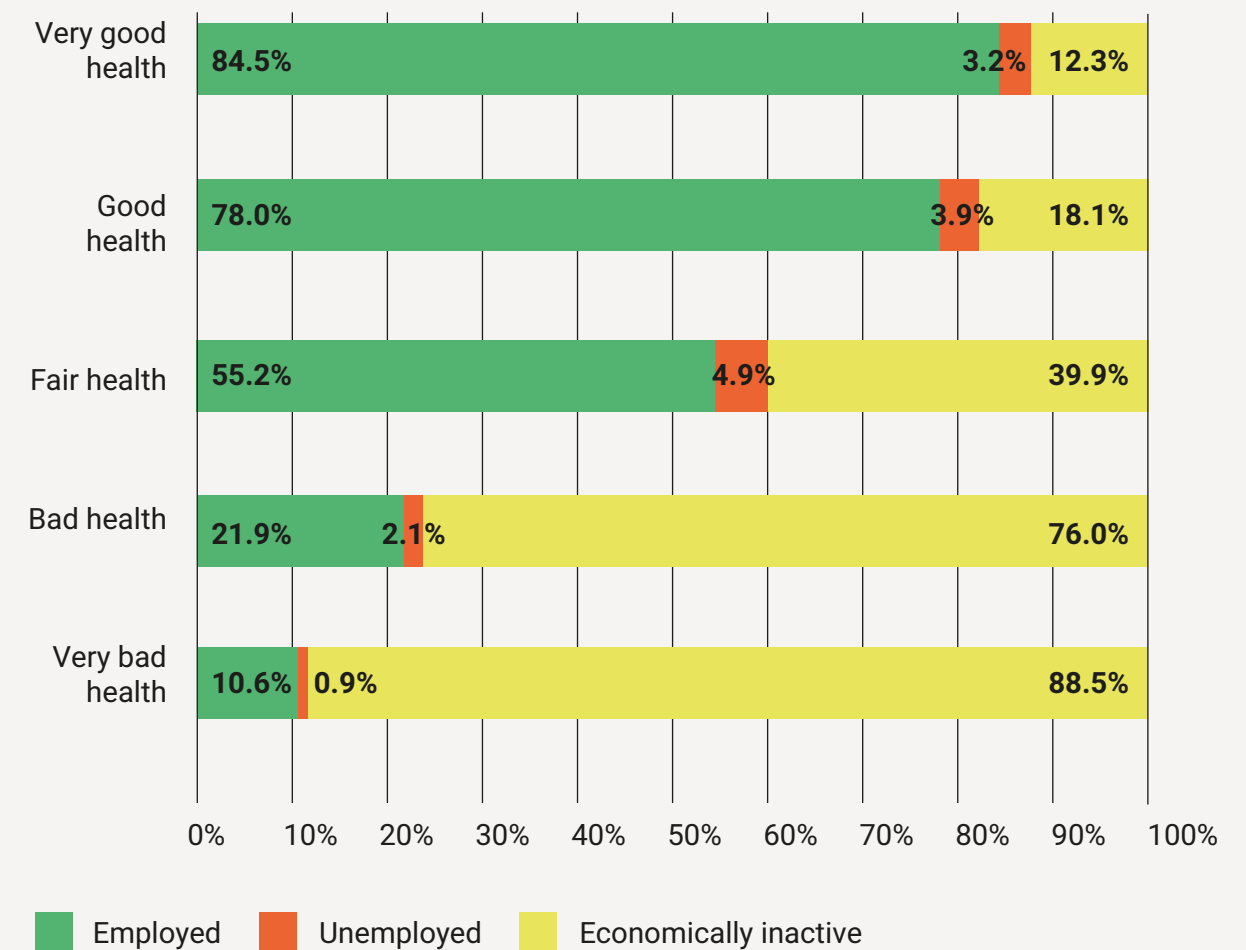


Figure 3 – Labour Market Status by Self-Reported General Health (excluding Students) across Lancashire

