Evaluation of the JobsPlus Pilot

Final Report

Amy Fox, Rakhee Patel, Kyla Ellis, Kate Alexander, Joe Cook, Harry Fox, Olivia Garner, Dan Mason, Jade Talbot (IES), Mags Bexon, Jack Bradstreet, Kristina Bronovsky, Helen Gray & Sravanthi Vempalli (Learning and Work Institute)

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Institute for Employment Studies
City Gate
185 Dyke Road
Brighton BN3 1TL
UK

Telephone: +44 (0)1273 763400
Email: askIES@employment-studies.co.uk
Website: www.employment-studies.co.uk

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Executive Summary

Introduction

One in seven working-age adults in England lives in social housing, where residents are more likely to face higher levels of poverty and labour-market disadvantage than the general population. They are twice as likely to be unemployed or disabled, over three times as likely to be lone parents or have no qualifications, and, when employed, to work in lower-skilled, lower-paid roles.

JobsPlus is a voluntary community-led, hyperlocal employment support programme designed to help people in social housing communities find work. It is adapted from the United States model which has demonstrated positive, sustained impacts on employment and earnings for residents and their children. It does this through onsite employment services, community involvement, and financial incentives.

The programme aligns with Government priorities set out in the Get Britain Working and Pathways to Work papers, Keep Britain Working Mayfield review, the Pride in Place Strategy, and the Child Poverty Strategy, all of which emphasise decentralised, tailored support to tackle economic inactivity, improve skills, and strengthen disadvantaged neighbourhoods. This focus on locally delivered, tailored support is consistent with evidence from the US model, which has shown that strong partnerships among landlords, tenants, and local service providers can lead to sustainable, long-term employment outcomes for residents.

In April 2024, the JobsPlus pilot secured funding for 2024–25 from the Department for Work and Pensions and the HM Treasury Labour Markets Evaluation and Pilots Fund. Additional Youth Futures Foundation funding for 16–24-year-olds was added from late 2024, and further DWP funding was later confirmed to extend delivery for 2025–26. The pilot is being delivered by housing associations across 10 neighbourhoods, selected to provide a mix of local contexts, with 300–1,000 households per site, high levels of housing association stock, and a relatively large proportion of households with no one in work. This report builds on the interim findings published in September 2025 to provide evidence on whether the model can be adapted to the UK context and effectively implemented to improve employment outcomes.

JobsPlus has been developed to support participants who are often a considerable distance from the labour market. For many, progress towards employment is non-linear and involves improvements in wellbeing, confidence and skills as necessary stepping stones to sustained employment.

Methodology

Implementation and process evaluation

The evaluation used a mixed-methods approach, combining: Management Information (MI) collected by pilot sites from July 2024 to December 2025; participant surveys completed within one month after programme registration during the same period; follow-up surveys, completed six months after registration (administered to those registered between July 2024 and June 2025), and desk-based research, including a high-level comparison between US and UK models to support the interpretation of UK findings.

Qualitative interview data were collected shortly after delivery began and in the early months that followed, as set out in the interim report. For this report, interview data were collected 15 months after delivery began from housing association staff, delivery partners, participants, and non-participating residents (October 2025–January 2026). In total, 64 interviews with housing association staff and delivery partners were conducted, 92 with participants across the 10 sites and 11 with non-participating residents across six sites. Visits to each pilot site were conducted between October and December 2025 to observe programme delivery.

Impact evaluation

The impact evaluation of JobsPlus used a difference-in-differences (DiD) approach to assess whether the programme improved employment and earnings outcomes for residents in the pilot areas. By comparing how outcomes changed over time in JobsPlus areas relative to similar comparison areas, the method isolated the programme's effect from broader economic or policy trends, relying on evidence that both sets of areas followed similar trajectories prior to implementation. To ensure robust findings, the evaluation selected and tested comparison areas to confirm they matched the pilot sites in their pre-programme trend and controlled for a wide range of individual and household characteristics, such as benefit history, employment history, and earnings. These steps strengthened confidence that any post-intervention differences reflected the early impact of JobsPlus rather than unrelated external factors. As such, the impact evaluation should be interpreted alongside evidence on implementation and outcomes, particularly given the programme’s focus on residents with complex, multiple barriers to work.

Key findings

Implementing JobsPlus

Evidence across pilot sites indicated that JobsPlus was feasible to implement in the UK, with its core components – onsite employment support with wide eligibility, community support for work, and financial incentives – adapting well to different contexts. Since July 2024, most sites had moved from early setup to more stable delivery, supported by more defined and better-resourced staffing structures and strengthened partnership working.

- On-site employment support was the strongest and most consistently delivered component across sites. Participants valued tailored, compassionate and flexible support. Some sites faced practical constraints (such as limited space for partners to co-locate), which created variations in how the model was implemented but did not fundamentally undermine delivery.
- The community support for work component increased programme visibility and trust, and was a key part of community outreach, but the depth of community engagement varied. Word of mouth became a strong recruitment channel at many sites, but the effectiveness of the community champion role varied across sites. This was due to recruitment challenges, staff turnover, and varying levels of connectedness to community networks. There was also little evidence at this early stage of deeper community leadership, such as residents being actively involved in programme design or governance.
- Recruitment surpassed 1000 participants by the end of December 2025 (as recorded in the MI). Hyperlocal targeting continued to reduce stigma and to support engagement among groups less likely to access mainstream employment services.
- Across pilot sites, JobsPlus engaged around one in six eligible residents on average, with engagement levels varying across sites.
- The Into Work Bonus was administered effectively, and provided practical support with bills and transport costs in the early months of work. While it was not a primary motivator for engaging with the programme, it helped some people to remain in employment. Take-up patterns suggest that it was useful but not central to participants' decisions to register for the programme or to the achievement of outcomes.
- Partnership working varied across sites. Where long-standing relationships with community organisations or Jobcentre Plus existed, referrals and support pathways tended to be more established. In other areas, partnerships were still forming, which influenced the pace at which delivery strengthened.
- When asked to compare JobsPlus to their previous experiences of other employment support, most participants stated that they preferred the support provided by JobsPlus. Participants highlighted that JobsPlus offered more than standard job support, explored what they wanted, took their needs seriously and provided a more holistic form of support. JobsPlus was seen as more welcoming and personalised.

Overall fidelity to the model remained high, though the pace and depth of implementation varied across sites. These variations reflected local context and capacity, highlighting that JobsPlus was flexible and responsive to local conditions. It also reflected the time required to build trust, relationships, and a community presence. This underlines the importance of longer-term delivery and funding to enable the model’s full effects to emerge.

JobsPlus participants

Evidence indicates that JobsPlus was reaching housing association residents facing complex barriers to employment, and who were likely to benefit from the intensive support available. Between July 2024 and December 2025:

- One-quarter (25%) of participants had no or low qualifications (Entry Level or Level 1), compared with 31% of all residents in the JobsPlus pilot sites.
- Most participants (81%) were out of work at registration: 32% had mostly been in paid work previously, 28% had moved in and out of employment, and 14% had never been in paid employment.
- One-third (33%) of participants had very low or below-average wellbeing, compared with 15–17% in the general population (Ng Fat et al., 2017).

There were positive indications that the model was engaging groups often considered underserved, including those who were economically inactive. For example:

- 39% had parental or caring responsibilities.
- Many (63%) were claiming Universal Credit.
- One-third (33%) had a health condition affecting daily activities, compared with 20% of all residents in the pilot sites.

JobsPlus was also effective at engaging younger residents and people from ethnic minority backgrounds:

- Around one-third (31%) of participants were aged 16–24 years, compared with 12% in pilot sites.
- Just under one-quarter (24%) were from a Black ethnic minority background compared to 12% of all residents in the pilot sites.

Taken together, this profile demonstrates JobsPlus was engaging residents who were typically further from the labour market and who may require longer and more intensive support before employment outcomes can be achieved.

Experiences of engagement and support

- Many participants reported feeling more confident and willing to engage after spending time in the community hub, describing it as friendly, welcoming, and conveniently located. Others were motivated by opportunities for training, improving wellbeing, having a reason to leave the house, or receiving help with finances and budgeting.
- Some individuals were initially unsure about engaging with JobsPlus due to mistrust of statutory services, previous experiences with employment services, or uncertainty about what the programme could offer. However, these reservations tended to ease once they visited the hub.
- The qualitative research showed that most participants were motivated by a desire to secure work or improve their financial situation. Many sought help with specific aspects of job hunting, such as CV writing, interview preparation, or career guidance.

Several felt they needed more substantial or personalised support than they had previously received from Jobcentre Plus.

Outcomes

Employment outcomes should be interpreted in the context of participants' distance from the labour market and the non-linear nature of journeys towards work.

- At the time of the interim report (based on data to the end of March 2025), 18% of participants had achieved an employment outcome. This compares to 27% in the period ending December 2025, indicating a 50% increase. Interview findings suggest that improved employment outcomes may be due to participants needing more time to build skills and confidence and to address barriers before employment.
- 29% who were out of work at registration achieved an employment outcome, and 22% of those already in work moved into a different role.
- Just under one-quarter (23%) of participants who achieved an employment outcome did so within one month of registering.
- Participants who were not in work at registration and joined at the start of the programme's delivery period (July to September 2024) had higher job entry rates than later cohorts – 44% moved into employment. Early participants were also more likely to report health difficulties than those who joined later, suggesting that sustained support over time can help individuals with complex needs make progress. It is also likely that early joiners were motivated and had more positive attitudes to work than later joiners, given the voluntary nature of the programme.
- Sustained employment outcomes at three and six months were positive but reduced at nine months:
  - 45% of those who achieved an employment outcome qualified for the two-month Into Work Bonus
  - 61% of participants who moved into employment were still in employment after three months
  - 55% sustained employment for six months, and 26% sustained employment for nine months.

  These figures reflect only participants who had reached each milestone within the reporting period. Overall, they suggest that once participants entered employment, many were able to remain in work over time, supported by ongoing, personalised support.
- Women and participants with higher level qualifications (Level 4–6) were more likely to sustain employment for three and six months compared with men or those with lower qualification levels.
- Women, participants aged 55 or above, those having parental or caring responsibilities, and individuals reporting substantial health issues were less likely to achieve job outcomes, highlighting the need for more tailored pathways for these groups. These differences are consistent with the complex and intersecting barriers

faced by these groups and underline the importance of tailored, flexible pathways and sufficient time in support.

- Most participants moved into permanent or stable roles:
  - 58% of participants who moved into employment secured permanent contracts
  - 30% entered non-permanent roles (rolling, temporary, casual or fixed term),
  - 2% became self-employed.
- 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.
- Participants reported improvements in mental health including reduced anxiety, low mood and social isolation alongside improvements in resilience. For some, feeling more settled and confident reduced barriers to considering work and supported early steps to employment. These outcomes were often described as essential precursors to applying for roles or sustaining work once secured.
- Through education, training, and personalised support, participants developed new skills, qualifications, and soft skills such as increased confidence and communication. These gains contributed directly to increased job readiness and progression.

Success factors

Qualitative Comparative Analysis identified a combination of factors associated with above-median work outcomes, in addition to high-quality, personalised one-to-one employment support. These factors were:

- A higher percentage of social renting in the local area (over 50%).
- A strong community champion presence.
- Strong and widespread use of the discretionary financial support element of the JobsPlus model (separate from the Into Work Bonus).

Other key factors enabling effective implementation were:

- Strong and mature local partnerships that provided clear governance, reliable referral routes, and access to specialist support.
- High-quality, personalised caseworker support that built trust, tackled complex and interconnected barriers, and strengthened participants' readiness for work through holistic, wrap-around support.
- Outreach through local community organisations, community hubs, community champions, and word-of-mouth that broadened reach and enhanced community engagement and trust. This approach also helped sustain participation among residents.

- Flexible and accessible delivery methods, such as welcoming community hubs and discretionary funding, that reduced practical barriers, facilitated rapid support, and let participants engage at their own pace.
- Jobcentre Plus referred residents to the pilot in some areas, helping to maximise engagement. This complemented the housing associations' own outreach activity, which remained the primary route for engaging residents.
- In some sites, sustained relationship-driven employer engagement aligned support with the local labour market and built employer confidence in participants' readiness for work, helping to create viable pathways into employment.

Impact evaluation

The impact evaluation findings should be interpreted as early and indicative, rather than as a measure of the programme's full effectiveness. The impact evaluation did not find early impacts on employment or receipt of out-of-work benefits. This is unsurprising given that impacts could only be estimated at an early stage after delivery commenced, and over a period of less than six months:

- As the intervention was aimed at a broad range of individuals who were not working at all or in very low-paid employment at the outset, the expectation was that it would take some time for JobsPlus to start to have an impact on employment and benefit receipt outcome measures. Indeed, this was the case with the US pilots.
- Evidence from the implementation and process evaluation indicated that it took time for some pilots to implement all aspects of the JobsPlus model. Many elements of the programme were not fully embedded by October 2024, the point at which outcomes began to be observed in the post-intervention analysis sample. For example, the saturation approach is unlikely to have been fully functional, meaning a large proportion of those on out-of-work benefits or in low-paid employment in the pilot sites may not have experienced any impact from JobsPlus at this point. These gaps in early implementation are likely to have limited the programme's ability to influence employment and earnings outcomes during the initial months of delivery.

There were signs that JobsPlus was beginning to affect monthly earnings towards the end of the 5-month period considered in the analysis. However, rather than the intervention increasing average earnings, the analysis sample in the pilot sites appeared to earn less than expected in the absence of JobsPlus during this early delivery period. This finding was statistically significant in the fifth month after the baseline observation. At this stage, it is not possible to determine the drivers of this pattern. The short follow-up window means that early fluctuations may not reflect longer-term trends. Many participants are likely to still be involved in support, training, and skills development, which typically take time to translate into improved employment and earnings.

The absence of early impacts should therefore be interpreted as consistent with both the programme design and international evidence, rather than as evidence of ineffectiveness. A longer-term evaluation would therefore be needed to make a fuller assessment of impact

Scalability

Evidence suggested strong potential for scaling, provided key conditions are in place, including clearer local governance set-ups and multi-year funding that allows sufficient time for delivery to mature.

Recommendations for ongoing delivery and future scale-up

- Allow time for the model to embed by giving certainty of a longer delivery timeframe, recognising that trust-based, community-led approaches strengthen as relationships and local presence mature.
- Adapt the community champion role to local conditions, recruiting champions where they are viable, and using alternative trusted partners where they are not.
- Strengthen governance and partnerships by supporting more consistent functioning of steering groups, partner roles and shared referral pathways.
- In addition to the community champion element, strengthen resident and community involvement. Create ways for residents to influence design and delivery of the programme.
- Maintain strong employer engagement, including specialist brokerage or screening capacity where local labour markets require it.
- Deepen tailored support for groups with greater barriers to job entry (e.g. older adults, carers, women, and people with significant health conditions), and work with employers to develop more flexible, adjusted roles that accommodate diverse needs.
- Review financial incentive thresholds, particularly where current criteria exclude part-time workers and those with health conditions, to better reflect realistic employment pathways and reward progression, balancing this against the Government's objectives to ensure people work a certain number of hours.
- Protect quality through staffing investment. Carefully manage caseloads and staffing ratios, provide structured supervision, and secure longer-term funding to retain skilled staff.
- Improve access to skills and training by making pathways clearer to participants and strengthening links with education and training providers, including routes into apprenticeships, for participants with lower qualifications.

Glossary

Term	Definition
Caseworker or employment adviser	An adviser who works with JobsPlus participants to help them transition into work and may refer the participant to other wider support services as part of the person-centred support.
Community champion	An advocate (normally a resident or former participant) who promotes the JobsPlus programme by building trust and improving communication between residents and the programme staff. They are involved in community outreach and engagement, sharing information about JobsPlus and employment opportunities, and providing community support.
Community hub	A location where JobsPlus support is situated, such as a community centre or a designated office space on or close to the housing estate. It includes representatives from various services, such as Jobcentre Plus, mental health providers, and local voluntary and community sector providers. These services may be co-located to provide joined-up support for participants seeking work.
Financial incentive	A financial bonus (see Into Work Bonus) for those finding and sustaining work.
Financial support	Discretionary funding provided by sites to participants, including wider support for clothing, travel, childcare, etc.
Into Work Bonus	A payment of £400 is received when a participant has sustained new employment or self-employment for at least two months and earns at least £677 monthly.
Jobcentre Plus	A government-funded employment organisation, part of the Department for Work and Pensions. Its aim is to help people of working age find employment in the UK,
JobsPlus	A pilot employment programme adapted from a United States (US) initiative. It aims to support social housing residents in gaining employment or improving job opportunities through a place-based, community-driven approach.
Saturation approach	The JobsPlus programme is available to all residents living within a defined geographical area. There are no additional qualifying criteria beyond being an HA resident in that area.
Site	The JobsPlus programme is being piloted by housing associations across ten neighbourhoods in England, or, at one site, by a contracted delivery partner. The programme is available to the residents served by each participating housing association within the defined geographic area.

Abbreviations

Term	Definition
DWP	The Department for Work and Pensions
HA	Housing Association
IES	Institute for Employment Studies
JCP	Jobcentre Plus
LSOA	Lower-level Super Output Area
L&W	Learning and Work Institute
MI	Management Information
MSOA	Middle Layer Super Output Area
QCA	Qualitative Comparative Analysis
ToC	Theory of Change

1 Introduction

1.1 Policy background and rationale for the JobsPlus pilot

One in six working-age people in England lives in social housing, where residents are more likely to face higher rates of relative poverty and disadvantage than the general population (Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, 2025; Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2025). Social housing residents are:

- Twice as likely to be unemployed or disabled
- Over three times as likely to be lone parents or to lack qualifications
- When employed, more likely to hold lower-skilled jobs and earn about a third less than those in other tenures (Alexander, Evans and Wilson, 2022).

In part, these findings reflect how the limited supply of social housing is allocated, with preference given to those with the highest need. However, these poor outcomes are compounded by the fact that people in social housing experiencing this disadvantage have typically had limited access to employment support. They may not meet eligibility requirements for major programmes and may not receive support through Jobcentre Plus (JCP), either because they are on benefits that do not systematically offer proactive support or because they are not claiming benefits.

Such significant labour market challenges reinforce the case for approaches that are carefully tailored to local contexts. Previous place-based models of employment support have operated on the premise that a deeper understanding of local circumstances and residents' barriers to work enables the provision of targeted support to achieve positive outcomes (Bramley et al., 2022). This can help to overcome geographic disparities in labour market outcomes.

Some place-based models have adopted a saturation approach to supporting residents (Bramley et al., 2022; What Works Centre for Local Economic Growth, 2018). This entails providing intensive employment support that is accessible to all residents in a specific neighbourhood. The aim is to create a critical mass of positive employment outcomes that generate spillover effects, in which the success of some individuals inspires, influences, and supports others within the same community. This is expected to have a greater impact than programmes with narrower eligibility criteria.

There is clear potential for social housing providers to be key providers of this type of place-based employment support. Social housing providers have a strong presence in local communities, maintain close relationships with residents, and understand their needs. They are also a key funder of employment support in the UK (Young, 2024), making them well-placed to help people towards work.

There is also recognition in current policy of the need for effective partnership working. Instead of placing full responsibility on a single provider, a consortium of local organisations, including anchor institutions, key service providers, and local authorities, can offer a more cohesive approach. By working together, these organisations can create a cohesive network that addresses various aspects of community wellbeing, including employment support, skills development, health and wellbeing, and social services (Young, 2022).

The JobsPlus model of employment support, originating in the United States, enables social housing providers to offer employment support to residents through a community-led programme based on joined-up working with local agencies. The JobsPlus model aligns with the priorities outlined in key Government policies, including:

- **The Get Britain Working White Paper** (Department for Work and Pensions, 2024). The White Paper called for a decentralised approach to employment support and for increased leadership and coordination at the local level, especially by mayoral authorities, to address issues such as economic inactivity, poor health, and skills gaps.
- **Pathways to Work Green Paper** (Department for Work and Pensions, 2025). The paper proposed reforms to employment support by enhancing locally led systems and better coordinating employment, health, and skills services. It highlighted the importance of mayoral authorities in developing integrated services to reduce economic inactivity and help people with long-term health conditions enter or remain in work.
- **Keep Britain Working: Mayfield Review** (Department for Work and Pensions, 2025). The review highlighted rising ill health as a major cause of economic inactivity and called for shared responsibility among employers, the government, and the NHS to prevent job losses and keep people connected to work.
- **The Pride in Place Strategy** (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2025). The Strategy focused on some of the UK's most deprived neighbourhoods and aimed to support community-driven local regeneration. It recognised that improvements in employment, skills and community wellbeing can strengthen neighbourhoods and contribute to wider regeneration and economic renewal.
- **The Child Poverty Strategy** (Department for Work and Pensions, 2025). This set out a focus on supporting parents, particularly lone parents, to move into stable work. It reinforced the importance of tailored employment support for parents in tackling child poverty and improving outcomes for families, including those in social housing.

The JobsPlus pilot, therefore, provided an opportunity to generate valuable insights into effective strategies and challenges in locally driven efforts to reduce unemployment, ill health, and inactivity.

1.2 JobsPlus US model

The JobsPlus model was first introduced in the mid-1990s in public housing developments in the United States. The programme operated in six housing

developments across the US from 1998–2003 and resulted in a sustained positive impact on residential earnings (MDRC, n.d). From 2000 onwards, the programme model was in place at most of these housing developments (Riccio, 2010). These communities faced high rates of poverty and unemployment, with up to half of residents unemployed and a third having significant health conditions (Bloom et al., 2005).

The core elements of the US model are:

- Employment services at onsite job centres in the participating housing developments.
- Changes in rent rules that provide a greater financial incentive to work.
- Community support for work, through which information about work-related opportunities is spread through neighbour-to-neighbour outreach and other social networking efforts.

A key part of the model is that it targets all working-age residents, attempting to saturate the housing developments with information, services, and incentives to support work. A summary of the US / UK model can be found in the Technical Annex.

1.3 JobsPlus UK model

Building on its success in the US, Learning and Work Institute (L&W), in partnership with Communities that Work, the representative body for social landlords engaged in employment and training support, developed a UK-specific version of the model for testing in the UK context (Wilson and McCallum, 2018). This community-led employment support model aims to provide employment and wrap-around support for residents in social housing, delivered in partnership with key local agencies. It consists of several key components set out below.

Onsite employment services

Employment support is located within community hubs situated within or near social housing estates, where specialist employment advisers deliver one-to-one employment support. Alongside employment support, the hub offers a range of co-located employment-related services, including housing assistance, mental health support, JCP services, and financial aid, ensuring comprehensive and coordinated support for residents. The hub aims to be accessible to residents, located within walking distance. It allows employment advisers to easily drop in and visit residents in their homes or informal settings, promoting the support and building trust.

Community support for work

External networks, local services, and community groups act as 'trusted intermediaries' for raising awareness of JobsPlus. Residents play an active role in shaping support and promoting the programme, working closely with housing association (HA) staff. Some take on the role of community champions, facilitating outreach through community events and informal face-to-face meetings, providing peer support, and serving as key communication links between residents and staff. Others contribute through local steering

groups, ensuring they have a voice in how the programme is delivered. This involvement builds credibility and trust, reduces the stigma associated with seeking support, particularly for those who have struggled to engage with other employment support services in the past, and draws on the community's existing social capital.

Financial incentives

Financial incentives are tied to job outcomes, offering a £400 Into Work Bonus for those who secure and maintain employment or self-employment for two consecutive months, earning at least £677 per month gross (aligned with the administrative earnings threshold below which claimants face more intensive work-search requirements). This bonus is excluded from benefit assessments, ensuring it is not offset by lower benefit payments and is exempt from income tax.

Saturation

JobsPlus is open to everyone of a working age within a defined geographical area and who wish to access employment support. This approach avoids complex eligibility criteria associated with many employment schemes, reduces the stigma of being singled out for needing support, helps normalise job-seeking, and allows people to see others making progress. Another aim of saturation is to create positive spillover effects so that benefits experienced beyond just the residents who participate, by fostering a shared culture of work where the success of some individuals inspires, influences, and supports others within the same community.

