



Get Worcestershire Working Strategy

Stakeholder Engagement Online Engagement
Pack

**GET WORCESTERSHIRE
WORKING STRATEGY**

 **worcestershire**
county council

Get Worcestershire Working Plan

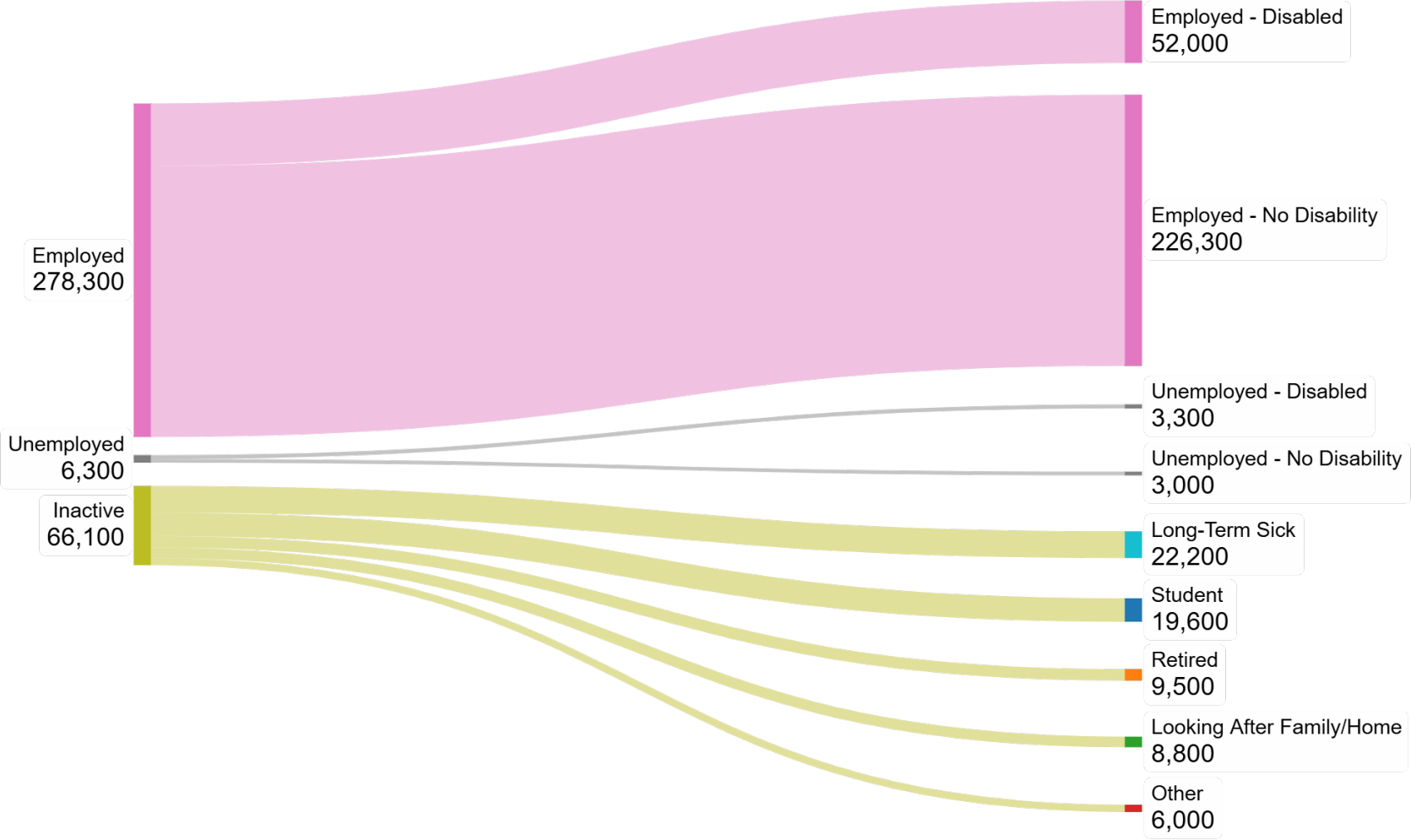
- Whole support system approach to tackling labour market participation (employment, unemployment and economic activity) and progression in work (earnings and job quality) to achieve an 80% employment rate.
- 10-year plan outline priorities for next 12 -24 months alongside steps to achieving longer term objectives. To be published in September 2025.
Reviewed Annually.
- To create shared understanding of the challenges, to manage and align provision , identify action , support better integration of the support system and set strategy to inform Government of need for future investments.

