



Get Swindon and Wiltshire Working Plan

October 2025

 **Insight**



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Foreword

The Get Britain Working White Paper published earlier this year provided the opportunity for us as partner organisations to consider, reflect and plan on how we can collectively prioritise and maximise a local Get Britain Working Plan.

A comprehensive data tool has been developed which helps to highlight the areas facing the most significant barriers to labour market participation, whilst recognising where we buck the national trends.

For our area this is crucial. We know that on the whole, there is high level employment in Swindon and Wiltshire, something which we will strive to maintain. We also know that there are geographical, demographic, sector and circumstances where access to and inclusion in the labour market is not equitable. This hinders our communities and restricts economic growth.

The Get Swindon and Wiltshire Working Local Plan aims to identify priority actions which can be taken in the short, medium and long term to reduce barriers to employment, support pathways and access to employment, and help employers fill their vacancies.

It sets out the plan as to how the most disadvantaged residents can be supported, and how barriers can be tackled.

There is an aspiration for integration, for alignment with other local strategies with our partners, and to support our wider public services so that disparities are reduced, opportunities are increased, and the wider health determinants of a high economic activity can be realised.

The plan sets out our joint commitment to working collaboratively to achieve our objectives.

Kathryn Davis, Director, Education and Skills Wiltshire Council

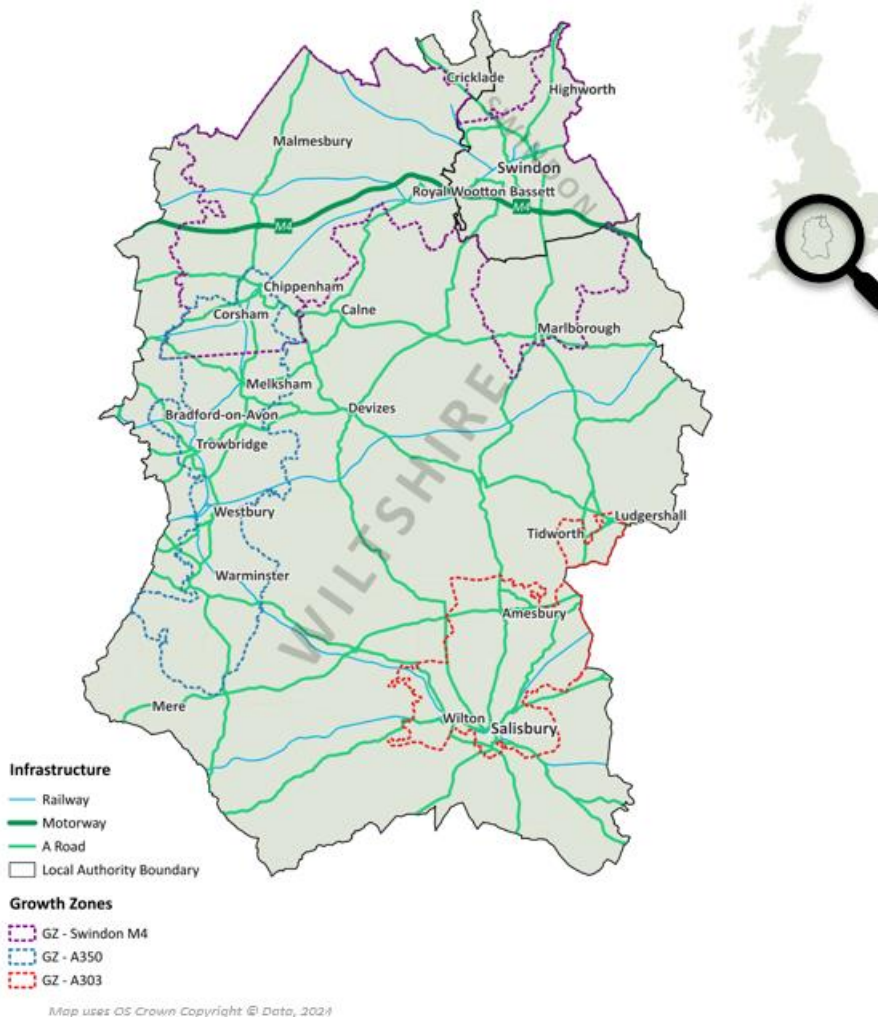
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1 Strategic Context

Swindon and Wiltshire has considerable strengths and assets to support inclusive economic growth and enable the Get Swindon and Wiltshire Working Plan. The area is strategically connected to the rest of the UK and beyond, and has significant sector strengths, capabilities and Growth Zones driving major investment and creating new jobs. To deliver our ambitions we need to support our businesses to grow and prosper and attract and retain the talent to fuel economic growth, address skill gaps and shortages and ensure that our residents can access good jobs and fulfilling careers to support their quality of life and prosperity.



This section of the Get Swindon and Wiltshire Working Plan sets out a comprehensive overview of the local labour market and strategic context underpinning Swindon and Wiltshire. The context that has been developed draws on a wide range of data sources and strategic insights. It responds to the challenges of economic inactivity and employment progression across Swindon and Wiltshire, framing these issues within the broader ambitions of the national Get Britain Working White Paper.

A comprehensive baseline analysis established in a bespoke [Swindon and Wiltshire Get Britain Working Data Dashboard](#) considers the region’s performance against a set of Get Britain Working Outcome Metrics and contextual indicators.

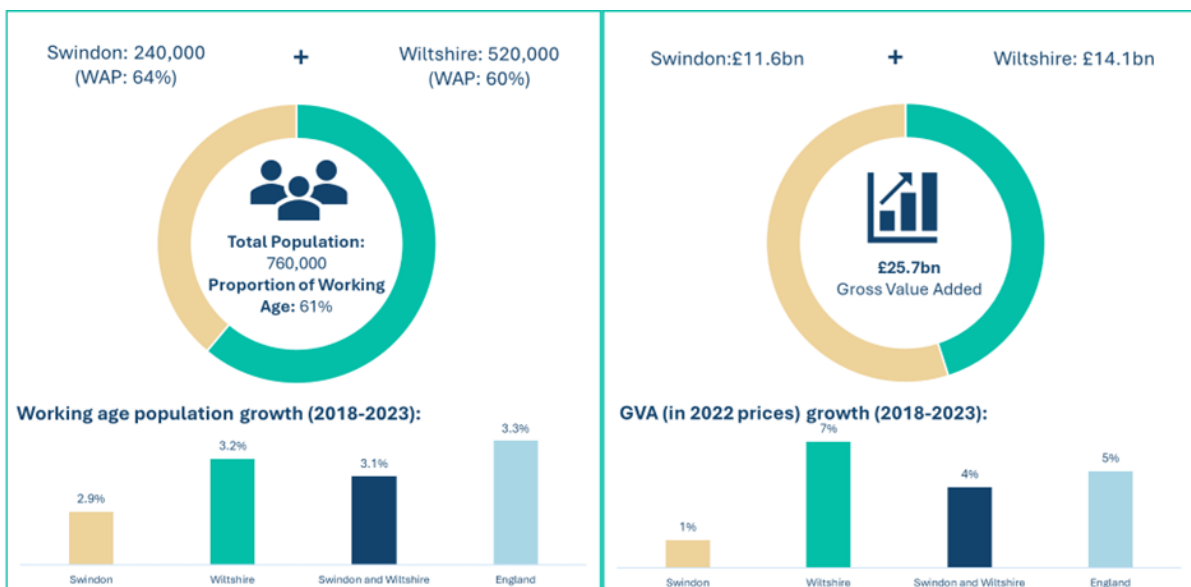
The dashboard is complemented by a rich body of evidence on the socio-economic context in Swindon and Wiltshire, developed to support the development of economic strategies at the local and sub-regional level. This evidence includes the targeted 2025 Swindon and Wiltshire Local Economic Assessment research, as well as engagement with strategic and operational stakeholders involved in delivering on employment outcomes, and further local research into issues and challenges facing the region.

The chapter highlights both strengths and disparities across the region. While Swindon and Wiltshire outperform national benchmarks across several desired outcomes (e.g. in employment rates and disability employment gaps), the region faces persistent challenges including skills shortages, an ageing population, and sectoral decline in key industries such as manufacturing and agriculture. The analysis also underscores the importance of place-sensitive interventions, recognising the distinct economic profiles and needs of Swindon and Wiltshire. This foundational context sets the stage for targeted policy responses and investment strategies aimed at fostering inclusive growth and long-term labour market resilience.

Labour Market Context

The Get Swindon and Wiltshire Working Plan responds to challenges experienced across both labour market participation and progression at work which impacts upon the individual, the local economy, and local service provision. While GVA growth between 2018-2023 in Swindon (1%) is noted in the economic snapshot below as being below the English average (5%), it should be noted that Swindon scored 5th out of 50 UK cities in PWC’s Good Growth Index in 2025, indicating strong growth performance on wider metrics than GVA such as income distribution, safety, work-life balance, life expectancy, carbon emissions reductions, commuting time and high street vitality.

Population and GVA Snapshot



Source: Mid-Year Population Estimates, ONS, 2023; Regional Gross Value Added, ONS, 2023

The Get Britain Working White Paper aims to significantly increase the UK's employment rate and reduce economic inactivity by focusing on skills, health-related barriers, and providing personalised support. The ambition to raise the employment rate to 80% recognises that there are many components of a sustained improvement to the workforce. The performance of Swindon and Wiltshire against the key government outcome metrics supports appreciation of the multi-faceted challenges that exist. A RAG rating has been conducted with available metrics with the following scoring:

- **Red:** Higher than national average
- **Amber:** Similar to national average
- **Green:** Lower than national average

Reported GBW Indicator (Exact GBW Indicator)	Swindon	Wiltshire	Swindon and Wiltshire	National Benchmark
Employment Rate - % aged 16-64 (18-66)	79.2%	83.8%	82.3%	75.7%
Gross Disposable Income per Head, 2024 prices (Real Earnings Component of RHDH amongst non-retired households (all ages)	£22,647	£26,919	£24,783	£26,787
Economic Inactivity due to Long Term Sick - % aged 16-64 (Long time sick inactive as percentage of all aged 18-66)	4.5%	2.8%	3.4%	5.7%
Disability Employment Rate Gap – percentage points (aged 18-66)	26.8%	19.2%	21.5%	26.1%
Female Employment Rate -% females aged 16-64 (18-66)	77.9%	77.8%	77.8%	72.3%
Young People Not in Education, Employment or training or “not known” - % 16-17 (NEET 18-24)	11.9%	3.2%	6.2%	5.5%
Percentage of mixed or workless households (% of coupled households where at least one parent is out of work)	37.1%	38.6%	35.4%	40.5%

Source: Annual Population Survey, April 2024 to March 2025, ONS; Regional Gross Disposable Household Income: Local Authorities by ITL1 Region, ONS, 2022.; Annual Population Survey, April 2024 to March 2025, ONS; Inspira/NCCIS, May 2025.

Further analysis of the performance of Swindon and Wiltshire against each of these outcome metrics is provided in the following sections.

An above average employment rate

Swindon and Wiltshire are performing well on employment, with a combined rate of **82.3%**, exceeding the government's 80% ambition and outperforming the national average of **75.5%**. Wiltshire leads locally at **83.8%**, while Swindon trails at **79.2%**. Since 2020, the employment rate for Swindon and Wiltshire has increased by 3.7 percentage points in comparison to a largely unchanged national position.

Disparities exist, particularly for those with disabilities

The employment rate in Swindon and Wiltshire varies by age, gender and disability. Typically, the proportion of economically active (EA) core disabled people (those who have a long-term disability which substantially limits their day-to-day activities) or work-limiting disabled (those who have a long-term disability which affects the kind or amount of work they might do) in employment (66%) is **significantly lower** than the proportion of non-disabled people in employment (87%). However, the employment rate gap between the overall employment rate and those with EA core disabilities is lower in Swindon and Wiltshire (21.5%) than nationally (26.1%).

The employment rate for women is also higher in Swindon and Wiltshire (78%) than nationally (72%).

In terms of age, Swindon and Wiltshire's employment rate is higher than the national average for all age groups, but there is a substantially higher proportion of 16-19 year olds in employment (40% compared to 28% nationally), as well as a high proportion of 20-24 year olds in employment (83% compared to 62% nationally). Evidence from local authority tracking data suggests, however, that given these high levels of young people in employment, education and skills providers have not been able to meet their Raising the Participation Age (RPA) duties. These young people (particularly 16 and 17 year olds) are therefore often entering jobs without sufficient training and then find themselves in career-limiting and potentially short-term jobs. Further work should be undertaken to identify and support this cohort.

Tight labour market conditions exist

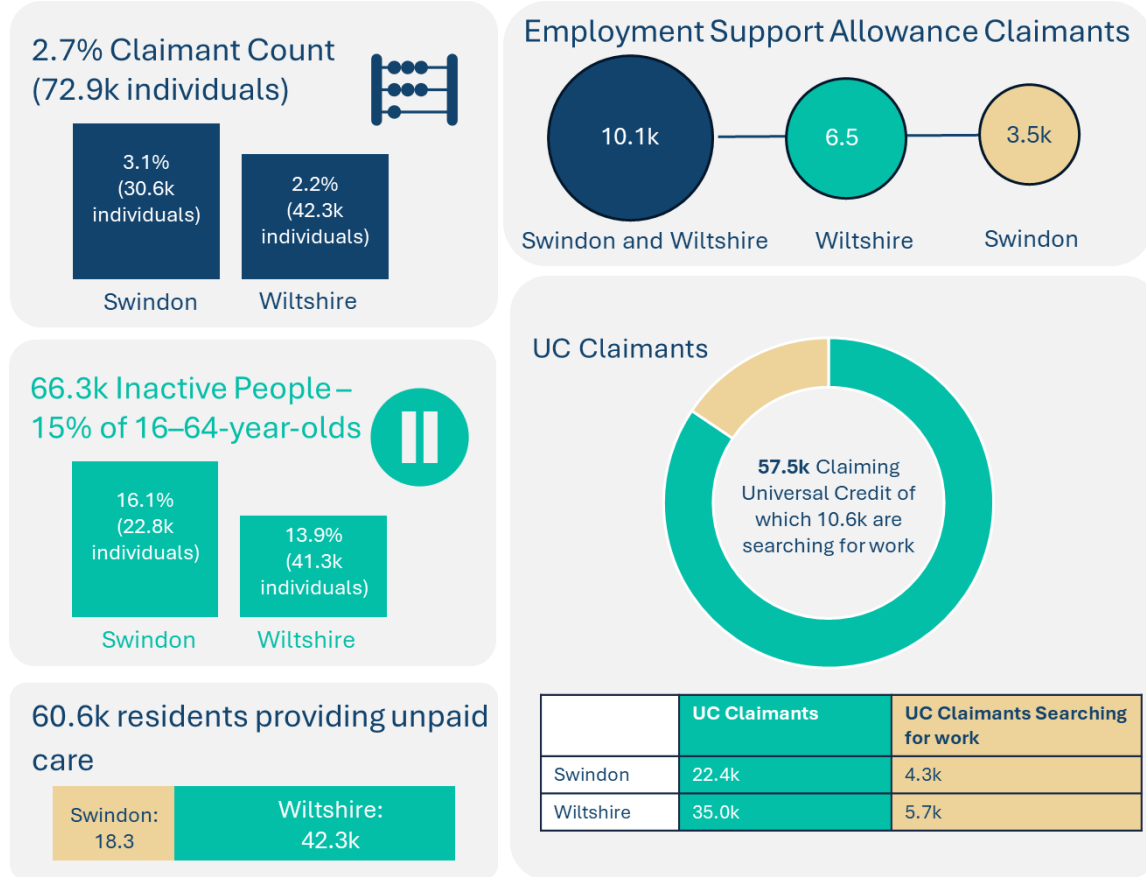
While the area is performing well overall on key metrics of economic performance, this creates a tight and constrained labour market. Key challenges frame this issue:

- The area has an **ageing population** - the proportion of residents aged 65+ is 21% (compared to 19% nationally) and there has been a boom in this cohort, with an 11% increase in the past 5 years.
- The area has a **qualification gap** – the proportion of residents qualified to levels 3 and 4 and above are below the national average and improvement is required both in terms of labour market entrants and the development of in-work skills. It is worth noting, however, that the attainment gap at levels 2 (18.7%) and 3 (26.7%) in Swindon were below the national average in 2024/25 (23.1% and 28.9%, respectively), while in Wiltshire the attainment gap for levels 2 (25.2%) and level 3 (33.7%) were above the national average. Employers have reported a mismatch between the skills they need and the current supply in the labour market.
- Job postings activity illustrates **high demand** amongst occupations such as care workers, sales related occupations, cleaners and domestics, programmers and software developers, nurses and customer services. Most sought after skills include communication, management, customer services, sales, teaching, and leadership. Many of the occupations in demand have targeted support for people aged 19 and over, in the form of Skills Bootcamps offered in the region. These 16-week courses, funded by the UK Government, are offered in areas such as Education and Early Years, Digital and AI, Leadership and Management, and Health and Social Care.

Economic Inactivity, Unemployment, and Health

The infographic on the following page summarises the current number of UC claimants, the proportion of economically inactive individuals in Swindon and Wiltshire, and the number of residents that are providing unpaid care in the region.

