



# HW ICS Health and Work Strategy

2025 - 2030 | Version: Final Draft

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Version:	Draft V3
Time period covered:	2025 - 2030
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Dated approved:	

## Foreword

Health, wellbeing and employment are inextricably linked and are co-dependent. Good health is a key factor in an individual being able to work, and good work is one of the biggest social determinants that lead to good health. Viewing them as co-existent factors is seen as increasingly important by the Government as part of its drive to improve economic growth and productivity. Partners across the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Integrated Care Strategy (ICS) have recognised the importance of this connection and this Health and Work Strategy outlines the priorities and actions to accelerate progress to integrate health and work services. We are aiming to foster a healthier, more inclusive workforce across both our counties.

Our vision as an ICS is clear and set out in our Integrated Care Strategy: ***Good health and wellbeing for everyone***. This vision is underpinned by our mission to work collaboratively with people and communities, enabling everyone to enjoy good physical and mental health and live independently for longer. Through our eight commitments, we strive to integrate care in a way that maximises partnerships, focuses on prevention, and addresses health inequalities.

The strategy acknowledges the significant impact that employment has on health outcomes. Financial stability, access to healthcare, mental health benefits, and the promotion of healthy behaviours are just a few ways in which good work contributes to overall wellbeing. Our ambition is to create an environment where clear pathways to good work are available for those who can and want to work, through partnership and collaboration.

We recognise the unique challenges faced by our local population, including high employment rates juxtaposed with significant economic inactivity due to health issues. Our strategy is designed to address these challenges head-on, with a focus on inclusive employment practices and support for individuals with health conditions and disabilities.

As we move forward, our strategic ambitions are centered on creating healthier work environments, reducing sickness absence, and increasing the number of disability-confident employers. We aim to shorten the disability employment gap and support individuals in moving into and retaining employment. This strategy is a call to action. It requires the collective effort of local authorities, public health, NHS services, the Department for Work and Pensions, voluntary organisations, and business support organisations across the two counties. Together, we can build a system that supports residents in achieving an independent and healthy future, with employment as a cornerstone of their wellbeing.

We invite all stakeholders to join us in this journey towards a healthier, more inclusive Herefordshire and Worcestershire.



**80% of residents across Herefordshire and Worcestershire are in employment, To raise this number we must create an inclusive employment landscape representative of the diverse resident base we have in our two counties.**

# Strategy on a page – Health and Work Strategy 2025- 2030

Our **vision** for local people...



Our **mission** is to...



Our 4 **strategic ambitions** are :



**Success** will be



A **Place based** approach will be used to **deliver** the strategic outcomes...

***“A dynamic workforce that drives a vibrant local economy, where everyone has access to meaningful employment, where health and wellbeing are prioritised, and residents with health conditions and disabilities are supported to thrive in employment”***

**Improve the employment rates of residents across Herefordshire and Worcestershire whilst creating an inclusive employment landscape representative of the diverse resident base within our employers**



Work with employers to **create inclusive, healthy and productive work environments** for all



Provide the **right support and pathways** needed to help individuals to move into employment



Provide **early health and employment support** to help avoid individuals leaving work due to ill health



Encourage and **foster collaboration between local stakeholders** to help residents get into and stay in work

Reduction in absence levels reported by employers

Lower unemployment and fewer benefit claimants related to health conditions

High performance across the range of health and work interventions developed

Greater levels of collaboration which directly benefit residents

Across Herefordshire and Worcestershire, we will:

- Seek to increase the cohesion of Health and Work schemes, building on current initiatives across DWP, Public Health and stakeholders including lowering the levels of individuals out of work due to health conditions through Connect to Work.
- Raise levels of disability confident employers.
- Join up current initiatives within each county for greater outcomes.
- Ensure that NHS Programmes across counties perform.

# Section 1: Context

This strategy sits within a systemwide strategic framework and specifically addresses the priorities and population needs for the specific area of focus, as set out in the [HW Integrated Care Strategy 2023-2033](#) and the [HW NHS Joint Forward Plan 2023-2028](#).

## 1.1 Our 10 year - Integrated Care Strategy

The integrated care strategy sets out how partners and stakeholders will come together to deliver a vision:

*Good health and wellbeing for everyone*

With the mission of... *Working together with people and communities to enable everybody to enjoy good physical and mental health and live independently for longer.*

Delivered through 8 commitments for HOW we will integrate care:

1. **Maximising the opportunity to work together** as partners to build connections, share learning and address shared challenges in the short and long term.
2. Focusing on **prevention, personalised care and taking action to address health inequalities and vulnerabilities.**
3. Enhancing health and wellbeing by taking **an integrated approach to areas such as housing, jobs, leisure and environment.**
4. Supporting **people and carers to take responsibility for their own and their families health and wellbeing** and working to enable their independence.
5. **Co-producing solutions** with individuals, carers, our communities and Voluntary & community sector organisations as equal partners with collective responsibility.
6. **Making the right service the easiest service to access** and providing it as close to home as possible.
7. Delivering better value for money, stopping duplication and using population health management to be **smarter in how we target interventions.**
8. **Using digital to make services more accessible and effective**, but never forgetting the risks of digital exclusion.

Integrated with and aligned to the two Health and Wellbeing Strategies:



## 1.2 Our 5 year – NHS Joint Forward Plan

The NHS Joint forward plan described in more detail the shared priorities that partners will deliver. With the overall strategic intent to:

**Drive the shift upstream to more prevention and best value care in the right setting**

Delivering high quality, safe, patient centred, accessible services delivered by a sustainable & inclusive workforce, living within the resources allocated to the system through our shared priorities...

- Providing the best start in life
- Living, aging and dying well
- Reducing ill health and premature deaths from avoidable causes

More focus on:



**Self-care and independence**, enabling all people to look after their own health and live well with a long term condition



Promoting healthy behaviours which **reduce, delay and prevent** ill health



**Co-production, personalised care and support**, meeting the needs of individuals



**Population health management** and better use of data to target efforts



**Sustainability of services**, and delivery of the right care models

Enabling reduction in:



**Healthcare inequalities** - access and outcomes including digital exclusion



Days people spend in the **wrong care setting**



The time spent **waiting** to access healthcare



**Inefficient use of resources** and financial deficits



**Avoidable pressures** on services



# Section 2: Where are we now?

## 2.1 Background and purpose

Herefordshire and Worcestershire ICS, as part of its Workwell programme is supporting and driving forward a strategic approach to integrating work and health services at a Place level across the two counties. Herefordshire and Worcestershire have long since faced challenges within their employment market that means employers are having to consider alternative strategies to recruit skilled employees within the locality.

Staff retention is also a priority. The impact on businesses of absence and productivity losses due to ill health is well documented and there is significant benefit for employers in retaining employees and their knowledge if the health conditions can be managed in the workplace rather than being lost to ill health, early retirement or resignation. Alongside this is the impact that good work can have on health outcomes – good employment can contribute in several ways:

- **Financial Stability:** Having a job with a steady income can reduce stress and anxiety related to financial insecurity. This stability allows individuals to afford healthier food, live in better housing, engage in health and wellbeing activities, remain independent and look after their own health.
- **Access to Healthcare:** Some jobs offer employee assistance programmes and some come with private healthcare benefits. This makes it easier for employees to access medical care, preventive services, and medications. This can lead to early detection and treatment of health issues.
- **Mental Health:** Employment can enhance mental well-being by providing a sense of purpose, structure, and social interaction. Engaging in meaningful work can boost self-esteem and reduce feelings of isolation and depression.
- **Healthy Behaviours:** Work environments that promote healthy behaviours, such as regular breaks, physical activity, and stress management programs, can improve overall health. Employers can also support healthy lifestyles through wellness programs and incentives.
- **Social Determinants of Health:** Employment is a key social determinant of health, influencing various aspects of life, including education, social status, and community engagement. These factors collectively contribute to better health outcomes.

**Good work and a good employment environment supports good health outcomes, and good health enables people to be more productive in the workplace**

**Our ambition** is to create the right environment with clear pathways to good work for those who can and want to work through partnership working and collaboration across the key stakeholders and aligned to the existing local strategies which focus on health inequalities, prevention, and improving employment opportunities across a life course approach.