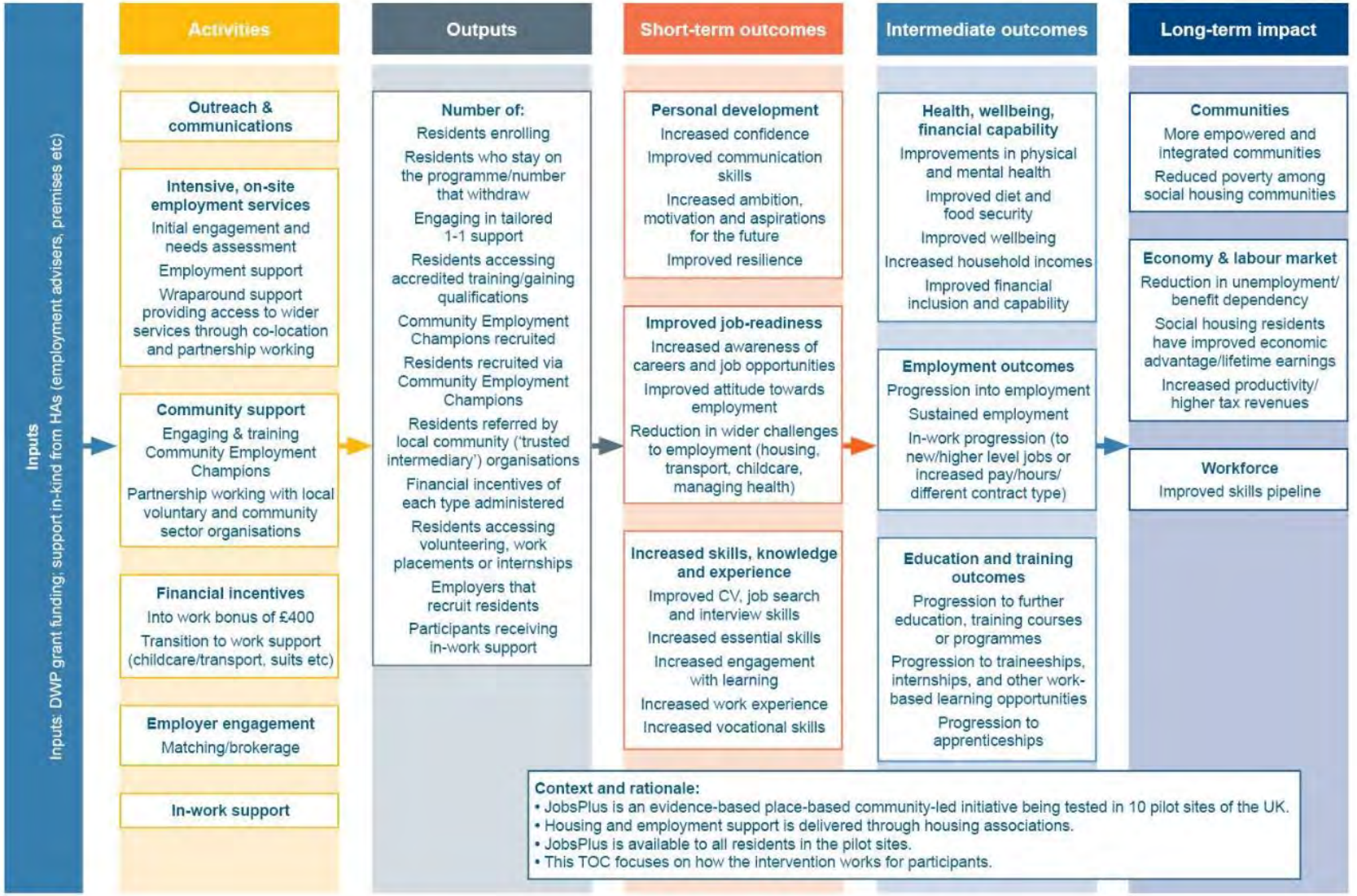
The main differences between the US and UK JobsPlus programmes are described in Table 1.1 in the Technical Annex. The key points of difference relate to:

- In the US, JobsPlus has been operated by selected public housing agencies across the country, which are funded by the federal government but locally managed. Residents of these publicly owned housing developments must have an income below a certain threshold to enter, and how much they pay in rent to the housing agency depends on their income, which the agencies track. Residents who have very little income pay very little in rent, and, under typical rules, residents who increase their income pay more in rent. In the UK, the central government provides funding, but local councils and HAs are the main providers. There has also been significant privatisation of social housing since the 1980s, resulting in a more mixed tenure. For example, in the UK, housing can be rented from HAs or councils at reduced rents, or it can be part-sold, part-rented as shared ownership.
- In the US model, the JobsPlus financial incentive is rent-based. Tenants' rent is frozen, or increases are limited for a set number of years as income rises, removing potential disincentives to work. In the UK, there is a one-off 'Into Work Bonus' of £400, once JobsPlus participants have sustained new employment or self-employment, earning at least £677 per month, for at least two months.
- The duration of the first pilot in the US (referred to here as the "original demonstration") was five years (from 1998 to 2003) and tested the model in six public

housing developments, whereas in the UK, the pilot phase is under two years and tested in ten HA sites which operated between July 2024 and March 2026.

The Theory of Change (ToC) for the JobsPlus UK model is set out in Figure 1.1 below, with a fuller description of the ToC and the intended mechanisms of change in section 1.1 of the Technical Annex.

Figure 1.1: JobsPlus Theory of Change diagram



1.4 Setting up JobsPlus pilots

Following the success of the original US programme, L&W worked proactively with 19 social housing providers between 2016 and 2018, supported by Communities that Work, to develop a proposal to test the JobsPlus model in the UK (Wilson & McCallum, 2018). The Work and Pensions Select Committee recommended that the UK Government trial the US-style JobsPlus programme in 2023. Using social housing providers to pilot JobsPlus aligned with DWP's recommendation to target employment support in local areas, allowing support to be tailored to the needs and opportunities of local areas and their residents (Work and Pensions Committee, 2023). It also presented an opportunity to highlight the role these providers can play in their residents' broader lives.

In April 2024, the JobsPlus pilot programme secured funding for 2024–25 from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) in conjunction with the HM Treasury Labour Markets Evaluation and Pilots Fund. The Youth Futures Foundation (YFF) also subsequently committed funds from November 2024 to March 2026 for delivery and evaluation focused on participants aged 16–24. In June 2025, additional funding was confirmed by DWP, to support full delivery for the second year of delivery (April 2025 to March 2026).

A final set of 10 pilot sites was confirmed in spring 2024. Sites were selected to include:

- A mix of urban and rural areas;
- Between 350 and 1,000 households

Table 1.1 Number of households by pilot site and workless adults

Pilot site	Number of households
East Finchley, Barnet, London	1000
Borehamwood, Hertfordshire	1037
Leyton, London	886
Penge, Bromley, London	820
Rotherham,	738
Sheffield	1000
Sittingbourne, Kent	840
Stockton-on-Tees	605
Toxteth, Liverpool	1000
Wirral	370

Source: Census 2021

Table 1.2 below provides an overview of key statistics for the 10 pilot sites, focusing on local labour market and social indicators, including caring responsibilities, employment rates, unemployment, inactivity, qualifications, health, disability, and housing tenure, at the

Lower layer Super Output Area (LSOA) level from the 2021 census. A more detailed breakdown of the site contextual data can be found in the Technical Annex. A description of the sites can be found below.

Table 1.2: Key statistics for pilot sites

Area	Dependent children (%)	Caring duties (%)	Unemployment (%)	No. employed adults in household (%)	Economically inactive (%)	Lower-skilled jobs (%)	No quals (%)	Social rented (%)	Disabled under Equality Act (%)
East Finchley, Barnet (London)	35.6	9.9	8.5	34.3	30.3	35.2	13.6	48.2	16.6
Borehamwood (Hertfordshire)	40.8	10.2	6.8	34.8	27.6	41.0	18.0	51.7	19.6
Leyton (London)	40.9	8.3	11.2	23.9	31.2	44.4	16.4	54.8	13.8
Penge, Bromley (London)	33.1	8.2	7.1	27.3	23.8	34.8	14.1	45.3	16.4
Rotherham	36.4	12.1	9.5	38.7	31.0	62.7	25.2	20.3	23.2
Sheffield	45.3	12.6	8.9	38.6	38.2	55.6	27.7	55.2	21.6
Sittingbourne (Swale, Kent)	42.3	10.3	4.6	22.0	19.8	39.5	13.9	13.6	16.9
Stockton-on-Tees	37.0	13.6	13.1	43.9	38.0	57.9	22.6	35.1	23.4
Toxteth (Liverpool)	30.7	9.1	11.9	42.1	41.2	43.4	20.4	52.1	22.6
Wirral	40.4	13.7	12.5	48.9	39.6	61.0	22.9	60.9	28.0
England average	36.6	9.9	2.9	28.9	22.5	34.1	12.4	17.1	17.3

Source: 2021 census

Site descriptions

Primrose Hill and Wrensfield Estates, Stockton-on-Tees

- Historic industrial town shaped by shipbuilding, sail making, rope making and port activity; later industrial decline created long-term unemployment pockets.
- Residents face barriers such as low skills, health-related worklessness, and higher than average economic inactivity.
- Limited transport links into wider Teesside reduce access to emerging employment sectors.

Toxteth (L8), Liverpool

- Diverse inner-city area shaped by Liverpool's maritime history and large Black community; long history of economic marginalisation.
- Severe industrial decline led to extremely high unemployment, especially among young people and minority ethnic groups.
- Barriers include racial discrimination, low qualifications, intergenerational poverty and weak trust in institutions.

- Legacy of social unrest in the 1980s persists to the present day

Bidston Rise, Birkenhead

- Neighbourhood located between historically affluent areas and post-war council estates shaped by Birkenhead's shipbuilding heritage.
- Industrial decline reduced access to stable employment; residents face skill mismatches with newer service sector roles.
- Physical separation created by the Bidston Hill ridge and limited transport adds to labour market isolation.

Kemsley, Sittingbourne (Kent)

- Purpose-built garden village for workers at the major Kemsley Paper Mill, with a community shaped entirely around industrial employment.
- Closure of paper mills and a shift toward logistics/retail has left many with legacy manufacturing skills and limited qualifications.
- Barriers include industrial health impacts, restricted mobility and adjustment to modern labour markets.

Penge, Bromley

- Former rural hamlet transformed by canals, railways and the Crystal Palace; now a dense, lower-income enclave within a suburban borough.
- Barriers include low wages, insecure work, childcare constraints and competition for jobs despite proximity to central London.
- Older housing stock and local pockets of deprivation affect residents' stability and job readiness.

Cowley Hill, Borehamwood

- Edge of town neighbourhood within a growing commuter hub known for film studio links and rapid housing development.
- Challenges include a mismatch between local skills and available roles, rising living costs and limited access to suitable employment opportunities.
- Competition for lower-skilled roles and a lack of progression opportunities affect residents.

Grange Estate, East Finchley (Barnet)

- Pre-war social housing estate with a strong identity but limited green space and growing congestion.
- Barriers include high cost of living, childcare constraints, competition for jobs, and lower qualifications among some residents.
- Proximity to affluent areas does not translate into equal access to opportunities.

Beaumont Estate, Leyton (London)

- 1960s high-rise estate with a history of disinvestment, regeneration cycles and social fragmentation.
- Barriers include persistent poverty, gang-related tensions, low pay, and lack of access to higher-skilled roles in rapidly developing East London.

- Residents face displacement pressures as regeneration reshapes the local housing mix.

Wybourn, Sheffield

- 1920s council estate built to rehouse families from inner-city slums; shaped by proximity to steelworks and collieries.
- Deindustrialisation has left low-wage service work, health issues and overcrowding as major barriers.
- Social isolation from the estate's topography contributes to limited job access.

Maltby East, Rotherham

- Former mining community dominated by Maltby Main Colliery until its closure in 2013; strong mining heritage identity.
- High unemployment, low job density (local jobs for only 30% of working-age residents) and dependence on commuting.
- Barriers include lower skills, transport limitations, rural isolation, and health impacts from industrial work.

All selected sites completed delivery plans, detailing how they will engage eligible residents, the format of individual needs assessments, and the setup of onsite employment services and support. They also described existing partnership and governance structures and staffing plans for the pilot.

By May 2024, plans for delivering at all 10 pilot sites were finalised, with each scheduled to go live in early July 2024. Initially, it was expected that the sites would be operational from May 2024. However, the UK general election announced for July 4, 2024, led to a delivery delay until after the election, in accordance with Cabinet Office guidelines on government-funded activities during the pre-election period[1].

1.5 Evaluation of the pilots and technical assistance

The evaluation of the JobsPlus pilot in the UK was designed to ensure rigour and relevance, drawing on the experience and expertise of L&W and the Institute for Employment Studies (IES), independent research organisations. The evaluation approach was also informed by lessons from previous large-scale employment interventions. L&W and IES formed a strategic partnership to lead the evaluation, with support from MDRC, the original developer of the JobsPlus model in the United States. This collaboration was intentionally structured to separate programme delivery from evaluation, ensuring objectivity and credibility in assessing the model's effectiveness.

[1] This pre-election period of sensitivity means that government departments will normally observe discretion about making new policy announcements or decisions that could influence voters.

L&W, as the overall programme lead, was responsible for grant management, coordination of pilot activities, facilitation of technical assistance to delivery partners, and working with IES on the evaluation. IES led the implementation and process evaluation, and L&W led the impact evaluation. In addition, IES undertook a transport and feasibility study for the YFF strand, working closely with L&W to ensure all evaluation activity was embedded into the pilot from the outset.

This partnership model also enabled insights from the evaluation to support delivery partners in real time through the technical assistance workstream. The technical assistance workstream was delivered through four strands:

- **Community of practice workshops:** Monthly themed collaborative workshops to share best practice and equip HA staff with the skills and tools required to implement the model.
- **Guidance:** A series of 18 written guides were developed and shared with HAs on key aspects of implementation.
- **Tailored support:** Each site was supported by a dedicated Technical Assistant (TA) who acted as the primary point of contact. This enabled the TAs to provide customised, timely, and proactive advice to sites. This helped to inform the production of the guidance.
- **Engagement activities:** A comprehensive programme of engagement designed to raise awareness of JobsPlus, promote insights from delivery, and share emerging evidence on the effectiveness of the model. This included national press coverage and stakeholder site visits.

Technical assistance and programme support were provided to sites to ensure fidelity to the model, support continuous improvement in implementation, and inform the next phase of JobsPlus in the UK.

1.6 Evaluation questions

Building on the evidence from the JobsPlus Implementation and Process Evaluation (IPE) interim report published in September 2025 (Fox et al., 2025), the JobsPlus evaluation aims to determine whether the model can be adapted to the UK context and successfully implemented to improve employment outcomes. It will provide evidence to inform decision-making about the potential future expansion of the programme. The evaluation consists of IPE and impact evaluation strands.

The aim of the impact evaluation was to estimate the causal impact of JobsPlus on a range of outcomes, including employment, earnings and claims for out-of-work benefits. The main research question that the impact evaluation sought to answer was:

- Did the JobsPlus pilots increase the likelihood that residents in the pilot sites achieved a range of outcomes compared with what would have been expected if the intervention had not been introduced?

As the impact evaluation was only able to estimate impacts on short-term outcomes for an early cohort of residents, the main focus was on whether JobsPlus increased the

likelihood of residents being employed in a three-month period after baseline observation (October 2024). Being employed in this three-month period was selected as the primary outcome given that a high proportion of those who were expected to make use of the support available through JobsPlus were likely to be out-of-work initially. However, the impact evaluation also estimated the impact of JobsPlus on a wider range of secondary outcomes, drawing on evidence from the US pilots on where the impacts of JobsPlus were felt. This included considering how the impact of the intervention evolved over time.

The IPE aimed to answer five research questions:

- Was it possible to implement the JobsPlus programme effectively in the UK?
- How did the programme work overall, in different contexts and for various groups?
- What outcomes were achieved and for whom?
- What factors contributed to the success of implementing JobsPlus and achieving outcomes?
- Would this or similar programmes be scalable in the future?

The evaluation was supported by a structured analytical framework; full details are in the Technical Annex.

2 Methodology

2.1 Implementation and process evaluation

The evaluation is underpinned by a Theory of Change (ToC) (see Figure 1.1 above), which maps the links among the programme's activities, target outputs, and planned outcomes and impacts. The evaluation framework sets out the research themes, questions, and evidence sources used in this study. Data were triangulated across themes to strengthen findings. The full framework can be found in the Technical Annex along with the evaluation timeline (Figure 2.1).

To test and evidence the ToC, the evaluation used the following data sources:

Data sources

The following quantitative data sources were used:

- **An analysis of Management Information (MI)** collected by pilot sites, which recorded key information about participants' characteristics and employment outcomes. This report uses data collected between July 2024 and December 2025. Across the 75 fields in the MI data, some were thoroughly completed, while others contained gaps. However, when data were missing, it was unclear whether the caseworker had not collected the information or if a participant had declined to respond. In some instances, this limits the evaluation's ability to accurately interpret the MI data.
- **Baseline survey data**, completed by JobsPlus participants at registration, included questions about work history, current employment, barriers to finding work, goals, financial inclusion, and demographics. It also featured two validated measures to assess changes in wellbeing and job-search confidence. A response rate of 82% was achieved (737 participants). As the survey was optional, participants who completed the baseline survey may not reflect the views of all programme participants. Compared with the MI, the sample was broadly similar in demographics of the participants.
- **Endline survey data,** completed online or by telephone by JobsPlus participants six months following registration (administered to those registered between July 2024 and June 2025). The survey repeated questions from the baseline survey and asked a small number of additional questions about perceived outcomes. A response rate of 29% was achieved (136 participants). A comparison of the demographics of the baseline and endline survey respondents indicated some differences: the endline sample contained fewer males, younger adults, and Black participants, and a higher proportion of older adults, people reporting a disability, and those selecting 'prefer not to say' across several characteristics (see Technical Annex Table 2.2 for further details). As before, the survey was optional, and participants who completed the endline survey may not represent the views of all participants in the programme.

- **Desk research**, which included a high-level comparison between JobsPlus US and JobsPlus UK, was undertaken to support the interpretation of early UK findings at the 12 and 18-month stage. It is not possible to compare outcomes of JobsPlus US and UK at these timepoints. This is because in the US, the model was still being developed when implementation began, and so outcomes were not reported at the 12 and 18-month stage as they are in this UK study. However, the comparison between UK and US studies highlighted several themes relevant to interpreting early UK delivery, including the financial incentive, participant profiles, resident engagement, and variation in implementation across sites. It draws on eight MDRC evaluation reports on JobsPlus US, including the main demonstration report Promoting Work in Public Housing – The Effectiveness of Jobs-Plus (Bloom et al., 2005). Further detailed evidence is provided in the Technical Annex.

In-depth case studies were undertaken to provide rich qualitative insight into how JobsPlus was implemented across the 10 sites and to explore how contextual factors shape delivery and outcomes. This aspect of the evaluation drew on interviews and observation:

- **Depth interviews were conducted with key stakeholders** 15 months after the programme's start. For each pilot site, the interview sample consisted of up to three housing association (HA) staff members (project managers, employment advisers, and community champions), delivery partners, and strategic stakeholders, such as local authority representatives and employers. These interviews were semi-structured and focused on stakeholders' experiences of programme engagement, partnership working, and implementation. In total, 64 interviews were conducted across the 10 pilot sites.
- **Depth interviews with JobsPlus participants** were carried out between October 2025 and January 2026 to gain insights into participant experiences of the programme. These took place predominantly face-to-face, with some completed online over Teams. A total of 92 interviews were completed with 86 participants (19 of whom were 12 months post-registration). The sample included a diverse mix of age groups, ethnicities, genders, and personal circumstances, as well as employment status and job outcomes achieved through the JobsPlus programme, including people who disengaged from the programme.
- **Depth interviews with residents** were conducted from October 2025 to January 2026 to gather insights into their perceptions of the programme. Thirteen interviews were completed with residents not participating in JobsPlus, offering further perspective on broader community opinions and experiences.
- **Site visits to observe programme delivery** and engagement with support took place between October and December 2025.

Analytical approach for qualitative data

The primary analytical approach for the case study data was thematic analysis, including cross-case comparisons. This enabled the research team to identify commonalities and differences across sites and to understand how contextual factors influenced implementation and outcomes. Qualitative evidence was used within the evaluation to

capture aspects of participant progress that are not fully reflected in short-term employment outcomes, including longer, non-linear and not yet successful journeys. This was particularly important given that many participants entered the programme facing complex barriers and that later cohorts had limited time within the evaluation period for employment outcomes to materialise.

To strengthen this analysis, the evaluation also incorporated Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA). QCA is based on a mathematical 'set theory' method that uses software to systematically compare data collected from a set of cases to identify causal combination(s) of factors that bring about a specified outcome. Further details of the methodology and analysis approach are available in the Technical Annex.

In this report, where base sizes for the MI and survey analysis are less than 100, percentages have not been reported.

2.2 Impact evaluation

Overview of the difference-in-differences methodology

The saturation approach used in JobsPlus means that a sizeable proportion of those eligible to participate in the programme within each pilot site is expected to benefit from the intervention, whether by directly accessing services or indirectly benefiting from a stronger culture of work in the local area. This feature of the model means that difference-in-differences (DiD) methods were selected as likely to be appropriate to estimate the causal impact of JobsPlus. With this approach, outcomes for a cohort of individuals eligible for JobsPlus, both in the pilot sites and a set of similar comparison areas, are tracked over time, spanning a period before and after the introduction of JobsPlus.

As outcomes might be expected to change over time, even without the introduction of JobsPlus, the DiD approach provides an estimate of the impact of the intervention, net of any changes in outcomes that the intervention group would have been expected to experience even if JobsPlus had not been introduced. To achieve this, outcomes for a cohort of eligible residents in the pilot and comparison areas are tracked over a period of time prior to the introduction of JobsPlus. The pre-intervention trends in outcomes in these two sets of areas are then compared against the trend in outcomes in the period after JobsPlus is introduced, and any differences in trend between these pre- and post-intervention periods can be attributed to the impact of JobsPlus, provided certain conditions are met:

- Outcomes for the analysis samples (defined in the following section) in the pilot and comparison areas must follow a similar trajectory in the period before the roll-out of JobsPlus. Provided this is the case, it is assumed that outcomes in the pilot and comparison areas would have continued on a similar path without the intervention. This is known as the common trends assumption.
- It is also essential that there are no other factors which might be expected to cause outcomes in the pilot and comparison areas to diverge following the introduction of JobsPlus, other than the roll-out of the intervention itself. If other policy changes are introduced in either the pilot or the comparison sites around the same time, or there

are economic factors that affect the pilot and comparison sites differently, this may bias the impact estimates and mean they do not capture the true impact of JobsPlus.

Later sections in this chapter report on the analysis that was undertaken to test the validity of the assumptions underlying the robustness of the impact analysis. Section 2.2 describes how the approach to selecting the comparison areas sought to reduce the risk that the introduction of other policy measures, in addition to JobsPlus, would affect the trajectory of outcomes in the pilot and comparison sites in the post-intervention period. Following on from this, it explains how the commons trends assumption was tested and what the analysis showed.

To aid the interpretation of findings, the impact chapter focuses on results that are statistically significant at conventionally accepted levels, i.e., at the 5% (or a p-value of 0.05 or smaller) level. This means there is a low probability that the finding has occurred purely by random chance.

Selecting the analysis samples

JobsPlus is open to anyone living within the pilot sites who seeks support, but it particularly aims to help those living in the social rented sector who are economically inactive, unemployed or in low-paid employment. For this reason, the analysis focused on all individuals aged between 16 and 65 living in the JobsPlus pilot sites or the chosen comparison areas who were claiming out-of-work benefits (defined as Invalidity/Incapacity Benefit, Severe Disablement Allowance, Employment Support Allowance, Universal Credit - the Searching for work, No work requirements, Preparing for work or Planning for Work conditionality regimes - or Jobseeker's Allowance) or earning less than the Universal Credit Administrative Earnings Threshold within the following data ranges:

- 1 to 31 October 2020 - referred to as the earliest cohort
- 1 to 31 October 2022 – referred to as the pre-intervention cohort
- 1 to 31 October 2024 – referred to as the post-intervention cohort

Individuals who meet the criteria set out above are referred to as the analysis samples. It was decided to focus on impacts for a cohort observed to be resident in the pilot sites in October 2024 due to the need to report evaluation findings by March 2026. This meant that outcomes could only be observed up to the end of March 2025. The aim to estimate impacts at a point when JobsPlus delivery was known to be fully established had to be balanced against the time needed for individual outcomes to be affected. October 2024 was chosen as a point when JobsPlus had been running for around three months in all pilot sites and when outcomes could be observed for around five months.

Data sources

Administrative data was used to conduct the impact evaluation. The main advantage of administrative data sources is that, compared with survey data, they are not subject to non-response bias or attrition. This makes it possible to observe background characteristics and outcomes for a much larger proportion of the eligible population in the pilot and comparison sites than would be likely if the analysis relied on bespoke data

collection. However, as data collection is not tailored to the specific set of circumstances and outcomes that JobsPlus is designed to address, this limits the range of research questions that the analysis is able to answer. It is not able to test all of the causal links hypothesised in the theory of change underlying the JobsPlus model. Like any other dataset, administrative data is also subject to error and inaccuracies in recording.

The broad eligibility criteria for JobsPlus mean that some of those who directly participate in JobsPlus may not appear within the administrative data sources used in the impact analysis. However, as the data covers all individuals aged between 16 and 65 living in the JobsPlus pilot sites and the comparison areas who are claiming out-of-work benefits or have earning below the Universal Credit Administrative Earnings Threshold, the expectation is that this would include the vast majority of those expected to benefit from JobsPlus.

The three main datasets used to conduct the analysis are listed below. Further details can be found in the Technical Annex.

- Registration And Population Interaction Database (RAPID)
- DWP Single Housing Benefit Extract (SHBE)
- HMRC Real Time Information (RTI)

Outcome measures

The primary outcome measure was the percentage of the analysis sample employed at some point during the 3 months following the baseline observation in October 2024 (for the post-intervention cohort). This was derived from HMRC data recorded on RAPID. The impact analysis also explored the impact of JobsPlus on the following secondary outcomes:

- The percentage of the analysis sample employed at some point during the first 5 months following the baseline observation i.e. November 2024 to March 2025 for the post-intervention cohort who were observed at baseline in October 2024 (based on HMRC data recorded on RAPID).
- The percentage of the analysis sample employed at monthly intervals over a period of five months from the month following the baseline observation (based on HMRC data recorded on RAPID).
- The percentage of the analysis sample on out-of-work benefits at monthly intervals over a period of five months from the month following the baseline observation (based on DWP data recorded on RAPID).
- Monthly earnings (specifically total taxable pay) for each of the five months from the month following the baseline observation (from HMRC RTI).
- Cumulative earnings for the analysis sample over the three months (to align with the primary outcome) from the month following the baseline observation (from HMRC RTI).