Employment across Worcestershire

Aiming for 80% employment rates

Get Worcestershire Working : Labour Market Groups

Data refers to point in time and not flows. Intended to show different labour market groups and respective sizes. Reflects most recent available data as of April 2025.

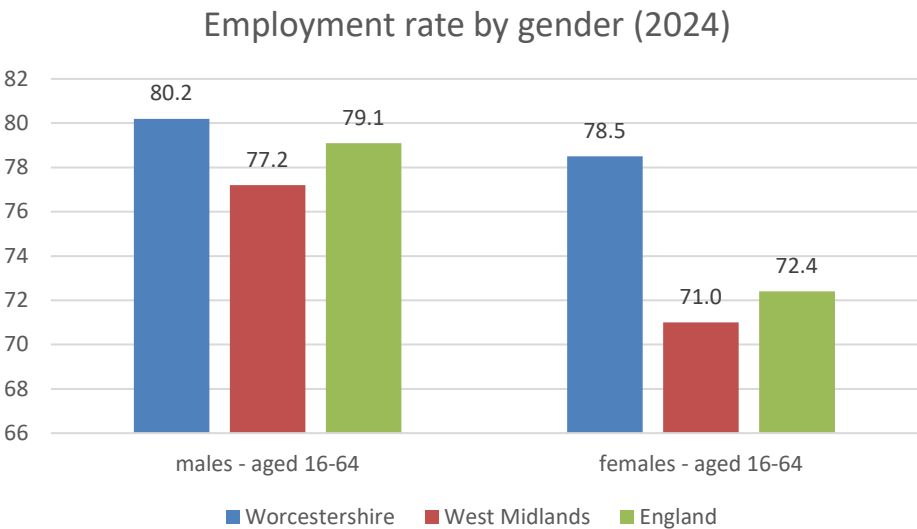
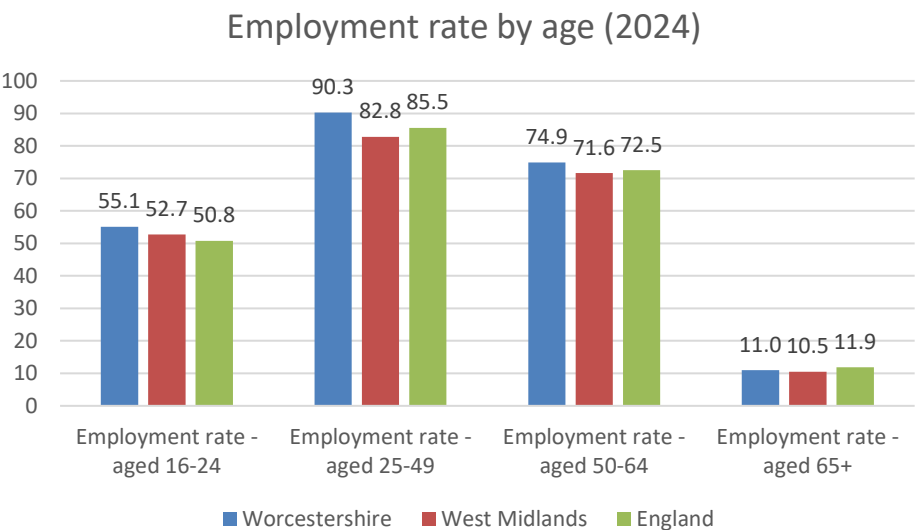
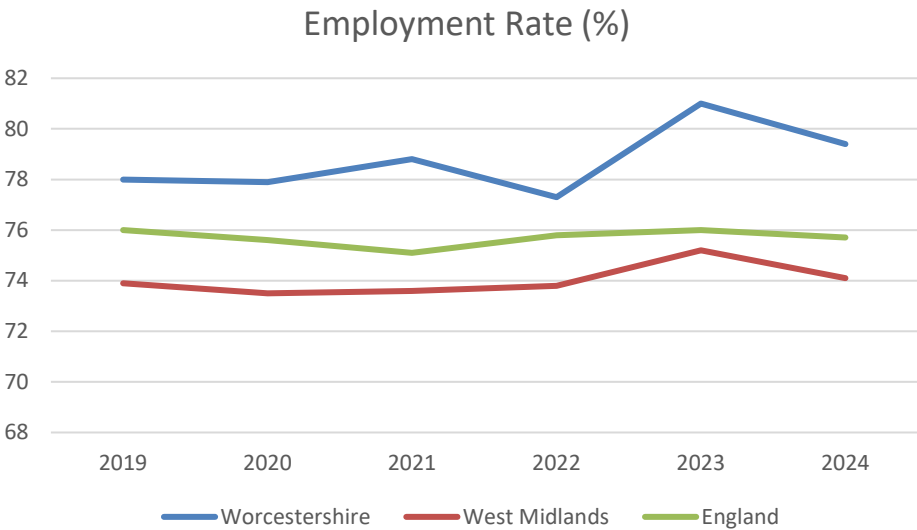