## 2.2 What are the needs of local people?

Herefordshire and Worcestershire have a working age population of 469,800 with over 80% of adults in both counties employed. Both counties have high employment rates in comparison to both the West Midlands and England but around 18% of the counties residents are economically inactive. Around 15000 residents alongside those on wider job seeking benefits suggest that if work were available, they would move into employment but currently health is one of the barriers to their goals. The two counties also have tight labour markets with challenges around levels of entry level employment and increasing skills gaps in industries meaning that employers are having to look at labour through a more inclusive lens, creating opportunity.

**Inequality in life expectancy** for both males and females across both counties is **significantly lower** than **national averages**, but stark differences still exists within **local communities**.



**30%**

**Over 30%** of residents with reported physical or mental health conditions are **not in employment** within the two counties.

**Cost of living** rates are **increasing** across the two counties particularly in Herefordshire. **37,469 (15%)** of households are fuel poor in Worcestershire. **14,145 (17%)** in Herefordshire - but this is set to worsen.



**5%** of all residents who receive **support for a learning difficulty** are in paid employment across the two counties.

**Over 80%**

of the population across both counties identify as **White British**.



**1% of all employed residents** in both counties **had a day off** in the last two weeks (0.9% Herefordshire and 0.7% Worcestershire).



Around **5% of young people** aged 16 or 17 years old are **not in Education, Employment or training** in the two counties ( 2022/23 data).

There are **fewer adults** with **depression** in Herefordshire compared to national average, **14% (Over 73,000)** of adults in Worcestershire have depression.



There is a **higher percentage** of **5 or more GCSEs** attained in Worcestershire than national average, rathes in Herefordshire are **slightly below** the national average.



Herefordshire is one of England's most **rural counties**, with **55%** of it's population living in a **rural area**. While Worcestershire is a **mixed/urban** county. A significant proportion of its population live in rural areas (**27%**).



There are more **employed adults (over 78%)** across the counties than the **national average (75%)**. Economic inactivity rates are lower than average in both counties.



**Employment rates** in the two counties are **higher** than the national average with around **3% of residents out of work**.



**Weekly median pay** in the two counties varies with **Herefordshire** residents earning on average **£54 less** than their **Worcestershire** counterparts and both counties £67 and £13 respectively on the England average.

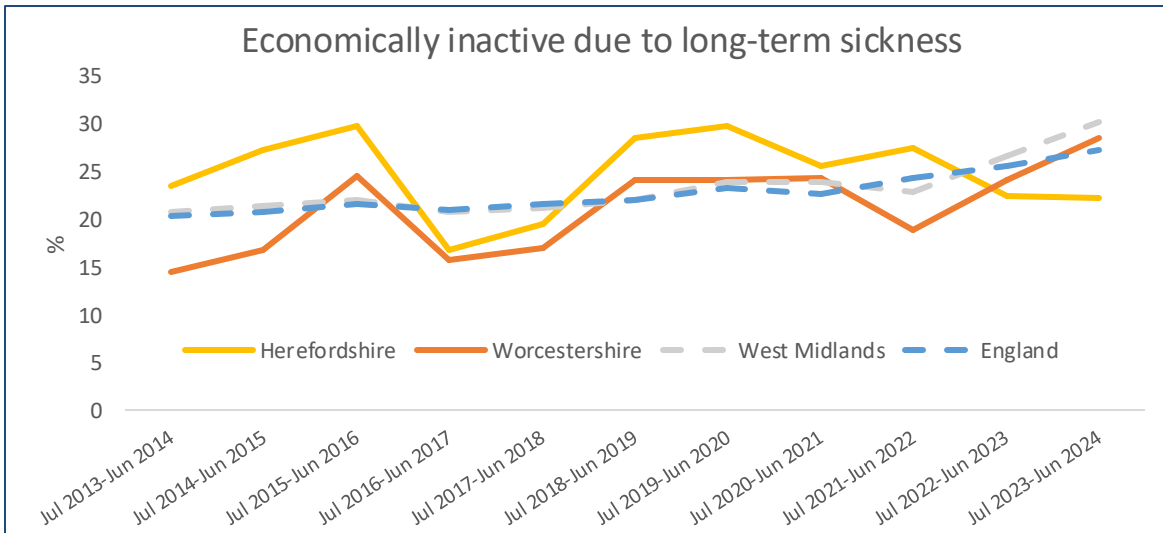


# Section 2: Where are we now?

## 2.3 Where are we starting from?

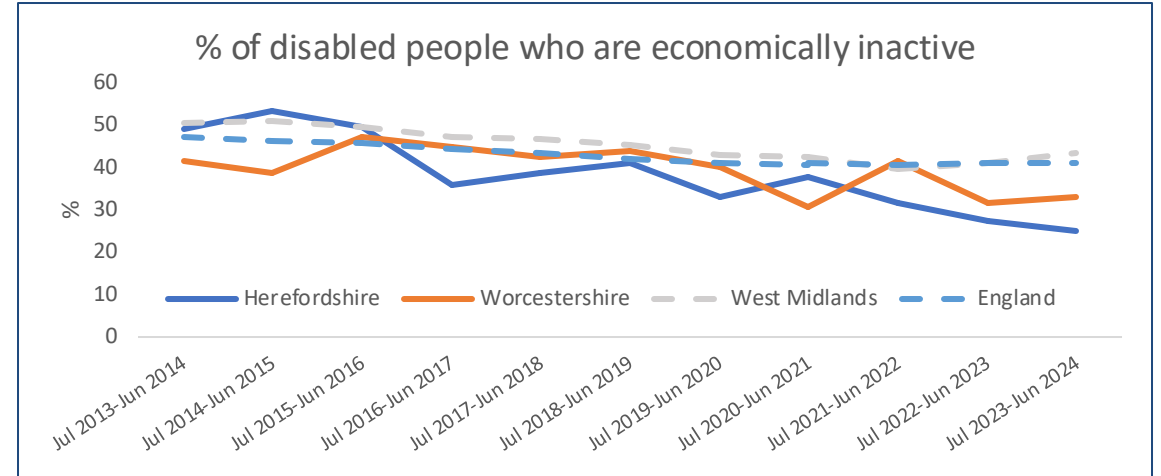
The Government's **Get Britain Working Paper** aspires to have an 80% employment rate. Whilst the current rate in our ICS exceeds this (Worcestershire 81.8%, Herefordshire (81.4%), both counties have high level long-term economic inactivity in relation to sickness. This brings a significant wider impact on the public purse and affects residents overall long-term health outcomes.

The proportion of the economically inactive people due to long-term sickness has increased in the West Midlands and England. Estimates for Herefordshire and Worcestershire are between 22% and 28% of all inactivity, which has fluctuated around the regional and national averages over the last 10 years.



Source – Annual Population Survey

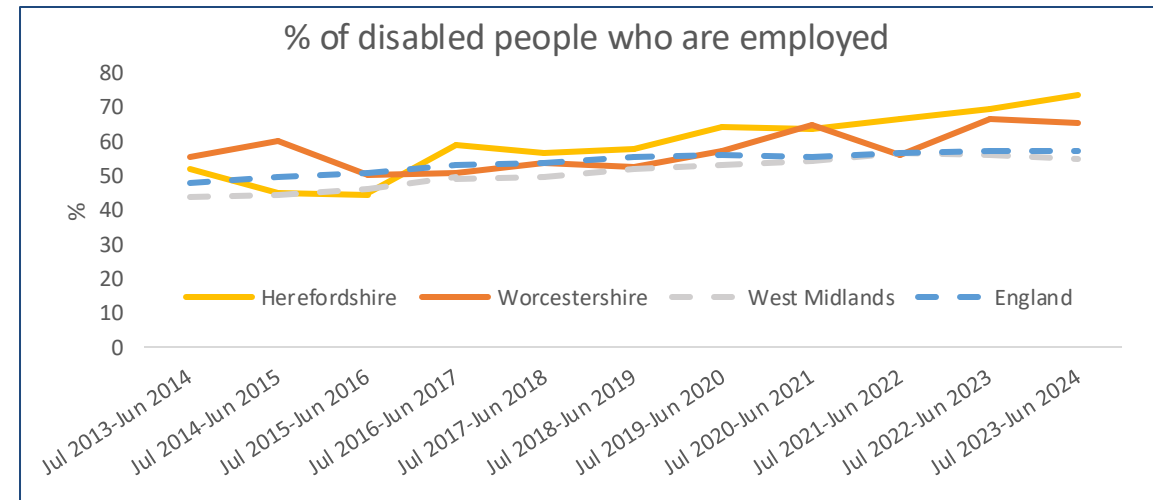
Having a disability brings further barriers to work, some are designed by society, some disabilities make it impossible to work and some people find employment challenging because of lack of simple reasonable adjustments that would enable work. The proportion of disabled people who are economically inactive has generally followed a downward trend in England, although there was a slight increase following the pandemic. Estimates for Herefordshire and Worcestershire have largely been at or below the national average rates with Herefordshire now significantly below the national average.