- Cumulative earnings for the analysis sample over the five months from the baseline observation (from HMRC RTI). Further details of the construction of the earnings outcomes measures are provided in the Technical Annex.

The outcome measures mirror those used in the US pilot (Bloom et al. 2005) but were adapted to suit the much shorter time-period available for evaluation (a maximum of five months in the UK pilot compared with six years in the US pilot). Given the need to complete the evaluation by March 2026, it was necessary to focus on short-term impacts, including estimating impacts on outcomes observed at monthly intervals, to explore how they developed over time. Impacts were estimated across all pilot sites to obtain an estimate of the aggregate impact of JobsPlus.

Selecting the comparison areas

The JobsPlus pilot sites varied in size, ranging from those consisting of a single lower layer super output area (LSOA) to one consisting of 12 LSOAs. A single LSOA can consist of between 400 and 1,200 households. Table 2.1 reports the number of LSOAs within each pilot site, along with the name of the local authority district and the number of Middle Super Output Areas (MSOAs) that each pilot spanned. MSOAs are groups of neighbouring LSOAs and there are typically around four or five LSOAs in each MSOA.[2]

Table 2.1 Details of pilot sites

Pilot site	Number of LSOAs	Local authority district	Number of MSOAs
Barnet	1	Barnet	1
Borehamwood	2	Hertsmere	1
Leyton	1	Waltham Forest	1
Penge, Bromley	4	Bromley	1
Rotherham	1	Rotherham	1
Sheffield	5	Sheffield	2
Sittingbourne	12	Swale	3
Stockton-on-Tees	3	Stockton-on-Tees	1
Toxteth, Liverpool	4	Liverpool	3
Wirral	1	Wirral	1
Total	34	10	15

Source: JobsPlus pilots data and 2021 Census lookup file

The proposed comparison areas for the JobsPlus pilot sites were selected in two stages:

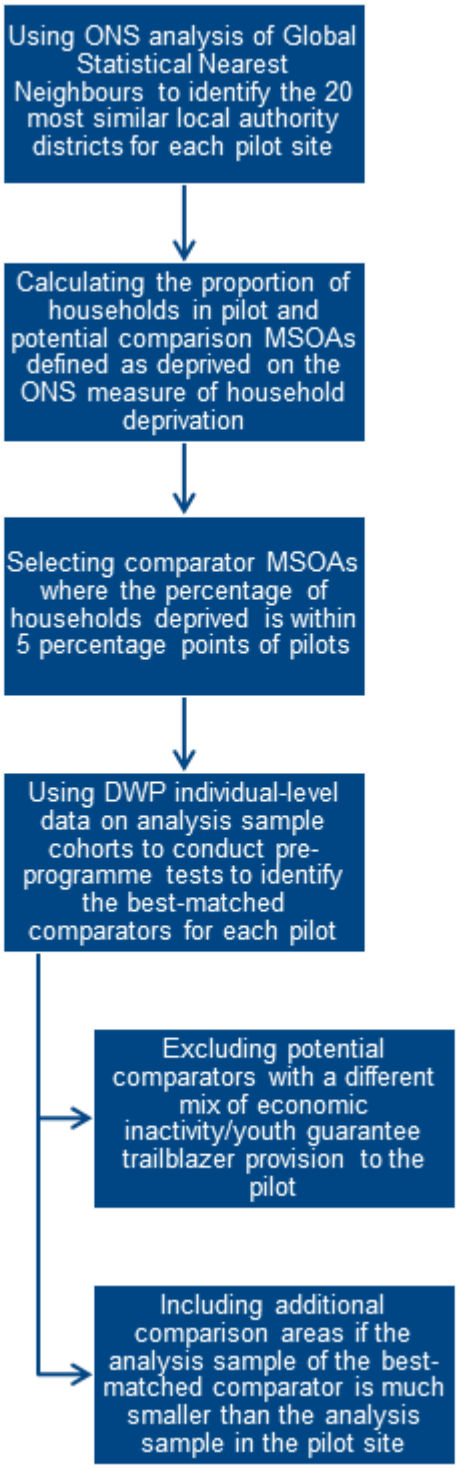
- Stage 1 – Publicly available data was analysed to draw up an initial longlist of areas likely to be similar to individual JobsPlus pilot sites.

[2] See https://www.ons.gov.uk/methodology/geography/ukgeographies/statisticalgeographies for further details of UK statistical geographies.

- Stage 2 – DWP supplied individual-level data on employment and benefit receipt which was used to conduct pre-programme tests to make the final selection of proposed comparison areas for each pilot site.

The figure below provides an overview of the main steps in each of these two stages. This process is described in detail in the Technical Annex in chapter 2. The annex also shows the trend in outcomes in the pre-intervention period for each of the pilot sites and the chosen comparators. This demonstrates that it was possible to find comparators which met the common trends assumption for all 10 of the pilot sites and sets out the final list of proposed comparators for each pilot site.

Figure 2.1 Summary of the process of selecting comparison areas



Controlling for individual circumstances

The DiD analysis took into account a range of individual and household characteristics, including the history of claiming benefits, employment and earnings. This information was used to control for any differences between the analysis samples in the pilot and comparison sites over time which might have caused the trend in outcomes to diverge. This was achieved by conducting the analysis of each of the outcome measures in an

ordinary least squares regression framework which included the following covariates (with the source of the information given in brackets), observed at the time of cohort selection, unless otherwise stated:

- Sex (RAPID)
- Age in years (RAPID)
- Whether housing benefit was in payment (RAPID)
- Household characteristics (SHBE)
  - the family type (as described in the Technical Annex);
  - whether there were any dependent children resident in the household;
  - whether there was at least one non-dependant in the household in addition to the Head;
  - the type of tenancy (as described in the Technical Annex);
  - whether information on household characteristics was missing because the individual was not found on SHBE.
- Whether claiming out-of-work benefits (RAPID)
- Whether employed (RAPID)
- Whether in irregular employment (RTI)[3]
- History of claiming out-of-work benefits in the two years prior to cohort selection (RAPID)
- History of employment in two years prior to cohort selection (RAPID)
- Earnings history in the two tax years prior to cohort selection (RAPID).

Testing the likely robustness of the findings

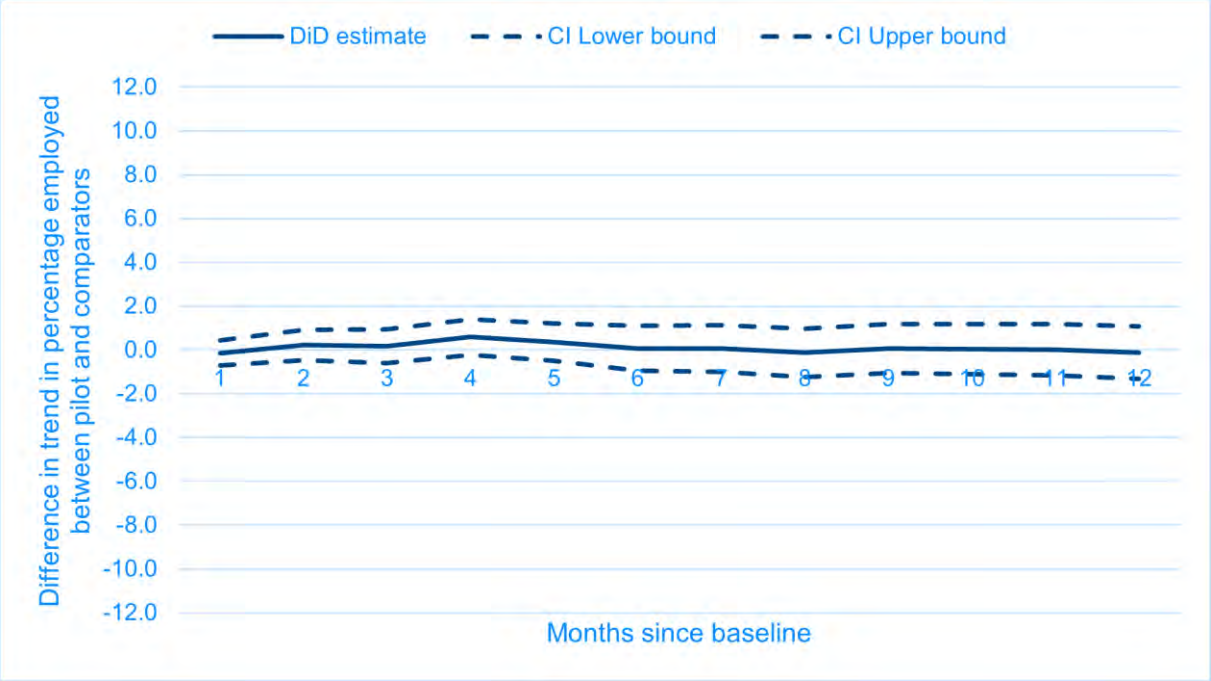
Pre-programme tests were used to see whether the selected comparison areas experienced a similar trend in outcomes to the pilot sites in the period prior to the introduction of JobsPlus. This was explored by conducting a difference-in-differences (DiD) analysis looking at the outcomes experienced over a period of 12-months for the earliest and pre-intervention cohorts, estimated in a regression framework, using the same set of controls as the impact analysis.

Figure 2.3 shows the overall differences in employment outcomes between the pilot and comparison areas in the pre-intervention period. The DiD estimate remains around zero for the entire 12-month period following cohort identification, but is highest at 4 months after baseline, when the difference in trend between the pilot and comparison areas is 0.6

[3] Employees might be paid on an irregular basis for a variety of reasons, such as working as a casual employee or being on long-term sick leave.

percentage points. The chart also reports 95% confidence intervals (CIs) around the DiD estimate. As these span the x-axis for all months, this indicates that the difference in trends between the pilot and comparison sites is not statistically significant over the 12-month period considered in the analysis.

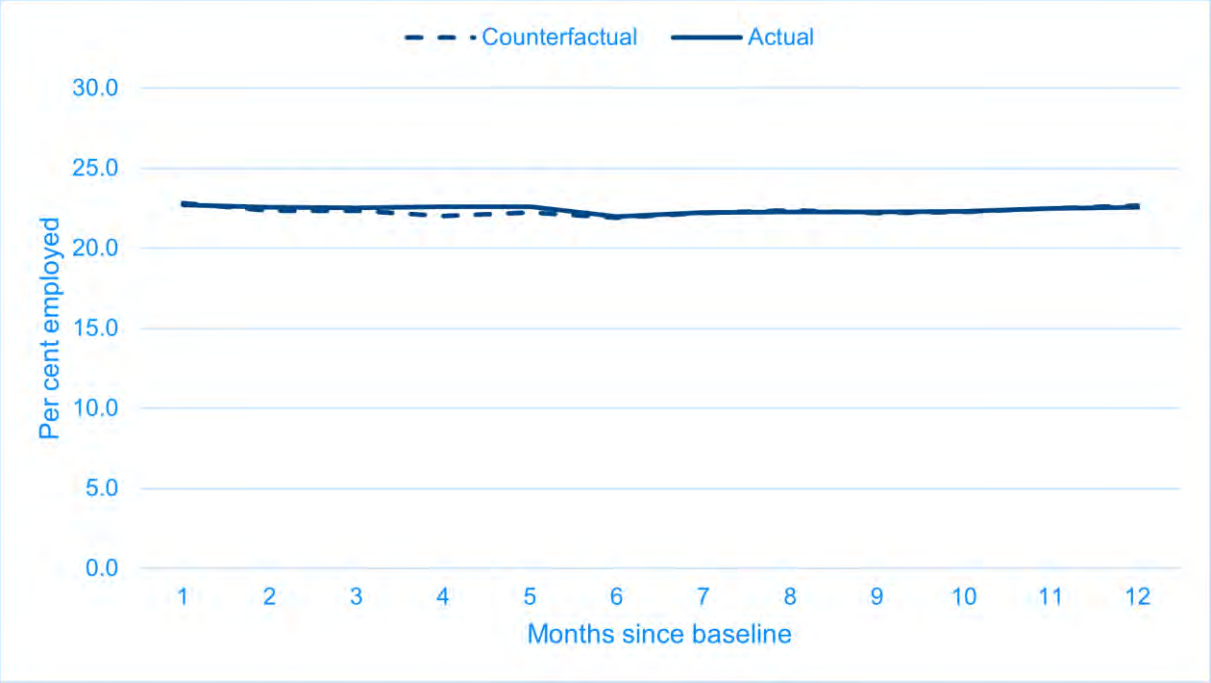
Figure 2.3 Differences in trends between the pilot and comparison areas prior to the introduction of JobsPlus



Source: DWP data.

Figure 2.4 shows the expected likelihood that the analysis sample from the pilot areas were employed in each successive month following the baseline observation in the pre-intervention period. This is referred to as the counterfactual. The figure also reports actual employment outcomes experienced by the analysis sample in the pilot sites. Estimated counterfactual and actual outcomes were very similar prior to the roll-out of JobsPlus, with between about 22.0% and 23.0% of the analysis sample employed in each of the 12 months following the baseline observation. As counterfactual outcomes closely mirrored observed outcomes in the pre-intervention period, this suggested that the DiD analysis was likely to yield a robust estimate of the counterfactual after the roll-out of JobsPlus.

Figure 2.4 Actual and counterfactual outcomes prior to the introduction of JobsPlus



Source: DWP data.

Limitations of the analysis

The comparison sites were selected because they appeared to experience a similar trend in employment outcomes to the pilots in the period before the introduction of JobsPlus. With such a large number of potential comparators and a limited amount of time to conduct the analysis (Nov 2025 to Mar 2026), it was not possible to explore whether the common trends assumption was met across the full range of outcome measures considered in the impact analysis. As a result, it is possible that the selected comparators do not provide a robust estimate of the counterfactual for all outcome measures considered.

Due to time constraints the impact analysis focused on outcomes for a cohort of individuals observed to be in the pilot sites (and comparators) at a very early point after the start of delivery. Most pilot sites only started to recruit participants for JobsPlus in July 2024, so they had only been running for around three months at the point in time that the post-intervention cohort were observed at baseline. It took time for all pilot sites to implement all aspects of the JobsPlus model as intended. Therefore, the impact analysis presented in this report is unlikely to capture the full effect of JobsPlus once delivery has become established.

Given that JobsPlus seeks to offer support to anyone in the pilot sites who comes forward, many participants will have been unemployed or economically inactive for a long period before starting to receive help. Even if JobsPlus is effective, it is likely to take many months to have an impact on outcomes for a group that do not have recent experience of employment. The US pilot found that it took time for JobsPlus to be implemented as intended and for positive impacts to emerge (Bloom et al. 2005). This supports the idea

that impacts from JobsPlus are only likely to become apparent over a longer period of time than it was possible to consider in the current analysis.

Finally, the reliance on administrative data in the impact evaluation meant that it was only possible to estimate the causal impact of JobsPlus on a limited range of the outcomes that the intervention was expected to affect. It was therefore not possible for the impact analysis to test all the causal relationships hypothesised in the theory of change.

2.3 About this report

The interim report published in September presented early implementation of the programme across the pilot sites. At that stage, delivery was still in its early phases, and the evidence mainly covered the initial months of operation. This report provides an update from March 2025 to January 2026, highlighting the shift from initial setup to a more stable delivery phase including impact data. The remainder of the report is structured as follows:

- Chapters 3–6 present findings on resident engagement and employment outcomes. These include movement into work, sustained employment, and progression. The chapters also report on progress against short-term and intermediate outcomes. All findings draw on data from July 2024 to December 2025.
- Chapter 7 outlines governance and partnership working and how the JobsPlus model has been refined since July 2024.
- Chapter 8 uses Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) to explore which combinations of local conditions and delivery factors help explain variations in outcomes across JobsPlus pilot sites.
- Chapter 9 provides estimates of the short-term impacts of JobsPlus on primary and secondary outcomes, using counterfactuals. It interprets these findings alongside descriptive data and implementation evidence.
- Finally, Chapter 10 provides a synthesis of the key findings, lessons learned and recommendations to support the future development of the JobsPlus model.

3 Engagement in the JobsPlus pilot

This chapter explores the demographics and circumstances of participants in the JobsPlus programme. It illustrates the diverse range of people who participated in the programme, their varied motivations for joining, barriers to engagement, and support needs. Findings are drawn from MI data, with additional quantitative insights from baseline survey responses. Where missing data account for less than 5% of responses, the base has been adjusted to exclude missing records from the analysis. Where available, qualitative interviews with JobsPlus participants and staff provide additional insight. Note that the term 'cohort' is used differently here than in the impact evaluation[4].

Key findings

- By the end of December 2025, 1,038 people had registered on JobsPlus. Early evidence showed that JobsPlus was reaching housing association (HA) residents with complex barriers to employment, and analysis over 18 months confirmed this pattern continued.
- JobsPlus participants were slightly more educated than the pilot-site population. The programme was more successful at engaging people with Level 2 qualifications than those with low or no qualifications.
- One-quarter (25%) of JobsPlus participants had no or low qualifications (i.e. a highest qualification of Level 1 or below) when they joined the programme, compared to 31% of residents across all pilot sites.
- Most participants (81%) were out of work when they registered for JobsPlus, while around one-fifth (19%) were in some form of paid employment.
- Of those participants who had never been in paid employment, one in five (23%) were aged 45 and above.
- Around one-third of participants (33%) had either very low (12%) or below average (22%) levels of wellbeing.
- Common barriers to employment were perceptions of a lack of vacancies or too much competition in the labour market (30%), mental and physical health issues or disabilities (27%) and a lack of work experience (22%).

The JobsPlus model continued to reach people who would not typically be well-engaged with employment services, including those who were economically inactive. This included:

- Those with parental and caring responsibilities (39%).
- Those who had a long-term health condition lasting or expected to last more than 12 months, and which reduced their ability to carry out day-to-day activities (33% of

[4] The cohorts described here are the groups of JobsPlus eligible resident groups who enrolled with the support at different points in time. This is different to the cohorts identified in impact analysis. The impact analysis cohorts were made up of all individuals aged between 16 and 65 living in the JobsPlus pilot sites or the chosen comparison areas who were claiming out-of-work benefits.

participants, compared to 20% of residents in the JobsPlus pilot sites and 17% of people in England as a whole).

JobsPlus also continued to be particularly effective in reaching young people and people from a Black ethnic minority background:

- Just under a third (31%) of participants were aged 16–24 years old, and nearly one-quarter (24%) were from a Black ethnic minority background, compared to 12% of residents in the pilot sites overall within these groups.

3.1 Resident engagement

At the point of the interim report (data to end of March 2025), 463 people had registered for JobsPlus. This had increased to 1,038 by December 2025. Between July 2024 and December 2025, the number of participants registered across sites ranged from 43 to 174. The Stockton-on-Tees site had the most registrations, accounting for 17% of all registrations. This was followed by Wybourn (14%) and Maltby (13%) (see Table 3.1 Registrations by pilot site).

It is also useful to understand the number of JobsPlus participants at each site within the context of the number of people who were out of work or in low-paid employment at each site, and therefore potential beneficiaries of JobsPlus support. The two right-hand columns of Table 3.1 show the number of registrations as a proportion of individuals on out-of-work benefits or in low-paid employment, and the number of people on out-of-work benefits or in low-paid employment in each pilot site in October 2024. This indicates the reach JobsPlus had at each site among residents most likely to benefit from the pilot.

- JobsPlus sites at Stockton and Wybourn, which had the highest number of participants, had fairly large populations on out-of-work benefits or in low-paid employment, and therefore were only engaging 13% and 6% of eligible people in these areas.
- In comparison, Maltby and Leyton, which also had fairly high numbers of people on JobsPlus, were engaging these from a smaller number of people in their population on out-of-work benefits or in low-paid employment, suggesting effective targeting.

Table 3.1 Registrations by pilot site

Pilot Site	Percentage of all participants	Number of participants	Participants as a proportion of people on out-of-work benefits or in low paid employment	Number of people out of work or in low-paid work (Oct 2024)
Stockton - Thirteen Group	17%	174	13%	1308
Wybourn - Great Places	14%	146	6%	2268
Maltby - SYHA	13%	131	30%	439
Leyton - L&Q	10%	101	44%	232
Sittingbourne - Southern	10%	102	4%	2273
Borehamwood - Clarion	9%	91	13%	718

Toxteth - Plus Dane	9%	94	4%	2215
East Finchley - Barnet	8%	81	30%	269
Penge - Clarion	7%	75	6%	1239
Wirral - Magenta	4%	43	9%	486
Total	100%	1038	9%	11447

Base: 1038 JobsPlus participants Source: JobsPlus MI analysis, IES, 2026 & for data on those on out-of work benefits or in low paid employment, DWP data for the post-intervention cohort, Oct 2024

Figure 3.1 shows total registrations by month. Registrations fluctuated, with peaks in October and November 2024 (84 and 86, respectively), and again in June 2025 (85). The Autumn 2024 peak is unsurprising as it followed the programme launch and intensive outreach across all sites. In the run-up to June 2025, sites received confirmation of a second year of funding, which reinvigorated engagement activities. They also benefited from support from the JobsPlus programme management team, which included communities of practice sessions and one-to-one support. These helped sites maximise engagement before the summer holiday period. August 2024 and 2025 recorded the fewest registrations (39 and 36, respectively).

Staff interviews indicated that engagement was challenging over the summer months due to childcare responsibilities and caseworker leave, which limited outreach capacity. Registrations also fell in December 2024 and 2025, which delivery leads attributed to reduced interest ahead of Christmas and site closures during the holiday period.

Chapter 4 provides a detailed explanation of these patterns, exploring engagement trends throughout the year and their implications for outreach planning.

Figure 3.1 JobsPlus monthly registrations

Pilot Site	Percentage of all participants	Number of participants	Participants as a proportion of people on out-of-work benefits or in low paid employment	Number of people out of work or in low-paid work (Oct 2024)
Stockton - Thirteen Group	17%	174	13%	1308
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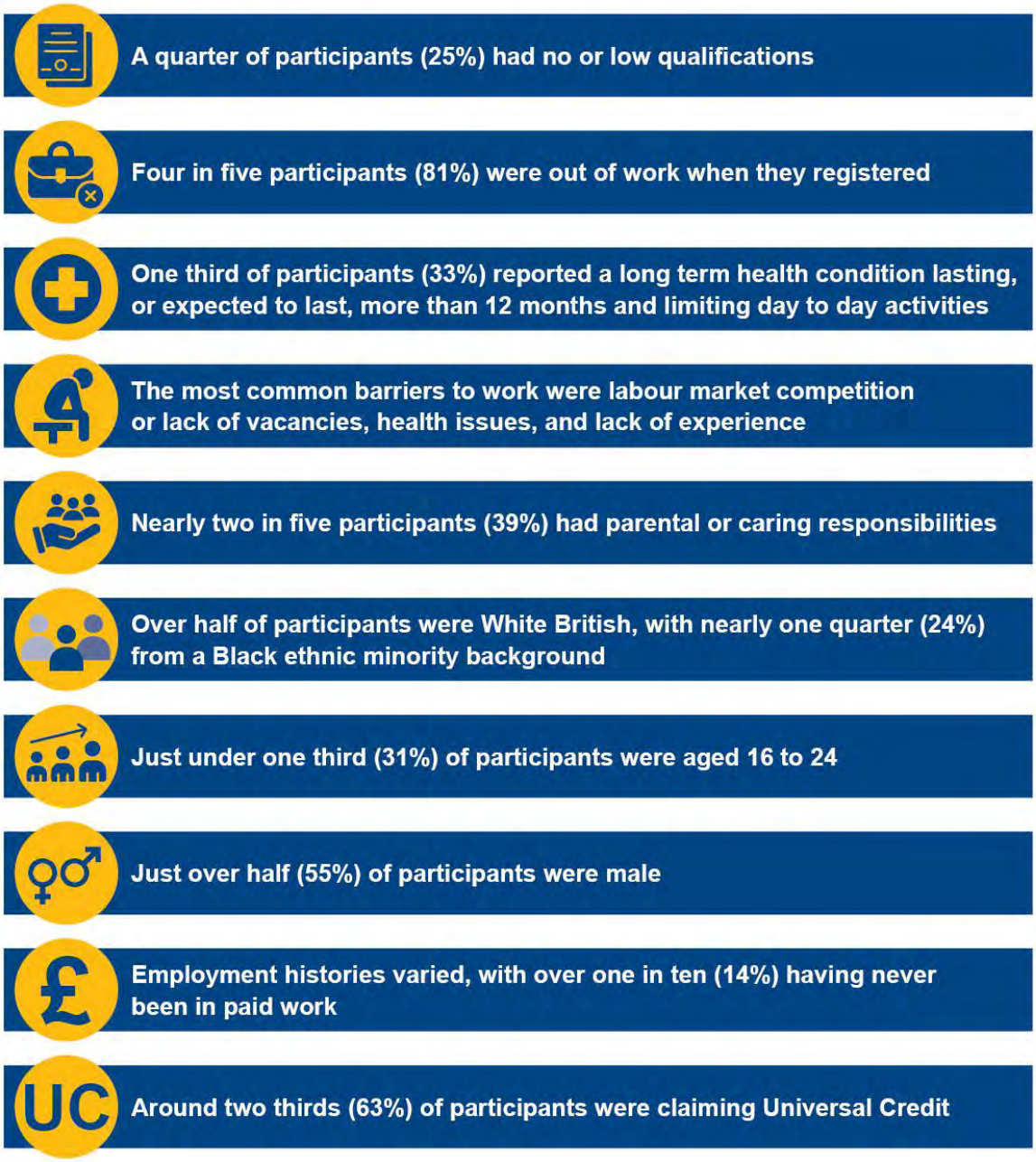
East Finchley - Barnet	8%	81	30%	269
Penge - Clarion	7%	75	6%	1239
Wirral - Magenta	4%	43	9%	486
Total	100%	1038	9%	11447

Bases: 1030 JobsPlus participants with registration date recorded
Source: JobsPlus MI analysis, IES, 2026

3.2 JobsPlus participant profiles

Headline findings



Age, gender and ethnicity

JobsPlus engaged a diverse range of participants across pilot sites (Figure 3.2). Almost one-third (31%) were aged 16-24, compared to 12% of residents in pilot sites (see

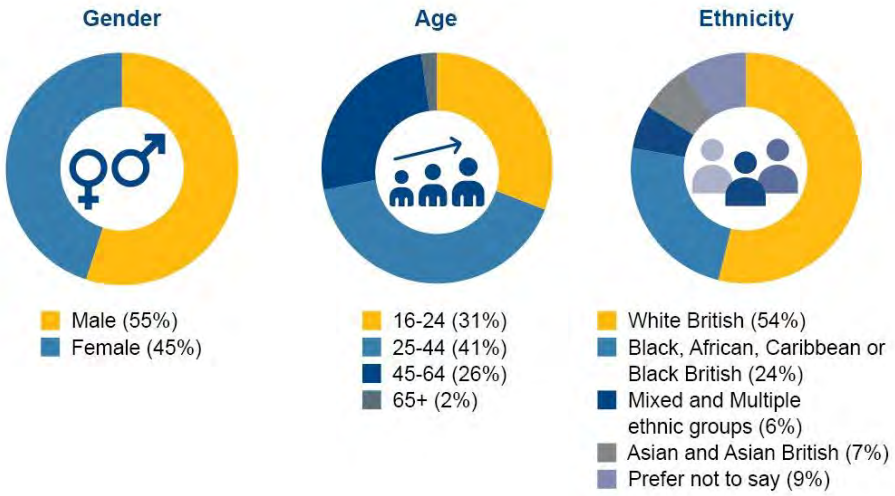
Technical Annex), showing strong engagement with young people. This reflects Youth Futures Foundation funding, which required targeted outreach to this group.