In Worcestershire, 59.6% of people are of working age. Around 80.3% are in some form of employment, albeit that 3.1% are claiming benefits of some kind.

Alongside this Worcestershire has an inactivity rate of 18.8% compared to West Midlands at 22.5% and England at 21.1%

**Worcestershire has currently
between 79.4% employment rate**

Employment across Worcestershire



Quick analysis , shows rate of 79.4% employment rate with slightly less females than males albeit significantly above national averages.

Lesser rates of over 50s employment than the 25-49 age group

Worcestershire Labour Market Analysis

Economic Inactivity



18.8% of residents are inactive in Worcestershire

Largest number is those aged 50-64 at 26'800 (23.8%) , but this should be considered with 14% retired

Rates of inactivity due to long term health condition is 5% lower in Worcs than England and 4 % in WM

Of those with no qualifications , 44% are inactive

Unemployment



Unemployment is at 3.2%

However, Youth unemployment is higher at 5.1%

Youth Employment in Redditch are at all time high of 7%

Over 50s unemployment over the last 12 months has grown by 250 people

NEET Rates



624 young people are NEET in Worcestershire (May 2025)

Young people in Care and with EHCP have significantly higher rates

NEET Rates are influenced by a variety of factors from :

- Provision availability
- Health provision
- Availability of careers advice
- Transport accessibility

Qualifications



6% of working age population have no qualifications

46% of the population have qualifications above Level 4

40% of the population have highest qualifications at Levels 2 and 3

Vacancy Rates



Since 2023, Worcestershire sees at any time around 10'000 vacancies

Largest number of vacancies is in Healthcare

83% of the businesses who responded to the HW Chamber Salary survey attempted to recruit in last 12 months

66% of those experienced challenges in recruitment

Pay



Employees who work in Worcestershire earn £72 less per month than the UK average

Workplace average earnings in Worcestershire are £1157 less than average earning per resident annually

Health and Employment



Highest rate of conditions impacting work are Mental Health conditions

Estimates show that 2.3% of the workforce (had a day off last week

Fit notes – 2850 a week across H&W with rates increasing

In summary – page 1

Wages and Productivity

Worcestershire's productivity levels lag behind those of neighbouring regions. Key contributing factors include:

- A dominance of smaller employers with limited capacity for high added value.
- Insufficient succession planning and upskilling opportunities. (leading to higher salaries for greater output)
- A significant proportion of residents with low qualification levels.