Source – Annual Population Survey

Across the two counties, this growing downwards trend in % of individuals who are economically inactive is also being felt in the employment rate for disabled people which has generally improved over time following that same trend.

In the UK around 1 in 5 of the working age population are classed as disabled. However, only half of disabled people are in work across the UK, Worcestershire and Herefordshire however buck this trend with 65 – 73% representatively.



Source – Annual Population Survey

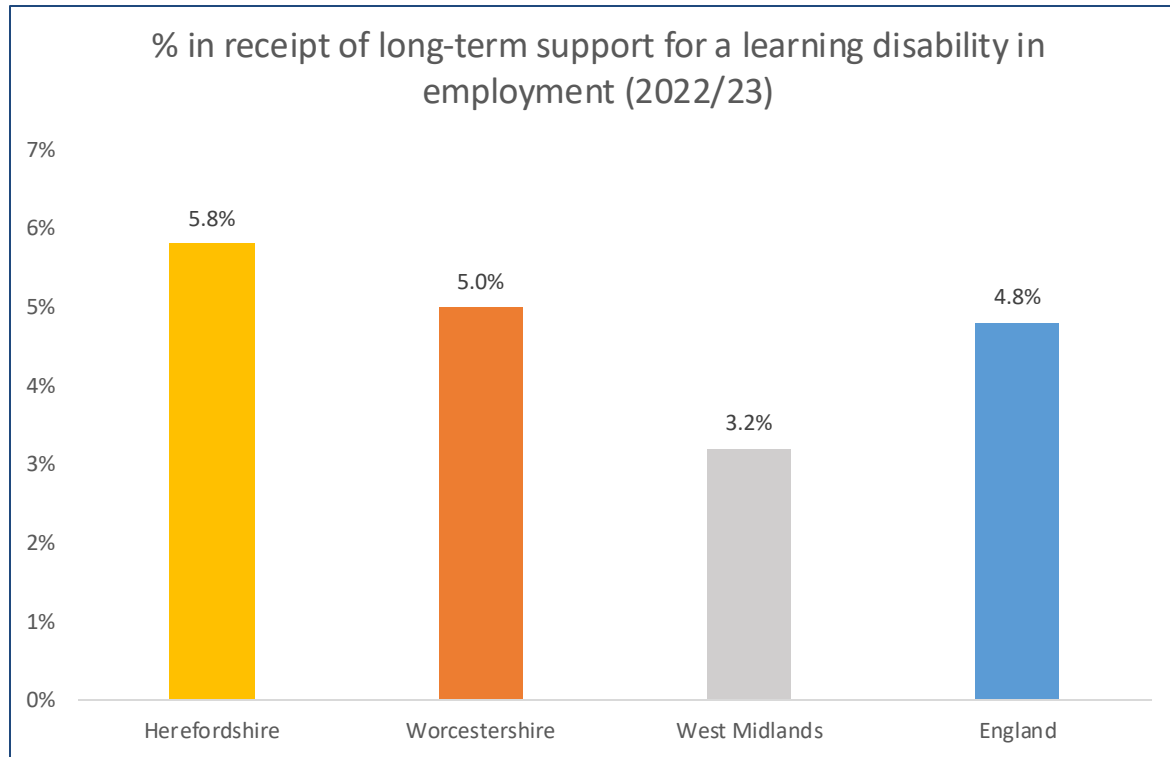
# Section 2: Where are we now?

## 2.3 Where are we starting from continued...

Residents with a learning disability can face many barriers to accessing employment, including lack of support, employer's attitudes and a general lack of understanding of what someone can achieve with the right support, from education through to employment.

Across the two counties, the proportion of the 18-64 population in receipt of long-term support for a learning disability that are in paid employment is significantly higher in than in the West Midlands, although not significantly higher than the national average. However, at a very low 5%, this presents a massive opportunity to address a significant inequality around opportunity alongside the wider economic and health and well being benefits.

A challenge for employers in investing in inclusive employment for people who may require adjustment to overcome a health condition or disability, can be the perceived cost of productivity losses caused by absence. The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development estimates the cost of absence per employee to be approximately £522 per employee. Sickness absence in the UK has risen significantly since 2020. In the two counties however, it remains lower than the rate of the national average and considerably lower than the regional average. However, this still presents a significant opportunity to improve productivity and reduce the impact on our employers and region as a whole.



Source – Annual Population Survey



Source –OHID Based on National Statistics Data

# Section 2: Where are we now?

## 2.3 Where are we starting from continued...

Health-related absences have a significant impact on employers, not only through short term disruptions but increasingly through longer-term absences that stretch into weeks. These absences reduce productivity and carry financial consequences for businesses, while also affecting individuals' quality of life—both in terms of their health and their financial stability.

To manage these absences, fit notes (also known as sick notes) are issued by GPs. These are used by individuals to inform employers of their inability to work and to access statutory sick pay or sickness-related benefits from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). Fit notes are issued to both employed and unemployed individuals.

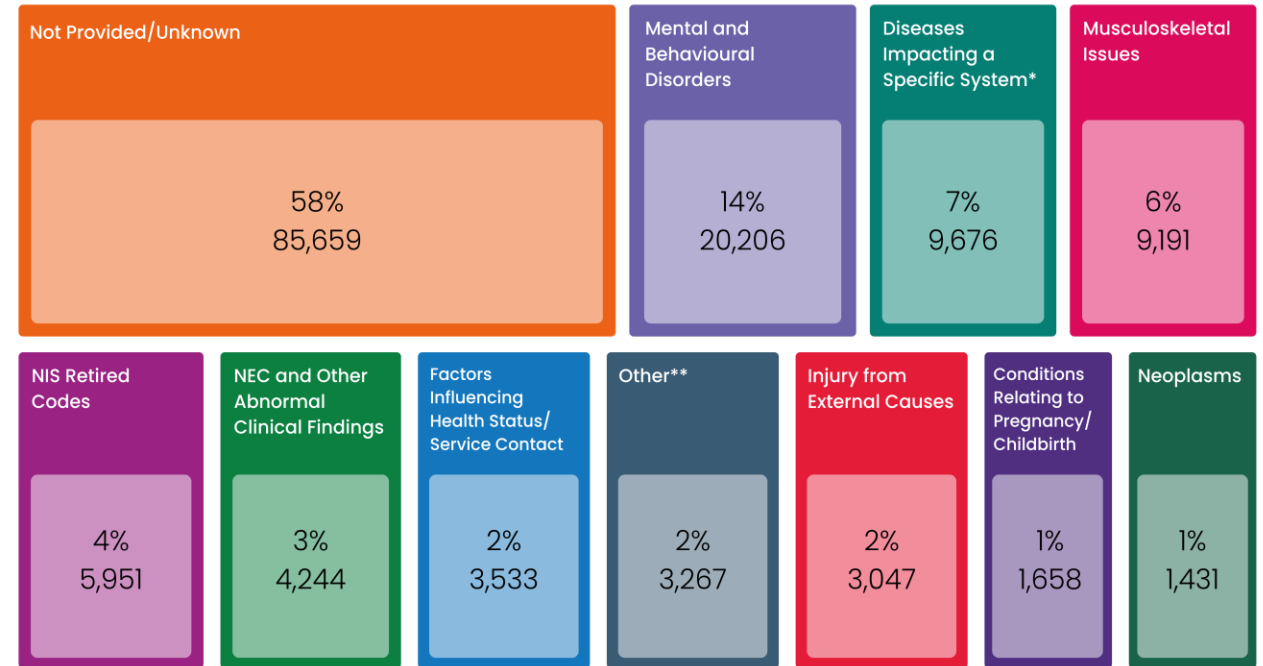
In 2024, a notable trend emerged: over 50% of fit notes did not include a recorded diagnosis, suggesting that time constraints or other factors may be affecting the documentation process. Among those with recorded diagnoses, the most common were mental and behavioural disorders, followed by musculoskeletal and connective tissue diseases.