Economic Inactivity, Unemployment and Health in Swindon and Wiltshire



Source: Annual Population Survey, ONS, 2025; Department for Work and Pensions, 2025; Claimant Count, ONS, 2025

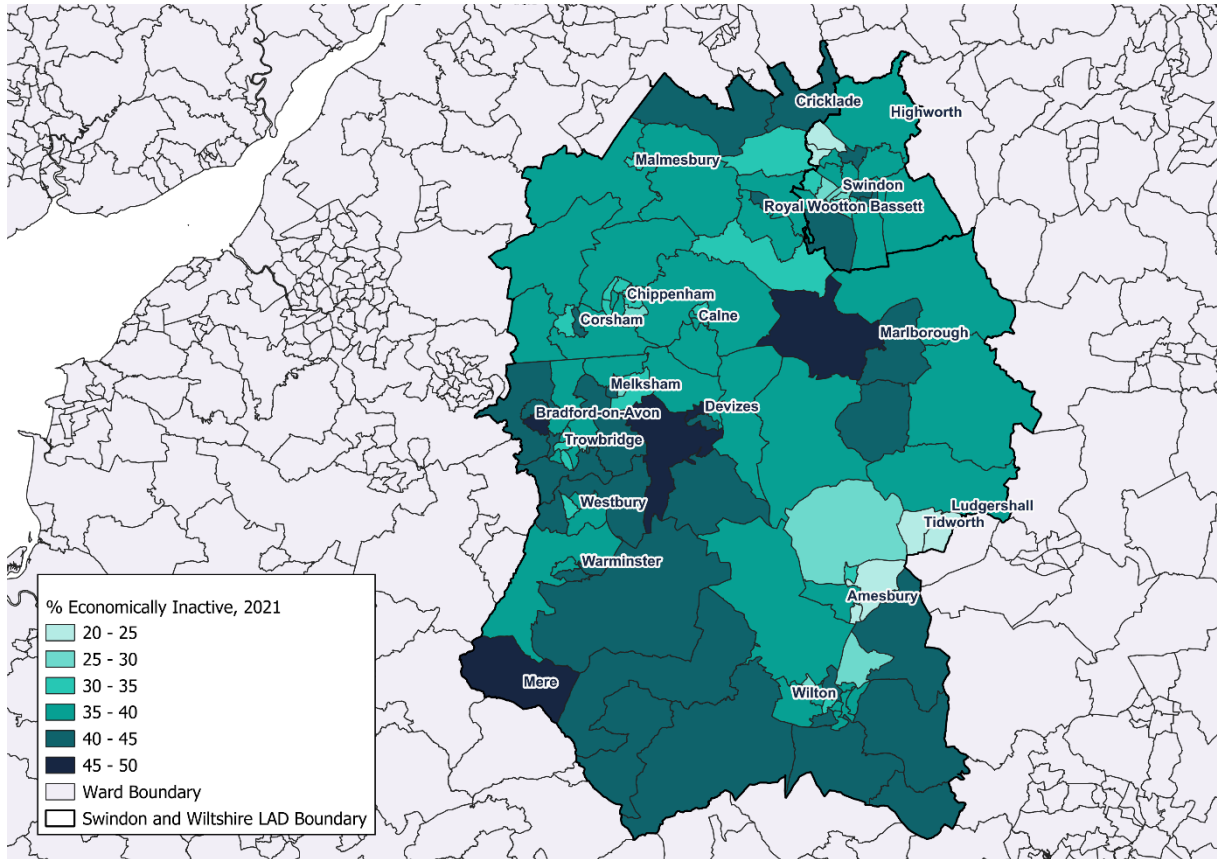
Below average unemployment rate

Swindon and Wiltshire has a below average unemployment rate reflected in a lower claimant count than the national benchmark. In June 2025, 2.7% (72,870 individuals) of 16-64 year olds in Swindon and Wiltshire were claiming, compared with 3.7% nationally. The majority (57%) of UC claimants across Swindon and Wiltshire were aged 25-49, followed by those aged 50 and over (24%).

Below average rate of inactivity however there are concentrated issues in key places

The economic inactivity rate in Swindon and Wiltshire, as of 2025, was 15%, significantly lower than the national rate of 21% and down 6.7 percentage points since 2020. This recent data is taken from the Annual Population Survey 2025; however, the 2021 Census provides a more localised picture to support appreciation of inactivity at a ward level. In Wiltshire, the Census highlights high levels of inactivity in and around Mere, Devizes, Trowbridge and Marlborough. In Swindon, the wards that the Census identifies the highest levels of inactivity are in Wroughton and Wichelstowe, Penhill and Upper Stratton, and Liden, Eldene and Park South.

Figure 1.1: Economic Inactivity Rates by Ward, 2021



Source: Census, 2021

Poor health and caring responsibilities are key barriers to labour market participation

Health is a key driver of economic inactivity in Swindon and Wiltshire. 17.% of residents who are inactive attribute this to long term sickness and this is particularly concentrated in Swindon at 22.8%. Caring responsibilities account for 17.8% of those inactive, and this is more concentrated in Wiltshire which has a rate above the national average at 18.4%.

Table 1.2 Economic Inactivity by reason, 2025

	Long-term sick	Looking after family/home	Retired	Student	Other
Swindon	22.8%	16.7%	24.6%	19.7%	14.0%
Wiltshire	14.5%	18.4%	20.8%	25.9%	19.6%
Swindon and Wiltshire	17.5%	17.8%	22.2%	23.7%	17.6%
England	27.2%	17.9%	11.9%	26.5%	10.6%

Source: Annual Population Survey, 2025

It should be noted that there has been an increase in the proportion of people that are economically inactive due to being retired in the region, from 19.2% in March 2021 to 22.2% in March 2024. The retired cohort in Swindon and Wiltshire could possibly help to support those that are inactive due to having to look after their families, by providing informal childcare provision to their grandchildren. However, it may also be the case that those that are inactive due to looking after their families are looking after their more elderly relatives instead of children.

30% of people who have a work-limiting disability or are classified as having a disability under the Equality Act were economically inactive in Swindon and Wiltshire in March 2025, compared to just 10% of people who did not have a work-limiting or Equality Act-defined disability.

Retirement is a key driver of inactivity

A lower proportion of people inactive in Swindon and Wiltshire want a job (17%) than the national average (22%). This may reflect, in part, the high proportion of people in Swindon and Wiltshire who are retired (22% compared to 12% nationally). Personal choice has an important role to play in economic inactivity: the GBW plan focuses strongly on the negative reasons for inactivity such as ill health or caring responsibilities, however it can play a role in encouraging people to stay in the workforce for longer or to contribute to the economy in other meaningful ways such as volunteering.

Unemployment rates are low overall but significant disparities exist between Swindon and Wiltshire

Unemployment rates (using the Annual Population Survey definition, rather than UC claimants) are also low in Swindon and Wiltshire, at 3.6% as of March 2025. This is lower than the national average of 4%. However, there is a significant disparity in unemployment rates between Swindon (5.6%) and Wiltshire (2.7%).

The number of young people not in education employment or training represent a key policy challenge

Young people face significant challenges in Swindon and Wiltshire. In 2025 6.2% of 16-17 year olds in Swindon and Wiltshire are classed as NEET/NK¹, this equates to 1,064 young people who are outside of the labour market while also not receiving training and support to improve their future prospects. Crucially this rate is higher than the national NEET/NK rate for 16-17 year olds at 5.6%. Closer examination of this issue shows that Swindon is facing particular challenges around their young people, with a NEET/NK rate of 11.9%. This rate has risen sharply over the past 2 years from 6.2% in 2023 to nearly double this in 2025. There is a notably high rate of young people whose position is “not known,” at 3.6% of the 16-17 year old population of Swindon and Wiltshire, compared to 2% nationally. This suggests that there is a need to more accurately capture data for young people aged 16-17 to fully understand the extent to which they achieve positive destinations across the region.

Structural Economic Challenges

Structural challenges shape the Swindon and Wiltshire economy, impacting on labour market participation.

The availability of jobs

Swindon and Wiltshire was home to 333,000 jobs in 2023 and according to the Swindon and Wiltshire Local Economic Assessment the area lost 2,000 jobs (-1%) between 2018-2023, while employment nationwide grew by 5%. This was driven by losses in Swindon (5% decrease or -6,000 jobs) over this period, whilst Wiltshire experienced slight growth of 1% (+3,000 jobs). Job density has also decreased over this period, falling from 0.92 jobs per working age resident in 2019 to 0.83 in 2022.

In addition, a reduction in the business base (-5% or -1,370 enterprises between 2019-2024) suggests more limited employment opportunities in Swindon and Wiltshire, *highlighting the imperative for targeted policy interventions to boost job creation, particularly in Swindon, to accompany employability initiatives such as Get Britain Working.*

Changing sectoral demand for employment

¹ Not in education employment or training and not known cohort

Although some sectors in Swindon and Wiltshire have seen employment expand, such as construction and transport and storage, significant job losses in manufacturing, wholesale, and financial and insurance services have contributed to Swindon's employment challenges. Meanwhile, the financial and insurance sector, a key employer in Swindon, saw a 9% drop in employment, in stark contrast to 5% growth nationally. According to Lightcast, an additional 4,373 jobs will be created in Swindon and Wiltshire by 2034. Anticipated job losses are predicted in sectors such as manufacturing, education, administrative and support services, whilst growth is anticipated in public administration and defence, construction, human health and social work, and arts, entertainment and recreation. Occupations such as sales and customer service occupations are anticipated to decline, whilst demand for skilled trades and professional occupations are anticipated to grow.

This highlights the importance of interventions supporting upskilling and reskilling to ensure that the skills of the local workforce aligns with employment opportunities and current and future skill requirements.

Skill shortages and gaps

According to the 2022 Employer Skills Survey the proportion of establishments with skill gaps due to non-work-related issues (i.e. health or personal problems) is higher in Swindon and Wiltshire (3.7%) than the national average (2.1%).

Employer engagement highlights a mismatch between the skills they need and the supply available and *point to a specific challenge about the work readiness of young people and gaps in essential skills.*

Technological change is reshaping the demand for skills

The Swindon and Wiltshire LSIP identify important sectors requiring targeted skills support alongside important cross cutting themes such as digitalisation, net zero and climate change, and core and transferable skills.

AI and digitisation is reshaping the demand for skills, reducing entry-level roles and increasing demand for specific skills such as digital. ONS estimates in 2019 identify that 93,000 jobs in Swindon and 184,000 in Wiltshire were at risk of automation, though the pace of AI adoption has accelerated since this data was published. The application of AI and automation to important sectors in Swindon and Wiltshire such as manufacturing and logistics creates an opportunity and a threat, highlighting the imperative *to understand the current acceptance and preparedness for implementation of AI amongst employers, support reskilling and workforce adaptability and ensure workers are equipped with the digital skills needed to support innovation and productivity and mitigate the threat of digital exclusion.*

Geographical variations in Economic and Labour Market performance

Economic and social outcomes vary between the Swindon and Wiltshire local authority areas, with notable geographical disparities in unemployment, economic activity and educational outcomes. While Wiltshire has exceeded the government's ambition of 80% employment, Swindon is slightly behind this target. Swindon also has significantly higher rates of unemployment than Wiltshire.

These variations underscore the need for a place-sensitive approach within the Swindon and Wiltshire Get Britain Working Plan, ensuring interventions are tailored to the distinct social and economic realities of these areas.

Swindon

Swindon is a key driver of economic output, employment and business activity. Crucially, Swindon needs to manage this growth and ensure the opportunities shaping its future are sustainable and

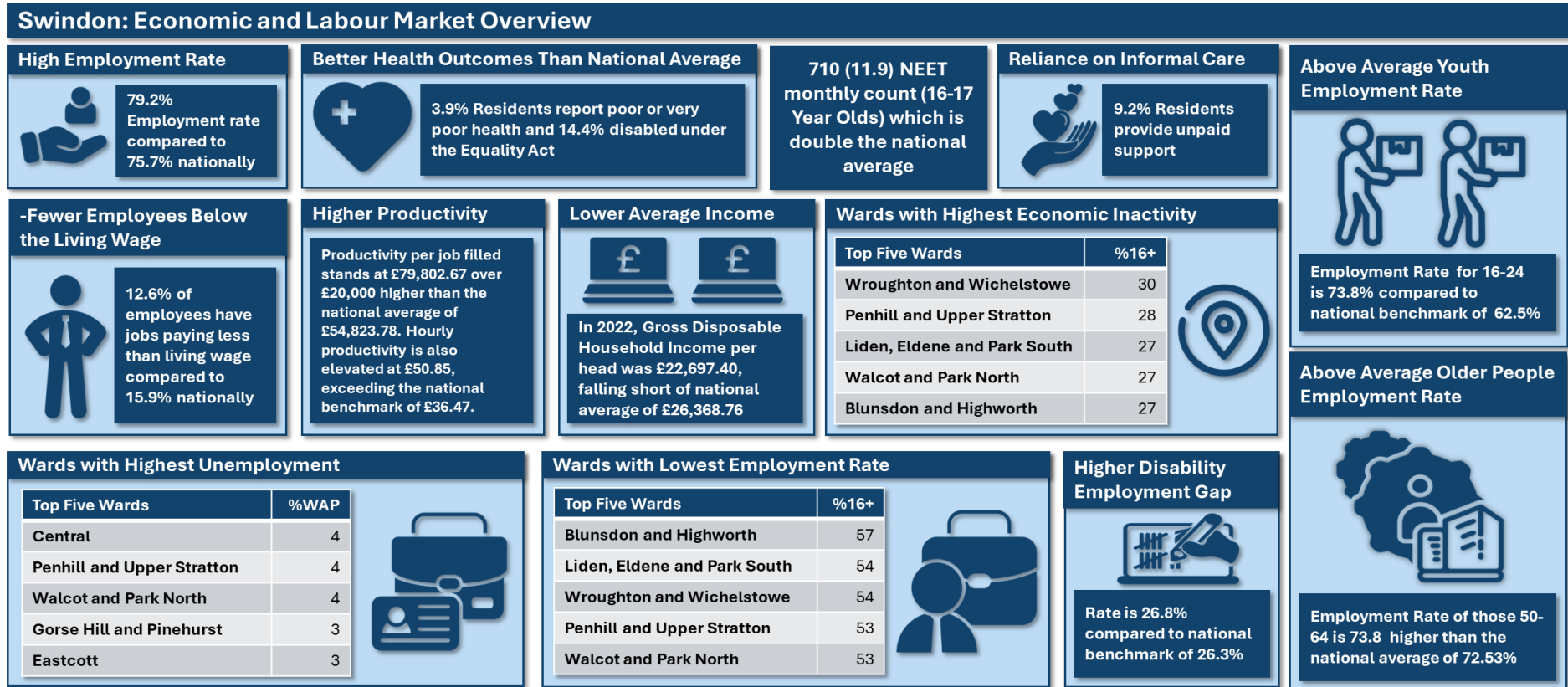
inclusive of all residents. Swindon is a highly productive area, ranking as the 10th most productive local authority in England in terms of GVA per hour worked in 2023 (£62.1). One of the most important sectors in Swindon (by GVA) is financial and insurance activities accounting for 20% of GVA (£2.5bn of the area's output in 2023). The closure of Swindon's Honda site in 2021 has had a considerable impact on the local economy, contributing to job losses, impacts on the supply chain, and a decline in economic output in the manufacturing sector.

Swindon also has a diverse ethnic composition with a high share of non-British and non-EU born residents (6% compared to 4% nationally). Ethnic diversity and migration can be harnessed as a driver of economic growth, supporting entrepreneurialism, culture and vitality, and employment.

Wiltshire

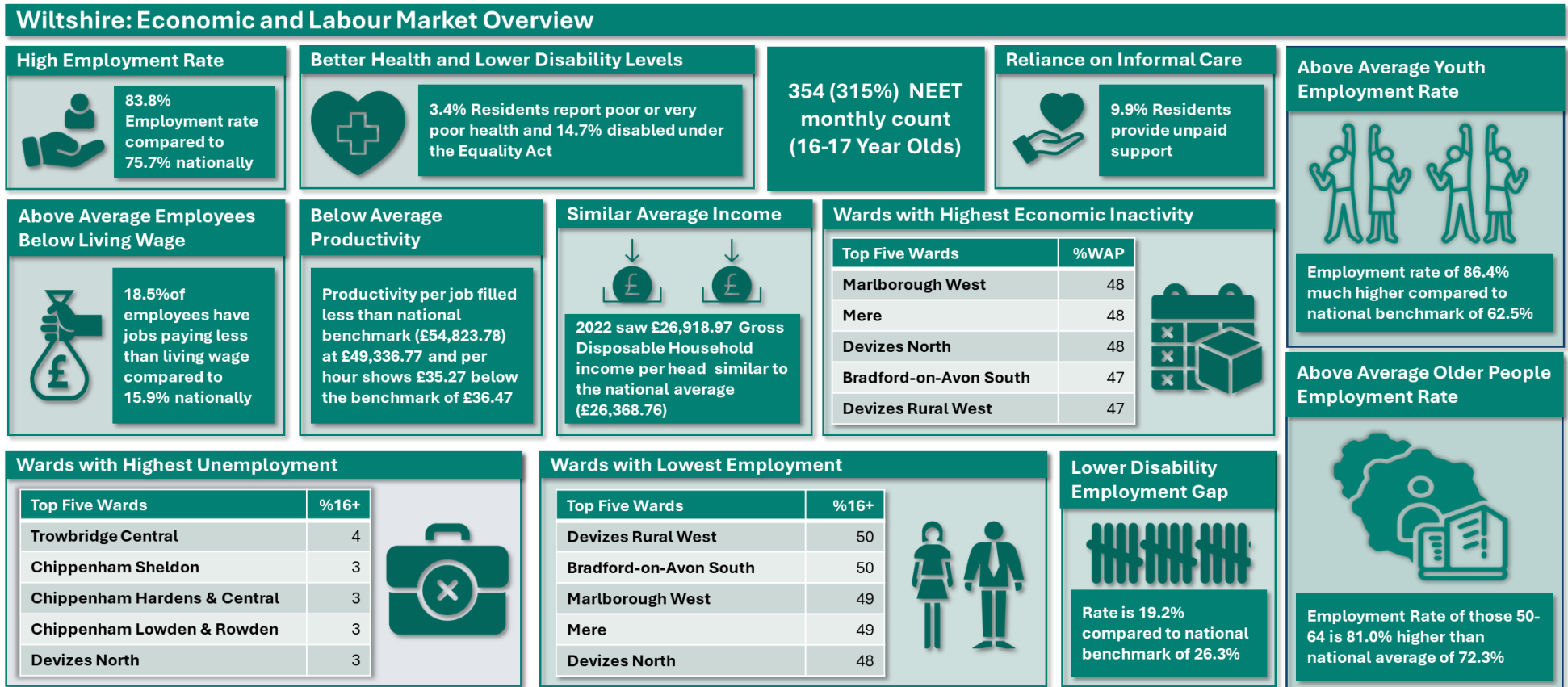
Wiltshire comprises the majority of the Swindon and Wiltshire land area and is a large source of the area's workforce. The local workforce is highly skilled - there has been strong rate of growth in the number of people working in Wiltshire in high skilled occupations since 2021, a 16% increase by 2024. This is higher than the national growth rate of +5%. Some of the most significant challenges facing Wiltshire are reminiscent of other rural areas across the country, these include an ageing population- the population of over 65's in Wiltshire has grown by 11% since 2019, and this age group comprise 23% of the population (compared to 19% nationally). Connectivity and internet are also significant challenges in Wiltshire, with broadband download speeds being lower in Wiltshire than the national average, likely due to its rural geography. Throughout the engagement undertaken as part of the development of this Plan, residents and local community stakeholders in Wiltshire recognised that digital connectivity can be a barrier to employment, particularly in terms of lacking the digital skills to apply for jobs and completing interviews online, and also in terms of limited access to devices amongst older residents.

Economic and Labour Market Overview of Swindon



Source: Annual Population Survey, 2025; NEET Participation, DoFE; Population estimates - local authority based by single year of age ONS, 2024; Claimant count by sex and age, ONS; Census 2021

Economic and Labour Market Overview of Wiltshire



Source: Annual Population Survey, 2025; NEET Participation, DoFE; Population estimates - local authority based by single year of age ONS, 2024; Claimant count by sex and age, ONS; Census 2021

Local strengths and assets

A growing economy illustrated by strong GVA growth

Despite the economic challenges identified above, Swindon and Wiltshire is a very productive area, contributing £26bn in GVA to the UK economy in 2023, an increase of 7% since the previous year. Swindon accounts for 45% (£12.7bn) and Wiltshire accounting for 55% (£15.3bn). Labour productivity is high, with GVA per hour worked standing at £43.01 relative to £36.47 in England, although this is driven by high levels of productivity in Swindon (£50.85) whilst Wiltshire is slightly below the national average (£35.27).