Young People and Skills

The county faces growing challenges with youth engagement:

- An increasing number of young people have low qualifications, limited or no work experience, and are not engaged with support services.
- Re-engagement provision is limited.
- Entry-level opportunities are declining, particularly in sectors like retail, hospitality, business administration.
- The apprenticeship market remains highly competitive, further limiting access for those with fewer qualifications.

In summary – page 2

Health and Labour Market Exclusion

Health-related barriers are a major factor in economic inactivity:

- Worcestershire's rate of labour market exclusion due to health is over 5% higher than the national average.
- Mental health is a significant concern:
- Over 33% of young people accessing youth hubs report wellbeing needs.
- 46% of Employment Support Allowance claimants cite mental health as a primary issue.
- More than 20,000 fit notes have been issued, with mental health as the leading cause, followed by musculoskeletal conditions.

Economic Inactivity and Regional Variation

Economic inactivity is closely tied to health and demographic trends:

- In Redditch, health and caring responsibilities are key drivers.
- In Malvern Hills, Bromsgrove, and Wychavon, a larger proportion of the population is approaching or at retirement age, contributing to higher inactivity rates.

In summary – page 3

Employer Challenges

Employers across the county report difficulties in recruiting the skills they need. However:

- Many lack long-term strategies for workforce development and have low investment in training.
- There is limited investment in succession planning and staff upskilling, which hampers both productivity and resilience.
- Investment in automation and digital products are lower than national and regional. This could relate to the large number of micro employers, not having the means to invest.
- Employers report not being able to find the skills they need in the current Worcestershire education footprint, which is likely driven by diversity of need.

Current landscape – positives

Positives

- Relationships are strong in Worcestershire – NHS , DWP , Local Government, Employability Providers, Schools, FE and Training/Apprenticeship Providers.
- Focus on Young People has supported to understand the challenge , whilst resource has been limited, outcomes have been strong across Youth Hubs, Apprenticeships and Early Careers work.
- Worcestershire hosts three committed FE colleges with a variety of specialisms which provide a good spread of curriculum, but the focus is lacking in adult provision
- Worcestershire's HE provision matches the key sectors of our economy – Education, Healthcare and Local Government
- Worcestershire understands the challenges but our ability to address is always limited by size and funding
- Business engagement is good and we have strong mechanisms to continue to develop in this space
- Data suggests we are within the 80% employment rate but there are pockets of challenges to address

