Autumn Budget 2026: Submission from Communities that Work

September 2026

- People are far more likely to engage with employment support that is embedded in their communities and delivered by organisations they trust. In our experience, the common features of effective employment support are rooted in trusted, community-led and holistic approaches.

- Social landlords are well placed to reach those who are furthest from work, work effectively in partnership, and deliver effective, personalised employment support. As trusted anchor institutions at the heart of communities, they are uniquely positioned to support residents into employment: a 2018 IPPR report calculated that this support is worth some £70 million every year.

- Their wide community reach also enables them to coordinate services effectively and ensure that support mechanisms are available and accessible to people who need them most. These include core employment support – such as one-to-one CV coaching and job-searching assistance – as well as specialist support for more vulnerable tenants. In many instances, this is complemented by wider holistic support, including guidance on navigating the benefits system and helping people to sustain their tenancies.

- The JobsPlus pilot offers valuable insights into how community-led employment support can empower people to secure decent work and progression opportunities. Backed by a strong evidence base in the United States, this model is now being replicated in ten sites across England, funded initially by the Department via HM Treasury's Labour Market Evaluation and Pilots Fund, and via grant funding from the DWP from 2025/6.

- The Learning and Work Institute, Communities that Work and the Institute for Employment Studies are supporting and evaluating the programme sites in Stockton, Maltby, East Finchley, Swale, Leyton, Penge, Borehamwood, Toxteth, Wirral and Wybourn.

- JobsPlus provides intensive and holistic employment support, combined with financial incentives - a one-off 'into work bonus', once participants have sustained new employment or self-employment for at least two months. Support is delivered through an integrated local place that brings together housing, employment, and other local partners. It is open to all of those in the neighbourhood, thereby removing formal barriers and stigma to participation. An informative study of the Stockton site was featured in The Guardian, for example.

- Overall, the programme has demonstrated that independent, community-based employment support can create an environment where people feel comfortable seeking advice, disclosing challenges, and exploring career opportunities without fear of financial repercussions.

- An independent evaluation of JobsPlus from the IES, published in June 2026, has encouraging results for the pilots. Expansion is possible and should be supported by the government in partnership with the social housing sector.

- JobsPlus has shown its success as an effective, community-led model for tackling economic inactivity, particularly among young people. Using a mix of quantitative and qualitative research, and gathering insights between July 2024 and December 2025 through participant surveys, interviews with staff and participants and desk-based research, key findings include:

    - Recruitment surpassed 1,000 participants by the end of December 2025, with the programme engaging around one in six eligible residents on average across all pilot sites.

    - At registration, 25 per cent of participants had low or no qualifications and 81 per cent were out of work. In the period ending December 2025, 27 per cent of participants had secured employment. This compares to 18 per cent at the time of the interim evaluation report (based on data to the end of March 2025), indicating a 50 per cent increase. This suggests that improved employment outcomes may be due to participants needing more time to build skills and confidence and to address barriers before employment.

    - Around one in five participants achieved a non-employment outcome, such as engagement in education, training, volunteering or work-based learning. Survey data also showed improvements in wellbeing and job readiness over time, highlighting the importance of intermediate progress in supporting longer journeys towards work.

Recommendations

- Provide a multi-year funding commitment to sustain and expand the JobsPlus programme beyond March 2027, enabling delivery across the full intended five-year period.
- Scale the model nationally, prioritising areas of high economic inactivity and deprivation to ensure that regions across England can benefit.
- Better integrate the core principles of JobsPlus – co-location with housing, local partnership and community leadership – into mainstream employment support and future Jobcentre Plus reform.
- Recognise social landlords as strategic partners in the employment ecosystem and provide ring-fenced funding for housing-led employment initiatives.

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