Ensuring businesses can access the talent they need to compete effectively and encourage their investment in skills to support labour productivity can support a prosperous and inclusive economy in Swindon and Wiltshire.

Key sectors and major investments support the provision of jobs

Key sectors contribute to economic output including financial and insurance (12%), manufacturing (11%), professional, scientific and technical (10%), wholesale and retail (9%), and public admin and defence (9%). A number of priority sectors identified within the Swindon and Wiltshire Local Economic Assessment 2025 based on absolute and relative strengths include:

- Professional business services
- Creative industries
- Cyber security
- Advanced manufacturing and engineering
- Defence
- Environmental Technologies
- Life Sciences

There is strong alignment between these sectors and the Modern Industrial Strategy IS8 sectors including advanced manufacturing, creative industries, defence, digital and technologies, life sciences and professional and business services. Policy ambitions to strengthen these priority sectors in Swindon and Wiltshire will support economic growth, secure investment and drive job creation.

There are a number of major investments taking place in Swindon and Wiltshire that present employment opportunities including:

- £918m regeneration of the old Honda site in Swindon which will create up to 11,000 new jobs on site and a further 4,000 indirect jobs in the supply chain over the next 10 years
- £250m programme to improve council housing stock in Swindon
- Major housing sites coming forward such as the old Westinghouse Brakes site in Chippenham which will provide over 300 homes
- Expansion of existing businesses such as Tuffking, a local safety footwear manufacturer
- The new Siemens Mobility £100m facility in Chippenham due to open in 2026 which will host around 800 staff
- Regeneration of the Swindon Railway Quarter which will deliver a mixed use development
- New Eastern Villages strategic development with plans for 8,000 new homes, employment and associated infrastructure
- Dualling of sections of the A350, enhancing connectivity and economic growth in the region

Inclusive growth aspirations can be supported through targeted interventions that broker employment connections between local residents and employment opportunities.

Skills infrastructure supports the development of talent

Swindon and Wiltshire have a large proportion of schools rated 'Good', nurturing future talent. This is complemented by a network of post-16 provision. The main colleges in Swindon and Wiltshire include New College Swindon and Wiltshire College and University Centre, offering a wide range of further education courses including A-levels, T-levels, apprenticeships and vocational training. The University Centre and New College Swindon provide a variety of higher education and degree level courses. There are also other higher education providers delivering directly in Swindon, for example the Oxford Brookes campus specialising in Nursing and the Wilkes Academy of Performing Arts. The £2.5m Local Skills Improvement Fund has enabled Swindon and Wiltshire providers to collaboratively address LSIP priorities, particularly at levels 3-5, funding new curriculum development, teaching capacity and facility upgrades.

Collaborative working between providers to ensure provision is responsive to identified skill needs and bridge current and future skill gaps can help to equip residents and workers with the skills they need to secure and progress in work.

Planned housing growth

Planned housing growth in Swindon and Wiltshire will facilitate the availability and offer of housing to support economic growth and meet population needs. The total population of Swindon and Wiltshire has increased by 4% over the past 5 years. Swindon's new Local Plan envisages building nearly 26,000 homes by 2043, with strategic housing allocations including the New Eastern Villages and the Central area, alongside town centre regeneration plans supporting delivery of these targets. Wiltshire is reviewing its local plan in response to government housing targets and is making good progress against new affordable housing goals.

The provision of affordable and quality housing close to employment opportunities will support economic growth.

Strategically connected

Swindon and Wiltshire is strategically connected, supporting the effective movement of people and goods and connecting them to jobs and markets to support economic growth. Major routes include the M4 and A350, serving as major arterial routes. This is complemented by the Great Western Rail Line.

The provision of multi modal and affordable transport options within Swindon and Wiltshire can help to better connect residents to employment opportunities, overcoming accessibility barriers.

Sectoral and infrastructure challenges

Although Swindon and Wiltshire has maintained its strong labour market and continues to be an attractive place to live, work, visit and do business, the area faces some significant sectoral and infrastructure challenges. With significant changes unfolding on both the national and international stage, a high degree of uncertainty for the future exists, therefore it is becoming increasingly important for Swindon and Wiltshire to build resilience against economic shocks. Challenges are emerging in the following sectors:

- **Logistics and Distribution** – Both areas benefit from sector strengths in logistics and distribution, offering significant growth opportunities, especially around the growth zones. However, there are rising concerns around planning constraints, sustainability, and workforce demands. As automation and AI continue to reshape these industries, policies must focus on futureproofing the sector while ensuring accessible pathways for workforce reskilling and upskilling.
- **Manufacturing** - Manufacturing's absolute contribution to Swindon's economy has declined in recent years, diverging from the national trend, which saw a modest increase of +1%. In Swindon, manufacturing shrank by 26% (-£371m), with a 37% drop (£-349m) in the sub-sector

of manufacturing of metals, electrical products and machinery, which includes motor vehicles. This decline can therefore be partially attributed to the closure of Swindon's Honda site in 2021 and the subsequent job losses.

- **Professional, scientific and technical** - A significant amount of the loss of businesses in both Swindon and Wiltshire occurred in the professional, scientific and technical, education and the information and communication sectors. Given the importance of the professional, scientific and technical to Wiltshire's business base this is significant and should be monitored to ensure the sector is not facing large scale and long-term commercial pressures that may lead to further business closures. Persistent recruitment challenges for higher-skilled roles point to the need for stronger collaboration between businesses, education providers, and training institutions to build a resilient local talent pipeline.
- **Agriculture** – GVA from the agriculture, mining and utilities sector, a key driver of Swindon's economic output- experienced a significant decline between 2019 and 2022, aligning with national trends (-17%) but with a sharper contraction in Swindon (-£299m, -25%) compared to Wiltshire (-£88m, -20%). The impact of EU exit and the pandemic has contributed towards labour shortages, global supply chains, and trade patterns.

There is also room for improvement of Swindon and Wiltshire's existing infrastructure. There are several challenges around infrastructure that create barriers to accessing employment and services, including but not limited to:

- **Digital connectivity:** Confidence in achieving 5G mobile connectivity is lower in Swindon and Wiltshire (68%) compared to the UK average (83%), with Swindon showing higher confidence than Wiltshire, (79% and 57% respectively), likely due to Wiltshire's rural geography. Rural areas have historically faced challenges around digital connectivity. Recent initiatives have sought to resolve this such as Project Gigabit.
- **Reliance on private car:** Road traffic is emerging as a significant problem in Swindon and Wiltshire, especially along the A303 and the primary routes between the north and south of the area. This is due to the high reliance on cars as a main form of transport.
- **Barriers to housing and services:** Barriers to housing and services are particularly acute in Wiltshire, with 42% of all LSOAs featuring in the 20% most deprived in England according to the Index of Multiple Deprivation. This rurality presents particular challenges for residents seeking to access to education, skills and training and employment.

National strategic alignment

Recent changes in national policy, including the **Comprehensive Spending Review**, the **Get Britain Working White Paper**, and the **Pathways to Work White Paper**, are directed toward reforming the welfare system, increasing employment, and providing enhanced support for individuals with health conditions or disabilities. However, detailed information regarding funding allocations and local implementation remains forthcoming.

The Government has committed to investing over £1 billion annually by 2029/30 in employment support programmes, with a particular focus on people with disabilities and those experiencing long-term health conditions. The **Connect to Work** programme, a key programme within the UK Government's Get Britain Working White Paper, aspires to assist approximately 1,000 individuals in Swindon and Wiltshire in gaining or sustaining employment over the next five years.

Addressing economic inactivity within Swindon and Wiltshire necessitates more than the introduction of short-term initiatives; it requires significant systemic investment, sustained support for vulnerable populations, the guarantee of long-term funding, policy flexibility, and a unified approach to tackling structural inequalities that impede access to employment.

In addition, the creation of opportunities for people to work in good jobs requires a strong link between the development of a supportive infrastructure and the wider development of Swindon and Wiltshire's economy. With the implementation of the **Modern Industrial Strategy**, the publication of the new Post-16 Education and Skills White Paper, the role of Skills England and integration with DWP, and the production of **Local Growth Plans**, the need to link these approaches up at a strategic level is critical.

Local strategic alignment

The Get Swindon and Wiltshire Working Plan has been developed in cognisance of a wide range of regional and local level policies and strategies that focus on long-term growth in economic development and supporting key employment metrics. Several of these policies are detailed below.

Regional alignment

At the regional level, the Get Swindon and Wiltshire Working Plan is highly aligned to ambitions raised in the (emerging) **Economic Strategy for Swindon and Wiltshire**, where it is acknowledged that there is a current imbalance between skills demand and supply, which if addressed could improve the performance of local business and increase economic inclusion. Key priorities outlined in this emerging strategy relate to supporting upskilling and reskilling, strengthening engagement with employers to understand future skills needs and encourage employer investment in training, raising educational outcomes and supporting young people and those with health issues or wider barriers to access sustained employment.

Likewise, the (draft) **Swindon and Wiltshire Skills Strategy 2025-2030** outlines key strategic priorities in upskilling and reskilling, strengthening engagement with employers and supporting sustained employment, particularly through targeted interventions such as the Connect to Work programme and the Get Swindon and Wiltshire Working Plan. The **Swindon and Wiltshire Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP)** acknowledges that key priority sectors in need of skills are in the Automotive, Transport, Logistics and Infrastructure, Health, Social Care and Life Sciences, Agriculture, Agritech and Land Management, Construction and the Built Environment and Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering sectors. It should also be noted that work is currently underway to refresh the Swindon and Wiltshire LSIP, and that the Get Swindon and Wiltshire Working Plan will help to meet future ambitions established in this forthcoming plan.

Recognising that there are multiple barriers beyond skills gaps, the Get Swindon and Wiltshire Working Plan also takes cognisance of ambitions laid out in the **Wiltshire and Swindon Sport's Health and Wellbeing Strategy**, which focuses on building sustainable collaborations between physical activity providers and healthcare professionals, to encourage people to live longer and better and tackle health inequalities in the most deprived areas of the region. Further, the Plan is highly aligned to recent work undertaken by the Integrated Care Board (ICB) for Bath and Northeast Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire.

In their **Work and Health Partnership Report**, the ICB identified that a range of different support recommendations to support the removal of barriers to employment for people that have long-term health conditions, which included a single point of access for employment support and potential co-location of health support into Jobcentre Plus settings, training and educational opportunities for employers to encourage open conversations and the use of fit notes, and increased collaboration between the ICB, local authorities and DWP.

[During the development of this plan the **Mayfield Review** was published which recommended the development of a new approach to supporting Workplace Health including recommendations on the design and implementation of the new system, its data requirements and the resourcing.](#)

[The review identifies key themes and findings, emphasising that prevention, retention, and rapid rehabilitation are far more effective than reactive approaches or long-term inactivity. It notes](#)

[misaligned incentives between employers, employees, and the Government, often leading employers to replace rather than retain staff.](#)

[Workplace health support is described as inconsistent and reactive, with a call for a shift towards shared responsibility among employers, employees, and health services. The review also identified the challenges around Mental health issues among younger workers as a major driver of economic inactivity, with those aged 16–34 and experiencing mental health conditions being nearly five times more likely to be out of work.](#)

[To address these challenges, the review proposes several interventions. Central to these is the introduction of a “Healthy Working Lifecycle” model, which spans prevention, retention, and rapid return to work, aiming to become a recognised organisational standard. The creation of a Workplace Health Provision \(WHP\) is recommended, offering non-clinical case management and early intervention support. A Workplace Health Intelligence Unit \(WHIU\) is also proposed to gather data, set standards, and support incentives for adoption. Over 60 employers are partnering with government to pilot these changes, with a focus on building evidence for what works and integrating recommendations with wider employment reforms.](#)

[Although a review, it builds on a significant amount of the research and background identified through this report and is welcomed as part of this plan. The review and its potential implications for new service design and delivery will be monitored as part of the delivery of this plan.](#)

The ICB’s **Integrated Care Strategy** sets out the ICB’s ambitions in partnership working across health, social care, voluntary and other sectors in support the residents of the region to improve health and wellbeing in an integrated approach. The strategy sets out three main objectives which can help develop the local labour market, by focusing on prevention and early intervention, ensuring a reduction in health inequalities and delivering health and care services that meet the needs of the population.

Local Alignment (Swindon)

The Get Swindon and Wiltshire Working Plan also acknowledges the local-level plans and strategies that Swindon Borough Council has developed regarding the labour market and improving employability. The **Swindon Plan** established the Council’s three priority missions to improve the quality of life for all of the Borough’s residents. These priorities include building a “fairer” Swindon by reducing disadvantages and health inequality, building a “better” Swindon by leading on town centre improvement and provision of affordable housing, and building a “greener” Swindon by working with communities to tackle climate change.

The **Swindon Skills Strategy 2025-2030** seeks to improve access to employment and skills information, advice, guidance and support to enable more residents to take up employment or training, ensuring young people have the skills they require to succeed, reducing inequality across the local education and skills offers, better engagement with employers to increase understanding of opportunities and skills gaps, and developing solutions in partnership with employers, skills providers and other key stakeholders and residents.

In developing this strategy, Swindon Borough Council engaged with businesses, residents and other stakeholders over a programme called **Let's Talk Skills**. The findings suggested that the main priorities should be around ensuring young people have the skills to succeed, and ensuring that all residents can realise their aspirations, while the main barriers to accessing learning provision related to a lack of awareness of what is available, time restrictions, costs and childcare considerations. When looking specifically at young people, the **Swindon Young People's Report** highlighted barriers that are faced in respect to skills, which include a lack of information and advice, a need for more support in practical "real-life" skills such as interviewing and writing CVs, as well as wider mental health and emotional barriers. Young people involved in the development of this report made five suggestions – better provision of advice, guidance and support, clearer pathways and more information about various careers options, encouraging more inclusive workplaces, providing greater mental health support in education settings, and improving public transport provision across the area.

At the local level, health considerations are also considered in the **Swindon Public Health Joint Strategic Needs Assessment**, which highlights that the economic wellbeing of an area and the health of its local population are inextricably linked. The JSNA identifies that there are challenges in educational attainment, but the Council is working closely with the (Swindon-based) Wiltshire Institute of Technology (IOT), participating in the UK Government in Work Skills pilot programme, and working with the local Chambers of Commerce and educational charities to understand skill shortages in the area.

Local alignment (Wiltshire)

As with Swindon Borough Council, the Get Britain Working Plan also acknowledges local-level needs expressed in strategies developed by Wiltshire Council. The (draft) **Wiltshire Council Plan 2025-2035** establishes a community-centred approach to ensuring a more inclusive and sustainable county that empowers communities to work together. Key priorities outlined in this Plan include helping the economy work for everyone to ensure growth in local economic benefits for communities, creating more accessible public transport, realising the benefits of volunteering for communities, organisations and individuals, and ensuring that children and young people have secure foundations to build successful and happy lives.

Wiltshire Council work in tandem with DWP to deliver their local **Jobcentre Plus Offer**, which includes tailored, work-focused support to ensure claimants remain close to the labour market, specialist and targeted support programmes (such as the Youth Offer and Disability Employment Advisors). The local Jobcentre Plus centres also partners with local and national organisations, to connect claimants with job opportunities and promote inclusive recruitment practices. Jobcentre Plus centres also deliver the new Jobs and Careers Service which was introduced in the Get Britain Working White Paper, to deliver more personalised, skills-focused support and strengthen employer engagement.

With regards to specific barriers to employment, the **Wiltshire Community Area JSNA** identifies that there are a significant proportion of the region that are NEET. The JSNA recognises that work is underway to support young people through Wiltshire Council's Education, Employment or Training Support Service and the development of an Education Employment Advisor role within this service. These functions help the local authority to fulfil its statutory responsibilities to track and support young people back into participation in education, employment or training.

2 Plan Objectives and Target Groups

Establishing the target groups and objectives for intervention requires a clearer model that outlines what we know and understand around Economic Inactivity, and an overview of the insights we have around the drivers, barriers and gaps in provision which impact on economic inactivity overall.

The following section takes us through this process and summarises the main insights and trends identified with stakeholders in the research and engagement undertaken to support the development of this plan.

Understanding Economic Inactivity

Overview

How we think about Economic Inactivity is a key part of how we develop new interventions but also embed them into the current system. Previous sections of this plan have provided an overview of the challenges around economic inactivity and reduced labour participation. The next section provides an overview of the research and engagement undertaken with stakeholders and service users. The key insights that we can take away from these findings are:

- **Barriers are interconnected:** For example, poor transport limits access to jobs and services, which in turn affects health and wellbeing.
- **Impacts are unequal:** Disabled people, carers, young people, and those in rural areas face the greatest barriers.
- **Solutions must be multi-level:** Addressing economic inactivity requires action on structural (housing, transport), systemic (health, childcare, skills), and programme (targeted support) levels.

This is closely aligned to the research which DWP has shared into the needs of key groups around employment support.² Similarly, the DWP distinguished between areas like housing, health & wellbeing, skills and employment. Building on this, we have mapped out the challenges for key groups that show the need for a multi-level solution:

Group	Structural Barriers	Systemic Barriers	Impact
Young People (16-24)	Provision of temporary and affordable housing, entry level jobs	Soft and basic skills gaps, uninformed parents and carers	Higher risk of NEET status, long-term “scarring” on earnings and prospects
Disabilities, Long-term Health Condition and/or Mental Health Barriers	Long wait times for mental health and MSK appointments, Rigid benefits system disincentivising work	Employer attitudes, rigid benefits system creating disincentives, provision of treatment	Large employment gap, higher inactivity, worsening health outcomes
Inactive Due to Caring Responsibilities	Access to childcare, earnings limit on Carers Allowance	Competitive labour market, workplace readiness	Lower employment, higher poverty, interrupted careers

² GOV.UK. ‘What Works to Support Disadvantaged Groups towards Employment? - Research Summary’. 11 August 2025. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-works-to-support-disadvantaged-groups-towards-employment/what-works-to-support-disadvantaged-groups-towards-employment-research-summary>.

Group	Structural Barriers	Systemic Barriers	Impact
People Facing Multiple Disadvantage	Language barriers, sectoral change – skills misalignment Lack of Entry Level roles	Age discrimination, cultural and societal practices (including adaptive and inclusive recruitment)	Groups remain outside of the workforce and unengaged from support

Each one of these groups of people runs the risk of being economically inactive *because* of these factors, but they also represent a set of factors which are a common experience for these groups.

In terms of impacts, aside from the direct impacts of health challenges, or lower skills, the main impact is on these individuals and their associated households in terms of potential income. Economically inactive individuals face substantial earnings losses and long-term career impacts when out of work, especially after prolonged unemployment. This is particularly the case for NEETs who can experience a significant impact on their future earnings. Less understood is that upon re-employment, economically inactive people are 1.5 times more likely to be in insecure work with lower quality jobs with less pay and stability.³ This reflects a general increase in insecure employment across labour markets in the UK, but also the overall capacity of the Economically Inactive to access good jobs due to their personal requirements and needs.