Current landscape – challenges and gaps

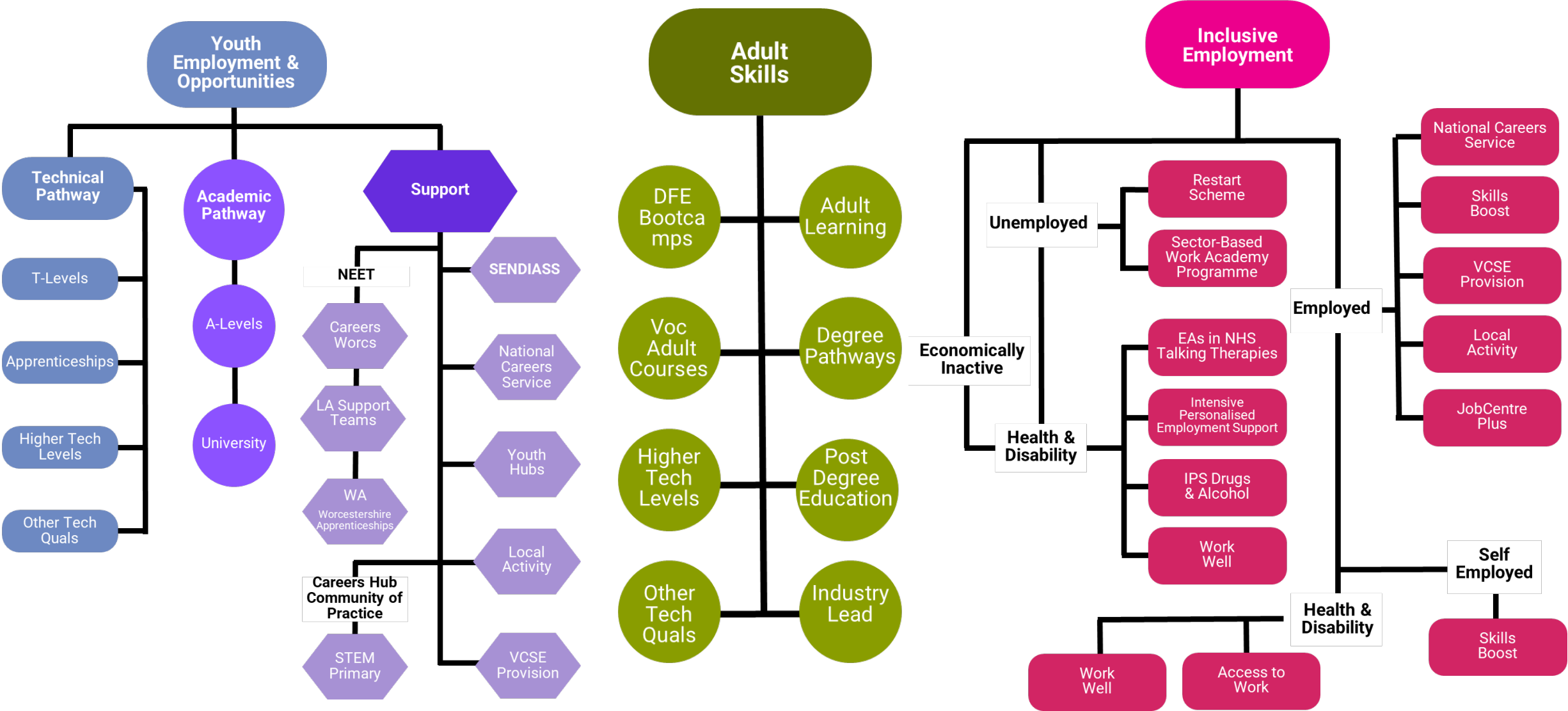
Challenges

- Limited Funding, only touching sides of challenges creating limited ability to address all issues, creating silos, gaps and duplication in agendas
- Limited provision – see above
- Multiple front doors and confusing access points
- Fragmented system – Health , Public Health, LA , DWP etc
- Short term funding and programmes
- SME Landscape of employers , lots of asks and lots of employers !
- High demand for limited services i.e. Health
- GDPR used as a barrier to join the system up around the individual.
- Challenges in accessing transportation and its cost.
- Need for more holistic and intensive support
- Multiple “support” systems between partners fragmenting support landscape
- Need more education provision in certain vocations.

Gaps

- Joint messaging – Each partner is communicating with employers in a piecemeal way through their lense.
- Employers not having the capacity or resources to support the individual employee.
- Need more delivery in localities, as the local challenges are different and ability to flex support is limited
- Careers advice availability and quality varies
- Education engagement offer for NEETs is variable
- Further integration of services to aid identifying those inactive residents
- Holistic practices or need for more social prescribing from health professionals.
- Lack of Adult Skills offer to upskill in county and lack of desire/incentive to upskill
- Understanding of skills needs of employers in the county
- Consideration of inactivity on a long held Worcs economic policy pursuing high skilled / high paid jobs.