Just over one-quarter (26%) were aged 45-64, and 2% were aged over 65. Over one-half of participants (55%) were male, reflecting demographics in pilot sites.

More than one-half of participants were White British (54%), lower than the pilot site average (69%). Nearly one-quarter (24%) were from Black, African, Caribbean or Black British backgrounds, compared with 12% of residents in pilot sites, indicating particularly strong reach.

The demographic profile was broadly unchanged since the interim evaluation, except for an increase in participants aged 16–24 from 25% to 31%.

Figure 3.2 JobsPlus participant demographics



Bases: 1014, 1026, and 1005, JobsPlus participants with gender, age and ethnicity information recorded
Source: JobsPlus MI analysis, IES, 2026

Circumstances of participants at registration

Educational attainment at registration

JobsPlus participants were slightly more educated than the pilot-site population. The programme was more successful at engaging people with Level 2 qualifications than those with low or no qualifications.

- One-quarter of participants (25%) had no or low qualifications (Level 1 or below) at registration, compared with nearly one-third (31%) of residents in pilot sites (see Table 3.6 in the Technical Annex).
- Fewer participants had no qualifications (9%) than in the wider population (19%).

- Around one-quarter (24%) of participants held a Level 2 qualification (including vocational qualifications and GCSE grades A*-C/4-9), a higher proportion than in pilot-site populations (10–20%).
- The share with Level 3 qualifications was similar for participants and residents overall (16% and 17%).

Qualification data was missing for 15% of participants.

These patterns were consistent with the interim evaluation.

Table 3.2 Highest level of educational attainment at registration

Qualification level	Percentage	Frequency
Entry level	5%	51
Level 1	11%	116
Level 2	24%	252
Level 3	16%	164
Level 4-6	12%	121
Level 7 and above	6%	59
No qualifications	9%	92
None of the above	2%	25
No information	15%	158
Total	100%	1038

Base: 1038 JobsPlus participants
Source: JobsPlus MI analysis, IES, 2026

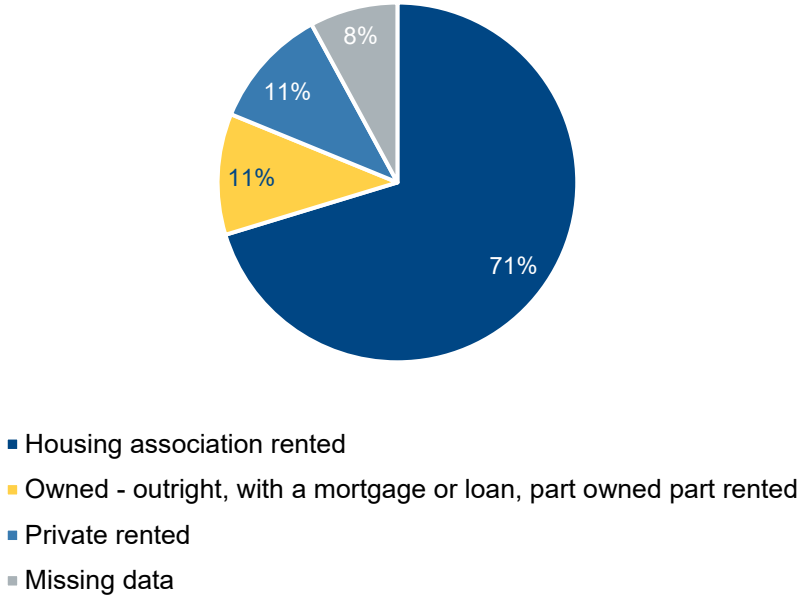
Parental or caring responsibilities

Just under two-fifths of participants (39%) had parental or caring commitments at the time of registration, with close to two-thirds (61%) not having any commitments.

Housing status

Most JobsPlus participants lived in HA-rented properties (71%), a much higher proportion than in pilot sites overall (14–61%) (see Table 3.7 in the Technical Annex). This is a positive indication that the pilot was reaching those with most need for support.

Figure 3.4 Housing tenure at registration



Base: 1038 JobsPlus participants
Source: JobsPlus MI analysis, IES, 2026

Household composition

JobsPlus was most effective in reaching people living in 'other multi-person households' (30% of baseline survey respondents). This is likely to be those living in house shares or multi-generational households.

The next most cited household compositions were a one-person household (20% of baseline survey respondents), lone parent with dependent children (17%) or couple with dependent children (15%) (Table 3.3). This indicates JobsPlus successfully engaged financially vulnerable and high priority demographics that face distinct barriers to work.

Table 3.3 JobsPlus participants' household composition, baseline survey

Household composition	Percentage	Frequency
One person household	20%	146
Lone parent with dependent child(ren) under 18 years	17%	122
Couple with dependent child(ren) under 18 years	15%	114
Couple, no dependent child(ren) under 18 years	5%	38
Other multi-person households	30%	224

Missing[5]	13%	93
Total	100%	737

Base: 737
Source: JobsPlus participant baseline survey, IES, 2026

Financial circumstances

Almost two-thirds of baseline survey respondents (63%) were claiming Universal Credit[6] (Table 3.4Table 3.4) while just over one-quarter (26%) were not receiving any benefits. Being able to engage people not claiming benefits is an encouraging indicator of widening access to employment support to people who are potentially inactive or in low-paid employment.

Among those who were not claiming any benefits, around one-third (34%) had done paid work in the previous seven days either as an employee or self-employee (n=65), while over two-thirds had not.

Table 3.4 Benefits received by JobsPlus participants

Benefit type	Percentage	Frequency
Universal Credit	63%	463
Personal Independence Payment	8%	57
Housing Benefit	7%	55
Council Tax Benefit	6%	44
Child Tax Credit	4%	27
Carers Allowance	3%	20
Disability Living Allowance	2%	15
Employment and Support Allowance	1%	8
Attendance Allowance	-	-
Pension Credit	-	-
Jobseeker's Allowance	0%	0
Working Tax Credit	0%	0
Other	2%	18
None of these	26%	193
Missing	6%	43
Total	128%	943

Base:737 (baseline survey)
Note: The '-' symbol indicates that the category has been combined with the 'other' category for each

[5] "Missing" responses include respondents that select "Prefer not to say" or "Don't know"

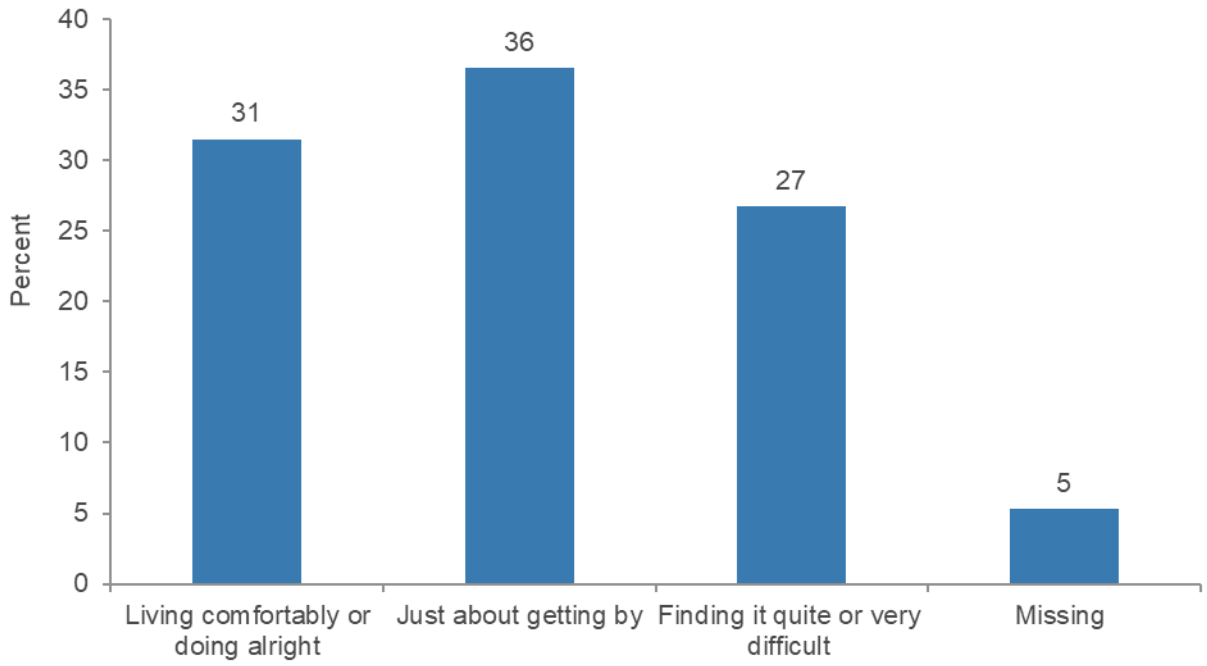
[6] Information on conditionality group was not collected in the survey.

respective survey. This question was multiple choice, therefore the base and % may exceed the total number of respondents for this question.
Source: JobsPlus participant baseline survey, IES, 2026

Figure 3.5 shows how well survey respondents were managing financially when they registered on the programme. Overall, the findings indicated that JobsPlus participants had poorer financial circumstances than the general population:

- Over one-third (36%) of baseline survey respondents were 'just about getting by', compared to nearly one-quarter (23.2%) of people nationally (Understanding Society, UK Household Longitudinal Study, January 2022-December 2023)
- Just under a third (31%) of baseline survey respondents were living comfortably or doing alright, compared to two-thirds (66%) of people nationally.
- Just over one-quarter (27%) of baseline survey respondents were finding it quite or very difficult to manage financially, compared to one-tenth (10.9%) of people nationally.

Figure 3.5 JobsPlus participants' financial circumstances when they joined the programme



Base: 737 (baseline survey)
Source: JobsPlus participant baseline survey, IES, 2026

Expanding on this, 28% of baseline survey respondents reported falling behind on household bills in the previous 12 months (Table 3.6Table 3.5). Close to one-fifth (19%) of respondents reported that they, or their partner, had used a foodbank in the same period.

Table 3.5 Household bills, food bank use and bank account access for JobsPlus participants

Financial circumstance	Percentage	Frequency
Fallen behind with household bills	28%	209
Used a foodbank	19%	140
Has access to a bank account	89%	653
Missing	5%	40

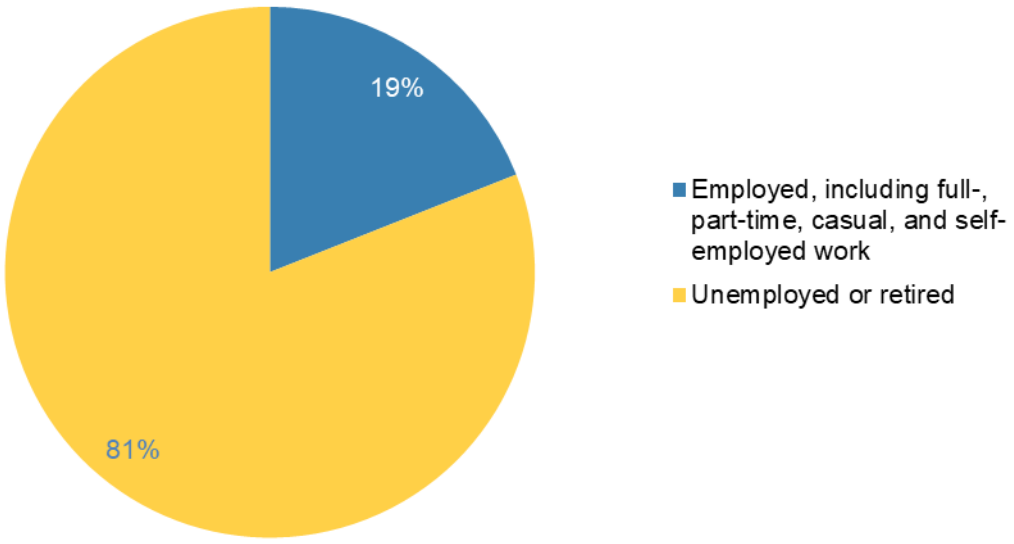
Base: 737
Source: JobsPlus participant baseline survey, IES, 2026

Employment status

JobsPlus was most effective at reaching those out of work, compared to individuals in some form of paid employment (Figure 3.6).

The qualitative research provided examples of individuals who were already working and registered with JobsPlus to find better jobs. These participants were often seeking a more stable or permanent contract, to secure a full-time role rather than a part-time role or a zero-hours contract, or to find a role better aligned with the individual's interests, experience and qualifications. For example, one participant with a law degree moved from an administrative role in the civil service into a legal role with JobsPlus support.

Figure 3.6 Employment status at registration



Base: 994 JobsPlus participants with employment status information recorded at registration
Source: IES JobsPlus MI analysis, 2026

The baseline survey examined this further and discovered that respondents had diverse employment histories:

- Just under one-third (32%) of respondents had mostly been in paid employment prior to joining JobsPlus.
- Under one-third (28%) of respondents had been in and out of paid employment.
- Over one in 10 respondents (14%) had never been in paid employment (Table 3.6).

Of those who were never in paid employment, just over one-half (52%) were aged 25 and under and almost two-fifths (39%) were aged 25 or above (n=40). One in five (23%) respondents from this group were aged 45 and above (n=9).

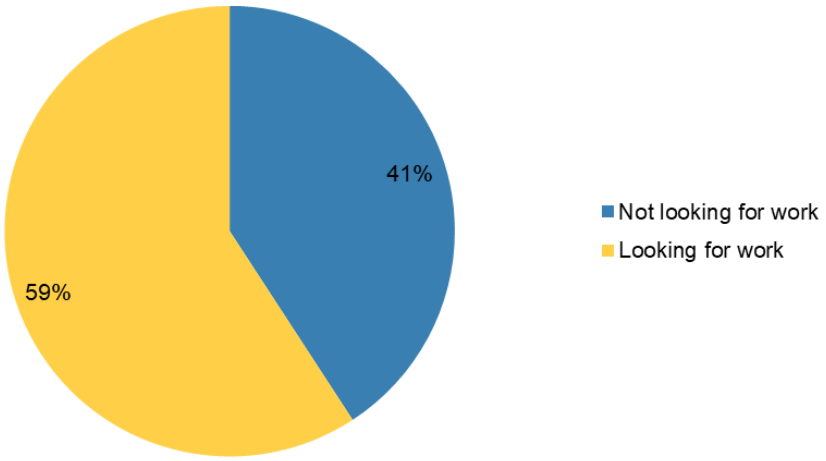
Table 3.6 JobsPlus participants' employment history

Employment history	Percentage	Frequency
I have never been in paid employment	14%	104
I have mostly been out of paid employment	17%	123
I have been in and out of paid employment	28%	209
I have mostly been in paid employment	32%	235
Missing	9%	66
Total	100%	737

Base: 737Source: JobsPlus participant baseline survey, IES, 2026

The findings from the baseline survey show that two-fifths of respondents who were not in work at registration or not temporarily away from paid employment/self-employed in the past seven days (41%) had not looked for work in the past four weeks (Figure 3.7 below). Table 3.7 below shows participants' activities in the seven days prior to enrolling in JobsPlus. The majority of respondents had not engaged in any education, employment or training-related activities in the seven days before enrolment (Table 3.7 below). Close to one in 10 respondents (9%) volunteered or were engaged in education, a training scheme or an apprenticeship (13%), either part-time (7%) or full-time (6%). Only 2% of respondents were retired.

Figure 3.7: JobsPlus participant work search status in the last four weeks



Note: This question was only asked of participants who were not in work on registration and not temporarily away from paid employment in the past seven days.
Base: 528
Source: JobsPlus participant baseline survey, IES, 2026

Table 3.7: JobsPlus participant activities in the 7 days prior to registration.

Activity	Percentage	Frequency
Volunteering	9%	45
Part-time education, training scheme or apprenticeship	7%	36
Full-time education, training scheme or apprenticeship	6%	30
Work experience	2%	8
Retired	2%	8
None of these	78%	406
Total	102%	533

Base: 523
Note: This question was only asked of participants who were not in work on registration and not temporarily away from paid employment in the past seven days. This question was multiple choice, the base and % may exceed the total number of respondents for this question.
Source: JobsPlus participant baseline survey, IES, 2026

Profiles of earlier and later cohorts[7]

Overall, the qualitative evidence suggested that participant needs and cohort profiles have remained broadly consistent over time. However, some HAs reported that later cohorts of participants had higher levels of need, as they were further away from the labour market. However, analysis of MI data showed the proportion of people with health problems impacting daily activities (i.e. a little or a lot of problems), was 44% in the first cohort and dropped to 27% in the last cohort (see section 5.3.3 in Annex).

YFF's involvement as a funder prompted the development of specific outreach strategies for young people, such as bespoke events, marketing, and partner engagement, which had some success. The proportion of people in the 16-24 age group increased in consecutive cohorts, growing from 19% in the first cohort to 38% in the last cohort, whilst the share of participants aged over 44 decreased (see section 5.3.3 in Annex). Young people often had distinct needs, particularly around training and study options, as well as general careers advice, as they navigated the early stages of their working lives.

Profiles of those whose engagement from JobsPlus had lapsed

The pilots reported data for the number of participants who disengaged from the support. Typically, residents who disengaged did not want to actively withdraw from the support; more typically, their engagement had lapsed.

Disengagement is calculated as the total number of active participants since July 2024 minus those with two months of non-contact. Participants are considered inactive after a sustained period of non-contact [8]. This definition was introduced at the start of year two, following earlier variation across sites in how disengagement was defined.

Table 3.8 indicates that disengagement from JobsPlus is low, with over four-fifths (85%) maintaining engagement with the support once registered.

Table 3.8 Number of participants with a disengagement date recorded

Disengagement recorded	Percentage	Frequency
Yes	15%	160
No	85%	878
Total	100%	1038

[7] The cohorts described here are the groups of JobsPlus eligible resident groups who enrolled with the support at different points in time. This is different to the cohorts identified in impact analysis. The impact analysis cohorts were made up of all individuals aged between 16 and 65 living in the JobsPlus pilot sites or the chosen comparison areas who were claiming out-of-work benefits.

[8] The criteria for this was (all of the following over a 2-month period): No attendance at scheduled meetings or activities. No response to at least 3 contact attempts via different channels. No evidence of participation in programme-related activities.

1. 'Yes' represents everyone with a disengagement date recorded, later than their registration date.

Base: 1038 JobsPlus participants
Source: JobsPlus MI analysis, IES, 2026

Qualitative interviews with HA staff indicated there was variation in patterns of disengagement across sites. Some sites reported that very few participants withdrew, while at others higher levels of disengagement were reported. For some pilots, participants failing to attend appointments has been a fairly common occurrence, but this did not usually lead to longer-term disengagement.

Pilots reported that disengagement was usually driven by personal circumstances rather than concerns about JobsPlus. Participants often stepped back due to health issues, caring responsibilities or bereavement, and many re-engaged once these pressures eased. Others became harder to contact after moving into work or because they were unavailable during office hours. Where participants do not respond to a series of attempts from staff to get in touch, pilots maintain an open-door approach and typically send a final communication to inform participants that they are welcome to re-engage at any time should they require further support.

3.3 Support needs and motivations for engaging in JobsPlus

This section focuses on the support needs and motivations for both those in-work and out-of-work at the time of registration.

Barriers to accessing and progressing in work

Despite high levels of active job search at programme registration, JobsPlus participants reported that they faced a range of challenges in finding and accessing work or advancing their careers, which are set out in Table 3.9. The three most commonly perceived barriers were:

- A lack of vacancies or too much competition in the labour market (30% of baseline survey respondents)
- Mental and physical health issues or disabilities (28%)
- A lack of work experience (23%) (Table 3.9)

Around one in five survey respondents also cited not having the right skills or low self-confidence as a barrier.

Table 3.9: Barriers to finding work for JobsPlus participants at registration

Barriers	Percentage	Frequency
Lack of vacancies/too much competition for jobs interested in	30%	211
Physical or mental health issues or disabilities	28%	193
Lack of work experience	23%	158
Not having right skills for the jobs interested in	22%	151
Your own self-confidence	21%	149
Childcare responsibilities	15%	108
Length of time out of work / between jobs	13%	91
Lack of adequate references from previous employment or volunteering	7%	48
Current or previous caring responsibilities	6%	41
Age-related factors	5%	37
Housing issues	4%	31
Transport difficulties	2%	14
Presenting previous criminal convictions to prospective employers	2%	12
Need to improve written or spoken English	1%	7
Other	5%	33
None of these	15%	105
Total	198%	1389

Base: 703
Note: This question was multiple choice, therefore the base and % exceeds the total number of respondents for this question. 5% of the total survey responses were missing responses.
Source: JobsPlus participant baseline survey, IES, 2026

Qualitative findings provided further detail. Participants often described a mismatch between their skills and local job opportunities. Some were not actively seeking work due to low motivation, limited English, childcare pressures, health issues or wider financial and housing challenges, such as experiencing overcrowding or requiring a larger property to accommodate several children. Skills gaps were most evident among those with English as a second language (ESOL) and those with limited digital skills. Childcare constraints and transport difficulties, particularly for non-drivers and those who had to use unreliable public transport, further limited job options, especially for shift-based roles. In some areas, reluctance to travel persisted even where links were good. Limited ESOL provision, neurodivergence and digital exclusion also affected access to work. In addition, these barriers could be down to limited knowledge of the support available or indeed wider confidence in a participants' ability to find work and make it work for them, both issues that JobsPlus support aimed to tackle. A small number of participants reported no specific barriers but had not yet secured a suitable role.

Health conditions

At the time of registration for JobsPlus, one-third of participants (33%) said they had a health condition that was expected to last 12 months or more, while two-thirds (66%) did not (Table 3.11).

Table 3.10 Health condition lasting 12 months or more at time of registration

Participant has a health condition	Percentage	Frequency
Yes	33%	332
No long-lasting health condition	66%	664
Prefer not to say	1%	12
Total	100%	1008

Base: 1008 JobsPlus participants with information on health conditions recorded
Source: JobsPlus MI analysis, IES, 2026

There was a wide range of health conditions and disabilities among participants, with a high proportion of people living with more than one condition (Table 3.12). Among the baseline survey respondents who provided further details of any health condition and/or disability that they had:

- 38% said they had more than one condition.
- Over one-half of respondents (56%) reported that they had a mental health condition. This indicates that the strong focus in pilot activities on wellbeing and mental health was appropriate.
- Chronic health conditions (26%) and mobility problems were also commonly reported (18%).

Over 1 in 10 reported difficulties with learning, understanding or concentrating (16%) and having long term pain (12%). Approximately one-tenth of baseline survey respondents also reported problems with their memory (10%).