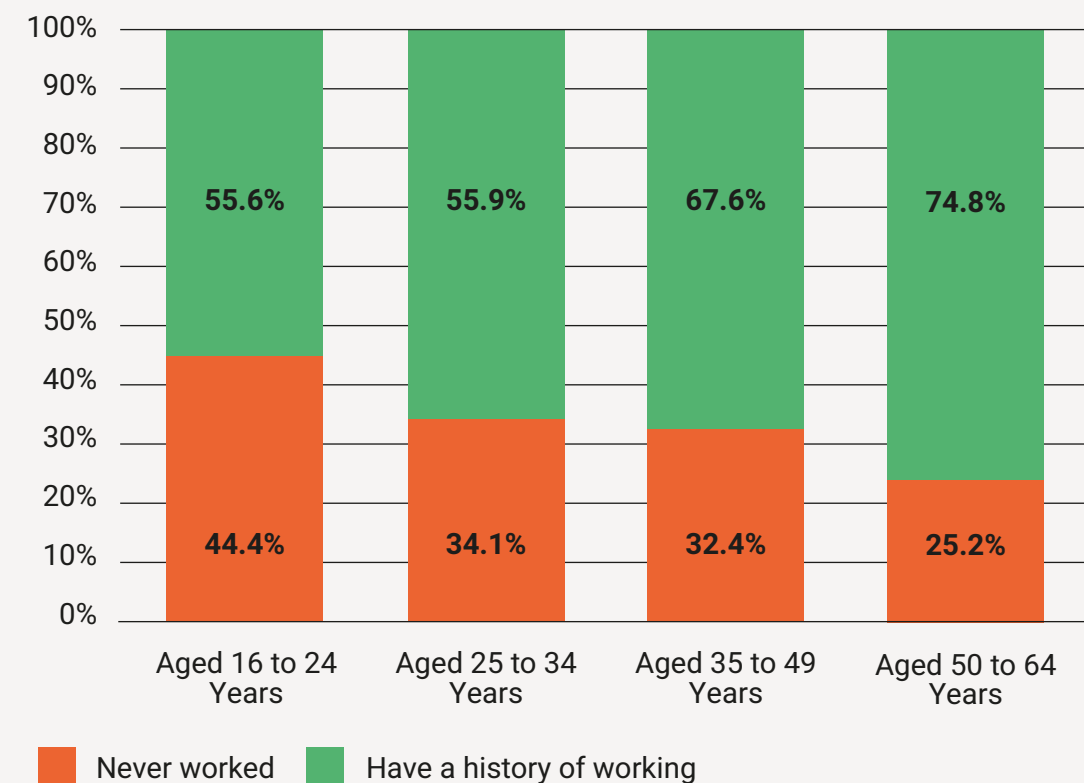


Figure 4 – Economically Inactive and Unemployed by Work History (excluding Students and Retirees)