Current Landscape of Support



Start your Response

Get Worcestershire Working



To assist us with your thoughts please scan the QR Code or view the Consultation Questionnaire through the following link :-

[Get Worcestershire Working](#)

Questions 3–6 within Form

1. Is this your experience of the Worcestershire employment support system?
2. Logic chains and assumptions – Do you think any of these are incorrect assumptions or draw the wrong conclusions from the data / analysis?
3. What is missing from this assessment?
4. What is your role in landscape? What action(s) would you be prepared to commit to, to make the situation better?

Priorities

Short Term – 12 – 24 months

Long Term – 24 months – 10 years

Short Term Priorities

Youth Employment and Transitions

Inclusive and Healthy Workforces

Skills Development and Adult Learning

Employer and System Integration

Infrastructure and Accessibility

Short Term Priorities – The Detail 1-2

1. Youth Employment and Transitions

Focuses on supporting young people through education-to-work transitions and early career development.

- Young people 16–24 – Engage and move into work – Deliver UKSPF/Youth Hubs
- Provide greater levels of transition support at key transition points (e.g., Post-16 and Post-18) for all young people.
- Focus on delivering the Modern Work experience programme for young people
- Continue to develop system partnerships to improve value for money and outcomes for residents – e.g. NEET strategy

2. Employer and System Integration

Focuses on embedding services within existing structures and improving coordination.

- Embed the Jobs and Careers services into DWP sites ,offices and other locations.
- Develop the information available to residents and employers around services within the county (e.g., WGH and Community Services Directory)
- Continue to develop system partnerships to improve value for money and outcomes for residents

Short Term Priorities – The Detail 3-4

3. Inclusive and Healthy Workforces

Aims to create supportive, accessible, and inclusive employment environments.

- Inclusive Workforces – Grow the numbers of healthy and inclusive workplaces for employees in the county
- Embed focus on supporting individuals with health conditions and disabilities through national programmes i.e.. Connect to Work
- Increase the levels of Disability Confident Employers in Worcestershire.
- Deliver the WorkWell Vanguard for Worcestershire, secure funding for 2026 onwards
- Improve visibility and awareness of support from health services to employment services
- Understand the physical health touchpoints where residents where support could be offered support i.e.. (e.g. Fit Notes)

4 . Skills Development and Adult Learning

Targets upskilling and reskilling the adult population to meet economic needs.

- Adult Skills Offer – Launch “Think Skills Worcestershire” & work with colleges to deliver a greater training offer
- Continue to grow the DfE Skills Bootcamps programme and successful outcomes into employment
- Embed the Local Skills Improvement Plan into Worcestershire and gain greater understanding of workforce needs
- Develop the countywide Talent and Skills Pledge for Worcestershire

Short Term Priorities – The Detail 5

5. Infrastructure and Accessibility

Addresses physical and systemic barriers to employment.

- Transport Review – Use findings to understand barriers to entry for potential employees and access to industrial estates across the county
- HM Government Reforms – Deliver and support reforms from Government whilst continuing to consider agenda and impacts, embed into workstreams across partners i.e. Youth Employment Guarantee, Local Government Reforms, ICB Clustering, DWP Reforming of Jobcentres etc.
- Create new approach to funding and procurement – Seek Funding for 2026 and beyond, whilst creating new structures for partnership approach, improving integration into geography and reduce duplication, silos etc.

Proposed Long Term Priorities – overview

Focus on the creation of
Holistic and Integrated
Support Systems

Drive efficiencies in
practice through
standardisation and
system changes

Build greater employer
engagement and
workforce development

Continue to drive the
quality of Careers and
Employment support to
young people

Develop an Inclusive
Economy and specific
tailored approaches to
Employment and Skills

Strengthen levels of
skills within our Adult
population

Seek funding
opportunities for
Worcestershire to grow
its skills and
employment offer

Create understanding
of the impact of Good
employment on Health
of residents

Proposed Long Term Priorities 1-2

1. Focus on the creation of Holistic and Integrated Support Systems – Strategy

- Develop Front Door access for residents and employers around skills and employment support that builds holistic assessments
- Cut through system – Work towards building a holistic view of a person, identifying support needs and services accessible and accessed using information from all service partners
- Gain a better understanding of system interactivity and explore solutions – Recognise how challenges in related systems contribute to employment difficulties
- Minimise duplication and deliver value for money through commissioning across organisations

2. Drive efficiencies in practice through Standardisation and System changes – Operation

- Reduce variance in processes across the county to standardise triage across commissioned programmes and in certain workstreams
- Focus on aligning the Social Value Act through Public Sector in Worcestershire
- Use our system data across partners to better inform service need
- Build collective solutions to improve outcomes around employer engagement, service directories, careers support etc.