Table 3.11 Health conditions/disability among JobsPlus participants

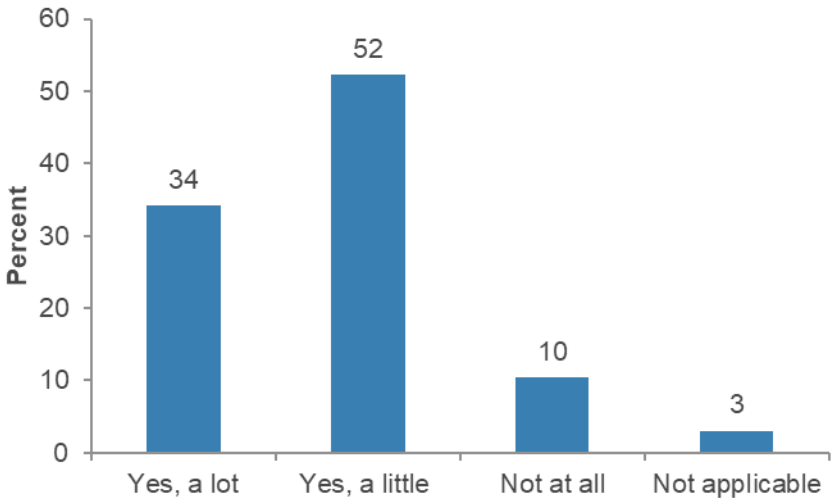
Type of health condition or disability	Percentage	Frequency
Mental health	56%	144
Chronic health condition (for example, but not limited to diabetes, coronary heart disease, stroke, epilepsy and hypertension)	26%	66
Mobility (for example walking short distances or climbing stairs)	18%	47
Learning, understanding or concentrating	16%	43
Long-term pain	12%	30
Memory	10%	26

Dexterity (lifting and carrying objects, using a keyboard)	7%	15
Vision (for example blindness or partial sight) / Hearing (deafness or partial hearing)/ Speech or making yourself understood	10%	25
Other	13%	34
Total	169%	442

Note: This question was only asked of participants who reported having a physical or mental health condition or illness lasting or expected to last 12 months or more. This question was multiple choice, therefore the base and % exceeds the total number of respondents for this question.
Base: 257
Source: JobsPlus participant baseline survey, IES, 2026

Among participants who reported having a physical or mental health condition or illness, it was very likely to have an impact on their everyday life. Almost nine out of ten (87%) baseline survey respondents with a health condition reported that it reduced their ability to carry out day-to day activities (Figure 3.8). Over one-half reported that it affected them a little (52%) while over one-third said that it affected them a lot (34%).

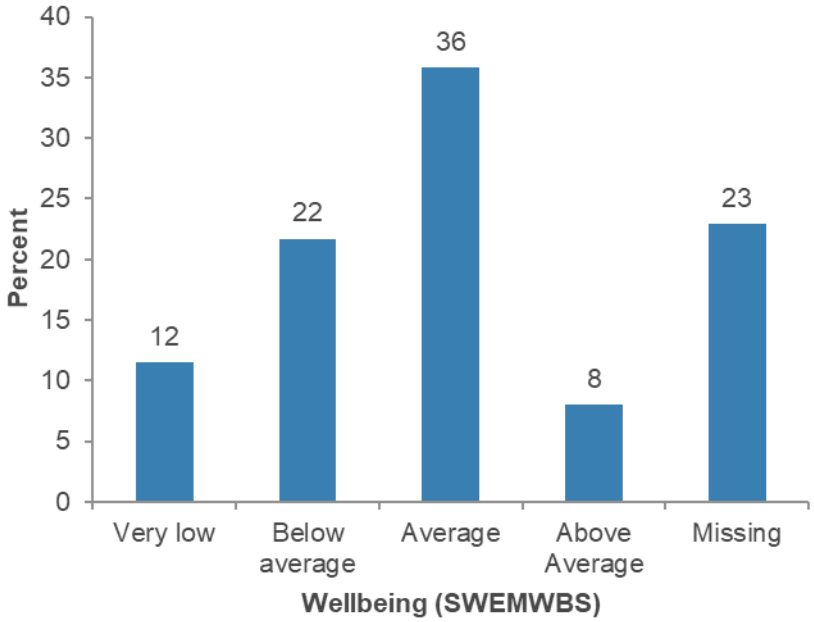
Figure 3.8: Health impact on day-to-day activities for JobsPlus participants at registration



Base: 260
Note: This question was only asked of participants who reported having a physical or mental health condition or illness lasting or expected to last 12 months or more.
Source: JobsPlus participant baseline survey, IES, 2026

To gain a deeper understanding of participants' wellbeing, survey respondents were asked to complete the Short Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale[9] (SWEMWBS). Responses indicated that those taking part in JobsPlus were more likely to report lower levels of wellbeing than the general population. Around one-third of respondents (33%) had either very low (12%) or below-average (22%) levels of wellbeing (see Figure 3.9 below), which is higher than the 15-17% typically observed in the general population (Ng Fat et al., 2017).

Figure 3.9: JobsPlus participants' wellbeing at registration (SWEMWBS)



Base: 737
Source: JobsPlus participant baseline survey, IES, 2026

Support needs

In response to a multiple choice question where all applicable options could be selected, more than two-thirds of survey respondents (67%) indicated that assistance with job applications, such as CV writing, completing applications, and interview training, would most likely help them move into work (Table 3.13) Over one-quarter of respondents (28%) reported that support and training in work-related skills would also help them move into paid work. Support with the cost of travel to and from work (21%), to start or continue

[9] The SWEMWBS asks respondents to respond to seven positively framed statements using a five-point scale where one indicates 'none of the time' and five indicates 'all of the time'. The sum of individuals' scores is then calculated and categorised into levels of wellbeing. Scores range between 7-35 on the scale and higher scores indicate positive mental wellbeing. Score categories, low 7-17, below average 18-20, average 21-27 and above average 28-35.

further education (14%), and to manage a physical or mental health condition (13%) was also cited as support that would help them find paid work.

Table 3.13 What would help JobsPlus participants to find work

Support needs	Percentage	Frequency
Support and training around finding/ getting a new job (e.g. interview skills, CV skills, communication skills)	67%	495
Support and training with work-related skills (e.g. spoken or written English; IT skills; job-specific skills)	28%	206
Help with the cost of travel to and from work	21%	152
Support to continue/start further or higher education	14%	105
Support to manage a physical or mental health condition	13%	96
Support with using technology/internet	10%	75
Access to digital technology and/or the internet	9%	68
Access to affordable/ good quality childcare	6%	43
Support to find suitable housing	6%	41
Support to manage other caring responsibilities	4%	32
Help with the cost of work clothes	0%	0
Support to boost own self-confidence	0%	0
Support to present previous criminal convictions to prospective employers	0%	0
Missing	5%	39
Total	183%	1352

Note: This question was multiple choice, therefore the base and % exceeds the total number of respondents for this question.
Base: 694
Source: JobsPlus participant baseline survey, IES, 2026

Qualitative participant interviews showed participants needed support and guidance on how to start looking for work. This was especially true for young people still in education, those who had never worked or only outside the UK, and those who had been out of work for a long period of time and were unfamiliar with modern recruitment. Others had secured informal work through contacts and never completed formal applications.

The interviews also showed that JobsPlus needs to offer clear career guidance to help participants set realistic expectations. Some had aspirations that did not align with local opportunities or the typical requirements of the roles they were interested in, for example, roles requiring enhanced background checks or positions that demanded strong English proficiency. Location was also a barrier for several participants who were only willing to consider jobs within walking distance, despite limited opportunities in their immediate area. Staff echoed these challenges, noting the importance of gently challenging participants' assumptions and encouraging them to consider a wider range of options. At some sites, staff were already doing this effectively by helping participants understand the local labour market and explore more realistic pathways.

Motivations for engaging in JobsPlus

Among those already in work

The baseline survey captured the reasons why those employed at the time of registration chose to take part in JobsPlus (Table 3.14). Almost one-half (48%) said they wanted to apply for a job in a different workplace, and under one-fifth (19%) hoped to make a career change. Over two-fifths (42%) were looking to take a training course to improve their skills. Others sought support in their current role, particularly to increase their hours (42%), to secure a promotion (16%), or to apply for a different job within their workplace (16%).

Table 3.14 Goals of JobsPlus participants who were in work at registration

Goals	Percentage	Frequency
Apply for a job in a different workplace	48%	74
Increase the number of hours you worked	42%	64
Take a training course to improve your skills	42%	64
Start a second job	19%	30
Change career or leaving self-employment for employment	19%	30
Get promoted at work	16%	24
Apply for a different job in your workplace	16%	24
Reduce the number of hours you worked	5%	8
None of these	8%	13
Total	215%	331

Base: 154
Note: This question was only asked of participants who were either in work on registration or temporarily away from paid employment in the past seven days. This question was multiple choice, therefore the base and % may exceed the total number of respondents for this question.
Source: JobsPlus participant baseline survey, IES, 2026

Motivations for all participants – both those in and out of work

The qualitative research revealed that most participants were driven by a general desire to secure employment or increase their income. Many also sought support with specific aspects of job hunting, such as CV writing, interview techniques, or career guidance, believing that JobsPlus could help them reach goals they found difficult to achieve on their own. A few also wanted access to more substantial support than JCP offered.

Many participants felt more confident and eager to join after experiencing the community hub's friendly, welcoming atmosphere. They were also motivated by the proximity of their local hub. Other motivations included accessing training opportunities, improving wellbeing, having a reason to leave the house, and seeking help with finances or budgeting. Some individuals initially felt reluctant or apprehensive about engaging with JobsPlus, mainly due to mistrust of statutory services (employability services in particular), fears of repeating negative past experiences, or doubts about its usefulness.

However, interviewees responded very positively afterwards, finding that these concerns were quickly eased after visiting the hub.

Among participants interviewed who had registered for JobsPlus but were already working, many sought a more stable or permanent contract to secure a full-time role rather than a part-time or zero-hours contract. Some also wanted to find a role better aligned with their interests, experience and qualifications.

Previous experience of employment support

Many participants had prior experience with employment support, particularly through regular appointments at JCP, often while engaging with JobsPlus. Participants' motivations for engaging with JobsPlus were strongly shaped by their past experiences with employment support. Several participants had experienced the Restart Scheme[10], either alongside JobsPlus or beforehand. Opinions on Restart varied: some found the support helpful, such as assistance with CVs or general advice, while others felt Restart had made little difference to their job search. Few had accessed other employability support besides JCP and Restart, though a small number mentioned the National Careers Service. Others reported no prior engagement with employment support, usually because they were already working, studying full-time, or not claiming benefits, making them ineligible for other support programmes.

Participants felt that services like JCP were limited by short appointments and limited flexibility, making it hard to fully address their needs. In contrast, JobsPlus was seen as more welcoming, personalised, and holistic. These perceptions are discussed in more detail in Chapter 4, where participants' comparisons between JobsPlus and other employment support services are explored.

[10] The Restart Scheme is a mandatory programme aimed at supporting claimants in the Intensive Work Search regime to overcome barriers to work and to find sustainable employment. It is available in England and Wales for claimants who have been receiving Universal Credit for 6 months or more as of 1st July 2024. Restart provides regular and tailored one-to-one support and allows work coaches, claimants and providers to work together to develop the claimant's employability skills and move them closer to and into work.

4 The JobsPlus model in practice

This chapter will provide an update on experiences of implementing JobsPlus between April and December 2025. It highlights key areas of progress, significant shifts/differences from the interim report, what worked well and key challenges. There is a focus throughout on stating how contextual differences between sites affected implementation.

Key findings: Progress in implementing JobsPlus

- Staffing levels were generally appropriate; however, delivering tailored, relationship-based support alongside broader support elements required more intensive input than typical employment services. At some sites, limited staffing capacity created additional demands on teams, which contributed to natural variation in delivery approaches across sites.
- The programme embedded and extended good practice, enabling more personalised and flexible support.
- Wider support was part of the core offer and essential in tackling non-employment barriers. However, sometimes securing specialist partners was difficult.
- Financial support – through both advice and flexible, discretionary funding – was a key element of JobsPlus, helping participants address immediate financial barriers, stabilise their circumstances, and better engage with employment support.
- In-work support was valuable to participants, particularly those who were experiencing early employment challenges.
- The Into Work Bonus was administered effectively, and provided practical support with bills and transport costs in the early months of work. While it was not a primary motivator for engaging with the programme, it encouraged some people to remain in employment. This may be related to the size and structure of the incentive.
- The saturation approach increased reach, with word of mouth spreading easily and helping to build a strong reputation. This supported collaboration with groups that might otherwise have been excluded from traditional employment support. However, some frustration remained, as certain residents outside the catchment area could not access support, and some groups continued to be difficult to engage.
- The community champion role was challenging to recruit and retain but has the potential to work effectively to support outreach and engagement processes when properly implemented.
- Participants generally reported a positive experience, viewing the onsite support as tailored, compassionate, and holistic compared to other employment services.
- Local community hubs increased accessibility and trust, with co-location further supporting engagement.

4.1 Staffing

Guidance was given on the suggested team sizes and roles within JobsPlus; however, decisions regarding team structure were operational, allowing sites to choose and adjust

based on local priorities. Staffing varied across the JobsPlus teams, depending on site size and local needs, Nonetheless, there were some broad similarities: sites tended to operate under a JobsPlus manager who took the strategic lead, supported by a core team of caseworkers. The largest teams operated with six staff members (including JobsPlus managers) and the smallest with three. Caseworkers handled most of the employability support but also often took on engagement and outreach work. Caseworkers were then often supported by a range of additional staff, examples of roles include Youth Engagement, Wellbeing Officer, Recruitment and Outreach, and Communications, financial and administrative support. JobsPlus staff reported that they had diverse backgrounds but often had experience in adjacent fields, such as youth work or the homeless sector. However, most caseworkers had worked in previous employment support roles from the public and private sector. The below case study provides an example of the staffing set up of one site. Whilst relatively large compared to other sites, it provides a fairly typical example of the configuration of staffing.

Case study: An example of staffing set up

JobsPlus at this site was run by a team of five, including four caseworkers and managed by the Housing Association Lead (HAL). The HAL was based on site and as well as line-managing the caseworkers, also worked to build local partnerships and relationships, lead governance arrangements, and serve as an employability coach with their own caseload.

Staff members came from diverse backgrounds. The HAL and two caseworkers had experience in employment support and previously worked in the housing association's (HA's) employability services. One caseworker had a retail background, while the other had a psychology and community mental health support role. Both were hired based on their personal qualities and skills. Staff were supported by one permanent volunteer community champion who promoted JobsPlus through the local church and their work with a food bank. The team were supported by other community champions with outreach and engagement. However, these were temporary roles as champions either struggled to maintain the role alongside paid work or left to take on other positions. There were plans to work with a local volunteering organisation to provide JP staff with training to manage volunteers and potentially to train community champions. It was hoped this would improve the recruitment and retention of future champions.

A team of five delivery staff is relatively large compared to other sites; however, the HA had a large caseload, and the HAL reflected that the team continued to face challenges with resourcing other elements of the programme, although the two new hires helped to provide them with sufficient resources to support their employability case work. Staff were all funded through JobsPlus, which was mainly used for staffing and direct support for participants, rather than commissioning external delivery services.

In terms of actually providing employment support, there is sufficient staff with the numbers we have got. I think where it might become a bit more of a problem is the more activities and events that we do, because every time [a staff member] is at the Job Centre for a day, every time [a staff member] is delivering a workshop, every time we've got a craft workshop, every time we've got an event, every time we are doing an event, it is taking away from that time. And then you have to prioritise and that's difficult… I think the only challenge is, if I'm really honest, just there is so much that we could do, and we just don't have that capacity

Housing Association lead

Staff were working at a pace that might be challenging to sustain indefinitely. At the point of fieldwork, this was balanced by their strong commitment to JobsPlus and a high level of job satisfaction. There was, however, an awareness that continued pressure could negatively affect staff wellbeing.

Generally, caseworkers were employed directly by JobsPlus; however, in some cases, HAs drew their teams from other organisations. For example, one HA who had not previously provided any employment support partnered with a national charity with relevant expertise. This organisation provided two employment and career advisers at the community hub to offer guidance and assistance to JobsPlus participants. The site was also staffed by three Youth Workers from a youth organisation who have served in a similar way to community champions, providing outreach support. They were able to leverage their existing relationships with young people on the estate to promote the programme and provide their understanding of local barriers to employment for young residents.

Case Study: Contracted delivery of employment support

This HAs original team consisted of a manager and two caseworkers. The HA manager was already known in the local area due to extensive work in community engagement. Their role is to manage the caseworkers, link back to funders and develop partnerships. They do not hold a caseload and were not generally involved in the day-to-day although sometimes stepped in for events and outreach. The two caseworkers originally provided employability support and participated in initial outreach and engagement activities to help JobsPlus get off the ground. However, the team did not have sufficient internal capacity or expertise. Consequently, they engaged a known provider in the area with whom they already had a partnership, who provided caseworkers to deliver JobsPlus on the ground. The partner organisation is able to provide support on an informal and ‘as needed’ basis with tasks such as marketing, administration, IT or delivering specific sessions such as on wellbeing.

The team also receive support from numerous community champions who were employed part-time for specific or one-off roles such as sourcing job adverts, attending events, gathering feedback and photographs for marketing, and maintaining the weekly bulletin board. Roles have been given to support participants to help them gain work experience as well as develop confidence and skills.

As delivery has progressed, the partner organisation has reallocated the manager to a partnership-building and community engagement role. While still supporting the JobsPlus team, they now split their time between another contract and the new role. A new manager has been brought in to manage the hub, including caseworkers, welcoming participants, running events, and engaging with partners. This role separation has enabled managers to focus on their specific areas of JobsPlus without having their attention divided. Both original caseworkers have also moved on. They left the JobsPlus team in 2025 due to funding uncertainties and the need for permanent positions. Two experienced replacements have been recruited, though capacity has decreased as one worked four days instead of five.

Overall, using an external provider for staffing has been largely beneficial. The organisation already has local knowledge of the area and good links with other potential partners and employers. Furthermore, it brings a bank of existing staff working on other contracts who can support where necessary. Furthermore, as staff work across different programmes delivering different types of support, they are able to access opportunities for JobsPlus participants that

HA staff may not be aware of or able to access. The only real disadvantages raised by caseworkers is that when housing issues often come up for participants, the team are not as well-placed to understand the issue, locate the relevant information, and escalate this as the HA itself might be. This has led to an extra layer of communication.

As demonstrated by the case study above, staffing changes were made across most sites following the initial rollout to address early capacity challenges or respond to areas of need.

The capacity for employability support was generally reported to be manageable across the sites. Caseworkers who had previously worked in employment support reported lower caseloads than they had been used to. However, they felt that the JobsPlus offer required more time and intensive work with participants, which would be unmanageable with larger caseloads. JobsPlus teams also noted that whilst caseloads were currently manageable, finding the capacity for other aspects of the support could be challenging (for example, marketing, developing community champions, building partnerships and employer engagement). Managers also noted that recruiting and retaining staff could be more difficult in a pilot setting where funding is time limited.

4.2 Onsite employment services

Community hubs

Qualitative data indicated that the four most important elements of community hubs are

- Their proximity to the community they serve
- A variety of sufficient spaces to accommodate different uses
- Visibility within the community
- A welcoming atmosphere

Most sites based their Hubs within the estates they served, and when this was not possible, the locations were reachable on foot or by public transport. For example, one was based on the local high street and was about a 10-15-minute walk for most residents. Another ran from a church on the local high street, which was already an established community space with a café and several local groups operating there. The hub was considered accessible via a short bus ride or walking distance for participants (depending on where on the estate they lived), as well as being near other shops and amenities that participants were accessing at the same time. Hubs were not uniform in terms of their physicality. Some were placed in community halls, some in offices and some in converted houses. This impacted the overall ‘feel’ of the hub and the kinds of space they were able to use. For example, hubs based in houses were able to project a less corporate and more homely environment but were more likely to struggle for space. Hubs based in community centres were more suited to group activities and co-location but struggled to provide private spaces for one-to-one appointments. The following case study outlines a site operating with two hubs, both based in community centres.

Case study: A dual hub site

The estate is built on a hillside, which makes accessibility on foot difficult for many residents, both in terms of getting across the estate and to the city centre. The HA therefore operates out of two community centres on the estate. The first was purpose built by the HA and is situated approximately halfway up the hill. The other had been closed for several years but has now been renovated by JobsPlus. Having two sites has benefited many in the community, especially those with health conditions or more elderly participants, who have found walking up the hill challenging.

One of the hubs spans two rooms; one is designed like a café with kitchen facilities and food laid out, and the other is prepared for activities with chairs and tables. There is also an office suitable for private appointments, as well as an outdoor space with children's equipment. Observations showed the site to be very busy in the morning, with many casual drop-ins and a structured 'job club' that includes one-on-one appointments. The overall atmosphere was relaxed, characterised by informal conversations and laughter. In the afternoon, it becomes quieter and more focused on individual appointments, while staff work on paperwork.

The second site is an older building with a large L-shaped room that serves as the main space for activities. It includes a sizable table in the centre where participants can gather or use at meetings. The steering group meet at this location for example. One-to-one meetings with caseworkers take place behind screens at desk areas around the room, providing semi-privacy. Observations showed that participants feel comfortable at this site, often staying after their appointments to chat and enjoy tea and biscuits with staff and other residents. JobsPlus operates one day a week from one hub and two days from another (9am-3.30pm), where participants can get job search help, apply for jobs, and book appointments with caseworkers. This is supplemented by regular activities, courses, and events across the week at both sites. Both hubs face capacity issues; rooms can be booked, space is tight, and scheduling sometimes requires compromise. Staff say residents see the hubs as relaxed, non-bureaucratic support environments. They felt that a core factor underpinning their success has been the sustained physical presence of staff in the community and at local events. As a result, the community hubs are increasingly recognised and valued.

Staff consistently emphasised that being embedded locally, with a visible and accessible hub, is central to the programme's effectiveness. Many participants reported attending regularly for appointments, casual drop-ins, or seeking job support. Among participants who had been on the programme for over a year, responses were more mixed regarding how regularly they physically attended the hub. This appeared to depend on the participant's preferences or circumstances, for example, if they were working part-time, studying, or volunteering.

Proximity appeared to have an important impact on participants' attendance at community hubs, with travel distances and transport costs creating additional barriers. One site observed a marked drop in attendance when temporary building works required

relocation. Another found that holding a 'job club'[11] in a nearby adult learning centre reduced participation. Participants echoed these observations and frequently highlighted the hub's convenience.

> *It [community hub] was right on my doorstep, so, it was only a 2-minute walk around the corner…. it's a good setup, to be honest.*
>
> JobsPlus participant

> *I think the venue is nice. It's well-structured and it's easy to get to, and it's easy for you to find your way out to them. And I love the environment and I love the people there. They are very lovely and they are really accommodating here.*
>
> JobsPlus participant

In the early stages of delivery, hubs were experienced positively by participants who often described them as friendly, informal and comfortable places. At this stage, we see evidence that these positive experiences are continuing with overwhelmingly positive feedback about the environment at the community hubs. Interview data revealed participants found the environments welcoming, accessible, relaxed, comfortable, friendly, and pleasant to be in. Comments about the venue were matched by the number of comments about the accommodating and friendly nature of staff present at the hubs, making it easier for participants to engage with the programme.

> *Every single time I come here, I feel relaxed and it's easy to talk about anything that needs to be talked about.*
>
> JobsPlus participant

> *It felt like the people that were involved and really wanted to make a difference, rather than just turn up for work and just be like, this is what I do, whatever. It was lovely.*
>
> JobsPlus participant

Staff viewed the community hubs as a core strength of JobsPlus. They provided a space for informal learning, aided social connections and supported the development of trust. Where other community services (such as libraries or foodbanks) were also present at hub sites, staff noted that increased visibility often led to incidental engagement from residents and more sign-ups. As discussed in the 'Partnership working' section of this chapter, a number of sites brought in other services to deliver or work alongside JobsPlus teams. This kind of formal co-location was considered beneficial in creating a welcoming, multi-purpose environment which facilitated easy referrals between services. However, some hubs faced constraints getting partners on site due to restricted space or because

[11] A space to come and work on applications and CVs where computers were provided and staff were able to give feedback with ongoing work.

small caseloads meant partners could not justify the costs for small numbers of participants. Despite this, teams were committed to expanding co-location where feasible.

Case Study: Single community hub

The community hub at this site is situated within a community centre in a quiet residential area which means incidental discovery and unplanned stop-ins are less likely than at other JobsPlus sites. Participants must buzz to enter and pass through two sets of doors before reaching the main JobsPlus area. Although this was not identified as a barrier, it means participants are not able to simply walk in. The hub operates three days a week from 10am-4pm as their core hours. Staff reported that this was sufficient time to meet with participants.

Once inside, participants are able to make use of a waiting area with a sofa and a tea and coffee station which are well received. The main JobsPlus area houses caseworkers' adviser desks in open space with two private meeting rooms and larger rooms upstairs for events and the delivery of group training sessions. Participants observed during site visits appeared relaxed, often coming in early and staying after appointments to chat. Some even came in without appointments just to chat with staff and residents.

The site has three caseworkers, as well as an Engagement Officer, and a Digital Support Officer (DSO) at the hub. The DSO also offers additional online support with digital training. Alongside employment support, the HA runs their housing surgery here, offering a pathway into JobsPlus and Social Prescribers, who frequently visit. Partner presence has increased, including steering group meetings and plans for joint events. External providers run workshops, like a six-week course to boost confidence for work, covering growth mindset, managing expectations, and disability support. The hub also hosts 'soft services' such as a wellbeing group to reduce isolation, yoga by the community champion, and a community garden. These services are popular, serving various groups, some not ready for employment support, others in work.

The JobsPlus team are now seeking to increase partner presence further and had confirmed plans to co-locate some JCP work coaches as well as bring in providers to deliver health programmes and sector-based workshops. It is also hoped that an increase in events will boost the hub's visibility and generate greater interest among the local community.