The decline of manual operative roles, especially in manufacturing, alongside an increase in the expected level of qualifications in manufacturing and other traditional employment sectors means that the access routes for people to move directly into employment without higher-level qualifications is increasingly concentrated in the service sector. Such roles are usually much more insecure in terms of hours, pay and overall conditions, and are also roles which have seen an increase in female labour participation. According to the Work Foundation around 44% of insecure workers said they were in the job they had due to limited job opportunities, poor transport or available childcare.⁴ This proportion of insecure workers can be correlated with use of universal credit, with around 55% of workers on Universal Credit in what is considered severely insecure work.⁵

This brings us to a wider challenge linked to the support of the economically inactive, the need to have jobs, as well as access to jobs which people can do. This reflects an important element around supporting labour participation, ensuring people have the skills in demand and supporting alternative pathways to employment.

³ George Williams, Aman Navani, and Stavroula Leka. *A Divided Workforce? Worker Views on Health and Employment in 2025*. The Work Foundation at Lancaster University, 2025.

⁴ Olivia Gable and Rebecca Florisson. *Limiting Choices: Why People Risk Insecure Work*. The Work Foundation at Lancaster University, 2023.

⁵ *ibid*

Drivers & Impacts

The drivers of inactivity and lower labour participation is multifaceted and reflect challenges which impact on multiple groups of people (identified above). Put another way, whilst some groups are more exposed to certain drivers of inactivity (and therefore are more impacted) the drivers are also shared across these groups in a way that interventions and approaches at a system level will need to address.

The following is based on a review of the key drivers, barriers and gaps in support, identified through the engagement report with additional desk-based research undertaken. The engagement report identified a set of key drivers and barriers which have been grouped together the main drivers and impacts of inactivity across Swindon & Wiltshire are:

Skills & Confidence

A key driver across all targeted groups is the link between a person's skill, qualifications, and experience and the demands from employers and the employment market in the area. Based on the engagement report these drivers, barriers and gaps in support are summarised as follows:

- **Skills Gaps & Mismatches**
- **Fragmented Skills System / Unclear Pathways**
- **Lack of Confidence & Soft Skills**
- **Digital Skills**
- **Career Advice and Employability Support**
- **Targeted ESOL Provision**

The engagement report highlights persistent skills gaps and mismatches between what education/training providers deliver and what employers require, compounded by a fragmented skills system and unclear pathways for learners. This reflects a wider set of research and sets of challenges identified by Skills England and others around the problems faced by people in navigating the labour market.

There is a notable lack of confidence and soft skills, particularly among adults far removed from the labour market and young people, with limited opportunities for work readiness activities. This can increase the chances of such individuals ending up in insecure work, as well as remaining inactive. There is also a significant expectation that individuals are able to work out their pathways into work, but there is limited alignment between personal expectations and the available jobs in the area, or the expectations of employers.

Gaps in provision include insufficient awareness and tailoring of Skills Bootcamps, limited career advice and employability support in schools, and a lack of targeted ESOL provision for migrants and refugees. These issues are exacerbated by a shortage of industry-experienced teachers and a lack of integrated labour market intelligence, making it difficult to align skills supply with demand and to support progression into key growth sectors.

Accessibility & Inclusions

Barriers and gaps in support include:

- **Rurality & Access to Transport**
- **Digital Accessibility**
- **Language and Cultural Barriers**
- **Accommodation for Additional Support Needs**
- **SEN Support**

Barriers to participation are pronounced for rural residents due to limited public transport and patchy digital connectivity, especially in Wiltshire. There is also a similar impact on people who may not be able to easily access public transport in a way that they can 'commute' within a reasonable amount of time to work, especially if that work is evening/night based. In both cases, the challenges of access also relate to how and where people can access the public support system to get support.

Digital exclusion is further compounded by a lack of digital skills, particularly among older workers, and limited access to devices. Language and cultural barriers persist for economic migrants and refugees, with ESOL provision described as insufficient in both capacity and relevance to workplace needs. With public services and information also increasingly delivered digitally, this is a wider challenge in terms of the public's access to this information as well.

There are also challenges in accommodating additional support needs, with SEN support and inclusive recruitment practices not always effectively implemented. This reflects a wider challenge linked to health and wellbeing, as well as employer practices with there being a limited number of opportunities for neurodivergent and SEN/EHCP individuals to have support in engaging with employers, and for employers to be able to meet the additional needs of such individuals.

Gaps in provision include a lack of integrated service delivery, with stakeholders calling for co-location of health, employability, and wider support services to create a more holistic, accessible offer. This reflects a challenge for people who are inactive to be able to access the array of services, information and advice they need easily.

Health & Wellbeing

Key issues identified include:

- **Health Related Barriers**
- **Systematic Causes**
- **Gaps in Support**

Health-related barriers are a significant driver of inactivity across the UK. Overall, long-term and multiple health conditions (including mental health and musculoskeletal issues) limit participation and increase the chances of inactivity due to a mixture of the challenges which people face in managing their own care, and the required flexibility or adjustments required at work. Crucially, there are also a significant number of people with health conditions (that can be work-limiting) that are working, and these groups can sometimes be overlooked in terms of their risk of inactivity.

Systemic issues such as reductions in preventative healthcare, long waiting times for support, and the complexity of navigating welfare benefits further entrench inactivity. Part of the challenge is the role played by the welfare system whereby Universal Credit, Carers Allowance and other benefits can limit working hours and engagement in work due to the risks to households of a loss of income 'if they work too much'. There is also some evidence that health-related disability benefits can sometimes encourage inactivity despite the potential advantages to individuals to work.

There is a lack of employer support for people with additional needs, and gaps in provision include insufficient integration between health and employability services, limited funding for targeted health interventions, and a need for better leadership and management training to support employees with health conditions. Short-term funding cycles also undermine continuity and trust in support services.

System & Employer Practices

Key issues identified can be summarised as:

- **Flexible Recruitment and Work Practices**
- **Lack of Integrated Service Provision**
- **HR Support for Businesses**

Systemic and employer-related barriers include inflexible recruitment and work practices, high childcare costs, and a lack of HR support (particularly for small businesses and sole traders) that employers can use to support those with challenges, health conditions or an increased risk of becoming inactive.

Employers are often deterred from investing in upskilling due to fears of staff turnover and the costs involved, this is a common problem for businesses navigating a difficult operating environment and with uncertainty about their future access to skilled labour.

More widely, there is a lack of integrated service provision, with fragmented support making it difficult for individuals to navigate the system of support, advice and guidance. Gaps in provision often reflect gaps more generally as employers are either unaware, unable or unwilling/uncertain to engage in inclusive recruitment. There is a similar challenge for employers who often have limited awareness of schemes like Disability Confident, or their role in areas like Access to Work/Reasonable adjustments. More generally, a need for more flexible and innovative employment models (e.g., term-time contracts, job sharing) to be more common yet balancing this with the challenges faced by SME's and certain sectors will be a key challenge.

Part of the solution is likely to be through enhanced business support, multi-year funding settlements for public schemes targeted at employers, and the development of Good Employment Charters to promote fair and flexible work.

Plan Objectives

The Get Swindon and Wiltshire Working Plan sets out a bold and collective ambition to address economic inactivity among core groups in our communities. Recognising that meaningful progress cannot be achieved in isolation, our approach champions collaboration and integration across local authorities, employers, community organisations, and support services.

By weaving together resources and expertise across our partnership, we aim not just to improve outcomes for individuals, but to build a cohesive system that can take an active role in enabling people to access opportunities, develop skills, and thrive in sustainable employment. Together, we are committed to ensuring that no one is left behind, creating a stronger, more inclusive local economy for all.

Objectives

A set of strategic objectives frame the approach to realising our ambitions:



Each strategic objective is accompanied by a detailed description that outlines its purpose and intended sub-objectives. This structured approach ensures that our strategy is both comprehensive and actionable, enabling measurable progress toward our overarching mission:

SO1: Improve Skills Development and Employability



Develop clear, integrated pathways that enable individuals to access high-quality training opportunities, strengthen digital and soft skills, and build the confidence needed for sustainable employment. Deliver targeted career guidance, employability support, and ESOL provision to empower people from all backgrounds to navigate opportunities and achieve their potential.

SO2: Promote Accessibility, Inclusion and Participation



Remove barriers to engagement by addressing challenges related to rurality, transport, digital access, language, culture, and additional support needs (including SEN/Disabilities, ensuring everyone can fully participate in the local economy and benefit from available opportunities.

SO3: Support Health, Wellbeing and Holistic Participation



Integrate preventative health measures and holistic wellbeing support into employment services, recognising the critical role of health in enabling people to engage actively in work and community life.

SO4: Foster an Integrated and Inclusive Local System



Drive system-wide reform by identifying and closing support gaps, collaborating with employers to encourage flexible and inclusive work practices, and embedding HR support. Build a responsive, joined-up local support system that underpins a diverse and resilient workforce for the future.

Overview of each priority cohort

The following sub section summarises the research and literature around the drivers of economic inactivity and lower labour participation across four key groups identified as being at most risk of economic inactivity and lower levels of labour market participation in Swindon and Wiltshire.

These groups were identified through engagement, desk research and data analysis. Focusing on these key groups enables implementation efforts to be directed where they are most needed and where impact can be greatest to increase employment participation and tackle economic inactivity. These groups face significant barriers and challenges to labour market participation. It is recognised that people can sit in one or more of these groups:



Overall, analysis of economic inactivity has highlighted that health related inactivity either in the form of physical or mental health factors are the main driver of people's labour participation. In addition, there is also significant evidence around the impact that the quality of work can have on labour participation. The presence of 'good jobs' as well as the overall effect of insecure work can have a significant impact on the perceptions of people and their desire to work.

Priority Cohort 1: Young people (16-24)

Youth unemployment and inactivity is shaped by a combination of educational attainment, mental health, caring responsibilities, and local labour market conditions.



1. Young People aged 16-24

- 40.4% of 16–24-year-olds in employment (27.8% in England)
- 1,064 NEET and not known (6.2% compared to 5.4% in England)
- 1.8% of FE Leavers not sustaining a positive destination and in receipt of benefits (3.4% in England)
- 852 care leavers aged 18-20
- 6.2% of unpaid carers aged below 25
- Fewer options for post-18 education and training in Swindon and Wiltshire compared to neighbouring areas
- Young people have limited knowledge of the current labour market to inspire their progression pathways
- Employers report a lack of essential skills amongst young people such as communication and problem solving and work readiness is an issue

Consultation with stakeholders identified that the career ambitions of young people don't always match up with key growth sectors in Swindon and Wiltshire. For example, young people may be more interested in creative industries and health, whereas the Swindon and Wiltshire area is more well known for its defence sector and manufacturing sectors. In addition, without easy access to employers or careers fairs, young people will take a college course hoping to get a career out of it without knowing beforehand what local employers want. The gap, it seems, is in connecting the things young people enjoy to the notion of work. This suggests that one key challenge – and opportunity – may be to help young people discover, clarify and connect their existing interests and values to viable and fulfilling transitions into good work.

Young people are also more likely to report being out of work due to a mental health condition. If not appropriately supported for mental health conditions, this can hold young people back from building fulfilling careers for themselves.

Key Stage 5 leavers in Swindon and Wiltshire are less likely to continue to higher education than the national average (36% compared to 45%). This may in part be attributed a lack of access to a range of HE provision close by. There is also a shortage of available apprenticeships for people aged 16-18, who are ready to work. Apprenticeships for people aged 18+ are also limited and many find themselves competing with graduates and career-changers who may have years of work experience.

Employers report a lack of work readiness and gaps in essential skills such as critical thinking, communication, creativity and problem solving, all key soft skills for building a career.

Priority Cohort 2: Inactive due to caring responsibilities

In Swindon and Wiltshire, 17.8% of people were economically inactive due to caring responsibilities in March 2025. Unpaid carers, defined as people providing care to children, elderly relatives, or people with disabilities, face significant barriers to labour market participation.



2. People with Caring Responsibilities

- 11,400 residents are economically inactive due to looking after the family and home (17.8%) in line with the national average
- Wiltshire has an above average proportion of residents inactive due to caring at 18.4%
- Mothers experience a decline in participation and hours worked after having children, which persists over time driving down hourly pay
- Carers are at high risk of poverty due to the complexities of navigating the benefits system and balancing care and work
- Long periods away from employment due to caring responsibilities can result in loss of confidence, deskilling, and gaps in knowledge
- Transport challenges in Wiltshire have made flexible employment inaccessible for many carers

The proportion of residents providing 19 hours or less unpaid care per week stands at 4.5% in Swindon and Wiltshire, rising to 5% in Wiltshire, compared to 4.4% in England. A further 2% of residents provide 2-49 hours of unpaid care per week, and an additional 2% provide more than 50 hours of unpaid care per week.

Too many women who care for their families still experience challenges staying in and progressing in work. While the UK's gender participation gap has been closing over recent decades, it is still larger than top performing economies, with a female economic inactivity rate in 2025 at 24.3% that was 6.8 percentage points higher than the male rate (17.5%). In Swindon and Wiltshire, the gap is wider (7.8 percentage points), with a female inactivity rate of 20.1% and a male inactivity rate of 12.3%. Mothers on average experience a decline in participation and hours worked after having children, which persists over time. This drives down hourly pay for women and contributes to the gender pay gap.

Carers are at higher risk of poverty and economic inactivity due to the complexities of balancing care and work; the challenges linked to the benefits system and the overall challenges of inflexible or insecure work. The financial constraints imposed by the Carer's Allowance earnings limit, combined with the health impacts of caring and limited support from employers, create a cycle of disadvantage.

The unaffordability, or lack of, childcare and transport are common challenges which prevent carers from working. Long periods away from employment due to caring responsibilities can result in loss of confidence, deskilling, and gaps in knowledge of current progress and activity in specific professions or sectors.

Due to Wiltshire's rural geography, transport is often inconsistent and unreliable. The rise in national insurance contributions has led to recruitment freezes or redundancies so there are fewer opportunities, making employment inaccessible due to financial constraints and travel distance. For carers, who are already financially constrained by childcare costs or time constrained by looking after dependents, there are even less employment opportunities as there is a need for employment to be flexible so they can balance care and employment. If all employment opportunities are too far away, or only accessible by car, it reduces their options for suitable jobs significantly.

Priority Cohort 3: People with a disability, long-term health condition, and/or mental health barrier

Long term sickness is a key contributor to economic inactivity in Swindon and Wiltshire, affecting 11,200 residents (17.5% of all inactive).



3. People with disabilities, long-term health conditions or a mental health barrier

- 11,200 residents economically inactive due to long term sickness (17.5% of all inactive compared to 27.2% in England)
- 22,426 people on Universal Credit with No Work Requirements
- The number of Fit Notes issued per 100,000 people is 2,710 and has increased over time
- Mental and behavioural disorders account for a significant number of Fit Notes issued
- 3.7% of employer establishments experience skill gaps due to non-work-related problems (e.g. health/personal) compared to 2.1% in England
- Employers' awareness of the supports available to them and to their employees is limited, which in turn impacts on how employers support employees with health conditions
- Access to health services is constrained by the area's rural geography and transport challenges
- Long waiting times for health appointments constrain meaningful progress towards and into employment

The number of fit notes being issued by GPs in Swindon and Wiltshire is increasing. The challenges are similar to those with disabilities and are linked to the challenges of managing health or disability conditions, balancing work with self-care, hospital appointments or sudden reductions in capacity.

A particular challenge for people with disabilities is the level and accommodation of support which employers are prepared to undertake, the extent to which additional support is available and the challenge around the capacity of schemes such as Access to Work to meet demand. Employers' awareness of the supports available to them and to their employees can be patchy, which in turn impacts on how employers support people with additional needs in the workplace. Another challenge is the overall complexity of the benefits system, and the role work can play in access to benefits such as PIP, ESA and DLA.

It can be challenging for people in Swindon and Wiltshire to access the support they need, due to service accessibility or limitations. Accessibility of services in some parts of Wiltshire vary due to the rurality of geographies, with travel times to GPs and hospitals higher than the national average.

Despite some examples of good practice, health and employability interventions can often operate independently of each other. Long waiting times for health appointments also constrain meaningful progress towards and into employment. Mental health supports are particularly difficult to access, and resources increasingly struggle to match demand for services. Mental health is perceived to be an increasing challenge in the workplace generally, and small and micro businesses in particular do not have the capacity or resources to be able to provide consistent and sustained support with this. This not only increases the risk that the businesses may be negatively impacted by the barriers and challenges employees face but also increases the likelihood of someone leaving employment and becoming economically inactive. Long periods of economic inactivity can also exacerbate mental and physical health and wellbeing.

Priority Cohort 4: People who face multiple disadvantages



4. People facing multiple disadvantages

- Many people who are economically inactive face more than one obstacle getting back into work
- Multiple obstacles mean that people fall through the cracks of support services and face additional stigma
- Examples of how barriers intersect are the unique challenges young carers face, as well as children born in poverty
- Support requires a joined-up approach with integrated support. Programmes should be multidisciplinary and partner with employers, schools and health services.

The barriers to securing a successful employment outcome often overlap, and many people who are economically inactive face more than one obstacle getting back into work. This means that without appropriate intervention, they may fall through the cracks of complex and uncoordinated support services, face stigma, and find it challenging to navigate traditional job-seeking processes. Additionally, the benefits system can be slow to adapt to their fluctuating circumstances, leading to financial costs for taking time off to manage their health or other responsibilities.

For example, many vulnerable young people are also impacted by health conditions. Being born into poverty can significantly impact childhood development through limited access to nutritious food, poor housing, and increased exposure to stress and adverse childhood experiences. Health conditions then have impacts on skills, with children in poverty or living with a health condition more likely to start school later or have lower cognitive function. There is a link between childhood health and development and young people's educational achievements and skills, which in turn links with access to employment opportunities. Inequalities in educational outcomes affect physical and mental health, employment and quality of life.

Another example of how barriers overlap is how many young people can also have caring responsibilities, and young carers are particularly disadvantaged compared to older carers, with lower educational attainment and greater risk of economic inactivity in adulthood. Young carers often fall into the wider category of NEET, as their caring responsibilities are likely to disrupt their education, leading to missed classes and less time to study for exams, meaning they are less likely to achieve a qualification, unlike people who were able to finish school before they were given a caring responsibility. Young carers also miss out on social opportunities that most young people have, impacting their communication and social skills and limit their access to a professional network.

Getting people with multiple disadvantages back into work therefore requires a joined-up approach with integrated support, such as integrated health services, housing support, and peer mentoring.

Programmes should also have multidisciplinary teams and a co-ordinated approach with multiple partners, such as the NHS, local employers and skills providers, to identify gaps in provision and make sure interventions are effective in helping people overcome all barriers.

3 Systems and Support Mechanisms

This section provides an overview of current and planned employment and skills provision in Swindon and Wiltshire, covering nationally commissioned programmes alongside locally delivered initiatives. It maps the offer against the selected priority cohorts identified in Section 2.

Existing Provision

A wide range of programmes are currently in operation across Swindon and Wiltshire to support individuals with employment, skills development and access to work, including both nationally commissioned services and locally delivered initiatives. National provision is primarily commissioned by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and the Department for Education (DfE) and delivered through public, private and voluntary-sector partners, while local provision complements this with targeted support tailored to Swindon and Wiltshire's communities and labour market.