Appendices

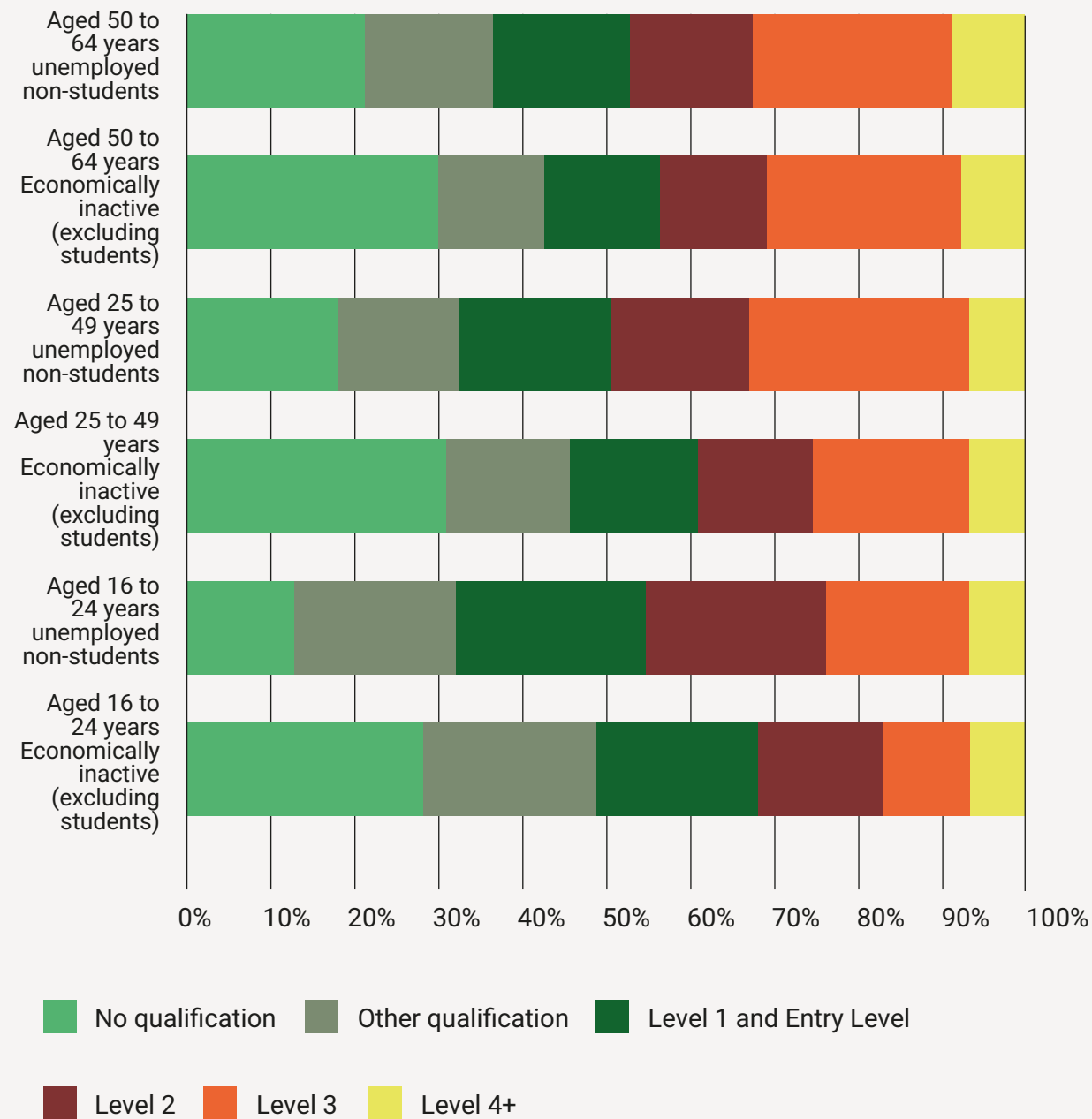


Figure 5 – Unemployed and Economically Inactive by Age and Qualification Level across Lancashire

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.