Fit note levels over recent years have fluctuated, with records from within the COVID-19 pandemic not necessarily representative of the actual situation, as they were not required for those who were shielding, self-isolating, or furloughed. However, in 2021, fit note issuance for both mental health and musculoskeletal conditions rose sharply before declining again in subsequent years.

This evolving landscape presents an opportunity to address the broader economic and wellbeing implications of health-related work absences.

This challenge for employers is twofold: ensuring a healthy workforce and recognising their role in supporting employee wellbeing. It requires having clear policies and procedures for managing absences and responding effectively to sickness as it arises. By offering timely support, employers can help prevent long-term issues and reduce the broader impact on business performance.

Fit Notes Issued by GP Practices, Herefordshire and Worcestershire, December 2024



\*Diseases of the respiratory system; Diseases of the nervous system; Diseases of the circulatory system; Diseases of the digestive system; Diseases of the genitourinary system.

\*\*Certain infectious and parasitic diseases; Diseases of the skin and subcutaneous tissue; Diseases of the ear and mastoid process; Congenital malformations, deformations and chromosomal abnormalities; Endocrine, nutritional and metabolic diseases; Diseases of the eye and adnexa; Diseases of the blood and blood-forming organs and certain disorders involving the immune mechanism; External causes of morbidity and mortality.

Source – NHS England – Data by ICB



# Section 2: Where are we now?

## 2.4 National, regional and local priorities

Herefordshire and Worcestershire have a number of strategies which address the Health and Employment agenda. Some apply an economic lens by considering the impact of benefit claimants and health on the economy, some focus on the opportunity to improve health or as a focused effort around increasing the employment outcomes of individuals with certain conditions. There is also a national policy where the Government seeks to provide better outcomes for individuals with health conditions and disabilities to move into work. Those strategies are summarised below:

### 2.4.1 Herefordshire Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023 – 2033

Link: [Herefordshire Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023 – 2033](#)

The vision for Herefordshire Health and Wellbeing Board of “**Good health and wellbeing for everyone**” is reflected in the strategy. It focuses on four ambitions that describe the place Herefordshire aspires to be in 10-years’ time:

- Thriving communities
- Healthy and sustainable places
- Opportunity for all
- Healthy people

The ambition around building **Thriving communities** will help foster wellbeing and resilience. Creating **Healthy and sustainable places** will help residents will grow, learn, live and work. Offering **Opportunity for all** will support fair access to employment opportunities and disadvantaged groups will be supported within a progressive and inclusive economy. Creating **Healthy People** will help residents to be empowered to take control of their health and access to information and services will be equitable.

The strategy identifies the priority of “**Good Work for Everyone**” and the ambition to ensure residents can earn a decent living wage, providing opportunity for personal development and financial security within employment. The strategy also identifies the challenges for certain groups of people being able to access good quality jobs that are suitable to their needs and circumstances.

Herefordshire identifies the Economy and Place Board and the Big Economic Plan as its vehicles to deliver change.

### 2.4.2 Worcestershire Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022 – 2032

Link: [Worcestershire Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-2032](#)

The vision for the Worcestershire Health and Wellbeing Board is “**Working together for better health and wellbeing in Worcestershire**”. The strategy focuses three ambitions to support the overall priority of **Good mental health and wellbeing**.

- Healthy living at all ages
- Safe, thriving and healthy homes, communities and places
- Quality local jobs and opportunities

The ambition of **Healthy living at all ages** recognises the link between physical and mental health and the importance of a healthy and active lifestyle for residents, supporting residents to remain independent for longer and enabling improved healthy lifestyle choices. The priority of **Safe, thriving and healthy homes, communities and places** brings the link between environment and health and recognises the challenges of a predominantly rural county and the importance of skills and knowledge. The final priority of **Quality local jobs and opportunities** aims to ensure not only is the county prosperous but that residents are able to take part in employment activities no matter their backgrounds. Within this ambition, and employers are encouraged to build healthy, inclusive and diverse workforces.

### 2.4.3 Herefordshire and Worcestershire All-Age Autism Strategy

Link: [Herefordshire and Worcestershire All-Age Autism Strategy 2024-29](#)

This joint strategy translates the national strategy and priorities for autism into the local context to enable local work to close the gap of the health inequalities between individuals with autism and their peers. The strategy focus on improved understanding of autism and ensuring autistic people have the support they need. The document lists seven priorities, with one of them being to **Support more autistic people into employment**. This priority focuses on seeking to close the employment gap and creating better working environments for individuals to thrive as well as improving inclusive recruitment practices within the two counties. The priority then identifies a number of key actions to be taken forward from improved collaboration across stakeholders to leading by example across public sector organisations that form the Integrated Care System.

# Section 2: Where are we now continued

## 2.4 National, regional and local priorities continued...

### 2.4.4 Herefordshire and Worcestershire Integrated Care Strategy 2023 – 2033

Link: [Integrated Care Strategy: Herefordshire and Worcestershire Integrated Care System](#)

The purpose of the ICS strategy is to bring health, local government and wider partners together to build a healthier future for local people in Herefordshire and Worcestershire.

Building on the two Joint Local Health and Wellbeing strategies it recognises that many factors contribute to our health and wellbeing, with on only around 20% of a person's health outcomes being directly impacted by access to health services.

The strategy focuses on three core priorities, each of which will be impacted by economic growth and prosperity. The most important part of the strategy is the eight core commitments that all partners signed up to. One of which is **Enhancing health and wellbeing by taking an integrated approach to areas such as housing, jobs, leisure and the environment.**

### 2.4.5 Herefordshire 2050 Economic Plan

Link: [Big Economic Plan – Herefordshire Council](#)

Herefordshire's vision is for a **vibrant, healthy, zero carbon, and inclusive place to live, work, study and visit at all stages of life.** The plan was launched in March 2023 and includes a strong emphasis on people by supporting residents to thrive within the county. The plan includes a focus on creating employment opportunities that are accessible for residents who are risk of missing out, such as those with special educational needs, disabilities and caring responsibilities.

The strategy actions include the establishment of joint work between local employers to enable more inclusive and flexible employment practices alongside collaborative approaches between employers to enable improved inclusive recruitment practices and improved wellbeing within Herefordshire workforces.

### 2.4.6 Worcestershire Local Skills Plan 2022

Link: [WLEP-A4-Landscape-Local-Skills-Report-update-2022-FINAL-Version.pdf](#)

Worcestershire published its first skills strategy in 2021, with a revision in 2023. The plan focuses around 5 priorities:

1. To enhance the coordination within employment support aimed at reducing claimant levels and improving individual health and well-being whilst impacting positively on economic activity within the county
2. To aim for all educational establishments to annually meet all 8 Gatsby Benchmarks of Good Career Guidance, with a particular focus on the Worcestershire economy.
3. To create an education and training provision eco-system that meets local needs and the future trends of Worcestershire's economy i.e. ensuring further and higher education are responsive.
4. To increase the number of graduates and skilled young people who spend a significant part of their economic life in Worcestershire.
5. To improve the economic activity rates amongst our older workforce by creating a culture of flexible work environments and upskilling/reskilling opportunities.

The action plan identifies the need to explore working with health providers and programmes within the county to ensure health interventions are embedded within employment support programmes to reduce inequalities, in practical terms it seeks to align the strategies of the Health and Wellbeing board with the Local Skills Action Plan.

# Section 2: Where are we now continued

## 2.4 National, regional and local priorities continued...

### 2.4.7 HM Government Get Britain Working White Paper

Link: [Get Britain Working White Paper - GOV.UK](#)

Launched in November 2024 as a key part of the governments mission to kick-start growth through its commitment to building an inclusive and thriving labour market, where everyone has the opportunity of good work and the chance to get on at work.

The approach is based on three pillars of change

1. Empowering localities through a modern industrial strategy and local growth plans to create more good jobs in every part of the country,
2. Improving the quality and security of work through the plan to Make Work Pay
3. The biggest reforms to employment support in a generation bringing together skills and health to get more people into work and to get on in work.