National Commissioned Programmes

Universal entry points for employability advice, job search support and referrals are provided across Jobcentre Plus provision, Citizens Advice, National Careers Service, and public libraries. Complementing this offer is the adult skills and community learning provision facilitated by Swindon Borough Council's Adult Community Learning, Wiltshire Council's Family and Community Learning, New College Swindon and Wiltshire College, offering accredited and non-accredited provision.

Case Study - The Jobcentre Plus Offer

JCP provides a package of personalised advice and support designed to help people find and retain employment. It targets support, helping individuals to move into work as quickly as possible. Work Coaches play a central role, offering tailored, work-focused support to ensure claimants remain close to the labour market. Jobcentres provide targeted support through specialist roles and programmes such as the Youth Offer, Prison Work Coaches, School Advisors, and Disability Employment Advisors. Advanced Customer Senior Leaders provide additional support for vulnerable claimants with complex needs. Support is further enhanced through partnership working with local and national organisations, and through Employer Services teams. Claimants may also be referred to national programmes such as the Restart Scheme and can access funding through the Flexible Support Fund. JCP provides signposting to local services providing support for employment, health, addiction, housing, money and debt advice etc. In Swindon and Wiltshire there is a support in the community offer including a test programme of enhanced Afghan customer support providing outreach in Swindon and Salisbury.

Nationally funded programmes delivered in Swindon and Wiltshire supporting labour market participation and providing support for specific groups include:

Programme	Cohort Group & Objectives
Individual Placement and Support (IPS)	IPS is a specialist employment service operating in Swindon and Wiltshire that supports people with mental health problems who need support to get into and stay in employment.
Connect to Work	Government programme that provides intensive, personalized support to help disabled people, those with health conditions, and individuals with complex barriers to find and keep jobs.
Restart	Support for unemployed claimants who have been out of work for at least 6 months through enhanced support to find jobs in the local area.
Sector-Based Work Academy	Offers short-term, sector-specific training linked to guaranteed job interviews. Delivered by Jobcentre Plus working with employers and training

Programme	Cohort Group & Objectives
Programmes (SWAPs)	providers, SWAPs are aimed at jobseekers aged 16+ receiving Universal Credit, JSA or ESA.
Flexible Support Fund (FSF)	Provides discretionary funding to remove practical barriers to work (e.g., travel, training, childcare). Managed locally by Jobcentre Plus, the FSF enables tailored support for Universal Credit claimants, carers and lone parents. It complements mainstream provision with flexible, needs-based assistance that unlocks access to jobs or training.
DWP Midlife MOT	Supports people aged 45–65 to help them review their skills and address barriers to work. It brings together trusted guidance, a jobseeker toolkit and charity resources, helps users identify job opportunities across the UK, and supports planning for later life and retirement.
NHS Talking Therapies	Provides integrated employment support for people using mental health services, including CV development, interview preparation and job-retention support.
Access to Work	A grant-based scheme supporting individuals with disabilities or health conditions who are in a paid job, about to start a job or going back to a job. It funds workplace adjustments, specialist equipment, and support workers
DFN Project Search	Targets young adults who are on the autism spectrum or have a learning disability to help them establish skills to secure permanent employment. Participants (16-24 years old) with an EHCP (Education, Health and Care Plan), remain enrolled in their education institution but based within a host business. They receive on-the-job learning and help to develop a broad range of skills. Supported over 2,000 young people with average of 63% securing permanent, paid roles.
Supporting Families Programme (DfE)	Supporting families facing multiple and complex disadvantages (such as worklessness, financial instability and poor educational outcomes) and delivered by local authorities through dedicated Supporting Families Coordinators, providing holistic early help to improve family wellbeing and support progression into work.

Complementing these employability initiatives, there are numerous forms of skills support that can encourage the upskilling and reskilling of residents to enhance their participation and progression in employment such as the Apprenticeship Levy and the Swindon and Wiltshire Institute of Technology (SAWIOT).

Case Study -Multiply

Multiply refers to the government UKSPF funded initiative that ended in March 2025 that offered free adult maths support in Swindon and Wiltshire to people over 19 years of age who lacked a Level 2 GCSE in maths. Delivered via local colleges, Adult Community Learning and employers, it supported adults 19+ to build practical skills and confidence for career progression, family learning, qualifications and better financial management.

Between October 2022 and March 2025, £1.8m of funding enabled 12 providers to deliver 1,340 interventions and 3,932 enrolments, achieving 97.5% attendance and 99.9% positive progression. In Swindon, the Borough Council’s ACL supported 900+ residents (2021–2024) with practical maths (basic numeracy; work-related skills; confidence and anxiety reduction; supporting children’s maths; bite-size budgeting/cost-saving). In Wiltshire, Multiply ran 2022–2025 with 1,954 learners, improving confidence for household budgeting, supporting children’s homework, workplace progression and small business development. Overall, Multiply has improved adult numeracy by contextualising maths to real-world tasks, helping people progress in (or move into) work.

Local Designed Interventions

Programme	Cohort Group & Objectives	Timescale
Wiltshire Employment Support Team	A supported employment service for young people and adults with special educational needs and disabilities to help individuals find and sustain paid work.	Ongoing
Swindon Borough Council Care Experienced Internship Programme	A paid 6-month internship programme delivered by Swindon Borough Council's Positive Futures Leaving Care Service, for young people aged 18-25 that are care experienced. This includes support from a job coach, and skills development from the Council's Adult Community Learning Team.	Ongoing
Community Hub in Bradford on Avon	The Hub aims to alleviate poverty and improve health, wellbeing and purpose, including volunteering. The Hub provides a foodbank, public computers, support with jobs and benefit applications, debt and welfare advice, money management guidance, general advice and signposting, and community facilities.	Ongoing
Chippenham Community Hub	The Hub promotes positive mental and physical health alongside social inclusion and works to align and coordinate statutory organisations and groups providing health and wellbeing support through referral and signposting.	Ongoing
Community Catalysts in Wiltshire	Supports the development of micro-enterprises that deliver flexible, person-centred care and support across Wiltshire, with universal eligibility for adults (18+).	Ongoing
Building Bridges	Building Bridges in Wiltshire supports people aged 16+ including those NEET, at risk of NEET or engaging with the Youth Justice Service and those aged 18+ who want to move towards sustained education or employment goals. Building Bridges Swindon supports people aged 18+.	Ongoing
Wiltshire Together	A digital platform for local events, volunteering and support (including mental health).	Ongoing
Wiltshire Wellbeing Hub	Support with cost-of-living and related assistance.	Ongoing
Work Wiltshire	The Work Wiltshire offer supports residents with employability and skills provision, in addition to support for young people aged 16-18 not in education, employment and training (Signposting and support referrals). Provision includes skills for work and short courses to support progression in employment, skills and training.	Ongoing
ABLEize Disability and Mobility Directory	An online directory of disability and special needs resources, listing UK-wide and local (including Wiltshire and Swindon) support across employment, education, health, community groups and accessible activities	Ongoing
IPSUM care	A mental health and wellbeing charity serving Swindon and the surrounding area, focused on improving psychological and emotional health, reducing loneliness and isolation, building self-	Ongoing

Programme	Cohort Group & Objectives	Timescale
	esteem, encouraging active lifestyles, and promoting positive change.	
Phoenix Enterprises	A charity and social enterprise in Swindon supporting vulnerable adults with mental health issues, learning difficulties and physical disabilities offering support including confidence, morale, life and employability skills.	Ongoing
Rethink	Advice service offering information on mental health and guidance for carers, including routes to employment or study.	Ongoing
Swindon Advocacy Movement	Advocacy support for people with physical and mental health disabilities aimed at promoting equality across services and communities.	Ongoing
Swindon's Down's Syndrome Group	Information, peer support and learning opportunities including the WorkFit programme, matching individuals with local employers and creating pathways into work	Ongoing
Salvation Army Employment Plus	Provides tailored, community-based support to help people find work and sustain employment through assisted job search, benefits advice, digital inclusion and one-to-one guidance. Participants can also access volunteering and work-experience opportunities that build confidence, skills and job readiness, with a focus on long-term progression and retention.	Ongoing
Seetec	Offers 1:1 coaching, back-to-work assistance and confidence-building to help people progress into and sustain employment.	Ongoing
The Harbour Project	A Swindon-based charity supporting people seeking asylum and refugees to rebuild their lives, providing advice and practical help.	Ongoing

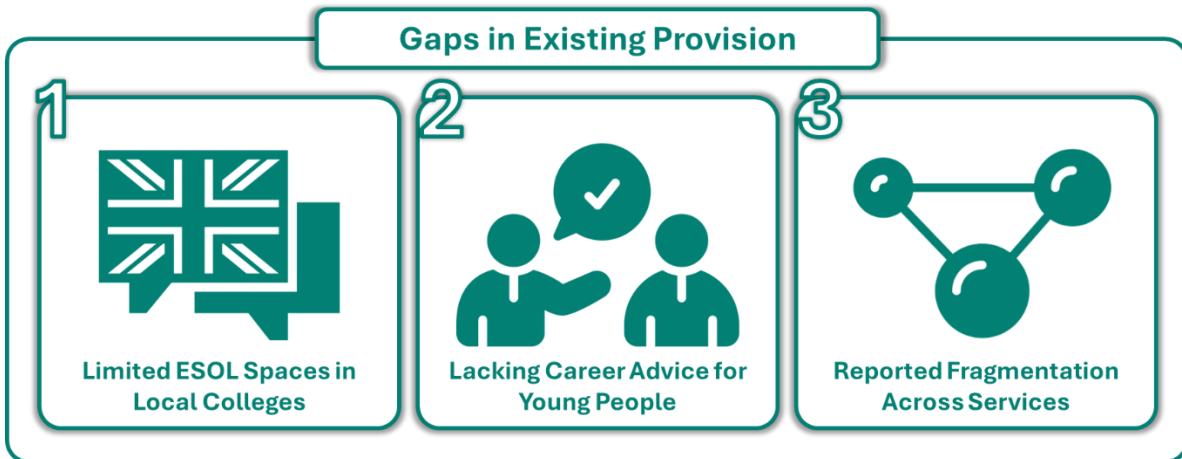
Case Study – Building Bridges

Building Bridges helps people across Swindon and Wiltshire overcome barriers to employment and education through holistic, personalised support for those furthest from the labour market. It supports people aged 16+ (or 18+ in Swindon) to move towards sustained education or employment, accepting self-referrals and third-party referrals (with consent). Each participant is matched with a dedicated Support Worker and can access confidence-building courses; volunteering and work experience; debt and benefits advice; travel training; counselling and mental health support; and help with applications, CVs, job search and interview skills, as well as college and course applications.

In 2023, 27% of participants progressed into employment, 10% into active job search and 31% into education, with 67% gaining new skills, awards or qualifications.

Gaps in Existing Programmes

Gaps in existing provision was identified through consultation with key stakeholders in Swindon and Wiltshire involved in the delivery of current services.



Gaps in CEIAG for Young People

Stakeholders highlighted a gap in careers advice within schools and, more broadly, in employability support for young people. Participants noted weaker “soft” skills (teamworking, communication and adaptability) affecting work readiness. A key reason cited was limited opportunities for Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG), as it competes with wider curriculum pressures.

An independent Ofsted review (2023) found variability in how effectively schools, FE and skills providers link curriculum learning to careers. Most schools used PSHE for careers input; in less effective cases, careers featured only in PSHE, with limited subject-level integration. The review also reported that, while institutions recognise both technical and academic routes, some staff need more support to understand and promote T Levels and apprenticeships, and that perceived bias towards particular pathways often reflects weak strategic planning rather than deliberate guidance. The review recommended delivering careers programmes through staff with appropriate expertise, supported by careers specialists; strengthening staff knowledge of technical pathways; and ensuring meaningful employer encounters and careers hub engagement that benefit pupils and learners.

Reported Fragmentation Across Services

Stakeholders highlighted fragmentation across services that contribute to employment outcomes.

In line with GBW guidance, there is a need for shared approaches and stronger collaboration. A proposed solution is co-location: integrating health, wider wellbeing and employment support (e.g., Jobcentre Plus alongside local authority employability services and, where appropriate, employers) in a single, community-based setting. A “one-stop shop” reduces physical barriers (no multiple trips across town), enables warm handovers between staff, and fosters informal, problem-solving conversations that improve progression to positive destinations. Co-location also strengthens professional relationships across teams—JCP, local authority services (employment, housing, education and skills), health and other providers—building a fuller picture of everyone’s needs and the available provision and improving timely signposting and holistic support.

Limited ESOL Spaces relative to demand

Through stakeholder engagement it was highlighted that there is currently a lack of ESOL provision for migrants, refugees and asylum seekers relative to demand, which is further compounded by a small

amount of contact time (2.5 hours per week) for people that get onto these courses. Some stakeholders that work with this cohort identified that, often, the potential job requirements do not require a comprehensive understanding of the English language, however they do still regularly require either an ESOL qualification or proof that the applicant has been educated to a GCSE English standard to access.

It was highlighted that a more targeted ESOL offer for people to access specific fields would be beneficial. For example, for people that apply to warehouse roles, learners could learn words, phrases and terminology that relates specifically to Health and Safety practices. That way, they would gain an understanding of the English language in the context that they require (e.g. fire safety, handling dangerous goods and machinery etc.) while not having to focus on other terminology that they would not need in work. As one participant described:

“[A programme like this] would mean that they don’t have to learn an entirely new vocabulary, only the phrases that they would need to use on a day-to-day basis.”

This would allow applicants to demonstrate that they have a working knowledge of the English language, and also demonstrate that they are eager, willing and capable to work in the relevant sector. When raised in further discussions with stakeholders that regularly engage with migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, each stakeholder stated that this would be highly welcomed in getting this cohort ready for work, and would also help to reduce the current surplus demand (currently stated as being a 6-12 month waiting list) for mainstream ESOL courses.

Planned programmes

There are a number of planned programmes in development which will further support individuals in Swindon and Wiltshire.

Pathways to Work

Pathways to Work provides the overarching government initiative to help people with health conditions or disabilities find and remain in work. It is the largest expansion of employment support for disabled people and those with health conditions in a generation, investing £2.2bn over four years and rising to £1bn a year by 2030 (an extra £300m beyond the Spring Statement), taking total Parliamentary investment to £3.8bn.

It offers a personalised guarantee of work, health and skills support for out-of-work claimants, from light-touch help to intensive pathways. Support begins with a needs-based conversation and can include regular one-to-one appointments with a consistent adviser, plus evidence-based provision drawing on the Work and Health Programme, Work Choice, IPS and skills training. For those not yet ready, periodic engagement maintains contact and enables timely signposting.

Engagement is flexible (phone, video or face-to-face), typically 30 minutes fortnightly with scope to increase. Participants can access Jobcentre Plus services including SWAPs, the Flexible Support Fund (e.g., clothing/equipment), digital upskilling, DPS and procured training. For individuals who have a Limited Capability for Work and Work Related Activity (LCWRA) customers, participation is voluntary and not linked to conditionality.

From April 2026, around 1,000 Pathways to Work advisers (about two per Jobcentre) will be in place across Great Britain. Connect to Work (outlined below) is one of the specific programmes designed to deliver that support and will support roughly 100,000 people in 2026/27, with WorkWell/Trailblazers

active in about half of England and parts of Wales; elsewhere, local health, skills and wider services will be assembled. £200m is confirmed for 2026/27, building to £1bn by 2029/30.

In Swindon and Wiltshire, delivery will run through local Jobcentres with warm links to SWAPs, FSF, IPS, Work Wiltshire, ACL/colleges and NHS/Talking Therapies to provide integrated, place-based routes into sustained work.

Connect to Work

Connect to Work is a key programme that delivers on the goals set out by the Pathways to Work Strategy. It aims to support people into sustained employment through a programme of support, including actions such as supporting a joined-up healthcare and employment support offer. Work is currently underway to deliver a local Connect to Work delivery plan, with Wiltshire Council recruiting for a Programme Manager role for Connect to Work in June 2025, with the Swindon and Wiltshire Business and Growth Unit anticipated to hold governance and oversight of the delivery of Connect to Work. The national Connect to Work Grant Guidance identifies anticipated programme start target of 1,000 residents in Swindon and Wiltshire, at an indicative unit cost of £4,000 per start, over the lifetime of the programme.

The Youth Guarantee

The Youth Guarantee is a new DWP initiative aimed at supporting 18-21 year olds to access employment, education or training, and supporting smoother transitions between jobs to prevent young people becoming NEET. The offer includes paid work placements, training opportunities, free travel passes, mental health support and money advice. The Youth Guarantee is currently being piloted via regional trailblazers, with £45 million allocated nationally to test and refine delivery models, targeting vulnerable groups (e.g., care leavers) and removing barriers to participation in work and learning.

Integrated Community Hubs – Swindon

Swindon Borough Council are advancing Integrated Community Hubs with partners as an opportunity for reimagining information and services to residents. The hubs will host a collection of services, co-located in one venue where residents can receive the information, advice or support they need from a range of providers including SBC, statutory partners and voluntary and community providers. The focus is on prevention and early intervention and ensuring communities with the greatest need have access to the right support, at the right time, in the right place.

Hubs will be created through co-production and neighbourhood planning to develop an offer that provides essential services focused on prevention and early intervention in order to reduce demand or delay escalation into statutory or specialist services. There are four common themes:

- Integrated community-based support – consolidating services into accessible, local hubs with multi-disciplinary and holistic perspectives
- Focus on reducing inequalities through programmes designed to address disparities in health, education and social outcomes
- Early intervention and prevention – addressing issues early to prevent long-term problems
- Collaborative, multi-agency approach among various sectors and through co-location

The hub model will kick start a new way of working through a prevention lens.

Systems Leadership

Recognising that employment support and the barriers to economic participation are multi-faceted, the Get Britain Working White Paper places a strong emphasis on the need for collaboration and a unified approach between services that help people find and stay in work. Get Britain Working is therefore

building a strong platform for local leaders within their respective regions to build new structures, in order to co-design a better future for all of its residents.

The organisations that will be involved in the delivery of the Plan includes local authorities, the NHS and associated Integrated Care Boards, training providers, DWP and their local provision through Jobcentre Plus, the voluntary sector, employers and trade unions. While each of these organisations has a role to play in delivery of the Plan, the roles of the bodies involved in the development and implementation of the Plan are described below.

In Swindon and Wiltshire responsibility for the development, governance and implementation of the Plan will be guided through the two local authorities, **Swindon Borough Council** and **Wiltshire Council**, the **Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire (BSW) Integrated Care Board (ICB)**, and the **Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)**, working in partnership with a wide group of stakeholders.

As part of the Get Swindon and Wiltshire Working Plan, all of the responsible bodies have committed to working collaboratively in the delivery of this Plan. While each of the delivery partners for this plan have their own organisational strategic priorities, the development of a local Get Britain Working Plan can help to better align these priorities and enable system change to better fit the needs of Swindon and Wiltshire's residents. A significant component to this is ensuring that all four delivery partners have a clear vision, and an understand of how to lead and support the collaborative work that they are responsible for delivering through Get Britain Working.