Tailored employment support

Enrolment and initial registration

Processes for initial registration and needs assessment have remained broadly stable throughout the delivery of JobsPlus. Caseworkers prioritised building relationships and rapport with participants when they first register for support. This might involve delaying formal paperwork to focus on personalised approaches, or using tailored questionnaires to draw out participants' interests, strengths and areas for development. Caseworkers regularly relied on established practices to balance administrative duties with fostering trust. Site visits confirmed that initial assessment meetings were thorough yet friendly, and staff were skilled at helping participants feel at ease. As one caseworker explained:

> *It's not just about getting them straight into work, I think it's about building that relationship first, you know, it's, 'And how are you? How are you getting on? How's your family?'*
>
> JobsPlus caseworker

Several participants reported that they were initially uncertain about what JobsPlus could offer them or whether it would be any different from previous employment support. This uncertainty often stemmed from apprehension about trying a new service or from past experiences where support felt limited or impersonal. As one participant reflected:

> *When we heard about this place, it was like, 'oh, is it going to be one of those situations [where an employability service lets me down] again?*
>
> JobsPlus participant

As discussed in more detail in section 7.5, JobsPlus teams (and community champions) had already invested significant time reassuring potential participants and building trusts as part of their outreach work. For example, the Youth Engagement Officer at one site emphasised the need to speak in ways that resonate with younger residents and to meet them in informal spaces. They described how trust needed to be built through steady presence rather than formal appointments and that he often had to meet with young people several times before they were ready to join JobsPlus. At another site, the community champion often spent considerable time reassuring residents that JobsPlus was unlike their negative experiences of Jobcentre Plus.

Despite this, participants often came to their initial meeting with reservations and caseworkers worked to address these concerns quickly. Indeed, participants described feeling more positive after their first appointment, noting the personalised nature of the service, the breadth of support available and the professional yet approachable manner of staff. Many highlighted that staff were supportive, knowledgeable, non-judgemental and genuinely interested in their circumstances. Staff were also able to provide 'quick wins' during these initial meetings with participants, such as addressing a practical issue or securing a work placement. When this could be achieved, it was reported as being important to secure early engagement.

Case study: Enrolment and initial assessment

At this site, early enrolment and initial assessment involve collecting contact details, ID, personal information, obtaining consent for HA and evaluation, and signing forms. Data from MI and surveys are gathered alongside participant goals, skills, and support needs. This is followed by a structured conversation assessing needs and linking answers to potential jobs and support. Caseworkers discuss preferences, interests, work types, and future goals, while exploring barriers and challenges, and considering practical needs like qualifications, transport, and childcare. The session lasts about an hour and aims to build rapport through sharing experiences, jokes, and small talk, making participants comfortable. The exchange is conversational, leading to a comprehensive understanding of the participant's background. Participants review caseworker notes to confirm accuracy, then learn about upcoming events and schedule the next session. They may be asked to prepare or review relevant material, depending on their job readiness and initial needs, such as building confidence or developing a CV.

Post-assessment employment support

Post-assessment employment support was broadly consistent with the early stages of delivery. For example, caseworkers tended to meet participants weekly/bi-weekly and support meetings with email and phone calls to pass on vacancies and check in on participants. Participant journeys were highly individualised and non-linear, but all provided core employment support, including writing/updating CVs, job searching, application support, employability skills training (e.g. interviews, applications), and goal setting. Participants were most likely to report support with their CV and covering letters as being a key in helping them towards employment.

> *I learnt a lot about CVs and everything else to do with jobs and work, so that's helped my understanding applying for jobs and just being able to put myself out there a lot better*
>
> JobsPlus participant

Caseworkers also used tools such as a SWOT analysis to set long-term and interim goals. Support was primarily delivered through face to face one-to-one meetings of around 45 minutes to an hour with a dedicated caseworker, and the format and frequency were tailored to individual needs. As in the early stages of the pilot, the flexibility to tailor support and focus on relationships was frequently cited by caseworkers as a distinctive strength of JobsPlus. As one caseworker noted:

> *The techniques and the support that I give is individual to the need, and my perception of the need as well rather than just what they tell me. So, it's knowing when to push, knowing when to pull as well. And if you look at, sort of, Alex Ferguson's intro to his biography, it says, 'I've got 11 different players, and I use 11 different management techniques.' And I think that's what I have to do as well. So, it's making an assessment of somebody quite quickly and what, sort of, techniques I'm going to use to the benefit of that person to get them into work*
>
> JobsPlus caseworker

Support was also tailored specifically for longer-term participants who may have more entrenched challenges in finding employment. Those who had been out of work for extended periods often required more intensive support and faced structural barriers such as limited local opportunities, making sustained progress more challenging. While specific approaches varied, most sites took a similar approach to maintain contact with these participants and increase their focus on persistent barriers such as poor mental health, caring responsibilities, or limited confidence, which makes rapid progression unrealistic. One site ensured that long-term participants had access to new opportunities, including training courses and local community events. Another emphasised support centring on confidence-building, mental health, stability and social connection.

Participants were consistently positive about the employment support they received. They described their caseworkers as trusted, responsive, proactive and understanding. Many emphasised that decisions about their support were made collaboratively.

> *They'll never tell me to do anything, they'll say, 'I advise you to.' So, this is [caseworkers] favourite thing to say, 'I'm not telling you to, I'm advising you to.' But, I*

> *mean, they don't really tell you what to do. They ask your opinions on it first, and then they'll say, 'What I would do is.' It just helps a lot, hearing their input and stuff*
>
> JobsPlus participant

Although most participants were satisfied with the service, a few felt that JobsPlus could not address their specific employment needs. This was particularly true for students seeking part-time work or those with higher-level qualifications.

> *I think overall the programme is really good for people that don't have any qualifications and, you know, don't have any kind of entry-level experience and stuff, so it's good to get people off the ground. But I joined as someone who already, albeit not the greatest job, but I already had a job, and I already had a few qualifications and stuff.*
>
> JobsPlus participant

Wider support

One of the defining elements of the JobsPlus model was its capacity to offer additional, practical support alongside employment support. This enabled staff to address broader barriers faced by participants before they could focus fully on work. Analysis of support types recorded in the MI data (see Table 7.1 in the Technical Annex) showed that wider practical help was common, with around one-fifth mentioning health, wellbeing or confidence support (19%) and a similar number mentioning addressing basic and personal needs (18%). Smaller numbers reported financial or debt support (15%), indicating that caseworkers were regularly helping participants address broader barriers to engaging in work.

However, staff at one site noted that this aspect of the offer can occasionally be challenging. They felt that some individuals were highly focused on securing employment and did not initially recognise underlying barriers or feel comfortable acknowledging their need for support. In addition, sites with smaller caseloads or limited physical space sometimes found it difficult to bring partners on site to deliver specialist provision. In these cases, teams relied more heavily on referrals to external organisations, making them less accessible than services delivered directly within the hubs.

Case study: Wider support

Caseworker provision of wider support might be as simple as checking in on participants' lives and offering a supportive ear but often leads to supporting broader needs around confidence and wellbeing. Staff at this site also deliver a weekly Wellbeing Workshop. This is led by caseworkers but is also sometimes supported by community champions or participants. These are group workshops which address topics related to wellbeing (e.g. stress, loneliness, digital wellbeing) and are set up to address the common need for wellbeing support and social interaction among participants. As the site doesn't work with any delivery partners, staff signpost participants to other organisations and support with referrals by making phone calls and filling in forms. These referrals range from funding for training, applications for college and university, to finance teams for debt and poverty advice, to mental health services or to foodbanks. Support is heavily tailored to and guided by the individual, the caseworker's aim is to meet people where they are and go at their own pace while providing encouragement.

Financial support

Financial assistance

Financial advice and assistance were a core part of the JobsPlus offer. Some sites developed partnerships with organisations providing one-to-one money coaching, support to identify unclaimed benefits or help with switching to cheaper utilities. Others drew on colleagues from other support services to offer guidance on budgeting, debt management and financial resilience.

Discretionary funding

Alongside this advice-based support, sites had discretionary funding as part of the JobsPlus programme to be able to provide immediate financial support where needed. This was entirely separate from the £400 Into Work Bonus and was used flexibly to remove short-term financial barriers to participation.

This support included help with bills, bus passes, interview clothing, laptops, training courses, food vouchers or same-day help with rent arrears. For some participants, this support was particularly important when they started work but had not yet received their first pay, helping them manage transport costs or essential purchases. For others, this enabled caseworkers to stabilise participants' circumstances early on.

> *Just going right back to theory of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, you're not going to have people looking at their career, their career progression and looking at a job if the fundamentals have just stayed the same and aren't secure.*
>
> JobsPlus manager

Health and wellbeing

Significant numbers of participants reported health-related issues, including long-term conditions, neurodiversity or disabilities, which they felt affected their ability to find work. Staff were well placed to signpost individuals to specialist services, drawing on their knowledge of local and national provision. 19% of participants reported accessing wider support for health issues. Caseworkers frequently supported referrals (for example, for ADHD assessments) or helped participants to access services such as smoking cessation support. Some sites responded to this need by developing specific health-focused partnerships that enabled direct, immediate access to advice and interventions. For example, one site partnered with an umbrella organisation offering a range of programmes, including long-term health condition management, adult carer support, mental health and wellbeing workshops, and general advice services. Not all sites were able to secure formal partnerships, but they continued to pursue these links, and many introduced interim measures, such as Health and Wellbeing Days, during which healthcare providers and clinics offered checks and guidance at community hubs.

Poor mental health was a common theme, with many individuals reporting issues such as anxiety or depression. Participants felt positively about the support they received, describing feeling listened to and appreciating how caseworkers worked with them. For

example, by acknowledging their challenges, providing flexibility when they are unable to attend appointments or helping them identify roles that would better accommodate their needs. Participants also reported that caseworkers routinely 'checked in', over email, by phone and text on their mental health, and one described the service as "mental health friendly". Several sites ran specific groups focused on confidence, anxiety or general wellbeing. When sites were unable to provide in-house support, staff frequently supported referrals or linked individuals to appropriate services. This support could be transformative and was often integral in getting participants job ready.

Tailored employment journeys

As noted above, support provided by JobsPlus is tailored and personal, which means that participant journeys are often very individualised. Furthermore, specific challenges and needs amongst particular groups require considerable thought to provide meaningful, accessible support to groups such as young people or those with caring responsibilities. Other groups requiring significant deviations from a linear and straightforward approach to employment support are those experiencing alcohol or substance misuse or with experience of the criminal justice system. Respondents also reported that caring responsibilities, housing issues, and the disclosure of previous criminal convictions to prospective employers are barriers to employment. These are less common, however, and primarily involve signposting to specialist support and time spent addressing wider issues, such as wellbeing or financial support, before employment can be considered.

Young people

Caseworkers across sites observed that young people (aged 16–24) are less likely to have worked, often have low qualifications, and lack basic employability skills. Sometimes this is paired with quite high expectations which leads to frustration when they do not easily find work. Consequently, caseworkers often have to provide support with life skills such as budgeting, and appropriate interview attire. Caseworkers also felt that younger participants are more likely to come to JobsPlus with mental health issues or be neurodivergent. Consequently, sites deliver services in an alternative way in these cases. For example, one site reported young participants respond well to hands-on activities and peer-led environments rather than formal job search sessions. Others found that young participants need more check-ins and reminders to ensure they attend and remain engaged. Sites also harness staff expertise and experience to engage young people. For instance, one site has their community champion work with young participants on confidence, routine and social engagement until they are ready to progress to employment support.

Participants with caring responsibilities

Another key group requiring specific approaches to support are those with caring responsibilities. In many cases, this means parents with dependent children. This group require work that fits around school or childcare hours, is flexible for emergencies and school holidays, and paid sufficiently to cover childcare or additional transport needs. Finding employment that meets these requirements is a considerable challenge due to a lack of suitable part-time jobs. Although caseworkers continue to support these participants in seeking suitable positions, they focus on broader support. For example, confidence-building and mental health support are particularly valuable. One site found that group-based delivery helps parents recognise shared experiences and build self-efficacy. Another site uses a delivery partner to run interventions for families with primary school-age children to improve routines and school attendance. Such

approaches maintain engagement and lay the groundwork for later employment or training outcomes when these participants are more able to balance employment with childcare.

In-work support

As more participants moved into employment, all sites became active in delivering the in-work support element of the JobsPlus service. The most common approach involved caseworkers maintaining regular contact, by telephone and email with individuals who had started work to monitor progress and keeping the lines of communication open. Caseworkers were also able to help with any issues although this was rare and often linked to costs associated with initial employment such as suitable clothing or transport. However, one participant did report receiving help negotiating better shifts when they were consistently being given night shifts.

Those on fixed or part-time contracts often continued to receive structured support to move towards sustained employment, and some participants remained involved in wellbeing or community activities run by JobsPlus teams. Staff noted, however, that most participants reduced or ceased contact once they were in work, in common with many other employment programmes. Participants themselves often acknowledged this but valued knowing that support remained available and appreciated the early check-ins while adjusting to employment.

When participants withdrew from contact, this did present some challenges, for example, around administration of the Into Work Bonus. However, this was generally viewed as a sign that participants felt confident and stable in their employment.

> *I would say the majority of them don't really want in-work support. For those people that I'm speaking about specifically, it's like their problems, in quotation marks, have kind of essentially been solved now that they're in work so they're not necessarily engaging with the other stuff that we've got going on.*
>
> JobsPlus caseworker

Of the participants interviewed who had been registered with JobsPlus for over a year, most were still in communication with their caseworker via text or phone call, regardless of whether they were in work, training or still searching for employment. Contact was largely maintained by the caseworker and framed as informal check-ins to find out if the participant had any needs that could be supported by JobsPlus.

Comparison to other employment support

A number of participants discussed previous or current experiences with other employment advice and support services. Many of these were large providers (such as the Restart prime providers), whereas others were local or short-term support services. Some participants found these useful because they linked them to courses, employment opportunities or were supported with job hunting. One participant reported having received 'brilliant' support with her confidence was left feeling 'job ready' from an alternative provider. Nonetheless, others felt that these experiences were not ideal in that support was not tailored to their specific needs. The most commonly cited provider for

employment support was Jobcentre Plus. Although a small number of participants felt they had received good support, the vast majority had had negative experiences with Jobcentre Plus. They cited reasons such as a lack of flexibility, insufficient time with work coaches, and a feeling that the support was not suitable and could often be unfriendly, dismissive, or unsympathetic.

When asked to compare JobsPlus to their previous experiences of other employment support, the vast majority stated that they preferred the support provided by JobsPlus. For example, participants felt that JobsPlus provided more than job support, explored what they wanted and needed and took their needs seriously. Furthermore, JobsPlus was considered to be more tailored, collaborative and holistic than other services and particularly that provided by Jobcentre Plus.

> *I think this [JobsPlus] differs and it's better because it's like someone's actually trying to help you find what's relevant to you rather than like, I'm not going to be an HGV driver or working in security or something. So yeah, it's more tailored.*
>
> JobsPlus participant

These methods seemed to be facilitated by stable relationships with JobsPlus staff, who were seen as supportive and attentive to their needs and preferences. Participants noted that JobsPlus staff were less judgmental and more understanding compared to their experiences with other services, especially Jobcentre Plus. They also mentioned that JobsPlus caseworkers allocated enough time for them to engage thoroughly with the support.

> *The Jobcentre is very limited time; it's a set time to finish. So sometimes you don't have all the time to say what you actually need. It's very rushed, so you just feel the person isn't really listening to you and is just waiting for the next appointment. So, at least here I've got time, and I'm able to really talk about what I actually need.*
>
> JobsPlus participant

Community hubs were also compared favourably to other services. For some individuals, travelling to other services required additional cost and effort that seemed disproportionate to the level of support received.

> *It's not like going to the Jobcentre and then you've got whoever around you. There might be someone kicking off. There is security watching you. For people sometimes they find that intimidating.*
>
> JobsPlus participant

4.3 Financial incentives

In keeping with findings relating to the early stages of delivery, JobsPlus staff reported that responses to the Into Work Bonus[12] remained mixed. It is worth noting that this may be related to the level and design of the financial incentive, as opposed to being common to all financial incentives. Sites were keen to highlight the bonus in promotional materials to catch the eye, but found it was more often perceived as a reward more than a recruitment tool.

> *I don't think people are getting a job just because they're going to get £400 in 2 months' time. What it is, it's a bonus, it's a nice little congratulations, if you like.*
>
> JobsPlus manager

Staff reported some scepticism and disinterest in the bonus and noted that participants were sometimes concerned about its impact on benefits whilst others did not return to claim their bonus. There were also limits to the bonus' use as an incentive for all groups as it excluded those who were working part-time (due to health, caring or studying), or those changing jobs.

Staff felt that consistent, trustworthy, relationship-based support delivered through visibility, events, and trusted figures worked better as an incentive than money as engagement tools. There was a sense that the bonus might sway the undecided, but it was rarely cited as a deciding factor.

> *I think that's a great bonus, but it's not the main reason why I want to take part [in JobsPlus]. I want to be self-sufficient, have a routine. Yes, just be normal, do you know what I mean? But that's a bonus, get some money, but that's all. Not the main incentive.*
>
> JobsPlus participant

Participants were often enthusiastic about the bonus, and some found the money to be particularly helpful while they were still getting on their feet. Nonetheless, it was generally perceived as a 'nice extra' rather than the main reason for engagement with the programme.

> *I think it was brilliant. It was really helpful. It takes a while to get on top of your debts, and it takes a while to get in the hang of things, and I wasn't expecting it, and it really helped. I think I paid an electric bill, and it was covering travel. I work in Central London, and that is a lot of money goes into travel.*
>
> JobsPlus participant

[12] A payment of £400 is received when a participant has sustained new employment or self-employment for at least two months and earns at least £677 monthly. The concept is often used on outreach material and is raised by caseworkers during the initial engagement process.

At some sites, it was felt that the incentive was valued more by younger participants, as the bonus was significant compared to the income they could earn from entry-level jobs. At one site, caseworkers used the incentive to try to re-engage participants who had disengaged. They found that some did then return to claim the bonus or to re-engage with JobsPlus. Both staff and some participants felt that the incentive was more effective in encouraging people to remain employed after they started, rather than in attracting initial sign-ups.

> *This definitely motivated me during the early stages at [the job] to stay with it, and by the time I achieved it, it was much easier with the experience I'd built up…In the beginning, my job was difficult, but [the Into Work Bonus] 100% kept me motivated to keep going, and then by that point, I felt like I gained the experience I needed and went on from there, it was much easier. It kept me motivated throughout, to the point where I no longer needed the motivation.*
>
> JobsPlus participant

Comparing the UK and US incentive designs

The UK incentive operated very differently from the US incentive, and these design differences shaped how each worked in practice. In the UK, the £400 payment tended to function as a supplementary reward rather than a motivator, partly because eligibility depended on reaching a specific earnings threshold but also because of the level it was set at and the operation of the existing benefit system which already means most people are better off in work. This meant that many participants in part-time, low-hour, or unstable roles were unlikely to qualify, limiting its influence on employment decisions, though this is aligned to the Government's aim that people should earn sufficient to reduce their reliance on benefit income wherever possible. In contrast, the US model offered an ongoing rent incentive that increased the financial return to work each month, which was substantially worth more money over time than the UK bonus, which evidence suggests played a more substantive role in supporting sustained employment. However, the US approach was also more complex to administer and experienced significant delays, which initially undermined trust and engagement. The US out of work welfare system overall is also very different to that in the UK, meaning the incentives and financial benefits of work are also different. Full details of the US incentive design, implementation challenges and impacts are provided in Annex, section 4.

4.4 Saturation approach

JobsPlus operated a saturation model, meaning the programme was available to all residents of working age within specified postcode areas. This approach was intended to ensure that the wider community benefited from the programme's presence. During early implementation, HAs viewed this model positively.

As JobsPlus became more embedded, staff reported that saturation helped them reach a broader range of residents, including those who might not access other support. Staff and participants explained that the regular, visible presence of JobsPlus normalised conversations about work and reduced stigma, with word-of-mouth referrals helping

residents feel that others like them were using the service. They mentioned that HAs are trusted spaces, making support feel safer and less formal than attending Jobcentre Plus. Staff highlighted that the high volume of community referrals suggested the model was working as intended.

However, some HAs considered the postcode eligibility element to be too narrow. Although the HAs themselves helped define the boundaries at the outset, it was reported that the resulting limits still felt restrictive in practice. Staff described how the boundaries of JobsPlus support could be confusing, particularly where HAs had previously delivered services which covered the whole estate. This resulted in many sites having to turn people away, sometimes even when they lived in close proximity to the community hub. Although these residents were always referred elsewhere, JobsPlus staff expressed some frustration at not being able to support these residents.

Most participants did not express strong views on the eligibility criteria. A minority raised concerns about the exclusion of residents living outside the designated postcodes. However, the majority were broadly supportive of the localised approach. Participants reported valuing the community focus and noted that JobsPlus was more accessible than other services, particularly for those who were in work or not claiming benefits and therefore ineligible for other programmes.

> *That makes a difference, because they were willing to help me. Although I'm in a full-time job, they were willing to help me.*
>
> JobsPlus participant

At this point in delivery, some sites, especially those covering smaller areas, reported nearing saturation.

> *I think you're going to reach saturation very, very quickly, knocking on the same doors again. I think it's a very, very small area.*
>
> Housing Association staff

To extend reach among residents who had not yet enrolled, JobsPlus teams were exploring a number of options. For example, strengthening partnerships or extending provision into the evenings. However, staff acknowledged that reaching those with more complex barriers was going require additional time, resources and creative methods.

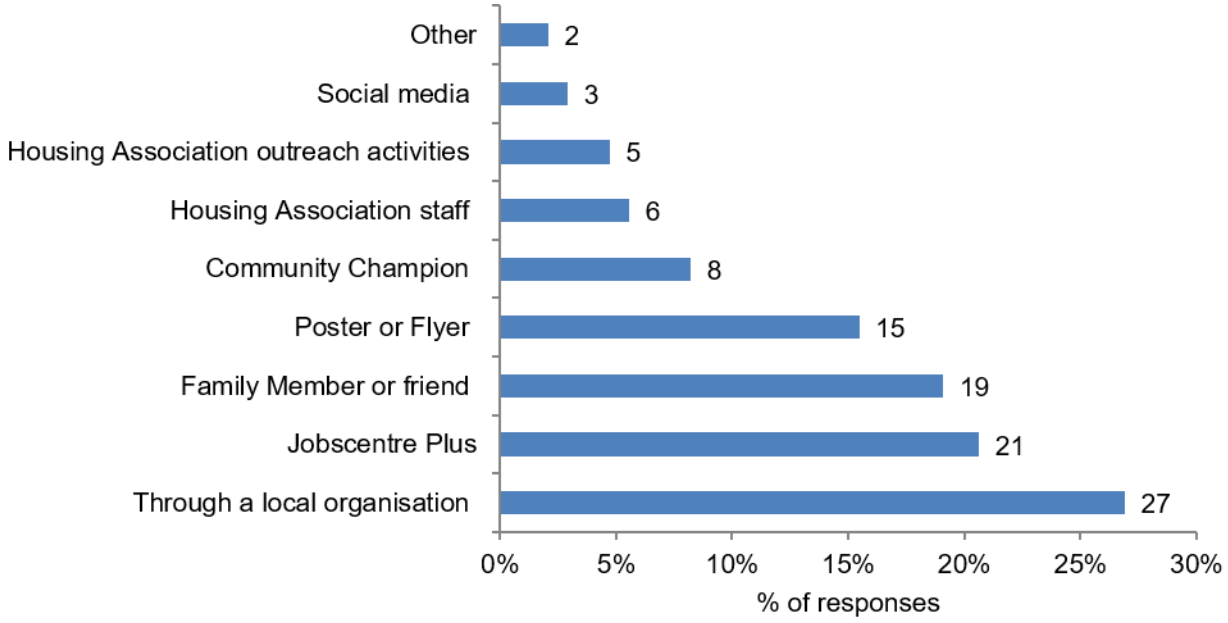
Given the relatively early stage of the model, there was no evidence of mutual support among residents to foster a culture of work and its indirect benefits. However, given that this requires a long-term cultural change, it is anticipated that as the number of people entering employment increases over time, we will see more evidence of this level of change.

4.5 Community support for work

Active outreach and engagement

The most common ways respondents to the baseline survey heard about JobsPlus was through a local organisation (27%) and through Jobcentre Plus (21%), indicating that both community partners and statutory employment services play important roles in raising awareness (see Figure 7.1). A further 19% first heard about it through friends or family, underlining the role of informal networks, while 15% mentioned seeing a poster or a flyer. Small proportions mentioned community champions and social media, suggesting that they were less frequently mentioned but still contributed to overall visibility (3% of survey respondents).

Figure 4.1: How participants heard about JobsPlus



Base 717
Note: This question was multiple choice, therefore the total and % exceeds the base number of respondents for this question.
Source: JobsPlus participant baseline survey, IES, 2025

Similar to the early implementation stage of the programme, HAs used a wide range of established outreach methods, including leafletting, newsletters, door-knocking, social media, text messaging, recorded phone messages, and community noticeboards. JobsPlus staff also attended local events and services, often supported by community champions. Although these activities did not always generate immediate referrals, they helped to build recognition and embed JobsPlus within the community. Staff noted that consistent presence at community events, even when attendance is low, helped to normalise JobsPlus as part of local life.

> *Things like [attending] the Food Bank every week, it's not hugely successful in terms of referrals, but it's about us just becoming established and people saying, 'Oh, that's*

> *[adviser] from JobsPlus' or, 'Why don't you speak to her, she might be able to help you.'*
>
> *Housing Association lead*

Delivery partners refined outreach and engagement activity to ensure that messaging resonated with a broad range of residents. Marketing approaches varied across sites, with some HAs emphasising particular opportunities, such as apprenticeships, community events, or training in areas like digital content creation, coding, or business development to generate interest and create opportunities for face-to-face conversations about the programme. These activities were used as initial ‘hooks’ to encourage participation, build confidence, and raise aspirations.