Whilst some detail of the White Paper is unavailable at present it sets the scene for change and driving forward approaches to tackle economic inactivity and a long-term ambition of an 80% employment rate. The Paper reinforces the pledge to build a joined up and local work, health and skills offer in future. There is a whole chapter focused on the issue of economic inactivity caused by ill health which outlines a series of priorities focused on the NHS's role to contribute to resolving the issues. There is a particular focus on the link between NHS waiting lists and economic inactivity – with 33% of economically inactive working age adults being on NHS waiting lists.

### 2.4.8 County SEND Strategies to support young people

Links: [All about special educational needs and disabilities \(SEND\) – Herefordshire Council](#) [Our SEND strategy | Worcestershire County Council](#)

Both counties have highly evolved strategies around Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and supporting young people. Each strategy includes reference to the long-term outcomes for young people and their prospects of employment. Each strategy discusses the need to support young people to explore careers and employment whilst in education settings and then refers to the aspirations around moving young people into employment.

### 2.4.9 DfE Local Skills Improvement Plans

Links : [Local Skills Improvement Plans | Herefordshire & Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce](#)

[Marches-LSIP-Stage-1-FINAL-REPORT-W-CR-RO.pdf](#)

The Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs) across the two counties have been designed to support understanding of the needs of local employers to enable greater alignment against education and skills priorities.

Herefordshire forms part of the Marches economic geography and is therefore represented alongside Shropshire and Telford. Worcestershire is its own economic geography but both reports have significant similarities in their needs to move forward. Both highlight the need to better engage employers around future skills needs, to support employers to understand the training and education landscape locally and to feed this information into future employment opportunities. Neither report specifically focuses on disabilities, health or inclusion.

The review of available literature highlights a strong ambition and clear need to improve employment opportunities for individuals with health conditions and disabilities. However, this goal often takes a backseat to primary objectives. The Health and Work strategy provides Herefordshire and Worcestershire with the necessary focus to collaborate, develop solutions, and drive change across various agendas.

# Section 2: Where are we now?

## 2.5 Programmes and activity within the two counties

### Workforce Health and Employment Support Across Herefordshire and Worcestershire

Herefordshire and Worcestershire are closely linked through the Integrated Care Board (ICB) and its collaborative system partnerships across the system. Both counties offer a range of similar programmes aimed at supporting individuals—particularly young people—into employment and helping employees return to work after periods of absence.

While there are shared goals, the focus differs slightly between the two areas. In Worcestershire, initiatives emphasise building inclusive workplaces and improving access for younger people. In contrast, Herefordshire has concentrated more on workplace health and the prevention of health conditions.

Across the region, a wide variety of programmes exist—from national schemes like the DWP's Health and Work Programme, commissioned at the Mercia district level, regional programmes across the two counties including the ICB's *Workwell* programme, to locally developed initiatives such as Worcestershire's *Workwell Live Better*, led by Public Health.

These programmes aim to support both individuals with health conditions or disabilities and the employers who can benefit from a healthier, more inclusive workforce. The goal is to improve access to employment and help residents stay in work **through** healthier workplace environments.

However, the current landscape is **fragmented**. Despite the success of many initiatives, there is often duplication across organisations. To maximise impact, there is a clear need for a more unified strategy and coordinated funding approach that brings together efforts across both counties into a comprehensive, streamlined support system.

**"Support needs to be accessible and available to all residents and employers through health, employment and business support touchpoints using the philosophy of no wrong door"**





# Section 2: Where are we now?

**CAREERS  
WORCS**



**Herefordshire.gov.uk**

Careers Worcs provides dedicated youth health and wellbeing support across Bromsgrove, Kidderminster, Worcester and Redditch through tailored 121 support, workshops and peer led support groups to increasing motivation and engagement with Careers Worcs and the wider community. By offering opportunities to explore personal growth we empower young people to be the best version of themselves. Our coaches provide individuals with the tools to manage physical, social and mental health, link in with specialist agencies and support young people to connect, establish positive networks across their communities in order to be able to access career opportunity and thrive in all aspects of life. Our aim is to improve health outcomes, reduce the need for more intensive interventions and longer term difficulties. We recognise that anxiety and low mood impact many of our young people and are committed to providing effective techniques to better manage stress, anxiety and significant life events. By promoting the establishment of positive routines such as sleep habits, nutrition and exercise we empower young people to take proactive steps to prioritise wellbeing. Our holistic approach works to build confidence and resilience to navigate challenges and thrive.

Since the beginning of the contract young people's attendance has never fallen below 63%, with referrals consistently exceeding targets and contract expectations. This highlights the strong demand for the service and its positive reputation amongst young people. The impact has been profound, with 97% of those completing one to one coaching reporting improvements in their health and wellbeing. Participants have shared powerful testimonials including *"My life is better and easier. I got to know myself more"* and *"Wellbeing helped me come out of my shell; it helped me be more confident"* another young person shared *"My university course starts January, I'm going out again and taking photo's. The support has helped me massively and I have regained my confidence"*. These outcomes demonstrate the service's ability to empower young people, helping them to thrive and achieve their goals.

Herefordshire Council, in partnership with Taurus Healthcare's Talk Wellbeing service, is successfully delivering the government's national Workplace Cardiovascular Disease Health Checks pilot programme. As part of its successful bid, the council is rolling out free cardiovascular health checks directly to workplaces across the county.

This innovative initiative is designed to remove barriers—such as travel, time, and cost—that often prevent working adults from accessing vital health services. It focuses particularly on employees in rural, agricultural, manufacturing, and lower-income roles, where health inequalities are often more pronounced.

*"Cardiovascular disease is a leading cause of economic inactivity. These checks will help us identify risks early and support people to stay healthy and in work."* —  
Dr. Sarah Williams, Lead Clinician, Talk Wellbeing

*"This is a fantastic opportunity to bring health directly into the workplace and support our workforce to live longer, healthier lives."* — Cate Carmichael, Director of Public Health, Herefordshire

*The programme has already received positive feedback from local employers*  
*"Thank you so much. Everyone that came to see you said that they found the service excellent. As you came to us and they were already in the building, it meant they didn't have to call their doctors or rearrange their lives to attend an appointment. Some had even been called for a review and never followed it up—this made it so much easier for them. I'll definitely be in touch to rebook next year."*  
— Local Employer

This pilot marks the first time the government has brought together local authorities and employers to deliver NHS Health Checks in the workplace, making prevention more accessible than ever and helping to protect the heart of the workforce.



# Section 2: Where are we now?



## Inclusive Worcestershire Leaders

Started in 2024, Worcestershire County Council recognised the need to create more inclusive workspaces within the geography to support residents with health challenges and disabilities. The Leaders scheme encourages business to become leaders in inclusive recruitment and employment, seeking accreditation beyond disability confident, challenging practices and supporting to understand the latest thinking. The programme currently has 45 businesses recognised as leaders with more being onboarded. Businesses report the recognition as leaders as being beneficial to shape their organisations future recruitment strategies and create meaningful change within their organisations.



## Herefordshire and Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce Health and Wellbeing Forums

The Health and Wellbeing Forums hosted by the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce exemplify a proactive approach to fostering workplace wellness. These forums bring together local businesses, industry leaders, and health professionals to exchange knowledge, share best practices, and develop innovative strategies for supporting employee wellbeing. By providing a collaborative platform, the forums empower organisations to address health challenges in the workplace while promoting a culture of care and inclusivity.

One key area of good practice is the emphasis on practical, actionable advice. Workshops and discussions focus on areas such as mental health support, stress management, and many examples, fostering a positive workplace culture. By incorporating case studies and speaker insights, participants gain tools to implement meaningful changes within their business. Furthermore, the forums encourage businesses to share their experiences with each other, creating a sense of community and enabling the dissemination of effective practices across thousands of individuals in the two counties.

The outcomes of these forums are far-reaching. Organisations that engage with the forums report improved employee morale, reduced absenteeism, and enhanced productivity. These initiatives also strengthen employer-employee relationships, showcasing a genuine commitment to workforce wellbeing. Additionally, the forums contribute to broader community health strategies by raising awareness of regional and national resources and supporting individuals to remain in employment.

# Section 3: Where do we want to be?

## 3.1 Our vision and strategic outcomes

### Our Vision :

In line with our Integrated Care Strategy vision of “Good Health for Everyone” our vision for the Health and Work Strategy aims to ensure that partners in our system work together to enable:

***“A dynamic workforce that drives a vibrant local economy, where everyone has access to meaningful employment, where health and wellbeing are prioritised, and residents with health conditions and disabilities are supported to thrive in employment”***

The vision encapsulates the core theme of our Health and Work Strategy; being that delivery will require a system approach where partners align around the strategies ambitions and outcomes.