Proposed Long Term Priorities 3-4

3. Build greater employer engagement and workforce development

- Deepen levels of Employer Engagement in Skills Programmes – Explore Worcestershire Growth Hub and create an Employer Skills Hub
- Improve long-term Workforce Planning in Worcestershire
- Ensure the Local Skills Improvement Plan creates improved understanding of local skills needs from employers
- Tilt current Inclusive programmes to create Employer charter around Fair work and raising skills and productivity levels
- Ensure the Growth and Skills Levy is maximised in Worcestershire
- Continue to drive Apprenticeship Growth within the county's employers

4. Continue to drive the quality of Careers and Employment support to young people

- Increase the focus and embed programmes to reduce NEETs and Youth unemployment in Worcestershire
- Careers Advice – Improve quality and quantity of advice across the system assuring the Worcestershire dynamic
- Continue to commit to delivery of the Careers and Enterprise Company Programme, improve quality of delivery across region around LMI and Careers advice

Proposed Long Term Priorities 5–6

5. Develop an Inclusive Economy and specific tailored approaches to Employment and Skills

- Create an Inclusive Economy – Healthy and inclusive businesses where economic policy lowers inactivity
- Focus on Localities, identify areas of disadvantage and create innovative solutions to locality-specific challenges
- Focus on disadvantaged groups and understanding the needs and demand around employability support
- Continue to focus on inactivity and delivery of key initiatives

6. Strengthen levels of skills within our Adult population

- Focus on Over 50s and reskilling for employed and unemployed
- Develop Adult Skills offer within county
- Support HE/FE Colleges and Independent Providers to develop provision through capital/revenue funding to meet local skills needs

Proposed Long Term Priorities 7–8

7. Seek funding opportunities for Worcestershire to grow its skills and employment offer

- Seek Funding to deliver against challenges faced in Worcestershire
- Work with Skills England, look for opportunities to develop key sectors within Worcestershire

8. Create understanding of the impact of Good employment on Health of residents

- Improve our understanding of the Health contribution on Economic Development and the need for services and enable action to be taken where health drivers impact.
- Collaborate with wider health-based stakeholders around the role of employment on health i.e. Primary Care Networks , GPs etc.
- Create resident-based campaigns across partners around the impact of good employment on health
- Provide early health and employment support interventions to prevent individuals leaving work
- Ensure Worcestershire workplaces are health promoting environments and that people are supported with health conditions and disabilities.

Questions

- Anything missing ?
- Do you agree with these priorities ? What would you add or change ?
- What do you think will make the most difference? How would you order them ?
- What actions are needed to create this change ?

Questions – Questions 7 – 10 within form

- Do you agree with these priorities ?
- What would you add or change ?
- Which priority do you feel will make the most difference to Worcestershire and its challenges ? And why ?
- What actions are needed to support the priorities and system change? Which action would you prioritise?

Next Steps

- Following your feedback WCC will amend the priorities
- Public Stakeholder consultation will finish on the 31st July
- Need to get as MUCH feedback as possible from stakeholders – please share messaging and help us to get this feedback , build into any event messaging you have etc.
- Aim to publish in September following internal Governance and final Sign offs from ICB and DWP by September 30th for submission to HM Government .

Thank you for participating and giving your views. If you want to discuss further please contact at GBW@worcestershire.gov.uk

Thank you

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