Teams also expanded the range of in-person events designed to encourage residents to visit community hubs. Examples include weekly drop-ins offering informal conversation, refreshments and giveaways; seasonal events aligned with key calendar moments (for example, Ramadan, Halloween or Easter), and sector-specific employability sessions featuring employers and employment leads. Some sites hosted events specifically aimed to bring young people into JobsPlus. For example, one site consulted with young people in the area and ran a GCSE celebration event with a DJ, pizzas, and goody bags, with a JobsPlus caseworker present to give advice on next steps. Attendance at events varied, but feedback was used to refine approaches and maximise impact. Teams emphasised the importance of creativity, experimentation, and reflection.

> *We’re trying everything and anything, some things land, some things don’t, but if you don’t try anything, nothing’s going to hit the spot. So, we’re quite happy to try things and see what works*
>
> JobsPlus manager

Views on outreach and engagement

Early in the pilot, gaining trust was time-consuming and challenging. Differentiating JobsPlus from statutory employment services was a key challenge. Some residents initially expressed hesitation about the HA branding, though this was not universal. In other areas, participants reported that HA-led support felt more approachable and accessible. Operational challenges linked to the physical environment of estates were also reported. In one case, local unrest required the JobsPlus team to temporarily relocate to a café and HA head office until the estate stabilised. Some hubs were located in areas with limited footfall, reducing visibility. Staff at one site described the estate as a “ghost town”, while another highlighted community fragmentation as a barrier to outreach.

> *Maybe it's general community fragmentation, maybe it's the demographics of the estate, maybe it's the history of the estate, I don't know. But, other than ad hoc relationships, we've had trouble getting the word out, and it still feels a lot like we're going person to person, rather than relying on people knowing each other and talking to each other.*
>
> JobsPlus manager

However, informal referrals (particularly through friends, family, and neighbours) have become increasingly common as JobsPlus embedded into local communities and its reputation strengthened.

> *If you've got a family member or a neighbour that's actually been part of the programme or on the programme, they're selling it because of their particular experience, aren't they? So, that's what I tend to find. It's that word of mouth*
>
> JobsPlus caseworker

One site built on the increasing trend of family and friend recommendations, encouraged residents to attend in pairs, described by the JobsPlus manager as a “Noah’s Ark” approach. This was particularly helpful for those lacking in the confidence to attend on their own. The site also developed a ‘Refer a Friend’ £10 voucher scheme, which was fundamental in increasing self-referrals from young people.

Residents who were not enrolled in JobsPlus, reported hearing about JobsPlus through a range of sources. This included communication from their HA, living in proximity to the hub or attending events at the hub, through a family member signing up, or via JCP. All non-participating residents interviewed felt that JobsPlus was a good idea, particularly for local young people. However, few were able to provide any details about the service, indicating that perhaps messages about what JobsPlus could help with could be improved. Furthermore, some seemed unaware that JobsPlus might be able to support them with their barriers to employment (such as childcare or health issues). In terms of increasing outreach, these participants suggested greater use of social media (specifically Facebook) and expressed a preference for ‘written’ methods such as leaflets, posters, notices, and emails.

Community champions

The JobsPlus model envisaged that each site would engage a number of local residents to act as community champions. Their role would be primarily to engage people in their community in JobsPlus, ‘spread the word’, and help to influence provision. It was also thought that they would provide some level of peer support. In practice, the roles undertaken by community champions varied across sites according to local need and the skills of individuals in post. Outreach and engagement roles tended to be less formal, with the most ‘light touch’ of these either leveraging existing community roles to promote the programme or using informal personal routes. At the other end of the spectrum, some champions took on design and delivery roles leading to more independent activities and in a few cases these more formal responsibilities evolved into paid roles. JobsPlus staff often reflected on the value of champions in outreach and engagement roles. It was reported that their unique position was highly effective at building relationships, especially through informal conversation. Their understanding of both the programme and the community allowed them to build trust and normalise JobsPlus in ways that employed outside staff might not have achieved. This section will now go on to discuss the roles and activities of community champions in more detail.

Case study: An example of a site with multiple community champions

Initially, this site was running with three community champions and two staff members. However, staff found that they were having to spend considerable time training the champions which distracted from case work. Consequently, when two of the champions left, the one remaining was promoted to senior community champion and two new part-time community champions (one on a 14-hour contract and the other on a 10-hour contract) were hired. The original community champion oversaw the new staff and all three were managed by a caseworker in a mentoring role.

Staff reported that champions were vital to outreach and engagement, building relationships through informal conversations, presence in community spaces, and social media. Having a paid senior champion helped emphasise JobsPlus's community-led nature. Their local knowledge provided valuable insights, especially for minorities, like increasing male participant engagement. The original community champion and one of the new hires had been JobsPlus participants themselves and so were able to draw on that experience as part of their outreach roles:

I saw how it [JobsPlus] helped me on my journey, and I wanted to pass that on to other participants as well, and help them on to their journey

The new recruits also expanded existing activities; one ran cooking sessions, and the site aimed to fill gaps in evening provision for those unable to attend during the day. For example, they worked flexibly to expand provision, offer activities and support for people outside work hours, such as a Halloween craft event, health activities, and communal meals. Champions were also engaged with supporting participants directly. For instance, whilst caseworkers focused more on job-ready participants, Champions worked with participants on confidence building, routine setting and encouraged participation in courses and activities. They also led research and shared feedback to caseworkers.

The community champions reported that the role supported them to develop skills, receive mentoring, enabled them to access courses such as Food and Hygiene and First Aid. The senior community champion also added that taking on the role had provided her with a sense of confidence and pride:

I love the role as community champion, I do. It's the best job ever… JobsPlus has helped me so much. I had no confidence. I had nothing, and now, I can talk to everyone and anyone about everything and anything. So, it's the best thing I've ever done, I'm not going to lie.

Roles and responsibilities

At most locations, community champions were primarily engaged in community outreach, trust-building, and raising the visibility of the JobsPlus service and associated activities. This work was largely facilitated by the personal and professional networks they brought to the role and often included attendance at community events or informal engagement with local services. Community champions played an important role in tailoring messages to local needs and addressing misconceptions. For instance, at one site, the community champion led the social media promotion of JobsPlus services and events, using participant quotes and images to highlight positive experiences and the unique elements of the support. Some community champions contributed more directly to the design and

delivery of events. Others applied their skills to administrative functions, including support for social media activities, mapping local resources or with outreach work.

Some sites assigned Champions to specific roles, such as a digital champion, while another site was planning to recruit a youth community champion. At one location, although not formally designated as a youth specialist, the community champion supported young people by focusing on confidence-building, routine, social engagement, and linking them to courses before introducing employability support.

> *If they're not [job-ready], they'll sit with the community champions and build up things like what courses they want to go onto, coming to the centre for community engagement, building confidence, you know, whatever it is that they need.*
>
> JobsPlus caseworker

At other sites, community champions help to shape strategic direction. In a small number of cases, they formally participated in steering groups; in others, they provided anonymous feedback or shared insights about the estate and its residents. At one site, a community champion was very active in the first year, helping staff identify emerging needs and priority groups. This person was later trained and employed as a caseworker.

Recruiting and retaining community champions

A key factor in the successful implementation of the role was recruiting individuals who were already well-connected within the community. Successful champions were often recruited through informal, proactive involvement in local events or by being ‘spotted’ as a good candidate by caseworkers. However, identifying and recruiting suitable candidates remained a significant challenge. For some sites, geographic context negatively impacted on recruitment. For example, where JobsPlus boundaries covered large regions, it was less likely to find individuals with both community recognition and available time. Some sites also lacked a well-established or active community with identifiable leaders. For other sites, the recruitment challenges were more closely linked to a lack of residents with the confidence to undertake the role.

Even when champions were successfully recruited, retention was difficult. One site noted that unclear expectations at the start of the programme led to higher dropout rates. Often, champions left for employment quickly, thanks to their strong networks and skills. This constant turnover hindered sites from planning effectively for the role's long-term success. It is clear, therefore, that to maximise the role of the community champion, sites need to focus on recruiting residents with strong social capital and on providing training and clear roles. It is also beneficial for sites to have more than one champion to provide continuity when one moves into employment or is unable to continue in the role.

Paid community champion roles

As delivery models became more established, some sites moved to have the community champion as a paid position. At one site, payment reflected the roles given to the community champion. Here, the role was seen as an opportunity for work experience and personal development, and payment was given to compensate for the time given to specific tasks or activities. Paying the role also meant the community champion had much

more time to dedicate to the position than they would have had if they had to split their time between job searching or working another job. This additional capacity enabled them to fully engage with the role and drive improvements in engagement, support, and the role itself. At one site, the community champion had originally been a participant on the programme, and moving into a paid role with the HA positioned them as a visible success story for JobsPlus. Their ability to share their own journey with residents was reportedly highly effective for engagement, demonstrating how a paid role could amplify the champion's credibility and impact.

Where sites did not pay their community champions or define clear roles, challenges were reported with recruitment and retention. The HA lead at one site considered whether paying community champions would enable them to develop the role more fully, as this would incentivise them to remain in the role. The site had been experiencing high turnover among community champions, which the team had found frustrating after investing time in bringing them up to speed. However, this might not be a universal solution. In some cases, community champions preferred the lighter expectations that came with being in a voluntary role. Care must also be taken that paying community champions does not undermine resources for the site as a whole, and this, in turn, translates into a clear role with aims and objectives. Even when payment supports stability and role clarity, it does not automatically generate the broader cultural shifts the model aspires to.

Challenges with the community champion role

As well as challenges noted with recruitment and retention, a number of sites reported that there was sometimes an overestimation of the basic skills of community champions. Investing in their skills and building their confidence took time, and staff often struggled to invest sufficient time in training new recruits alongside other operational priorities. Some sites also reported that, particularly at the outset, the community champion role was not clearly defined and it took time for some sites to understand how best to utilise the role. At one site, the high turnover rate of community champions made it challenging to develop the role.

Advantages of the community champion role

Across the pilots, community champions were particularly effective at clarifying the distinct nature of the offer and communicating JobsPlus's personalised, community-based approach.

> *I never say 'JobsPlus' because people think it's the Jobcentre and switch off. I say '[name] JobsPlus' and emphasise it's free, it's supportive, and we encourage you; we don't crush you.*
>
> community champion

Where the community champion role was well-established, staff reported that it had been pivotal in enhancing JobsPlus' credibility within the local community. Champions enabled more proactive outreach and helped normalise JobsPlus as part of the community infrastructure rather than a targeted intervention for a narrow group. Champions at these sites demonstrated strong relationship-building skills, particularly through informal

conversations. At two sites, community champions played an active role in establishing relationships with potential partners or groups who had not previously accessed support. For example, one site had identified parents seeking employment as an underserved cohort. A community champion's existing connection with a local primary school enabled caseworkers to attend an open evening to promote JobsPlus, resulting in fifteen referrals. community champions were important in ensuring the team could make the most of their resources. For example, at some sites, deploying community champions specifically on engagement and community activities allowed caseworkers to focus on intensive casework and progression.

The role also provided benefits to the community champions themselves. As well as providing opportunities for the accumulation of work experience and, for some, direct employment as a paid role, community champions across all sites reported that the role had a significant personal impact. As illustrated in the case studies, many described increased confidence, the development of transferable skills, a chance to socialise in the community, to meet new people, and a sense of pride in contributing positively to their community.

Case study: An example of a site with a single community champion

The site consists of a team of five, which includes a manager, two employment advisers, an apprentice, and a full-time voluntary community champion. Caseworkers approached the champion after she gave a presentation on her experiences as a JobsPlus participant. It was felt that she was able to convey a visible success story of the programme with passion and confidence. Furthermore, she was already well-connected in the local community through her employment. Other, more informal champions, such as local parents and faith leaders, support outreach on a voluntary basis, but recruiting and retaining further champions has been challenging.

The community champion's main role has been to promote the programme in the local area. They have done this through personal connections (word-of-mouth), via local groups they are members of on social media and by maintaining a visible presence at community events. They also organise activities such as yoga and self-defence and sit on the steering group, providing residents with a voice in shaping delivery. The champion reported how they use their own experience to promote JobsPlus.

I believe the role is just to let people know about the programme and how much it has helped. Part of it for me is that I'm an example of how the programme has been successful…People want to hear success stories. They don't just want to hear, 'Oh, this place is here.' When I tell people, 'That's how I got my job, I was like you, I was demoralised,' they're more willing to give it a go. They see I was in the same situation.

The champion has also been able to challenge misconceptions about the programme and cut through mistrust.

Sometimes there's that mentality of, 'Why are you giving this to us? Why do we deserve it?' and I say, 'There's no catch – you deserve it.' People are almost shocked. You have to enforce the idea that they're worthy of stuff.

The JobsPlus team also benefits from outreach underpinned by a relatable, approachable champion who shares their lived experiences with the team. Indeed, most of the participants

interviewed reported having spoken to the community champion, with some noting that she had been integral in engaging them in the programme.

Staff reported that the community champion role is pivotal in cementing local credibility and building networks, which has led to an increase in sign-ups. They noted that early reliance on leaflets and formal outreach had been far less effective; rather, what really worked was informal, relationship-based approaches through the community champion and social activities. The role also has a significant impact on the Champion herself, who described becoming more confident speaking publicly and feeling empowered to take on new responsibilities and outreach activities. She also reported a new sense of identity and a positive impact on her wellbeing.

I was a single mum… I didn't feel like a person. I just felt like someone's mum. I forgot my skills… One of my friends said recently, 'You seem like a whole new person'. My son said, 'You seem so much happier now, Mum.'

Over time, the role has evolved into a paid position, and staff were able to reflect on what made the role such a success in this instance. Caseworkers noted that investing early in a credible, local figure already established in the community has been particularly important. This means the champion has been able to hit the ground running, and that communications are shared through relationships rather than through automated or impersonal messaging. It is also important that the community champion is engaged full-time so they can act proactively and engage thoroughly with different aspects of the service.

4.5.1 Community support for work: comparison with the US Model

While the community champion role in the UK focused mainly on outreach, trust-building and strengthening the visibility of JobsPlus, the US model placed a stronger emphasis on structured resident-led support. In the US demonstration, area captains were trained and supported to take on more formal responsibilities, including promoting job opportunities, coordinating neighbour to neighbour assistance such as childcare and transport, and undertaking door-to-door engagement.

Early implementation of this aspect varied, with some sites forming peer support groups and involving residents in outreach efforts, such as door-to-door visits, distributing programme materials, and discussing job opportunities and training with neighbours. Across most sites in the UK, resident-led roles were mostly informal, though some sites moved closer to the more structured US model. In the US, participation relied on factors such as leadership dynamics, relationships with HAs, and residents' skills and confidence. While involving residents as partners was practical and beneficial, it needed institutional backing, effective leadership within staff teams, and opportunities for residents to develop relevant skills. Credibility was strengthened by engaging trusted resident outreach workers, including multilingual staff, who played an important role in connecting with immigrant communities. Sites also provided stipends and training to sustain motivation and ensure area captains felt equipped for the role.

These differences in approach offer useful context for understanding how community-based engagement operated across the two models and the conditions needed to sustain it. Taken together, the comparison shows that more structured resident-led community champion roles work well when clear role design, training, and

ongoing support are in place. Strong leadership, good relationships with HAs, and opportunities for residents to build confidence also play an important part in enabling residents to take on these roles.

4.6 Early implementation and outcomes UK and US comparison

Patterns in participant needs and delivery approaches were not unique to the UK. Similar challenges were evident across US JobsPlus sites, which operated in areas of high deprivation. US sites were located in neighbourhoods of very high poverty, where residents faced multiple and overlapping barriers to work, including low-paid and unstable jobs, high reliance on welfare benefits, low educational attainment, childcare constraints for around a quarter of parents, and health issues affecting roughly 30% of residents. The sites were also highly diverse some predominantly African-American, others mainly Latino or Southeast Asian with between 11 and 22 languages spoken in some sites, creating significant translation and communication needs.

These contextual factors closely mirror the challenges reported by UK sites, where local demographics, labour-market conditions, and levels of trust in public services shaped both the delivery of employment support and the additional help participants required. For instance, sites based in post-industrial areas lacked employment opportunities, as jobs were never replaced or were replaced by higher-skilled roles that did not match the available workforce. In some areas, this was exacerbated by a lack of affordable and accessible public transport as well as a reluctance to leave a relatively small area for work. In many cases, the low trust in authority was partly a legacy of de-industrialisation, which contributed to this scepticism.

By contrast, the US demonstration highlights how delays and partial implementation had an important influence on early delivery and outcomes. JobsPlus did not begin as a fully mature programme: key components of the model, including the rent incentive and the community support for work element, were introduced later than planned or only partially in place, and the complexity of bringing the three components together meant progress varied across sites.

These early challenges led the 2005 evaluation to treat 1998–1999 as a transitional period, with employment and earnings impacts from 2000–2003 viewed as a more reliable indication of the programme's potential. High resident turnover also made it harder to assess early outcomes, as many households moved on before experiencing the full model. Alongside this, sites needed time to build partnerships, secure funding, recruit staff and establish suitable delivery space, and although employment-related support was available from the outset, the nature and intensity of support differed across sites. Early job outcomes were achieved, but participation levels had not yet reached the intended saturation approach, and the available evidence did not provide clear findings on short-term outcomes such as health, confidence or social inclusion.

In contrast, the UK model was implemented with most core components in place from the start, allowing staff to offer more consistent support to participants from the start, even though trust-building and local adaptation were still required. These differences in

implementation maturity, resident stability and the timing of key components provide important context for interpreting the US evidence base. On the other hand, the US pilots benefitted from more secure and longer-term funding than the initial one-year funding in the UK and this may affect relative impacts too. Further details are set out in Annex section 4).

Taken together, the comparisons show that while the underlying challenges were similar, the conditions for delivery were quite different. In the US, early delivery was shaped by delays, partial implementation and high resident turnover which meant the programme to took longer to reach a steadier state. By contrast, the UK model benefited from having most components in place from the outset, allowing for more consistent support while trust building and local adaptation were at early stages. The US pilots also had more secure, longer-term funding, whereas the UK sites operated in a shorter funding window. These differences are important for understanding how to interpret the US evidence alongside the UK experience.

5 Employment outcomes

In this chapter, we examine evidence on the employment outcomes achieved by JobsPlus participants and the characteristics of those entering employment. The analysis provides insights into how JobsPlus may have contributed to employment outcomes; however, these are possible patterns of influence, not strong causal evidence. The analysis draws on quantitative management information data and some qualitative interviews with programme delivery staff and participants to further illustrate the findings. Logistic regression[13] was conducted on the MI data to better understand the factors influencing the likelihood of participants entering employment. A full discussion of the regression analysis will be provided in the conclusions.

Key findings

- 27% (n=284) of JobsPlus participants secured new employment. Around one-quarter, 24% (n=235), of all participants moved into a new job having been out of work when registering for the programme, and 4% (n=42) were already in work and transitioned into a new role.
- At the time of the interim report, based on data to the end of March 2025, 18% of participants had secured an employment outcome, indicating a 50% increase in employment outcome rates to the end of December 2025. Improved outcomes reflected that participants needed more time to build their job readiness and address broader barriers before entering employment. Although the quality of support remained consistent, JobsPlus delivery models and links with employers and partners became more embedded over time, which likely increased their effectiveness.
- Nearly one-quarter (23%) of participants who achieved an employment outcome did so within one month of registering for the programme. This shows that some participants were able to move into work quickly after joining, while others required support over a longer period.
- Participants who were not in work at registration and joined early in the pilot's delivery (July to September 2024) moved into work more quickly and had higher job entry rates (44% moved into employment) compared with later cohorts.
- Logistic regression showed women, people aged 55 or above, those with parental or caring responsibilities and people with health problems substantially affecting their day-to-day activities were less likely to achieve a job outcome, controlling for other variables.
- Sustained employment outcomes at three and six months were positive but reduced at nine months: Around three-fifths, 61%, of participants who moved into employment

[13] Logistic regression is a statistical technique used to predict a binary outcome, such as moved into employment (yes / no), based on input data, which in this case was factors that may influence the likelihood of moving into employment.

sustained their new employment for at least three months, 55% for six months, and 26% for nine months.

- Women and participants with university-level education (Level 4-6) or equivalent advanced degrees who moved into employment were more likely to sustain new jobs for 3 and 6 months compared with men or those with lower levels of education.

5.1 Factors affecting employment outcomes

Regardless of employment status at registration, participants were considered to have achieved an employment outcome if they moved into employment or a new role after registering for JobsPlus. Of the 1038 participants on the programme, 27% (n=284) achieved an employment outcome.

This compares with 18% at the time of the interim report[14], indicating a 50% increase in employment outcomes since the end of March 2025. The findings from interviews with housing association (HA) staff and partners suggest that the increase in employment outcomes could reflect participants needing more time to build their skills, confidence, and job readiness, and to address wider barriers before moving into employment. Although the quality of support has been consistent, the JobsPlus delivery model and links with employers and partners have become more embedded over time, which may have increased their effectiveness.

Of the 803 participants who were out of work when they registered for the programme, 29% (n=235) achieved an employment outcome, i.e. moved into work. Of the 191 participants who were already employed when they registered for the programme, 22% (n=42)[15] moved into new roles, indicating JobsPlus supports career progression and job changes[16]. The following example demonstrates how JobsPlus can help participants progress to more sustainable, better-paid work.

Case study: Participant interview

A participant who was working a full-time job at the time of enrolment joined the programme looking for help to apply for more senior roles. Although she held qualifications suited to senior roles, she was unsure what roles to target and lacked confidence in her applications. She received support around career planning and employability skills, which clarified her aspirations and boosted her confidence to pursue progression opportunities.

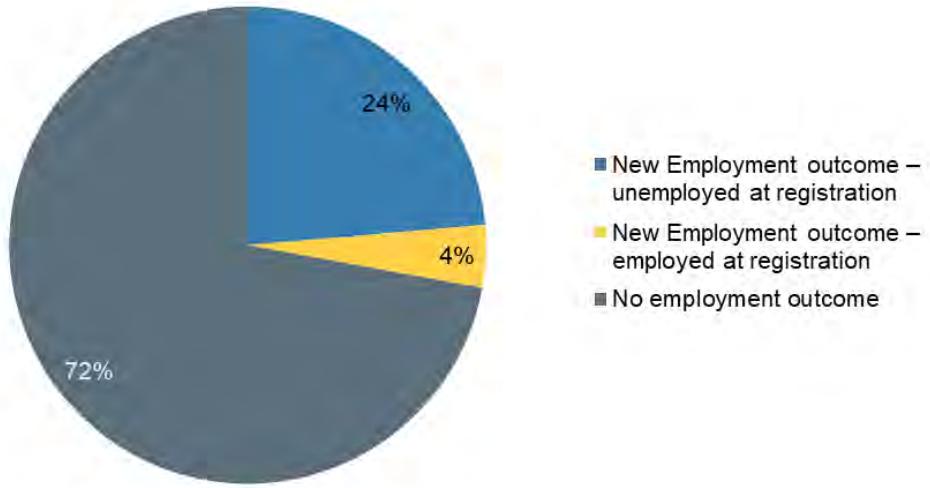
[14] The interim report had MI data to the end of March 2025.

[15] The MI data included fields about salary for those with jobs at registration and also salary for any new job secured. However, this data is insufficiently complete to allow for meaningful analysis.

She subsequently secured a place on an HR manager graduate programme, which she viewed as a step up. The role was well-suited to her needs, being full-time, within walking distance and involving training which would allow her to progress in the role.

Around one-quarter of all participants, 24% (n=235), were out of work at the time of registration and then entered work, while a further 4% (n=42) of participants were employed at registration but moved into new roles (Figure 5.1).[17]

Figure 5.1: Percentage of participants who achieved an employment outcome



Source: JobsPlus MI analysis, IES, 2026.
Base: 994 JobsPlus participants with employment status at registration recorded.

Percentage of participants finding employment by cohort

Participants who joined earlier in the programme (July to September 2024) were more likely to achieve employment outcomes compared to those who joined later. This is reflected in Figure 5.2 which shows the percentage of participants who found employment by quarterly cohort (the quarter in which they registered for JobsPlus).