- **For residents** with a long-term health condition or disability, health and care services are essential to ensure that timely support is available to ensure they are physically and mentally well enough to work and that residents can be signposted to services that can enable them to enter or remain in work.
- **For employees** to thrive and drive a vibrant local economy, workforce health needs to be prioritised. This means ensuring employees are healthy, in work and productive as well as enacting recruitment and employment practices that are inclusive to both a wider pool of prospective employees and a more diverse workforce to drive innovation.
- **For local stakeholders** such as Department for Work and Pensions and Local Government must ensure that provision is available and accessible for residents and employers to drive forward the ambitions within this strategy.

The cross cutting and central themes that are central to achieving the vision is the requirement that that stakeholders across Health and Care, Employment Support and Local Government work more effectively together and with the wider stakeholders to drive forward change. This includes the commitment to ensuring that employers and employees are engaged and shape development and delivery bringing their unique knowledge and understanding of workplaces to the forefront. Key Stakeholders include but are not limited to:

- Public Health,
- NHS Health and Care Services,
- Primary Care Networks,
- Department for Work and Pensions
- Jobcentre Plus Service,
- Local Voluntary and Community Organisations,
- Business Support Organisations such as
- Herefordshire and Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce and
- Growth Hubs
- Local Government within Herefordshire and Worcestershire.

To achieve this, we have set out four strategic ambitions :



# Section 3: Where do we want to be?

## 3.2 What are the ambitions ?

### Strategic Ambitions

These are the overarching goals guiding the strategy:

- **Collaboration:** Foster partnerships among local stakeholders to support residents in gaining and maintaining employment.
- **Early Support:** Offer early health and employment interventions to prevent people from leaving work.
- **Inclusive Workplaces:** Partner with employers to build an inclusive and healthy economy
- **Employment Pathways:** Ensure pathways are in place to help individuals transition into employment.

### Areas of Focus

These initiatives aim to strike a balance between prevention and recovery interventions:

- **Population-Wide Campaigns:** Promote the health benefits of being in work through broad communications and engagement.
- **General Employer Support:** Provide advice to employers on creating healthy workplaces, highlighting the economic advantages.
- **Bespoke Employer Support:** Offer tailored training and resources to help employers develop healthier work environments.
- **Individual Coaching:** Deliver personalised coaching for employees facing health challenges that could affect job retention.
- **Specialist Services:** Provide targeted support for individuals with complex or long-term health barriers to employment.

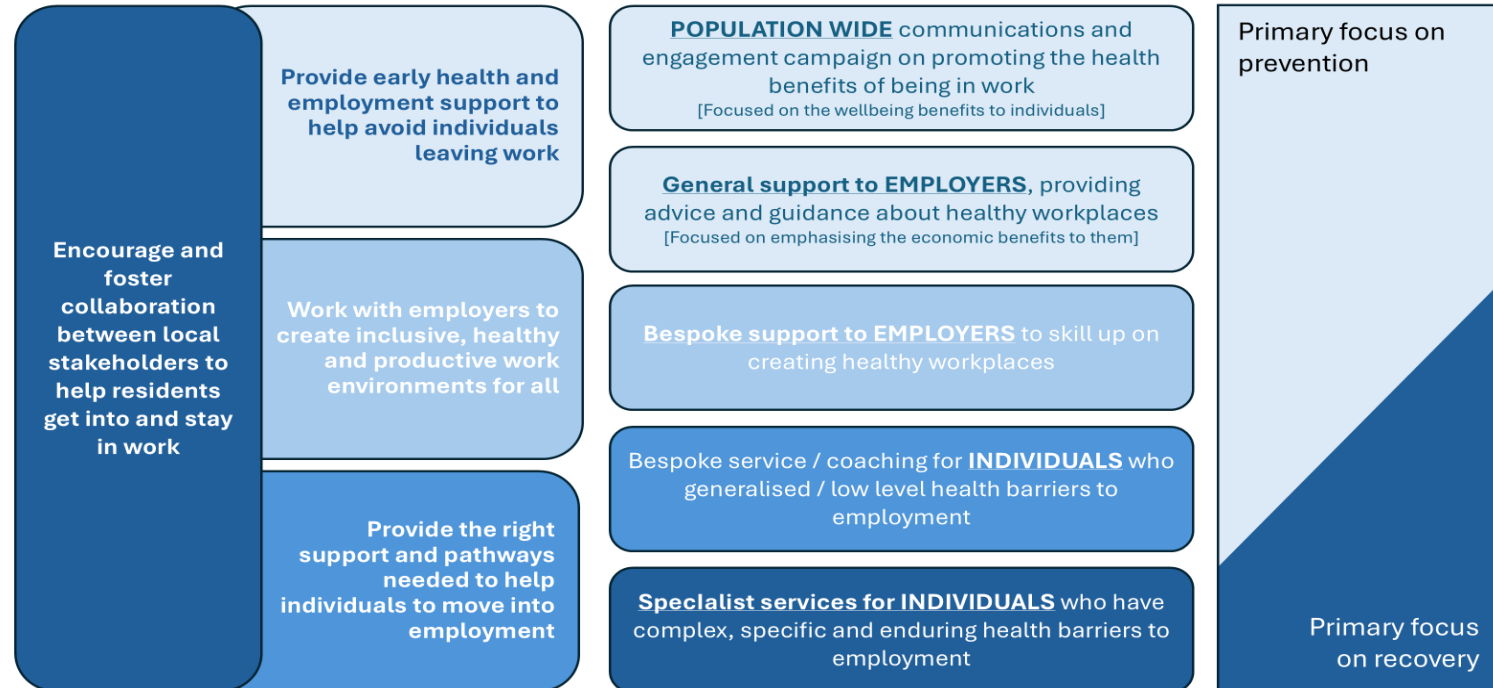
### Emphasis on Prevention

The diagram underscores a **primary focus** on prevention, aiming to reduce the need for **recovery** by addressing issues early and proactively.

*"Good Work is Good for Health: When people thrive at work, they thrive in life. Supportive, inclusive, and healthy workplaces don't just boost productivity—they build resilience, improve wellbeing, and reduce long-term health risks. Investing in good work is investing in a healthier, happier society"*

#### Strategic Ambitions

#### Areas of focus, achieving a balance between prevention and recovery



# Section 3: Where do we want to be?

## 3.3 How our strategic enablers will support the change

### Local Authorities:

The work set out in this strategy is intrinsically linked to the work within Local Authorities: from the teams in Public Health, Young People and Adults within Social Care services to colleagues within Economic Development and Employment services. The new DWP employment programme **Connect to Work** devolved to Local Authorities will play a primary role in the agenda gaining traction and being successful.

### NHS Health and Care Services and Primary Care Networks:

Health providers, particularly GPs and PCN Teams will have a role to play in delivering the strategy, particularly by recognizing and acting upon the inextricable links between employment and health. Through identifying people who present in care settings with health conditions that may put their employment at risk and directing them to the right support, health professionals will be well placed to support a “no wrong door” mindset.

### Department for Work and Pensions:

DWP, both locally and nationally, need to be at the heart of this strategy. Working with and creating a strong partnerships will be essential to the success of this programme, ensuring that we are able to identify gaps and duplication in provision and support to bring forward funding and approaches to deliver.

### Local Voluntary and Community Organisations:

Local VCS organisations are key to enabling change. Supporting them to enable better outcomes for residents and signpost to services designed to support, whilst growing the capacity of the sector to enable greater impact on the ground.

### Business Support Organisation and Employers:

Employers and Business Support Organisations such as the Federation of Small Businesses and Herefordshire and Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce will be central to delivery and communication of messaging. Employers will need to be given the tools to support employees moving into workplaces and to celebrate in the successes as we enable this change.



Department  
for Work &  
Pensions



# Section 4: How are we going to get there?



To create inclusive, healthy and productive work environments for all

Working towards a Healthy Inclusive Herefordshire and Worcestershire economy starts with educating employers around the benefits to both employers and employees alike of inclusive workplace practices, from quantitative benefits such as reaching a wider talent market to recruit from, overall improvements in staff retention and generally happier and healthier employees resulting in improved productivity.







