Spending Review Submission – Communities that Work
April 2025

Introduction

Communities that Work (CtW) is the national body in England focused on social housing and employment. We bridge the gap between housing, employment and government to drive better job and earnings outcomes for working-age tenants and residents across our communities.

CtW is led by our members – social landlords who own and manage 1.6 million homes across England – who play a vital role in supporting people to thrive through meaningful and sustainable employment.

A commitment to integrating work, skills and housing services is essential to breaking down barriers to good work for those who need it most. CtW's new Housing, Growth and Green Jobs Alliance seeks to advance the connection between Government departments to achieve higher employment rates for local people, growth in green jobs and more homes in net zero states, contributing to the Government's overarching growth mission.

Meeting 80 per cent employment: accelerating the rollout of JobsPlus

CtW welcomes the Government's renewed focus on tackling economic inactivity to meet its wider ambition to reach 80 per cent employment. With more than 9 million people aged 16-64 economically inactive, addressing this challenge will be essential to achieving economic growth and social mobility.

A single, universal service through the JobCentre Plus (JCP) is a welcome ambition, providing a more streamlined and accessible approach to employment support. However, the scale of the challenge we face will require a fundamental shift in how JCP operates. Engaging with hard-to-reach groups, in particular, will necessitate JCP to expand its partnerships with community organisations, healthcare providers and disability groups.

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 by the Department via HM Treasury's Labour Market Evaluation and Pilots Fund. 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.

Fundamentally, 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.

JobsPlus takes an explicitly community-led approach. This means that residents play an active role in shaping provision, championing engagement and providing peer support. Evidence from the United States showed that this helps to build trust and engagement in the service, as well as addressing challenges around stigma and access.

Above all, JobsPlus demonstrates the importance of in-person, community-based support and its potential to complement a modernised, digital employment support service. For many people facing difficult barriers to work, face-to-face visibility in a safe and welcoming environment increases trust and engagement.

While the JobsPlus pilot demonstrates a promising model, its impact is currently limited to just ten sites. This indicates a significant opportunity to build more sustained partnerships to ensure that the most joined-up support is delivered across our communities.

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