Within the respective local authorities of **Swindon Borough Council** and **Wiltshire Council**, there are multiple service areas that consider the current employment landscape, such as the education and skills teams, the families and children's teams, the planning, economy and regeneration teams, public health teams and community teams. All of these are key areas the Get Swindon and Wiltshire Working Plan seeks to focus on in terms of securing better sustained employment opportunities and addressing the barriers that face residents in these service areas.

Swindon Borough Council and Wiltshire Council have worked together on a wide range of collaborative activities in the employability sphere over a number of years. This included collaborative working within the now-defunct **Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)** to deliver on strategic objectives around ensuring that both physical and digital infrastructure supports economic development, developing skills and talent to ensure that the local workforce was appropriately skills to achieve growth ambitions, and strengthening competitiveness of local SMEs while also attracting foreign and domestic investment into the region. The LEP functions have since been assumed by the **Swindon and Wiltshire Business Growth Unit (SWGBU)**, delivered by Wiltshire Council as lead authority, working with Swindon Borough Council. The SWGBU continues to deliver the three core functions of the former LEP:

- To represent the voice of businesses
- To develop economic strategies and undertake economic analysis
- Deliver government programmes such as the Growth Hub

To support the functions of the SWGBU, a Swindon and Wiltshire **Economic Advisory Board (EAB)** has been established as a voluntary collaboration between the public and private sectors. It is chaired by the leaders of two local authorities, with representation from ten business and academic organisations. The EAB operates as a platform for businesses to influence decisions impacting the area's economic policy and strategy development. Five theme-based sub-groups support engagement with the wider community and business networks, including a Skills Group, Principal Settlements Place Partnership, Rural Economy Sector Group, and Business Intelligence and Networking Sub Group.

Both the **ICB** and **DWP** have stated aims around the co-location of services, to ensure that there is a single point of access and a unified referral system where individuals can access employment, health and skills support through one co-ordinated pathway. Integration between the services delivered by local health centres and Jobcentre Plus sites will enable for a more collaborative, strategic planning approach to be taken.

All parties will have responsibility for collaborative workforce development. This will include employer engagement campaigns, where delivery partners work together to support education of employers on topics such as inclusive recruitment, reasonable adjustments and mental health support in the workplace. It will also include community outreach activities, to raise awareness of available support, particularly amongst the priority cohorts identified through this Plan.

Challenges

To deliver systematic change, local systems need to evolve and address existing barriers to deliver improvement against the GBW outcomes. These have been highlighted through desk-based research and stakeholder engagement. While these are current challenges, it also shows how targeted intervention can make substantial changes:

Capacity and capability challenges

Parity in provision of support

Rural areas in Swindon and Wiltshire shows that the lack of public transport is a dominant barrier. While major centres (e.g., Swindon) are relatively reachable, cross-county travel is difficult (getting from Salisbury to Chippenham may even require going via Swindon) reducing attendance at Jobcentres, training and health appointments, and stretching provider capacity. Stakeholders cited mitigations such as employer-pooled minibuses and Jobcentre “benefit buses” as beneficial.

Wiltshire Council’s Wiltshire Connect now offers demand-responsive, pre-bookable services in north Wiltshire (Marlborough–Pewsey–Royal Wootton Bassett) and south-west Wiltshire (Sutton Veny, the Deverills, Mere, Gillingham, Warminster, Frome), operating 06:00–20:00 weekdays and 08:00–19:30 weekends, with home pick-ups for people with poor mobility or in isolated locations. It was highlighted that wider promotion and increased availability of Wiltshire Connect (alongside targeted transport solutions) would help ease these access pressures and improve sustained engagement.

Limited Digital Accessibility

Limited digital access further constrains provision in rural Swindon and Wiltshire. Stakeholders reported patchy mobile and broadband connectivity, which disadvantages residents when most job applications and learning are now online. Although headline figures for Wiltshire indicate 99.8% 3G, 100% 4G and 79.2% 5G coverage, stakeholders noted that these statistics often do not reflect on-the-ground reality; Wiltshire ranks 58th of 96 UK areas for mobile coverage, placing it in the bottom half. Broadband was also described as “patchy,” prompting local participation in Project Gigabit (including vouchers up to £4,500 for rural premises below 100 Mbps) and prior Superfast Swindon activity (lifting >24 Mbps coverage from 80% in 2013 to 99.5% by June 2016).

Mitigations exist within public buildings such as libraries offering public Wi-Fi, computers and printing with temporary access available, but inconsistent connectivity still reduces engagement, slows referrals and online training, and contributing to drop-off from employment and skills programmes.

Structural and cultural barriers

Need for Integrated Service Provision

As the Get Britain Working Plan guidance recognises, there is a need for all of the services that contribute to improving employability outcomes to collaborate and come to a shared understanding of the best approaches to delivering these outcomes. Throughout the development of this Plan, stakeholders have referenced the potential benefits of co-location of these services, ensuring that there is a “one-stop shop” to help remove physical barriers to the support that people require, while also increasing service delivery organisations’ understanding of the range of supports offered, providing greater chances of a warm handover for clients, and building strong professional relationships across staff in organisations that have co-located.

Emerging governance structures

Following the end to the Swindon and Wiltshire Local Economic Partnership (LEP) in April 2024, governance and responsibilities have since been assumed by the Swindon and Wiltshire Business and Growth Unit (SWBGU). While the governance structures, systems, and delivery mechanisms are similar to those established by the LEP, there is an understanding that it will take some time to fully

develop, embed and evolve in respect to the Get Swindon and Wiltshire Working Plan. There is a need for all participating partners to be flexible, co-operative and adaptive in their approach to the design and delivery of the Plan, whilst ensuring its aims and objectives are met.

Existing Data Sharing Systems and Protocols

Linked to the above structural challenges, current data-sharing systems and protocols can hinder collaboration and service integration. Where appropriate information cannot be shared, providers have limited insight to deliver effective support, signposting and referrals, slowing or preventing access to the right help. It also weakens the quality and breadth of data for decision-making, monitoring and review. Addressing this requires suitable infrastructure, governance and permissions, and should be treated as a priority at the outset.

Cyclical and short-term commissioning practices

VCFSE organisations highlighted the challenges of short-term funding cycles of the local authorities and nationally commissioned services as being a particular barrier to long-term planning and delivery of skills and employability service provision. Without certainty that roles will still be available following a commission/funding cycle, it can be hard to both attract and retain talent into the organisation and also ensure that organisations can build trust and continuity of service provision to service users. Greater consistency, collaboration and consideration of longer-term funding cycles in commissioning services can help to support better service integration and also deliver better outcomes for residents.

Changes required to facilitate future investment

Foundational system change (short-term priorities)

In the short term, the key focus must be to secure buy-in from all relevant partners and to build consensus across stakeholders in the area. This will be about evolving from the current collaborative capacity and create the conditions for the partnership to identify and agree courses of action. There is a need for partners to recognise the **importance of systems change** in addressing entrenched challenges related to employment, unemployment, and economic inactivity.

Linked to this, the **development of an agreed outcomes framework** is essential. It should clearly articulate the shared vision and define partner roles and responsibilities. This will promote transparency and ensure collective accountability. It will also set the baseline for the development of a future system of employment support in future, creating the conditions for a single set of outcomes which all partners deliver against and contribute towards.

Building on existing relationships with intermediary organisations such as local Chambers of Commerce and CVS networks, a targeted **business and employer engagement strategy** is required alongside a clear engagement approach for VCSE partners. Employers should be engaged as core partners in the development and delivery of initiatives such as the Get Britain Working Plan and related programmes like Connect to Work. Crucially, it should be a mechanism that ensures that the challenges faced by SME's around creating flexible employment are understood, as well as broader linkages back to **Local Skills Improvement Plans**.

VCSE organisations play a vital role in community engagement and are critical partners in both shaping and delivering inclusive employment strategies. Their connection to lived experience is invaluable in informing both strategic direction and practical implementation.

Data sharing protocols between core partners should be established as early as possible to avoid delays and ensure that decision-making is informed by the best available evidence. This will reinforce the collaborative approach outlined in the outcomes framework. There is also a linked approach whereby the partnership may agree to **additional research and baseline data collection** required to support reviews and developments of programmes.

Finally, an **overview of training and upskilling needs/opportunities** across the partnership will support the identification of joint approaches and collaborative activities. This will enable more effective targeting of resources, maximise expertise, and foster a longer-term culture of learning and shared good practice.

Structural system change (medium to long-term priorities)

As new structures evolve and embed, there is an opportunity to move towards evolving the strategic partnerships and governance to help **develop the future system for employment support**, building on a regular review of progress, objectives, and responsibilities. The emerging system design must remain flexible to reflect ongoing learning and the need for new partnerships, while maintaining clear and well-defined objectives.

Creating an integrated system for tackling inactivity will require **the alignment of services, operational geographies, removal of duplication and potentially the co-locating of multi-agency teams** that work together with service users.

There is growing recognition of the need to shift towards **preventative approaches which prevent inactivity or delays the point of inactivity**. Emphasis should be placed on early intervention, with outcomes and pathways clearly mapped to enable targeted support for individuals furthest from the labour market, those experiencing long-term health conditions, or those at greatest risk of economic inactivity both now and in the future. This approach not only supports long-term health and wellbeing but also has the potential to deliver future cost savings.

Finally, working towards a **sustained, multi-year investment in services** is essential to enable long-term planning and delivery, and to build confidence among partners in the strategies adopted. This includes the ability to commission specific interventions over a long-term horizon compared the current use of short-term funding cycles which can undermine the stability of interventions and create uncertainty for staff and service provision.

4 Working With Partners

The Get Swindon and Wiltshire Working Plan, aligned to the Get Britain Working (GBW) white paper guidance, requires a high degree of collaboration and integrated co-ordination across each of the key partners involved in delivery of the Plan. Only through shared accountability and responsibility will the Get Swindon and Wiltshire Working Plan lead to long term change in the region.

Engagement to date

Targeted Get Britain Working Engagement

In line with Get Britain Working white paper guidance, we have undertaken an extensive programme of stakeholder engagement around the challenges to addressing economic inactivity in the region and the opportunities presented by the Get Swindon and Wiltshire Working Plan.

The organisations involved in this programme of engagement include representatives from Swindon Borough Council, Wiltshire Council, the Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire (BNESSW) Integrated Care Board (ICB), the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), Jobcentre Plus (JCP), the Department for Education, Connect to Work delivery partners across the region, Citizens Advice Bureau Wiltshire, Community First, the Gloucestershire and Wiltshire Partnership, Wessex Community Action, New College Swindon, Seetec, the Shaw Trust, Smash, Waythrough, Business West, Voluntary Action Swindon, the Harbour Project, Wiltshire Community Foundations and Phoenix Enterprises.

Targeted engagement included:

- Five workshops with relevant stakeholders across Swindon and Wiltshire, including:
 - Business, Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) organisations on Monday 22nd September, with 16 attendees
 - Swindon Borough Council and Wiltshire Council's internal employability-related teams on Tuesday 23rd September, with 19 attendees
 - Department of Work and Pensions, Job Centre Plus, Swindon Borough Council, Wiltshire Council, the Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire Integrated Care Board and Seetec, as core delivery partners on Wednesday 24th September, with 7 attendees
 - Swindon and Wiltshire's internal skills group on Thursday 25th September, with 25 attendees; and
 - Local Jobcentre Plus Operational Leaders, drawn from Swindon, Salisbury, Devizes, Trowbridge and Chippenham Job Centres, on Monday 13th October, with 17 attendees.
- 7 one-to-one consultations with relevant Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) organisations that will be part of the delivery of the Plan; and
- 3 one-to-one consultations with senior and strategic stakeholders that will be involved in the design and implementation of the Plan.

This has been supplemented by tailored GBW presentations and briefings as follows.

BNESSW Integrated Care Board and Integrated Care Alliance (ICA) Engagement

The BNESSW ICB is a statutory body which brings together NHS organisations with local authorities and other partners to work to improve population health and establish shared strategic priorities. This includes hospitals, primary care, local councils, hospices, voluntary community, and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations to discuss improvements to population health. The ICB has statutory responsibility to involve people and communities at a strategic level, engaging with them in the development of proposals for transformational work and service changes.

The ICB has identified neighbourhood health as a priority focus for the Integrated Care Alliance (ICA) of Swindon and Wiltshire. As part of this focus on neighbourhood health, there has been exploration into the possibility of developing an **Integrated Community Hub** system into delivery of ICB objectives. Integrated Community Hubs host a collection of services, co-located in one venue where residents can receive the information, advice or support they need. Services within these Integrated Community Hubs are based on local need and provided by a range of providers, including the relevant local authorities, statutory partners and voluntary and community providers. The purpose of these Hubs is to make access to needed support as easy, timely and local as possible, by identifying need earlier and joining up interventions effectively. As a result, this can reduce demand on specialist and statutory services and increase resilience of individuals and communities. Integrated Community Hubs present an opportunity for the Swindon and Wiltshire region to reimagine how to provide information and services to residents.

In addition, the ICA identified Employment as one of their priorities and received a presentation on Get Britain Working as part of this.

Health and Wellbeing Boards

Within both Swindon Borough Council and Wiltshire Council, there are respective Health and Wellbeing Boards that help to supply the data and analysis required to ensure a collaborative and integrated approach to health and social care across the respective areas, in collaboration with the ICB and wider partners.

Each Board is responsible for producing their respective Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategies and their Joint Strategic Needs Assessments (JSNAs). The main audience for JSNAs are health and social care commissioners who use it to plan services. It can also be used as an evidence base for preparing bids and business cases to ensure that community needs and views are represented, by service providers to assist in the future development of their services, and by the public to scrutinise local health and wellbeing information, plans and commissioning recommendations.

Each Board received a paper on Get Britain Working and identified nominated contacts to support engagement activity.

Resident and Stakeholder Engagement: Swindon Skills Strategy

The development of a Skills Strategy for Swindon is being overseen by a cross-council Task and Finish Group. As part of the development of this Swindon Skills Strategy, the Task and Finish Group offered its residents and wider stakeholders engagement opportunities named “Let’s Talk Skills” in order to ensure the strategy is co-produced and to continue the commitment to listen to our residents and stakeholders. This included 2 open resident events in core libraries, 2 open stakeholder events, a Swindon Borough Council internal online event, individual meetings with stakeholders, 4 focus groups with young people in schools and colleges, a resident and stakeholder survey, engagement with young people through Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Champions.

Engagement activities were tailored to their respective audiences, but all sessions included a presentation by lead officers on the Swindon Plan and why a skills strategy is important, and a roundtable or informal discussions (for young people) where the drafted strategic aims of the Skills Strategy were discussed. This resulted in gaining feedback from over 100 residents, over 275 stakeholders, over 50 internal Swindon Borough Council colleagues and over 120 young people. This feedback has informed the development of the GBW plan.

Resident and Stakeholder Engagement: Wiltshire Community Conversations

In order to help local communities organise and tackle local issues with their own solutions for improved health and wellbeing, Wiltshire Council delivers an approach called Community Conversations. This approach focuses on local areas of need and asks local people to collaborate and share ideas on what they can do to inspire and make a difference in their local communities. Across Wiltshire, the approach has engaged residents, supported community-driven projects, and facilitated the development of inclusive and sustainable initiatives. The community engagement has also provided important insights to shape how the council provides services and has been a strong engagement mechanism for the development of strategies and policies in Wiltshire Council.

The Community Conversations approach has been adopted for the development of the Wiltshire Council Plan 2025- 2035, with Wiltshire Council inviting local residents to provide feedback on the drafted Plan across 8 different engagement events throughout August and September 2025. In addition to the events, residents also provided feedback through a short survey to share their thoughts on the draft Plan.

The Community Conversations approach has also enabled people to discuss barriers that have affected their ability to participate in the labour market. The Wiltshire Council Community Conversations lead has developed case studies which have informed the development of the Get Swindon and Wiltshire Working Plan, by helping to understand key barriers for residents, and developing an understanding that residents face multiple barriers to participation. The main barriers arising include caring responsibilities with elders coupled with parenting responsibilities (particularly those with additional needs), living with multiple health conditions, and struggling to get “onto the ladder” in terms of initial employment opportunities (affecting both young people, and those that have been excluded from the labour market for a long time).

Business Engagement: Economic Advisory Board and Business Intelligence Networking Group

Following a restructuring of economic functions within the region, Swindon Borough Council and Wiltshire Council have developed the Swindon and Wiltshire Business and Growth Unit (SWBGU) to assume the responsibilities of the former Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership (SWLEP) in April 2024. The SWBGU, delivered by Wiltshire Council as lead authority in partnership with Swindon Borough Council, delivers the three core functions of the former SWLEP:

- To represent business voices in strategic planning and decision-making;
- To develop economic strategies and undertake economic analysis; and

- Deliver on government programmes.

As part of the SWGBU's role in representing business voices, other strategic boards that were previously delivered by SWLEP, including the Economic Advisory Board (EAB) and the Business Intelligence Networking Group (BING). The BING consists of over 20 different organisations, including the SWGBU. It meets on a monthly basis to discuss the current challenges faced by local businesses and provides a platform for partners to share local knowledge and identify how they can all support business across the region. The EAB serves as an additional representative business voice for the area, providing strategic advice and guidance as the region delivers its business support programs and develops its Economic Strategy.

Both the EAB and the BING have been involved in the development of the Get Swindon and Wiltshire Working Plan, with discussions focused on the challenges affecting employers in supporting people into and within work.

Swindon Borough Council and Wiltshire Council also collaborate to deliver the Swindon and Wiltshire Growth Hub, which provides support to businesses within the region. This can be tailored support for specific business needs, as well as a wide range of workshops and events that are run by business experts. The Growth Hub also has a network of member businesses, which acts as an effective engagement mechanism to receive feedback from local businesses in the region.

Wiltshire Council and Swindon Borough Council both have mechanisms, led by Economy and Growth Teams to engage with businesses, particularly larger businesses linked to business growth, inward investment and infrastructure planning. Skills and employment teams also engage with businesses, for example the Careers Hub and Skills Bootcamp teams. It is recognised that given the increased role that councils have to engage businesses in supporting people into work, business engagement needs to be more integrated with a strategic approach across the system.

Future Approach to Partnership Working

The development and planning of the Get Swindon and Wiltshire Working Plan is the responsibility of a joint working group between Wiltshire Council, Swindon Borough Council, the BNESSW ICB and the Department for Work and Pensions. However, given the Plan requires a regional and integrated approach, a wider range of external stakeholders will also be involved in the delivery and implementation of the Plan. The following establishes each stakeholder group's role in the Get Swindon and Wiltshire Working Plan.

Local Authority Stakeholders

An internal consultation group was established in Spring 2025 to inform the development of the GBW and CtW plans through the provision of data and supporting insight. This provides representation from key teams including Adult Social Care, Public Health, Children Services including Care Leaver services and SEND, Housing, Refugee Services.