Prioritising prevention delivers long-term advantages for employers by reducing hidden costs associated with absenteeism and boosting overall productivity. Additionally, inclusive workplaces contribute further gains by fostering creativity and enhancing problem-solving through diverse perspectives and approaches to challenges.

Evidence shows that increased diversity also positively assists organisational income with individuals with health conditions and disabilities more likely to spend money with organisations who are more inclusive, known as the “purple pound impact”.

Herefordshire and Worcestershire have made progress in supporting businesses to be more inclusive over the last twelve months, by helping organisations to understand how to work with employees with health conditions and disabilities and better support them to manage conditions alongside work. The two counties have also built programmes to support employers around healthier workplaces such as the Public Health initiatives Worcestershire Workwell Live Better programme and Workplace Health checks in Herefordshire.

Moving forward, Health and Work should be increasingly seen as aligned agendas in all system partner thinking and when working with stakeholders. It is essential that the understanding of the intrinsic links between economic development and health are considered and aligned so that employers are able to gain information and support through traditional routes into health and business support to create healthier workplaces with long lasting economic benefits.

## Key areas of focus

	Increase messaging to employers around the benefits of healthy workplaces and provide support and assistance through our local Growth Hubs to source programmes to support employers
	Review data around reasons for sickness and absence from workplaces , considering capacity around low level health interventions to meet needs and develop programmes as needed through NHS, Public Health and other partners.
	Working with DWP to increase the number of disability confident employers across Herefordshire and Worcestershire
	Explore the creation of a charter around good employment for employers in the two counties, linking to current initiatives using key metrics such as job quality and impact on worklessness .
	Increase messaging to employers around current initiatives for residents which can be delivered through workplaces
	Complete review of current workplace health programmes to ensure they meet employer needs, deliver the objectives of the Health and Work strategy and improve health outcomes for residents



# Section 4: How are we going to get there?



To create inclusive, healthy and productive work environments for all

How will this be measured ?	Geographical alignments	Measure	Baseline	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
Increased employer engagement in local programmes	Herefordshire	Workplace Healthchecks	2500	2600	3000	3500
	Worcestershire	Inclusive Worcestershire Leaders	44	100	150	200
Reduction in Fit Notes issued by GPs	Regional level	Number of fit notes	147683	145000	142500	140000
Growth in Disability Confident Levels	Herefordshire	Disability Confident Levels	37	56	83	125
	Worcestershire		262	328	409	512

## Measuring Success and Future Actions (2025–2027)

Achieving success in this priority area will involve tracking progress through both local programme outcomes and key indicators such as fit note issuance levels and the number of Disability Confident employers. These measures will support the development of the inclusive economy that Herefordshire and Worcestershire aim to build.

To support this ambition, the following actions will be undertaken between 2025 and 2027:

- 1. Implementation of a Good Employment Charter** - A shared employment standard will be introduced across both counties, enabling employers to assess and improve their workplace practices. This charter will draw on best practices from other English regions, including mayoral authorities, and build on the existing Inclusive Worcestershire Leaders framework.
- 2. Enhanced Communication with Employers** - Efforts will be made to improve awareness of existing wellbeing programmes. This will involve collaboration with employer representative bodies such as the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce, the two counties' Growth Hubs, and Public Health teams to better communicate the current support landscape. This will include the annual production of a **directory of services** for employers.
- 3. Review of Existing Wellbeing Offer** - A comprehensive survey will be conducted in partnership with Public Health to assess employer needs in the area of workforce wellbeing. This will help identify current challenges, highlight gaps in provision, and ensure that public health initiatives are aligned with employer priorities.

# Section 4: How are we going to get there?



## Create support and pathways for individuals to move into employment

Across Herefordshire and Worcestershire, employment rates are higher than national average, with 81% of residents of working age in employment. However, employment rates for those with health conditions lag behind other areas, at around 65% in Worcestershire and 73% in Herefordshire. Employment for staff with disabilities sits at around 50% of residents in employment.

Inclusive employment across the two counties has become a more prevalent conversation with employers. Recent feedback in the latest Herefordshire and Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce Salary and Benefits report 2025, explored Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and the impacts on employer's recruitment strategies. 77% of employers recognised ED&I as a key organisational objective, highlighting its growing importance within workplace strategies. Employers need confidence to recruit and create the workplace environment that is required to effectively transition individuals.

The right type of work is good for physical and mental health and Focusing support on those with greatest need and developing the tools and programmes to drive this change is possible with greater cohesion across this agenda. The actions taken need to build a system within the two counties that creates the right conditions to support residents, no matter their personal circumstances to build an independent and healthy future - which includes employment.

As Herefordshire and Worcestershire Councils move through devolution, Health and Work needs to be prioritised within the skills and employment agenda. This focus must also be preventative and ensure that young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities moving out of education are given the tools to understand their future options and the pathways to pursue them. As ICBs develop, they must also build capability to ensure that the NHS maximises its impact on supporting economic growth and prosperity for the benefit of local residents.

Key areas of focus	
	Working with Local Authorities , effectively commission support for residents with disabilities and health conditions using devolved programmes such as the Connect to Work programme to enable support.
	Work with the local Business support organisations to promote inclusive behaviours in workforces and sell the benefits of inclusive recruitment to build opportunities for residents across the two counties.
	Simplify the landscape of employment support so that no residents faces a wrong door across the two counties and that support is available for residents.
	Grow the local capacity and knowledge of the employability sector and our employers to gain improved outcomes for residents.
	Develop under the HM Government White Paper a Get Britain Working Plan for Herefordshire working with Shropshire County Council and for Worcestershire with Worcestershire County Council.
	Work collectively to build understanding of the support employers around Inclusive recruitment and supporting individuals with health conditions and disabilities into workforce.

# Section 4: How are we going to get there?



Create support and pathways for individuals to move into employment

How will this be measured ?	Geographical alignments	Measure	Baseline	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
Increase in the number of residents economically inactive in the labour market	Herefordshire	Employment Rates	80.3%	80.3	81	81.5
	Worcestershire		80.3%	80.3	81	81.5
Decrease the levels of inactivity due to Health conditions	Herefordshire	Inactivity Rates due to long term Sickness	4900	4800	4500	4250
	Worcestershire		22200	22000	21000	20500

## Measuring Success and Future Actions (2025–2027)

Achieving success in this priority area will involve tracking progress through both local programme outcomes and key indicators such as levels of employment and inactivity due to long-term health conditions. These measures will support the development and simplification of access to pathways and to remain within employment for residents across Herefordshire and Worcestershire.

- 1. Establish a Unified Front Door for Residents Across Both Counties** - A comprehensive review of access points to employment and health services will be conducted across Herefordshire and Worcestershire. This will provide insights into service users' experiences and inform improvements to the triage process. The goal is to ensure individuals are connected to the most appropriate support at the right time in their journey, thereby enhancing the effectiveness and outcomes of available programmes.
- 2. Strengthen Inclusive Employment Through Collaboration with the DWP Connect to Work Programme** - The Connect to Work programme will play a central role in promoting inclusive and diverse workplaces. In alignment with efforts to increase the number of Disability Confident employers, both counties will explore opportunities to support businesses in creating healthy, inclusive environments. This includes **building on initiatives** such as the Inclusive Worcestershire Leaders Programme to embed inclusive practices across the region.
- 3. Support the Development of 'Get Britain Working' Plans in Herefordshire and Worcestershire** - The Integrated Care Board (ICB) will actively contribute to shaping the counties' **Get Britain Working plans**, ensuring alignment with health and work strategy priorities. System partners will be encouraged to adapt existing programmes to support these plans and to engage in meaningful consultation when introducing new initiatives. This collaborative approach aims to strengthen joint working and deliver improved outcomes for residents.

# Section 4: How are we going to get there?









## Provide early health and employment support intervention to prevent individuals leaving work

Typically, around 1% of all employed residents in both counties have a day off every two weeks due to ill health. Whilst 71% of residents who report health conditions are employed, many of them report that their health condition impacts their careers and limits their employment over the long term. Additionally, the number of employees reporting neurodiversity is increasing and employers will need to evolve to ensure that employees have reasonable adjustments and practices are neuroinclusive to support these staff.