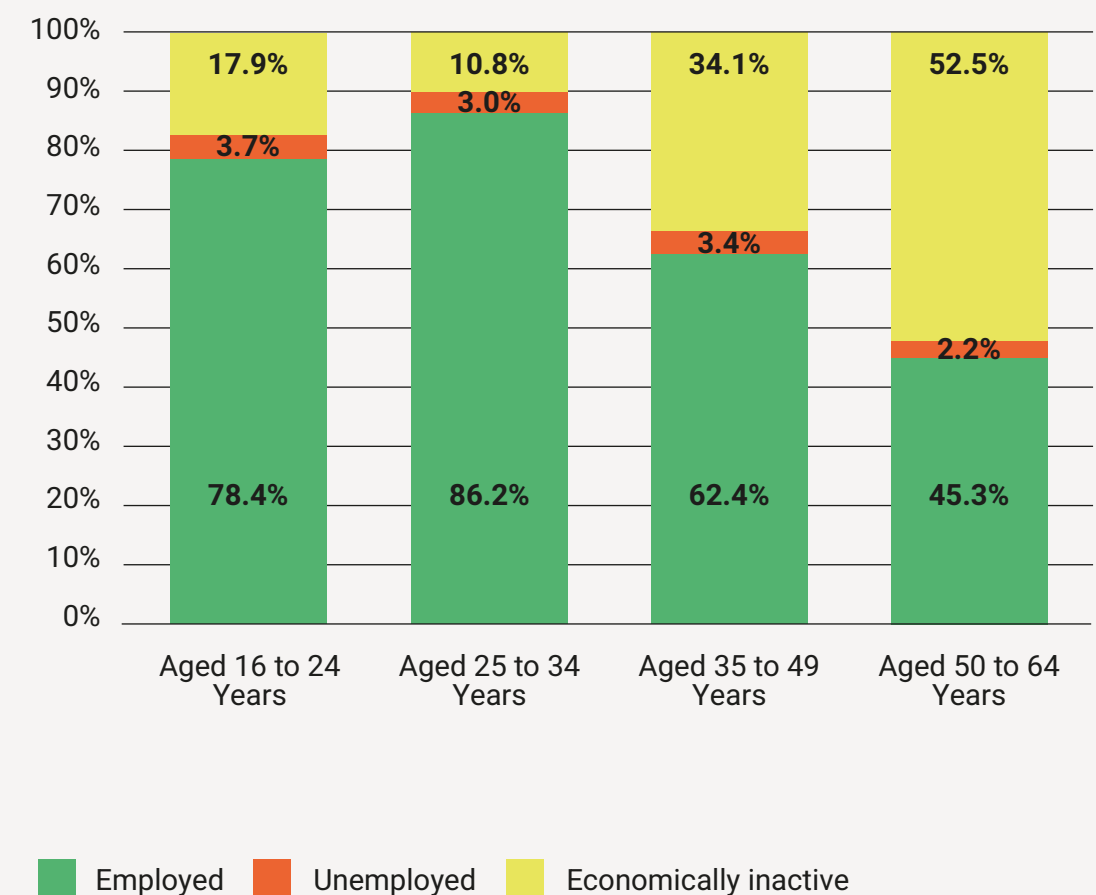


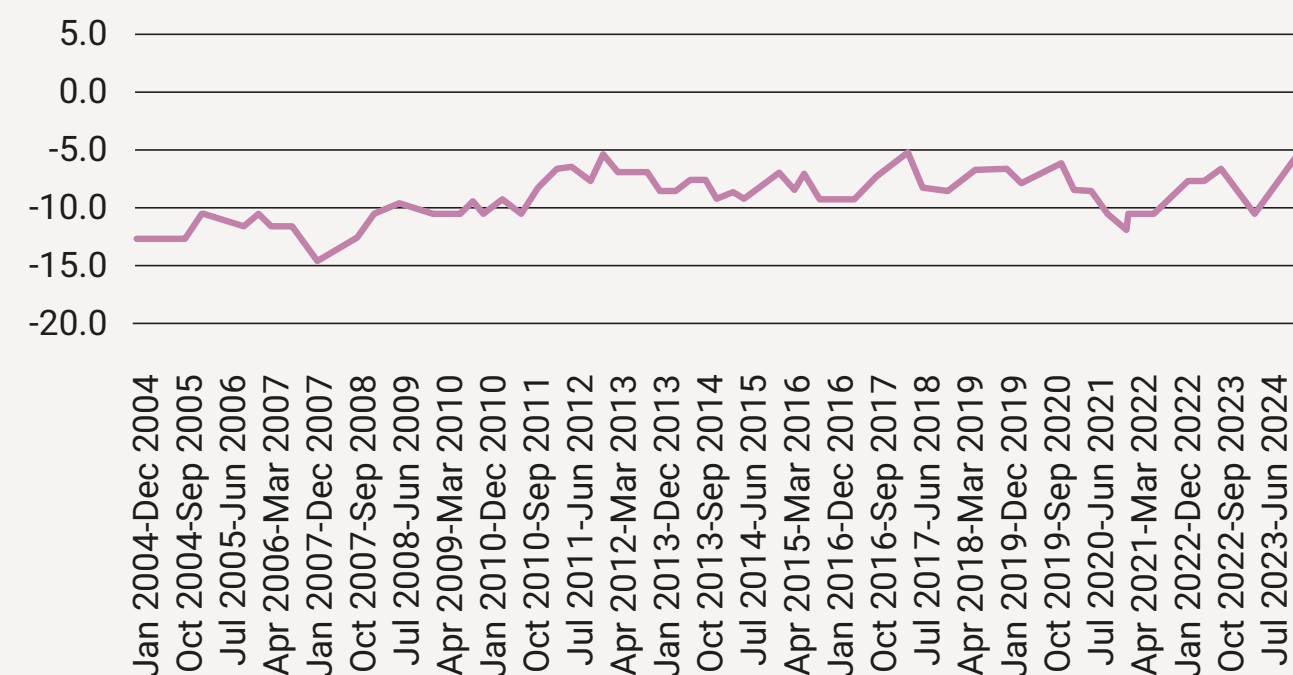
Figure 6 – Labour Market Status by Unpaid Care Responsibilities (excluding Students and Retirees)

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.