The next step for this group is to confirm a service link from all services that provide a referral route or have a role in improving outcomes for residents. A series of workshops are being established to ensure delivery of the GBW plan through socialising the plan, developing referral pathways, and maximising opportunities for integrated working. In Swindon, this will also be progressed through the operational delivery of community hubs with placed based hub operational groups being set up to develop integrated working.

Internal presentations and engagement on GBW have also taken place at a strategic level to ensure corporate understanding and engagement and alignment with wider strategic plans.

External Strategic Partners

Engagement to support the development of the plan has included those who deliver employability, health and skills services in Swindon and Wiltshire. This included Jobcentre Plus representation across each of the local service delivery areas, the ICB's primary care network leads, skills providers and VCFSE providers. The engagement explored specific local barriers to economic participation, how to support those that are in most need of employability support, what the main priorities of the Plan should be, who should be involved in delivery, and how to better integrate services delivered across the organisations.

There are a range of partners and stakeholders who will support the successful implementation of the Get Swindon and Wiltshire Working Plan through partnership and collaboration.

People with lived experience

There is growing recognition and understanding of the role that lived experience plays in service implementation and review, as evidenced in the engagement undertaken through Wiltshire's Community Conversations team and the "Let's Talk Skills" approach taken by Swindon Borough Council. People with lived experience bring real-time insights and experiences of how services are working for them and can support the early identification of blockage or unanticipated challenges to delivery. It is important to recognise the time and expertise people with lived experience contribute to supporting service design and delivery and they are core partners. Consideration should be given to how best to integrate a people with lived experience approach in wider service areas (e.g. in housing and health services).

Third sector and service providers

Engagement with the wide network of third sector and funded services across Swindon and Wiltshire will be shaped and driven primarily by the core partners' engagement with relevant representative bodies such as Community First, Voluntary Action Swindon and Wiltshire Community Foundations. However, this will also require specific coordination locally, both within each local authority area and across the region. This will be a complex task that will take account of the range and number of services operating locally, and there will be some services or initiatives that may be funded in the short term or operating micro-locally.

Employers

Employers across the region are critical partners in implementation of the Plan. From the engagement that has been undertaken with the Business Intelligence and Networking Group (BING) and the Economic Advisory Board regarding Get Britain Working, it appears that there are some significant barriers to being able to support people moving into or remaining in work. It is understood that employers feel under pressure for a variety of reasons (e.g. the increase in National Insurance contributions), some of which can only be addressed at UK Government level through policy changes. However, local-level buy-in to the Get Swindon and Wiltshire Working Plan is required and further consideration of how best to engage with this cohort should be considered in the context of local challenges. Significant employer engagement will be carried out through the delivery of Connect to Work which will build a better picture of employer needs, how GBW can support skill needs and develop more inclusive practice which is sustainable and workable for employers.

Employer representative bodies such as the BING and EAB groups, the Swindon and Wiltshire Growth Hub, the Swindon and Wiltshire Business Growth Unit, and Business West are also important partners who can facilitate engagement with employers, particularly SMEs.

NHS

NHS Health services will be engaged through the BNESSW ICB. There is, however, substantial restructuring of this system planned on a nationwide level, which may impact how a range of health

services are engaged. The implications of this will be monitored and reviewed by the core partners throughout delivery of the Get Swindon and Wiltshire Working Plan.

Skills providers

Skills providers have a key role in the implementation of the Get Swindon and Wiltshire Working Plan, in that activities delivered around employability and skills should be aligned to the needs of employers, learners and sectors identified as being of high growth potential. These skills providers include local Further Education providers (New College Swindon and Wiltshire College), as well as independent and VCFSE sector providers (such as Seetec). Ensuring comprehensive engagement with this cohort will be a priority throughout the delivery of the Plan.

Key Principles of Partnership Working

A stakeholder engagement plan will be developed to support implementation of the Get Swindon and Wiltshire Working Plan using the identified stakeholder groups.

A number of key principles will shape our approach to partnership working:

- Shared understanding of resident needs
- Evidence based - sharing of evidence and intelligence from engagement of service users
- Shared principles of strength-based practice
- Sharing information agreement
- Improve access to services, locality based and all support co-ordinated through one point of access
- Integrated and co-ordinated, with residents not falling between services, telling their story once

5 Priority Actions and Long-Term Goals

This plan seeks to balance and draw together two elements:

- Firstly, drawing together current activity and aligning this with the updated approach outlined by the Get Britain Working policy.
- Secondly, setting in train the development of a future system of employment support that can build upon the current system and ensure that key groups are prioritised, and programmes developed to meet their needs.

The following sets out an initial set of priority actions which are intended to support the ongoing discussions through the Get Britain Working Strategic Board. These actions provide a list of initial starting-points from which local partners will be expected to refine and develop in accordance with the wider development of the partnership and the commitment of agencies across Swindon and Wiltshire.

Priority Actions (2025 – 2027)

The priority actions are framed around our plan objectives and reflect the Strategic Board's aims to enhance skills, training, and employability across Swindon and Wiltshire by developing integrated pathways, removing barriers to engagement, and embedding health and wellbeing support within employment services.

Through close collaboration with partners and employers, the Board will create inclusive opportunities, address structural challenges such as transport and housing, and drive system-wide reforms including comprehensive career guidance for all age groups. These efforts are designed to build a responsive, resilient local workforce and ensure that everyone can fully participate in the region's economic life.

These are outlined below as a set of actions against four overall categories:

- Advance Skills Development and Employability
- Promote Accessibility, Inclusion and Participation
- Support Health, Wellbeing and Holistic Participation
- Foster an Integrated and Inclusive Local System

Under each category we have a clear statement of intent around system objectives and a set of programme delivery actions.

Advance Skills Development and Employability

Develop clear, integrated pathways that enable individuals to access high-quality training opportunities, strengthen digital and soft skills, and build the confidence needed for sustainable employment. Deliver targeted career guidance, employability support, and ESOL provision to empower people from all backgrounds to navigate opportunities and achieve their potential.

The Strategic Board will lead the development of clear, integrated pathways to high-quality training, foster digital and soft skills, and deliver targeted career guidance and employability support, while collaborating with partners and employers to ensure skills provision aligns with labour market needs and advances opportunities for all residents across Swindon and Wiltshire.

Focused around the following areas: *Using LSIP processes and outcomes to shape skills provision*

Leverage labour market intelligence and engage employers, especially SMEs, to better align training provision with sector needs. Address skills mismatches through Apprenticeships, Bootcamps, and flexible learning, and work with employer bodies to harness the expertise of experienced and older workers.

The GBW Strategic Board will collaborate with Business West Chamber of Commerce to inform the replacement LSIP, guiding strategic skills direction.

Co-design an accessible integrated approach to delivering face-to-face employment and skills advice, guidance and support

Work with key partners (DWP, NCS, CEC, VCFSE) to create a responsive, all-age CEIAG offer (see Action 6). Ensure provision of up-to-date labour market information and employer encounters to inspire and guide residents towards in-demand sectors and occupations. Utilise engagements and data collected to inform Priority Action 3, 4, & 5 as well as support additional operational adjustments. All-Age CEIAG offer can be used to refine overall strategic approach to the advancement of skills development across Swindon & Wiltshire.

Programme Delivery Actions

Priority Action 1: Ensure current & future NEET interventions improve confidence, soft skills and CEIAG

Work with schools and wider partners to ensure NEET strategies are in place with a focus on prevention and use of the Risk of NEET process. Embed confidence-building, soft-skills development, and careers guidance within NEET programmes. Where direct inclusion is not possible, ensure effective referral to relevant support. Shape programme outcomes through these core elements.

Priority Action 2: Expand digital upskilling initiatives

Develop targeted digital skills programmes (e.g., basic digital literacy bootcamps, sector-specific digital upskilling) to address ongoing shifts in the job market. Including introduction to AI and linked towards wider course development around Growth & Skills Levy.

Priority Action 3: Develop and communicate clear post 16 pathways to include the new qualifications for both Young People and Adults.

Convene Colleges, Independent Training Providers and VCFSE sector partners to prepare for proposed new Post-16 reforms including new Level 1 courses, and new Level 2 pathways for young people and NEETs. In conjunction, review V-Levels options and pathway design for post-19 including impact on Free Course for Jobs. Both processes should align with and support delivery of Local Skills Improvement Plan.

Promote Accessibility, Inclusion, and Participation

Remove barriers to engagement by addressing challenges related to rurality, transport, digital access, language, culture, and additional support needs (including SEN), ensuring everyone can fully participate in the local economy and benefit from available opportunities.

The Strategic Board will remove barriers to engagement by addressing challenges related to rurality, transport, digital access, language, culture, and additional support needs (including SEN), ensuring that everyone can fully participate in the local economy and benefit from available opportunities.

The Board will enable the system by ensuring the GBW Strategic Board and Employment Support system provide insights on transport and housing, and by feeding back user and partner observations on structural barriers such as transport and housing to inform policy and design targeted interventions. These actions will leverage statutory services and planning levers to support GBW ambitions.

Ensure the GBW Strategic Board and Employment Support system provide insights on transport and housing

Feedback user and partner observations on structural barriers such as transport and housing to inform policy and design targeted interventions addressing these challenges, leveraging statutory services and planning levers to support GBW ambitions.

Programme Delivery Actions

Priority Action 4: Increase outreach and mobile support services

Develop mobile advice and training units or pop-up employment IAG services to reach rural and underserved communities and enhance access for those with transport or digital barriers. Focus on use of community facilities such as community centres and libraries to maximise outreach. Use the roll out of the Integrated Community Hub model as a test and learn opportunity to support integrated provision in the areas that need the greatest support.

Priority Action 5: Strengthen inclusive recruitment initiatives

Promote employer engagement with inclusive recruitment practices and provide tailored support for individuals with additional needs, including language and SEN support. Provide targeted resources to support employers, SMEs to access and employ individuals with additional needs. To include programmes such as:

Social Value Entry Level Jobs Scheme

Working with Anchor institutions such as Councils, NHS, HEIs and Colleges, review options, develop (or expand) schemes that provide supported entry level jobs within the institutions for Young People, Over 50's and Women returning to work.

Targeted Apprenticeships

Secure commitment from Work & Health Partners and Anchor Institutions to recruit specific numbers of apprenticeships from a target group of at-risk groups.

Develop Short Courses for managers on Employee Health and Disability

With new flexibilities around short courses through the Growth & Skills Levy, commission a short-course to support Leadership & Management around management of staff with health conditions, disabilities and neurodivergent requirements and target support to the SME community.

Support Health, Wellbeing, and Holistic Participation

Integrate preventative health measures and holistic wellbeing support into employment services

The Strategic Board will integrate preventative health measures and holistic wellbeing support into employment services, recognising the critical role of health in enabling people to engage actively in work and community life.

Establish the Preventative Health linked to increasing economic activity and labour participation

Identify and commission preventative health measures targeting priority cohort groups (e.g. MSK, mental health). Explore mechanisms to secure greater integration of health and wellbeing support

within employment services, reducing pressure on healthcare and supporting local economies. Share monitoring and evaluation insight from existing and new programmes such as WorkWell and Connect to Work to shape the future delivery approach.

Programme Delivery Actions

Priority Action 6: Embed wellbeing checks within employment programmes

Introduce routine health and wellbeing checks for employment programme participants, signposting to specialist support as needed to facilitate sustained engagement and progression.

Foster an Integrated and Inclusive Local System

Drive system-wide reform by identifying and closing support gaps, collaborating with employers to encourage flexible and inclusive work practices, and embedding HR support. Build a responsive, joined-up local support system that underpins a diverse and resilient workforce for the future.

The Strategic Board will enable system-wide actions by developing an all-age CEIAG (Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance) offer. The Board will establish a holistic CEIAG process that links the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), local provision, and the new Jobs and Careers Service. This will support personal progression and provide an entry point into intensive employment support for individuals who are furthest from the labour market. The Strategic Board will also develop specific advice pathways for young people, those over 50, and other key cohorts as identified, ensuring alignment with Priority Actions 8, 9, and 10 to facilitate direct access to employment roles. This will include:

Development of an All-age CEIAG offer

Establish a holistic CEIAG process linking DWP, local provision, and the new Jobs and Careers Service. Support personal progression and provide an entry point into intensive employment support for those furthest from the labour market. Look to develop specific advice pathways for young people, Over 50's and other key cohorts identified and link to Priority Actions 8, 9 & 10 in terms of direct access to roles.

Review Customer Journey and links to the commissioning of programmes

Develop comprehensive customer journey maps, review support programmes, and establish a 'no wrong door' approach. Use insights to build a more integrated, responsive, and effective employment and skills system.

Programme Delivery Actions

Priority Action 7: Ensure sustained and targeted communications regarding business support

Develop a targeted business engagement strategy to inform employers about available support and funding, focusing on SMEs and areas such as occupational health, HR, and reasonable adjustments. Use this engagement to identify provision gaps and inform future programme development.

Priority Action 8: Multi-agency Employment Support Teams

Develop and test the use of multi-agency (NHS, JCP, LA) teams focused on employment support to work at a neighbourhood level through libraries, community facilities and the roll out of the Integrated Community Hub model to target engagement with people in need of support.

Priority Action 9: Workforce Development for Employment Support

Identify workforce training needs across Get Swindon & Wiltshire Working partners and commission training at scale using pooled training budgets. Provide shared information and guidance for frontline workers to increase awareness of support offer and pilot integrated support workers delivering provision i.e. through the Integrated Community Hubs.

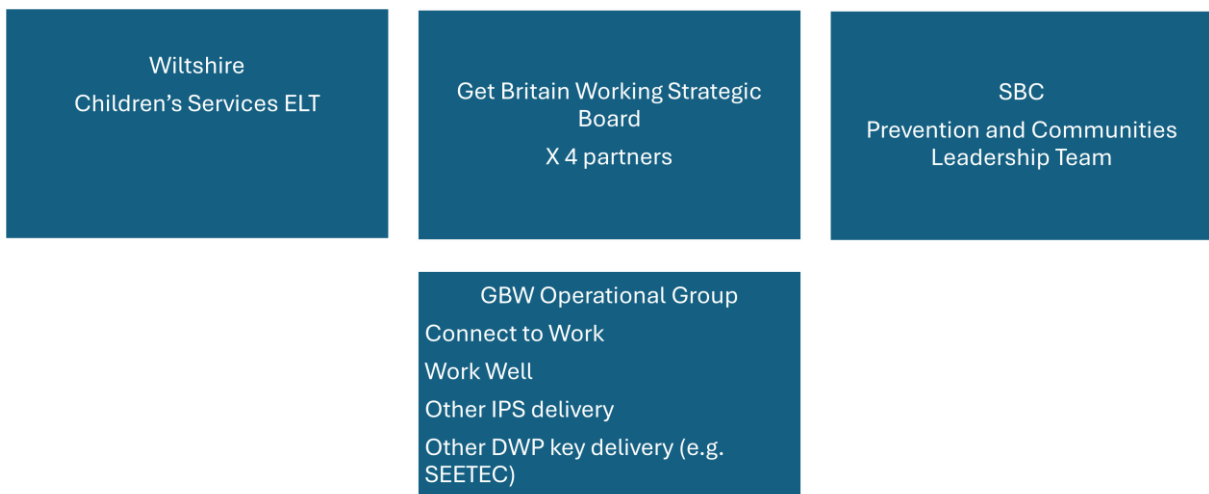
6 Governance and Local Engagement

Delivering the Get Swindon and Wiltshire Working Plan will require a **coordinated, strategic approach** built on shared understanding and commitment across all partners—local authorities, health services, DWP/JCP, employers, education and training providers, community organisations, and residents. Success depends on **joint ownership**, with **effective communication and collaboration** across all governance groups to ensure alignment and accountability.

Looking ahead, devolution remains on the horizon and both Councils are exploring opportunities for devolution that will unlock new opportunities for collaboration and funding to drive economic growth. Future arrangements for devolution have not been decided but present a number of opportunities in the delivery of GBW including greater local control over some services and budgets, flexibility for areas enabling more integrated planning of housing, transport and employment, higher levels of investment. There will be greater control and flexibility over adult skills budgets to meet the specific needs of the area. Devolution provides an opportunity to enable partnership working across a number of partners and economies of scale.

Governance Model

The current proposed Governance Model will adhere to a RACI framework (Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, Informed) and includes the following key groups:



Get Britain Working Strategic Board

A Terms of Reference (ToR) guides the purpose of this group to discuss and agree plans in respect of Get Swindon and Wiltshire Working in line with the guidance for GBW. The Strategic Board includes decision makers from the Accountable Body (Wiltshire Council), Swindon Borough Council, DWP and ICB and is responsible for signing off implementation plans, delivery plans, and supporting the strategic integration of GBW across organisations and wider governance.

Joint governance arrangements are in place between the two Councils to support oversight of the plan including the Wiltshire Extended Leadership Team (Wiltshire Council) and Prevention and Communities (Swindon Borough Council).

GBW Operational Group

This group is represented by members drawn from local authorities (including representatives drawn from Public Health, Adult Social Care, NEET, housing, and communities), DWP, ICB, VCSE, Education

and Training and employability providers. It is responsible for providing input to delivery plans, supporting with data acquisition, monitoring performance, recommending priorities and supporting delivery.

Other groups may be called upon for input, including but not limited to Household Support Fund group, Public Services Boards, Health and Wellbeing Boards, Economic Advisory Board, Business Representative Groups, and WorkWell Steering Group.

The operational group will ensure alignment to established or emerging approaches to lived experience so that resident experience informs operational policy and practice in a meaningful and sustainable way.

Ongoing review of the Get Swindon and Wiltshire Working Plan

The Operational Group will be responsible for monitoring and reporting on Get Swindon and Wiltshire Working progress, outputs and outcomes to the Strategic Board. There will be quarterly monitoring of progress and performance using the GBW Outcomes and Local Outcome Indicators and drawing on published and locally held data. It will also draw on other relevant data sets as available for example reports produced by local stakeholders and any research undertaken or commissioned as part of the Get Swindon and Wiltshire Working plan.

The quarterly reports will state progress against targets along with any emerging issues, risks and mitigating actions. Consideration should be given to the format and tools that could be applied to reporting for example a RAG Dashboard and Power BI.

To support accountability and improvement, in the first 24 months there will be a cycle of quarterly review workshops, where the Operational Group and frontline staff will provide feedback on progress to the Get Britain Working Strategic Board and associated governance structures.

Review and Evaluation of the Get Swindon and Wiltshire Working Plan

Preparing the Get Swindon and Wiltshire Working Plan has been a collaborative process that has built and strengthened relationships. The accountable body will oversee a light touch review of it after 12 months working with the Strategic Board. This process will review the new and emerging context, the Plan's purpose and strategic goals, policy alignment, alignment with need at the review point, and operational aspects to inform the future. This review will allow the Get Swindon and Wiltshire Working Plan to adjust to and respond to changing policy drivers and the socio-economic context.

After 24 months there will be a formal, external process and impact evaluation. The Evaluation Report will be published and shared. It will include a summary document suitable for non-specialist audiences.