With increasing demand on local NHS services, there is a risk for people with health conditions that impact on their ability to work if they are unable to access services in a timely way. To mitigate this risk, NHS and Public Health will continue to focus on prevention and work collaboratively with employers to identify prevention opportunities. This will include supporting individuals to seek early help and will bring a range of services closer to where people live (for example through a Workwell service in every PCN area).

Poor mental health and wellbeing is a particular challenge. Reported prevalence levels and demands for services have risen dramatically since the pandemic. A mental health survey from 2021 calculated that 57% of our adult population had possibly experienced signs of depression and anxiety, with 15% 'probably' having symptoms. In the two counties around 5.5% of employed individuals are currently accessing secondary mental health services. It has been reported that more than half of all long-term absences are as a result of a mental health condition.

Early support will help individuals to remain in employment, especially when scheme when supported by their employers. This brings benefits to employers in productivity and reduced replacement labour costs. The Workwell programme offers an opportunity for employers to support employees who are at risk of going off sick and those who are struggling to retain work.

Key areas of focus	
	Maximise the impact of the Vanguard pilot Workwell Programme across the two counties, explore learning and lobby for roll out of the programme beyond its current lifetime.
	Work with DWP and Local Authorities to consider opportunities to increase take up in programmes designed to support existing staff with health conditions within two counties.
	Support employers across the two counties to enable effective absence management procedures and implement processes to facilitate better conversations with staff and monitor absence to implement prevention measures.
	Raise profile of existing Public Health and NHS programmes designed to support healthier workplaces to Herefordshire and Worcestershire Employers to maximise takeup and impact.
	Support SMEs to access DWP Health Adjustment Passports to support Occupational Health needs, designed to support employers to understand health needs of employees and put provision in place to support.
	Work with DWP to explore Access to Work and supporting employers to make reasonable adjustments to existing staff

# Section 4: How are we going to get there?



Provide early health and employment support intervention to prevent individuals leaving work

How will this be measured ?	Geographical alignments	Measure	Baseline	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
Engagement levels of Service Users in Health and Employment programmes across the two counties	Herefordshire & Worcestershire	DWP Workwell	300	1650	1650	1650
		Talking Therapies	1140	1140	1552	1738
		IPS Mental Health	-	683	854	943
		IPS Drugs and Alcohol – Job starts	39	40	40	40
Reduction of Sickness Absence Levels	Herefordshire	Percentage of employees aged 16+ who had at least one day off due to sickness absence in the previous working week	2.1	2	1.9	1.8
	Worcestershire		2.3	2	1.9	1.8

## Measuring Success and Future Actions (2025–2027)

Achieving success in this priority area will involve tracking progress through health and employment programme outcomes and key indicators such as levels of sickness absence within employers.

- 1. Expand Awareness of Health and Employment Support Programmes** - In collaboration with employer representative organisations, both counties will work to increase awareness and understanding of available health and employment support programmes. The aim is to maximise participation and ensure that employees at risk of leaving the workforce receive timely support to prevent long-term absence. This will involve identifying synergies between services and launching targeted marketing and communication campaigns to boost engagement. Success will look like finding opportunities for **joint marketing campaigns** targetting participants
- 2. Collaborate with DWP to Promote Employer-Focused Tools** - Employers across the region often face challenges in accessing and utilising tools such as Access to Work and Health Adjustment Passports. Working closely with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), system partners will develop **improved communication strategies** to raise awareness and uptake of these resources among employers.
- 3. Support Employers in Embedding Effective Absence Management Policies** - System partners will engage with local employers to **co-develop practical solutions and resources** that support the implementation of robust absence management policies and processes. These tools will be designed to be easily adopted by employers, helping to reduce long-term sickness absence and improve workforce retention.



# Section 4: How are we going to get there?



Encourage and foster collaboration between local stakeholders to help residents get into and stay in work

Herefordshire and Worcestershire has a plethora of organisations working in this space, across a wider health and employment agenda - from large resourcing organisations to small Voluntary and Community providers. Health and Work ambitions will require partners to come together, recognize each other's contribution and maximise the impact that each plays around the known challenges.

It will require new thinking, ambitious plans and brave leadership to stretch existing resources to bring change in this agenda. The ICB will play a key role in bringing together stakeholders to create delivery plans to support the Health and Work ambitions outlined in this strategy. These delivery plans will then be monitored by an appropriate governance structure that includes representatives from both counties and all key stakeholders.

A key part of the success of this strategy will be working collectively to communicate and reinforce messaging to the public round the links between good work and good health, bringing organisations together under one mantra and one message from all system partners.

Local Authorities will work under their Connect to Work programmes supporting residents into work through their contracting arrangements. Where possible using these to build more local capacity to deliver around this agenda in future and ensure that employers are supported to create the cultures needed for inclusive workforces.

Alongside this the two counties will align their wider Get Britain Working plans to be developed over 2025, to create synergies with the Health and Work Plan alongside existing wider strategies already within the geography to ensure consistency and maximise impact.

Key areas of focus	
	Focus on partnership working with greater integration across health and care, inc. other public sector bodies such as DWP , Local Authorities, Public Health and the VCSE sector bringing them into the Health and Work agenda
	Map the work of stakeholders around this agenda, recognise the value each sector and organisation brings, but also acknowledge the challenges needing resolution.
	Recognise and utilise the opportunities that partnership working brings for shared economies of scale and to avoid duplication of work.
	Ensure that all stakeholders within the agenda act as best practice exemplars with inclusive and health and wellbeing being at the forefront of their employment practices.
	Amplify opportunities to add inclusive workforces and local employment opportunities into social value across public sector procurement practice.
	Collaborate with local stakeholders to develop a population wide campaign that reinforces the intrinsic links between health outcomes and employment outcomes

# Section 4: How are we going to get there?



Encourage and foster collaboration between local stakeholders to help residents get into and stay in work

## Measuring Success and Future Actions (2025–2027)

Success in this priority will be driven by strong relationships that promote collaboration, align efforts across the system, and ensure that both employers and residents benefit from a healthier, more inclusive workforce.

**1. Strengthen Collaborative Governance** - Establish and maintain robust partnership structures to oversee and report on the Health and Work Strategy. This includes forming a **formal governance framework** with regular attendance tracking, progress monitoring, and documented evidence of joint decision-making and shared accountability. The aim is to foster a shared vision and encourage innovative, cross-organisational solutions.

**2. Annual Stakeholder Mapping and Resource Development** - Co-develop and publish an **annual Employer Guide to Health and Work Support** for Herefordshire and Worcestershire. This will be done in collaboration with Growth Hubs and the Chamber of Commerce to maximise visibility and promote integrated, cross-sector approaches. Success will be measured by the number of contributing stakeholders and the guide's reach and engagement.

**3. Identify and Leverage Collaborative Opportunities** - Proactively explore opportunities for joint working, particularly in areas such as Employer Engagement, Marketing, and Triage. The impact will be assessed through the number of collaborative initiatives launched and the extent of shared resource use to drive greater system-wide effectiveness.

**4. Align Social Value with Strategic Goals** - Work closely with procurement teams to ensure that **social value commitments** align with the objectives of the Health and Work Strategy. This includes embedding health and employment outcomes into procurement practices. Progress will be tracked through analysis of current procurement frameworks and the annual value of contracts incorporating relevant social value clauses.

**5. Engage and Inform Residents** - Collaborate to identify effective communication channels and deliver public campaigns that highlight the positive relationship between good employment and health. Success will be measured by the number of campaigns delivered and the uptake of related programmes and services by residents.



# Section 4: How are we going to get there?

## 4.2 Measuring our strategic outcomes

We will use the following outcome measures to understand the impact the strategy and place-based delivery plans have in delivering our vision for residents around Health and Work:

Measure	Herefordshire	Worcestershire	What is good
Numbers of Disability Confident Employers across two counties - DWP	37	262	↑
Levels of sickness absence decline across two counties – OHID	2.1%	2.3%	↓
Employment Rates – DWP	80.3%	80.3%	↑
Disability Employment Rates	73%	65%	↑
Inactivity Rates due to Sickness	8500	22200	↓

# Section 4: How are we going to get there?

## 4.3 Governance

We will use the following Governance board across our system partners to drive the work of the Health and Work Strategy



The above diagram represents the relationships with the health & Work Strategic Board, who will oversee delivery of the outcomes measures.