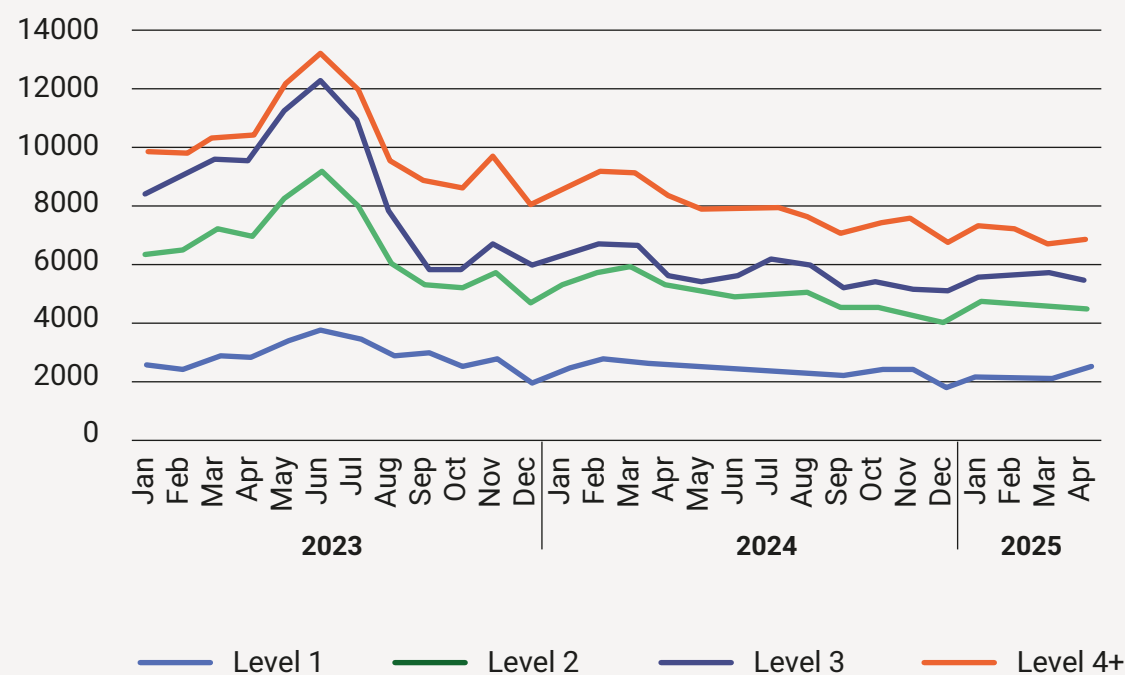
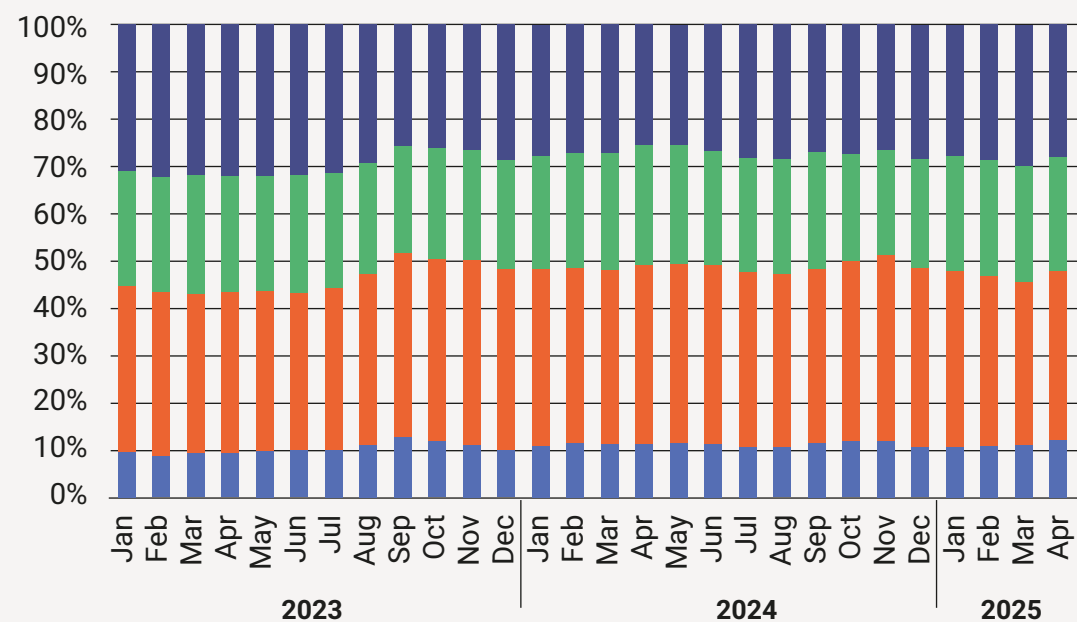
This illustrates the importance of:

- 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.



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"