Swindon and Wiltshire Get Britain Working Plan

RACI	Body	Membership	Role	Reporting
Responsible	All core partners	DWP, ICB, SBC, Wiltshire Council	Overall leadership and responsible for GBW working plan	Into each partners' governance
Accountable	Wiltshire Council	ELT	Sign off GBW plan as accountable body	To Cabinet/CLT
Consulted and Informed	Corporate Leadership Teams	Of each core group member	Acknowledge and respond, providing steer and challenge	Quarterly and by exception
	Wider Internal Partners	PH, housing, resettlement, ASC, Revs and Bens, Skills, Children's, Communities and partners internal teams	Referrals, providing intelligence, problem solving and programme feedback	Into operational group
	External partners	VCS, Skills England, SEETEC, Schools, Colleges	Collaborate, identify needs, referrals, alignment of priority groups, integration, problem solving	Into operational group

7 Measuring Success: Outcomes, Measurement and Evaluation

The outcomes framework has been designed to support the Government’s ambition of achieving an 80% national employment rate. While the core Get Britain Working metrics are set nationally and monitored by the DWP, local labour markets require tailored frameworks that reflect their specific context. Our methodology therefore aligns national metrics with local priorities, using robust local evidence to monitor progress on local labour market challenges alongside GBW outcomes.

Setting the Context for the Outcomes Framework

Local Methodology and Evidence Base

The local methodology and evidence base for Swindon and Wiltshire strengthens decision-making by tailoring monitoring to the area’s economic structure, geographies and cohorts. Ward-level diagnostics, partner returns and administrative sources enable more targeted intervention design, earlier signals of change, and clearer lines of accountability aligned to the GBW framework, while also evidencing local impact and value for money.

However, several intended outcomes are not yet supported by routine (or readily accessible) data collections. Where gaps exist, interim proxy measures have been specified. Nevertheless, the measures discussed in this section and previously do not align precisely with the GBW outcome set. Until the planned widening of data collection is in place, local monitoring will therefore not run fully in parallel with national GBW reporting. Key divergences include differences in age-cohort coverage.

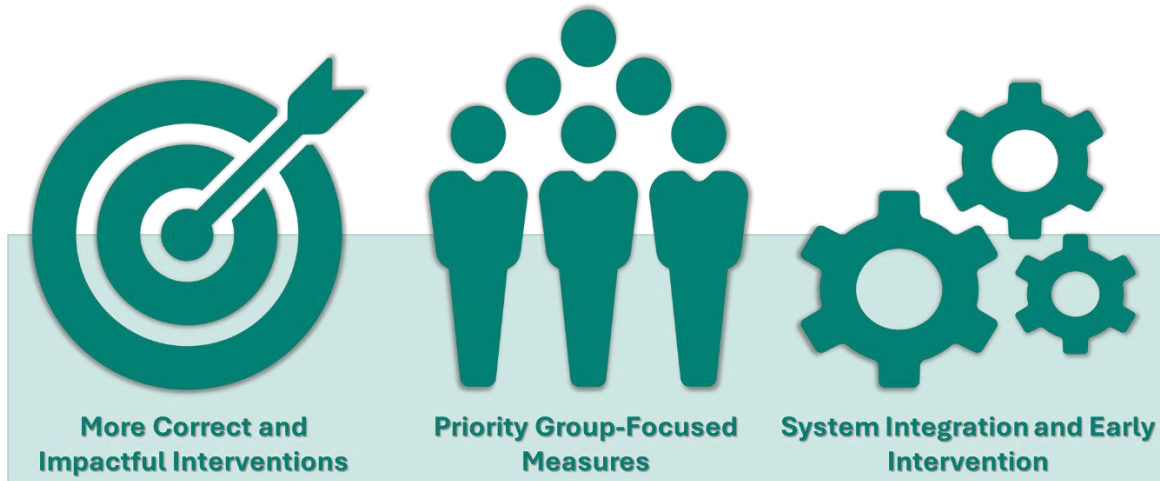


A further limitation of the published evidence is the wide confidence intervals in the Annual Population Survey (APS). For example, while Swindon and Wiltshire’s annual employment rate fluctuates year to year (and is presently estimated to exceed 80%) the APS confidence intervals mean that this apparent performance may not be statistically robust. This indicator should therefore be interpreted with caution and used primarily to monitor long-term trends rather than short-term movements.

To provide a fuller picture, complementary labour-market measures have been incorporated into the framework, enabling progress to be assessed both against local challenges and against GBW outcome metrics.

Implications for Swindon and Wiltshire Outcomes Framework

Ensuring an individualised outcomes framework will result in the following:



1. More Correct and Impactful Interventions

Measures are aligned to ward- and district-level needs, sector mix, and commuting patterns, allowing precise targeting rather than one-size-fits-all interventions. This allows for weaknesses to be identified and priority area actions to be formulated. This improves value for money of interventions and enables locally relevant benchmarking against peer areas and historic baselines.

2. Priority-Group Focused Measures

Cohort-specific tracking and support sharpen impact: for 16–24s, work-readiness, mental-health support and clearer HE/apprenticeship routes; for carers, flexible work, childcare and transport solutions that particularly benefit women; for disabled/long-term health groups, integrated health-and-work support and more inclusive employer practice; and for people facing multiple disadvantages, coordinated case management that reduces churn and improves sustained progression. It ensures that no group is left behind regarding interventions and action is made to tailor impact.

3. System Integration and Early Intervention

A shared evidence base across councils, Jobcentre Plus, colleges, and employers improves coordination and reduces duplication of work. Incorporating leading indicators flags issues early, enabling timely course-correction and strengthening the case for investment aligned with GBW metrics.

Proposed Outcomes Framework

The outcome framework is broken down into the four plan objectives established with a final cross-cutting objective, highlighting outcomes that branch over all objectives. The generic GBW outcomes are highlighted within each objective. There are a broad selection of outcomes and measurements to allow for sufficient and detailed data collection.

Objective 1: Advance Skills Development and Employability

Purpose: Develop clear, integrated pathways that enable individuals to access high-quality training opportunities, strengthen digital and soft skills, and build the confidence needed for sustainable employment. Deliver targeted career guidance, employability support, and ESOL provision to empower people from all backgrounds to navigate opportunities and achieve their potential.

Outcome Measure	How It Will Be Measured (KPI)	Data Source for Measuring Success
Increased and sustained employment rate, aligned with the 80% long-term ambition	Employment rate - % aged 16-64	Annual Population Survey, ONS
	Proportion of payrolled employees - % aged 16-64	PAYE RTI, ONS
Reduce the proportion of young people not in education, employment or training	Proportion of 16- and 17-year-olds who are NEET	Local authority
	Claimant count rate among people aged 16-24	Claimant count, ONS
Improve skills provision	Apprenticeship starts	Apprenticeships, DFE
	Apprenticeship attainment	Apprenticeships, DFE
Increase in Level 3 and 4+ Qualifications	Qualification split - % with at least level 3	Annual Population Survey, ONS
Increase in digital upskilling initiatives	No. targeted digital skills programmes	Primary data collection
Improved skills and employment support offer	Development of offer	Primary data collection
	No. people interacting with services provided	Primary data collection
	No. positive reviews of services after interaction	Primary data collection

Outcome Measure	How It Will Be Measured (KPI)	Data Source for Measuring Success
Increased proportion who receive job related training	% of all who received job related training in last 4 weeks (female WAP, male WAP)	Annual Population Survey, ONS

Objective 2: Promote Accessibility, Inclusion, and Participation

Purpose: Remove barriers to engagement by addressing challenges related to rurality, transport, digital access, language, culture, and additional support needs (including SEN), ensuring everyone can fully participate in the local economy and benefit from available opportunities.

Outcome Measure	How It Will Be Measured (KPI)	Data Source for Measuring Success
Reduced disability employment rate gap	Difference between employment rates of disabled (EA core) and non-disabled people	Annual Population Survey, ONS
Improved access to housing	Median house price to workplace-based median earnings ratio	Housing affordability ratio, ONS
	Percentage of total monthly household income spent on private rent	Private rent affordability, ONS
Improved access to services	Reduced public transport/walking time to key services	Journey time statistics, DfT
Improved access to employment	Reduced public transport/walking time to employment	Journey time statistics, DfT
Increased inclusive job design	% vacancies advertising salary, flexible/hybrid options, adjustments offered	Primary data collection linked to employer engagement
Improved adjusted recruitment process	% candidates offered reasonable adjustments; interview-to-offer rate by cohort	Primary data collection linked to employer engagement
More entry-level roles created	No. entry level job postings (no/limited work experience requirements)	Lightcast
Increase in apprenticeships	No. apprenticeship starts (by level and characteristic)	Apprenticeships by Level, DfE
	No. businesses offering degree apprenticeships	

Outcome Measure	How It Will Be Measured (KPI)	Data Source for Measuring Success
Better manager awareness and skill on health and disability	No. attendances in the short courses % completion rate	Monitoring integrated in the development of short course Monitoring integrated in the development of short course
Improved outreach of advice and development services	User satisfaction Provision in target neighbourhoods and for target groups	Primary data collection

Objective 3: Support Health, Wellbeing, and Holistic Participation

Purpose: Integrate preventative health measures and holistic wellbeing support into employment services, recognising the critical role of health in enabling people to engage actively in work and community life.

Outcome Measure	How It Will Be Measured (KPI)	Data Source
Reduced health-related economic inactivity	Economic inactivity due to long term sick - % aged 16-64	Annual Population Survey, ONS
	Proportion of 16-64 years olds in UC health journey and/or claiming ESA	DWP Benefit Statistics
Unfit for work fit notes reduction	No. Not Fit for Work (NFW) notes issues by GP practices	NHS England
	% fit notes issued that are NFW by GP Practices	NHS England
Reduced waiting lists	No. of patients on the community health services waiting list	NHS England
	% split of community health services waiting times	NHS England
	Mean days to Assessment to Treatment – Talking Therapies	NHS England
Increase interaction with services such as NHS Talking Therapies	No. Referrals Received	NHS England
	% Accessing Services and Finished Treatments	NHS England
Established preventative health agenda	Published preventative health agenda	Council Website
Embed wellness checks into employment programmes	No. wellness checks provided within programmes	Primary data collection

Objective 4: Foster an Integrated and Inclusive Local System

Purpose: Drive system-wide reform by identifying and closing support gaps, collaborating with employers to encourage flexible and inclusive work practices, and embedding HR support. Build a responsive, joined-up local support system that underpins a diverse and resilient workforce for the future.

Outcome Measure	How It Will Be Measured (KPI)	Data Source
Increased employment rate of women	Female employment rate - % aged 16-64	Annual Population Survey, ONS
Increase employment among households with children	Proportion of children living in working households	Workless households for regions across the UK, ONS
	Number of households on UC with children	DWP Benefit Statistics
Development and effectiveness of all-age CEIAG offer	% population engaged	Primary data collection
	% target populations	Primary data collection
	Time between referral and access to service/advice/guidance	Primary data collection
Advancing a 'No-Wrong-door' Approach	% of providers signed to shared referral protocol	Primary data collection
	No. agencies on shared directory	Primary data collection
Ensure targeted business engagement	Development of an engagement strategy	Council Website
	No. provision gaps identified	TBD
	No. interventions suggested	TBD
Establish multi-agency teams focused on employment support	No. multi-agency teams developed	Primary data collection

Outcome Measure	How It Will Be Measured (KPI)	Data Source
	% positive user feedback	Primary data collection
	No. multi-agency physical locations	Primary data collection
Increased understanding of work placed needs	No. employers interacted with	Primary data collection
	No. employees receiving IAG	Primary data collection

Cross-Cutting Outcomes (Spanning Multiple Objectives)

Some outcomes underpin several objectives simultaneously. Defining and tracking these “cross-cutting” measures helps align delivery, avoid siloed activity, and focus on what most improves participation, productivity and inclusion.

Outcome Measure	How It Will Be Measured	Data Source
Increased household incomes	Real gross disposable household income per head	Regional Gross Disposable Households Income, ONS
Decrease in proportion of households with no working adult	Annual household survey data	Annual population survey
Reduction in economic inactivity rate (overall and UC No Work Requirements)	% economic inactivity rate	Labour force survey/Annual Population Survey, ONS
	% NWR UC Claimants	DWP Stat-Xplore data
	No. NWR UC Claimants	

Data collection and Monitoring

The GBW Operational Group will act as the owner for data collection and monitoring. Its responsibilities will include:

- Working with programme delivery partners to agree reporting frequencies for key indicators (e.g., participants in employment support).
- Developing a system to collate engagement data and ensure feedback is captured and acted upon.
- Reviewing data regularly, assuring quality, and flagging anomalies for investigation.
- Managing GDPR-compliant data sharing; completing DPIAs where linkage is proposed; using pseudonymised aggregates for reporting; applying standard validation and reconciliation checks; and maintaining a change log for any revisions to methods or sources

Evaluation, Feedback and Learning

Evaluating Performance

Quantitative Outcomes

This evaluation approach is designed to be proportionate, transparent and usable for decision-making. For each metric within the outcome framework, performance will be evaluated against South-West and national benchmarks.

It is further suggested that a six-monthly performance review is produced, with an annual synthesis aligned to the publication timetable of the Annual Population Survey, given its importance for employment and inactivity indicators. GBW programmes and pilots would ideally be evaluated using mixed methods, combining quantitative outcomes (including 3/6/12-month sustainment) with qualitative evidence.

To maintain quality and transparency, APS-based estimates should be presented with confidence intervals; provisional management information should be clearly labelled; and any proxy measures should be recorded in the outcomes register alongside plans for improvement.

Qualitative Outcomes

It is recommended that qualitative evidence be used to explain mechanisms of change and inform commissioning decisions. Participant perspectives could be gathered through short pulse surveys and structured interviews, disaggregated by priority cohort. For example:

- Employer feedback might focus on vacancy fill, job design (flexibility and reasonable adjustments) and retention.
- Frontline staff feedback could be captured routinely to understand delivery enablers and barriers across CEIAG, NEET support and health-to-work pathways.

Where useful, concise, templated case studies should be produced to illustrate practice and impact. Furthermore, where possible anonymity should be provided and offered to participants.

Feedback and Learning

To embed continuous improvement, the following is suggested:

- **Communities of Practice (CoPs):** Establish CoPs for major workstreams (CEIAG, Inclusive Recruitment, Health & Work, Outreach/Hubs).

- **Independent evaluation (where proportionate):** Commission external studies for higher-stakes programmes to provide credible assessments of impact and value for money.
- **Annual learning workshop:** Convene programme leads and partners annually to review results, share practice and agree system-wide improvements and target refreshes.
- **Action tracking and oversight:** Maintain a live recommendations log (owner, action, deadline, status). It is proposed that the GBW Strategic Board review progress quarterly and authorise material changes to delivery or commissioning.

8 Next Steps and Implementation Plan

The ongoing development and implementation of the Get Swindon and Wiltshire Working Plan requires strong leadership and a collective commitment to collaborative working, with a strong emphasis on integration, accessibility and continuous improvement. The objectives and priorities in this plan represent a starting point for this process. The Plan is intentionally adaptable, allowing it to evolve as policies, system integration, and service delivery continues to develop across Swindon and Wiltshire.

The first step is to bring the partnership together to review each partner's current service delivery, available resources, and workforce capacity, and to collectively agree on the transformation journey and the commitments required from all involved.

Key Milestones – Year 1

Timeline	Milestone	Description
Q4 2025	Establish Programme Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formalise the Strategic Board and Operational Group terms of reference, membership and decision-making protocols
Q1-Q3 2026	Roundtable discussions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Run regular roundtables between governance representatives to develop shared understanding of roles, responsibilities and opportunities for collaboration Identify and prioritise key groups for initial focus Identify potential for pooled resources and piloting initiatives to test and learn from which apply the 'no wrong front door' approach
Q1-Q2 2026	Forward Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-develop a 2-year forward plan aligned to priority actions Create a working group to develop the process and infrastructure to support data-sharing and monitoring of the plan Develop shared outcomes approach Establish process for test and learn pilot activity
Q2-Q3 2026	Customer journey and system capacity review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commission an in-depth review of client journeys through the current employment support system to identify points of engagement, failure and fall out Use review to identify current capacity issues within the system to inform identification of urgent resourcing which could be agreed at the partnership level
Q4 2026-2027	Programme Delivery and Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement forward plan, monitor progress, and apply continuous improvement

The effective delivery of this plan is reliant on critical enablers, including:

- **Strong multi-agency partnership** and clear governance structures
- **Robust data-sharing systems and protocols** to enable joined-up service delivery, effective monitoring and evidence-based decision-making
- **Adequate funding and resources**, including pooled budgets for training and programme delivery, to ensure capacity to deliver. This requires multi-year, stable funding arrangements to support long-term planning, service continuity and trust among partners and service users
- **Alignment of local and national policy**
- **Active participation from employers and engagement with people with lived experience** to ensure services are responsive and accessible
- The **provision of enabling infrastructure** including digital connectivity, transport and housing will reduce barriers to participation

Addressing these dependencies early will be critical to achieving the plan's objectives and delivering lasting impact.

The Swindon and Wiltshire Get Britain Working Plan sets out a bold, collaborative vision to tackle economic inactivity and unlock opportunity for all. By aligning local strengths, integrating services, and focusing on those who face the greatest barriers, the plan provides a clear roadmap for inclusive growth and resilient communities so that everyone can access good jobs, develop their skills and thrive.

Together, let's build a stronger, fairer Swindon and Wiltshire, where no one is left behind.

Glossary

The following table provides a list of acronyms and their respective definitions that have been used throughout the report.

Acronym	Definition
ACL	Adult Community Learning
AI	Artificial Intelligence
BING	Business Intelligence and Networking Group
BNESSW	Bristol, North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire (Integrated Care Board geography)
CEC	Careers and Enterprise Company
CEIAG	Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance
CoP	Community of Practice
CtW	Connect to Work
DfE	Department for Education
DLA	Disability Living Allowance
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions
EA Core Disabled	Equality Act Core Disabled
EAB	Economic Advisory Board
EHCP	Education, Health and Care plan
ESA	Employment and Support Allowance
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
FSF	Flexible Support Fund
GBW	Get Britain Working
GPs	General Practitioners
GVA	Gross Value Added
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
ICA	Integrated Care Alliance
ICB	Integrated Care Board
IPS	Individual Placement and Support
JCP	Job Centre Plus
JSNA	Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
LA	Local Authority
LEP	Local Enterprise Partnership
LSIP	Local Skills Improvement Plan
MSK	Musculoskeletal
NCS	New College Swindon
NEET/NK	Not in Employment, Education or Training / Not Known
NFW	Not Fit for Work
PIP	Personal Independence Payment
RACI	Responsible, Accountable, Consulted and Informed
RPA	Raising the Participation Age
SEN/SEND	Special Educational Needs/Special Educational Needs and Disability
SME	Small and Medium Enterprises
SWAPs	Sector-based Work Academy Programmes

Acronym	Definition
SWBGU	Swindon and Wiltshire Business Growth Unit
SWLEP	Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership
ToR	Terms of Reference
UC	Universal Credit
VCFSE	Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise
WHIU	Workplace Health Intelligence Unit
WHP	Workplace Health Provision