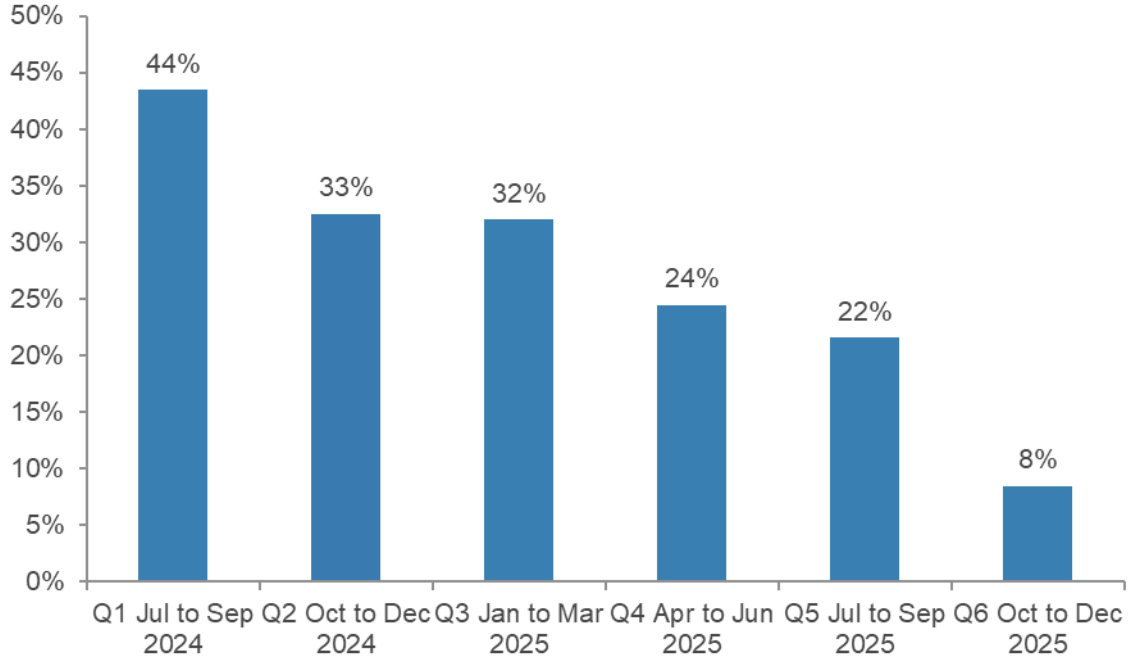
Employment outcomes were highest for those who registered early in the pilot (Q1, July to September 2024) at 44% and then stabilised between October 2024 and September 2025[18]. Not surprisingly, employment outcomes were lowest for those in Q6 (October to

[17] 44 participants did not have a recorded employment status at registration.

[18] Between Q2-3 (October 2024 to March 2025) and between Q4-5 (April to September 2025) the differences in the proportion of people achieving employment outcomes were minimal (one to two percentage points). The greatest decrease was from Q5 (July to September 2025) to Q6 (October to December 2025) by 14 percentage points.

December 2025) at 8%, likely due to the shorter time on the programme compared with earlier cohorts.

Figure 5.2: Percentage of participants who achieved an employment outcome by quarterly cohort



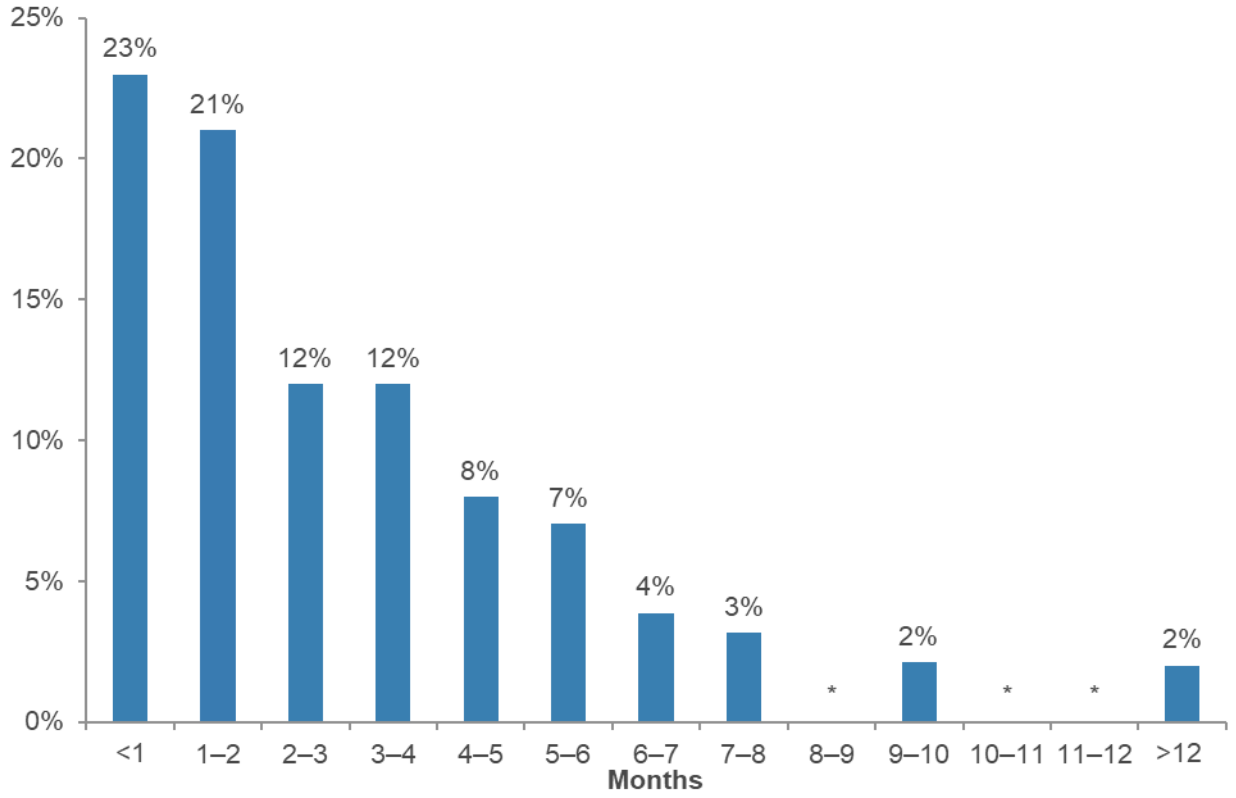
Source: JobsPlus MI analysis, IES, 2026.
Base: 1030 JobsPlus participants with a recorded registration date.

Time taken to achieve an employment outcome

The mean duration between registering on JobsPlus and finding work was around three months (93 days) for all participants[19] who achieved an employment outcome. The median duration was around two months (68 days). Participants were most likely to achieve an employment outcome within one month of registering for the programme, with nearly one-quarter (23%) of participants who achieved an employment outcome doing so, and 44% doing so within the first two months (Figure 5.3). Two-thirds of participants (66%) took more than two months to achieve an employment outcome, with 17% taking more than 6 months.

[19] This includes people who were in employment at registration and those who were not.

Figure 5.3 Months taken to achieve employment outcome

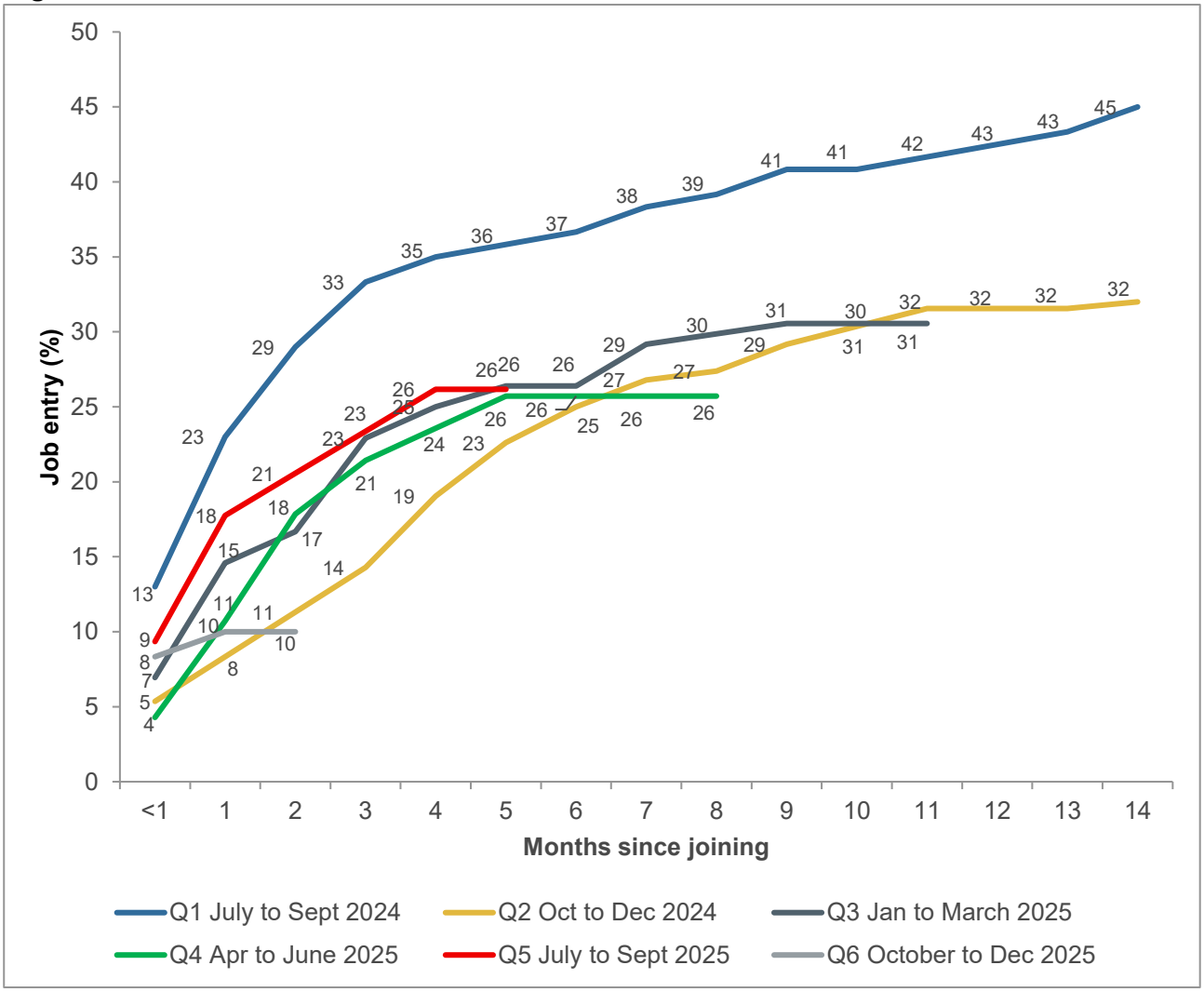


Source: JobsPlus MI analysis, IES, 2026.
'' Suppressed due to being based on five or fewer people.*
Base: 271 JobsPlus participants with a recorded employment outcome and registration date and no date entry errors for employment outcome.

Participants who were not in work at registration and joined the first cohort of the pilot's delivery (July to September 2024[20]) moved into work more quickly and had higher job entry rates compared with later cohorts. This is likely due to pilot sites needing longer to build trust and engagement with underserved residents, and those with more complex support needs, who require support over a longer period before moving into work. Furthermore, HAs perceived that those who engaged earlier in the programme were closer to the labour market although the MI data showed a higher proportion of people with health conditions impacting daily activities in earlier cohorts compared to later (see 'Profile of earlier and later cohorts' in section 3.2). However, the trend does not apply to all early cohorts; for those registering in the second quarter (October to December 2024), job entry rates are slower than for the next three cohorts. Figure 5.4 shows the time taken to move into work after registering for JobsPlus.

[20] JobsPlus pilot started in July 2024.

Figure 5.4: Cumulative job entry rates by quarterly cohort for those not in work at registration



Source: JobsPlus MI analysis, IES, 2026.
Base: 799 JobsPlus participants who were not in work at registration and had a recorded registration date.
Cohort bases: Q1 = 120, Q2 = 168, Q3=144, Q4=140, Q5=107, Q6=120.

5.2 Who found work?

Multivariate modelling (regression analysis) identified that several factors influenced the likelihood of JobsPlus participants achieving an employment outcome (see Annex Table 4.1: Predictors of Job Outcome: Sequential Models).

- Participants who were employed at enrolment were less likely to achieve a positive job outcome, possibly because they were already in work and therefore needed to find a 'better' job to want to move making this a higher bar to clear.

- Lower likelihoods of job outcomes were observed for women, participants aged 55 or above, those having parental or caring responsibilities, and individuals reporting substantial health issues.[21]
- Participants who enrolled on JobsPlus in the first cohort (July to September 2024) had the highest likelihood of getting a job, while being part of every consecutive cohort had a reducing likelihood of getting a job. Participants in the most recent cohort (October to December 2025) had the lowest likelihood of getting a job. This is likely due to the time needed to move people into employment, which is too soon for the most recent cohorts.
- People who reported having health problems affecting their day-to-day activities *a lot* had the lowest likelihood of getting a job, with significantly worse outcomes compared to those participants who reported their health conditions affected them *a little*.

These findings were supported by qualitative interview data that highlighted the challenges faced by parents and carers, as well as people with health conditions, when seeking work. For example, staff noted that the types of jobs needed for these people were harder to find, such as jobs offering flexible hours, remote work, and/or part-time (within school) hours.

Case Study: Caring responsibilities and finding a job

A young single mother who had been unemployed for about a year after losing her job reported struggling to find a job that suited her needs. She had prior employment experience, and was open to most types of roles, but finding a job that fitted within the three hours of childcare she had five days a week for her young child was difficult. She also needed a job accessible by public transport as she did not drive.

Lots of the jobs am I applying to they either start the same time as childcare or end the same time as childcare and you can't get to two places at once, can you? I don't drive either so I've got to take into account, like, travel.

JobsPlus participant

Despite these challenges, she felt more confident about getting a job since starting JobsPlus support, partly because she had improved her CV and job readiness. She felt well supported by her caseworker compared to previous employment programmes she had been on and appreciated being able to meet on site and bring her child, as she might not otherwise have been able to take part in the programme.

As illustrated in the below case study, there was also qualitative evidence that JobsPlus supported participants with health conditions into work.

[21] It can be safely assumed that for binary factors (such as has parental or caring responsibilities), the opposite effect would be observed for (i.e. those without parental or caring responsibilities). Regarding the age groups, it is observed in the analysis that for older age groups the effect gets larger to the point of becoming significant for those aged 55+.

Case Study: Gaining employment

One participant interviewed was struggling with his mental health, which affected his motivation. The participant appreciated the low-pressure environment of JobsPlus and the approachable nature of the staff, given his mental health struggles. He said he became job-ready within 6–8 weeks of enrolling in JobsPlus and felt supported throughout the process. He received help with CV writing, interview preparation, and emotional support.

He gained full-time employment with the local council, which he attributed to the support he received from JobsPlus. He also credited in-work support from JobsPlus with helping him stay in work during a restructure, with the Into Work Bonus also helping him to stay motivated. His aim for the future was to progress within the council, and he has received encouragement and support from the JobsPlus team for this ambition.

Length of time out of work and likelihood of securing employment

The logistic regression analysis indicated a strong negative association between the length of prior unemployment or worklessness and the likelihood of securing employment after enrolling in JobsPlus. Participants who had been out of work for 6-12 months had 58% lower odds of securing employment compared with those out of work for less than six months. Participants who had been out of work more than a year had 74% lower odds of securing employment compared with those out of work for less than six months (see Annex Table 5.7 Logistic regression models).

5.3 Sustained employment outcomes

JobsPlus staff recorded when participants reached milestones of sustaining employment for three, six and nine months. Table 5.1 shows that 61% (n=122) of participants who moved into employment were still in employment after three months, 55% (n=76) sustained employment for six months, and 26% (n=22) for nine months. Not all participants who achieved employment had been in their roles long enough to be eligible for sustainment outcomes. The milestones recorded by staff may underestimate the true extent of sustained employment, as there may be missing information from participants who sustained employment but ceased contact with JobsPlus staff, or where staff did not follow up with participants.

Table 5.1 Percentage of participants who sustained employment

Sustained employment for	Percentage of participants
3 months[1]	61%
6 months[2]	55%
9 months[3]	26%

Source: JobsPlus MI analysis, IES, 2026.
1. Base 3 months: 199 JobsPlus participants who moved into employment at least three months before the end of the data collection period (30.09.25).
2. Base 6 months: 139 JobsPlus participants who moved into employment at least sixth months before the end of the data collection period (30.06.25).

3. Base 9 months: 84 JobsPlus participants who moved into employment at least nine months before the end of the data collection period (31.03.25).

Into Work Bonus payment

People who were not in work when they registered for JobsPlus may have been eligible for the Into Work Bonus payment when they reached two months in employment. Analysis showed that just under one-half, 45% (n=96)[22], of participants who were not in work at the time of registering for JobsPlus and achieved a job outcome received the Into Work Bonus. The other 55% who moved into work but did not get the payment either did not qualify because they did not reach two months sustained employment, did not meet the earnings threshold or the payment date was missing from the MI data; it is not possible to ascertain which. It is also possible some participants qualified for, but did not claim, the bonus as they had ceased contact with JobsPlus or chose not to.

Characteristics of those who sustained employment

Regression analysis results suggested that gender and prior education were two important factors influencing the likelihood of participants who had moved into employment staying in employment (see section 5.2 in Annex):

- Men had lower chances of sustained employment for three months than female participants, with 77% of women who found work sustained a 3-month job compared to 63% of men, a difference of 14 percentage points[23].
- Men also had significantly lower chances of sustaining employment for six months compared to women. In absolute terms, this indicates that 79% of women sustained a job for six months compared to 54% of men, which is a statistically significant difference of 25 percentage points.

With regards to prior education, the results suggested that those with university level qualifications (Level 4-6) or equivalent advanced degrees, were more likely to sustain employment for 3 and 6 months:

[22] This is based on 212 JobsPlus participants who were **out of work at registration** and moved into employment at least two months before the end of the data collection period (31.10.25), because being out of work at registration was one of the eligibility criteria for the one-off Into Work Bonus (a £400 financial incentive). Another eligibility criteria that could not be taken into account in this analysis was the requirement to earn at least £677 per month, for at least two months. Only salary bands were recorded in MI data, not specific amounts, meaning it is not possible to accurately identify those earning at least £677 per month.

[23] The results show that women had an odds ratio = 0.50 at p =0.051, which places it marginally outside the 95% confidence level for significance testing. However, gender (or sex) are typical predictors of employment outcomes and therefore we have reported it here.

- Having university level education increased the chances of sustaining employment for 3 months by 3 times compared to Level 1 (GCSE grades D-G) or Level 2 (GCSE grades A*-C), and by about 12 times compared to having Entry Level qualifications
- The education information among those who sustained employment for six months was limited (i.e. N=86), therefore difficult to identify statistically significant differences. However, among those with six months of sustained employment, no participant reported entry-level education.

5.4 Type of employment outcomes

Contract type

Most participants (58%) who moved into employment were employed on a permanent contract (Table 5.2), which can be considered a positive indicator of sustainment. One-fifth (30%) of participants were in non-permanent roles, including rolling, temporary, casual or fixed-term work, which are more likely to be precarious but can also match the needs of individuals. A small number (2%) moved into self-employment.

Table 5.2 Contract type of participants who achieved an employment outcome

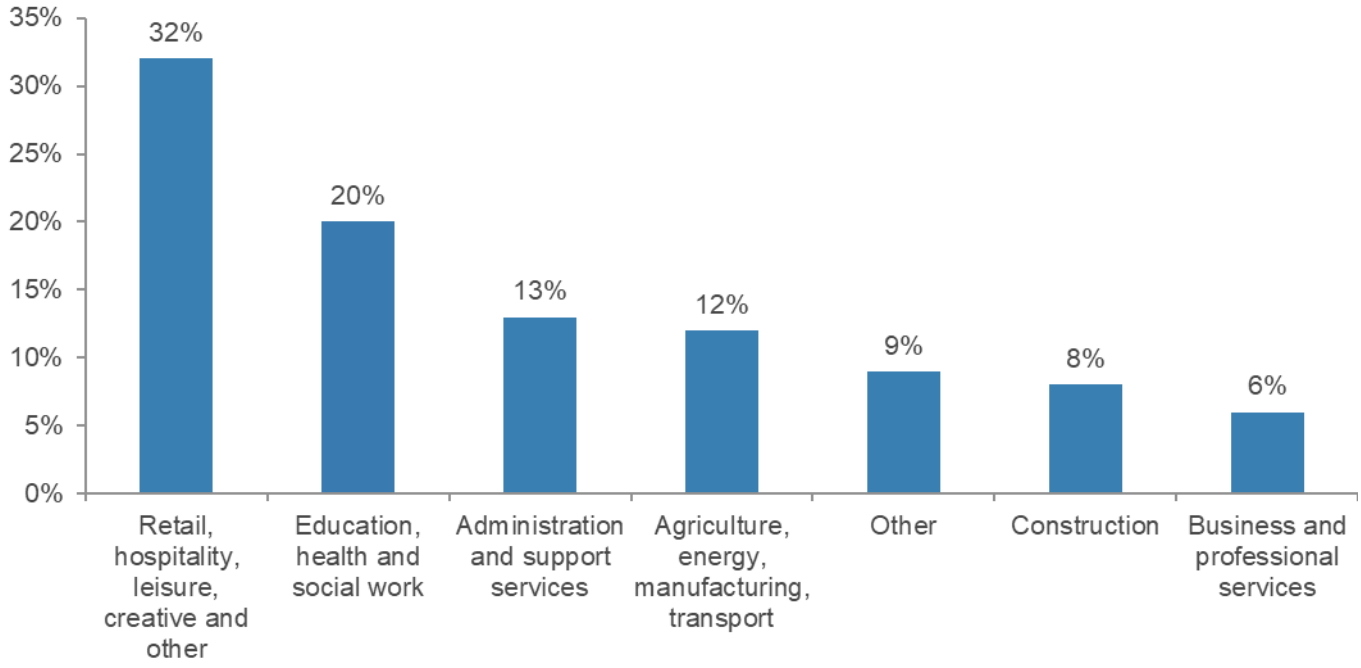
Contract type	Percentage	Frequency
Permanent	58%	165
Rolling or temporary work with no agreed end date	12%	34
Casual work	10%	29
Fixed-term work	8%	23
Self-employed	2%	7
Don't know/ no data recorded	9%	26
Total	100%	284

Source: JobsPlus MI analysis, IES, 2026.
Percentages do not sum to 100% due to rounding.
Base: 284 JobsPlus participants who moved into employment.

Employment sectors

Out of 282 participants who achieved an employment outcome where the sector of employment was recorded, 32% entered retail, hospitality, leisure and creative industries, and 20% entered education, health and social work (see Figure 4.5). As noted in the interim report, this suggests participants were more likely to find employment in more customer-facing or service-oriented sectors, which could reflect the availability of entry-level jobs in those sectors and participants' skills profiles.

Figure 4.5 Employment sector of those who moved into employment



Source: JobsPlus MI analysis, IES, 2026.
Base: 282 JobsPlus participants who moved into employment and had employment sector data recorded

Hours worked

Around two-fifths (39%) of JobsPlus participants who achieved an employment outcome worked 35 or more hours in the last week[24], indicating they worked full-time, and a slightly higher percentage (45%) worked less than 35 hours, indicating they worked part-time (Table 5.3). Around one-fifth (18%) worked less than 16 hours in the last week.

Table 5.3 Hours worked in last seven days by participants who achieved an employment outcome

Hours worked in last 7 days	Percentage	Frequency
Less than 16	18%	51
16–24	15%	43
25-34	12%	33
35 or above	39%	110
Don't know/ no data recorded	17%	47

[24] 'In the last week' refers to any point in time between July 2024 and December 2025 when JobsPlus staff recorded a participant's employment outcome. Therefore, this information should be treated as indicative of the types of jobs people moved into within this period.

Source: JobsPlus MI analysis, IES, 2026.
Base: 284 JobsPlus participants who moved into employment.

Salary

Participants who secured an employment outcome provided information on their net income in the last seven days from their current job. Just under a third (29%) earned less than £299, with fewer participants in the higher pay bands (Table 5.4). For comparison, someone aged 21 or over working 37.5 hours per week, earning the National Minimum Wage of £12.71 per hour, would earn approximately £410 per week after tax.

Table 5.4 Salary during the past seven days of participants who achieved an employment outcome

Net salary in last 7 days	Percentage	Frequency
Less than £299	29%	81
£300-399	14%	41
£400-499	20%	56
£500-599	7%	20
£600-699	3%	9
£700 or more	*	*
Don't know/ no data recorded	25%	72

Source: JobsPlus MI analysis, IES, 2026.
Base: 284 JobsPlus participants who moved into employment.

Employment progression

Of the 1038 participants on JobsPlus, 3% have taken on a second job since registering for the programme, all of which had a start date after the first job they moved into. With only start dates, and not end dates, recorded in the MI data, it is not possible to say if these second jobs were a change of employment, if there were gaps between employment, or whether people were working two jobs at the same time. Due to the limited data available in the MI, it is not possible to analyse how second jobs compare with first jobs regarding pay, hours, or contract type.

6 Non employment outcomes: short-term and intermediate outcomes

JobsPlus participants experienced a range of short-term and intermediate outcomes. Reflecting interim evaluation findings, JobsPlus participants showed improved health and wellbeing, job readiness and benefited from personal development and gained new skills and knowledge. The programme also supported participants into education and training, volunteering and work-based learning. Staff often highlighted these as the most visible outcomes they encountered, and as activities that may contribute to residents' preparation for work. This is consistent with the programme's design, which includes support aimed at addressing barriers and improving work readiness. This chapter builds on similarly positive findings presented in the interim report. Drawing on additional quantitative data from surveys and MI analysis, and qualitative evidence from participant and staff interviews, it illustrates how non-employment outcomes have continued over time and formed part of participants' journeys into and towards employment, as well as potentially delivering wider benefits to their lives.

Key findings

- Interview and survey responses highlighted that some participants experienced improvements in mental wellbeing, echoing themes noted in the interim report. Participants described reduced anxiety, low mood and social isolation, and increased resilience. A number of participants said that feeling more settled and confident made it easier for them to consider seeking a new role.
- Participants continued to report that the support strengthened their employability skills relating to job searching and applications. This contributed to increased motivation, confidence and more successful job-seeking outcomes.
- JobsPlus supported participants' personal development. Following the interim report's findings, increased confidence, social skills, and clearer aspirations were identified as consistent outcomes of the programme, all of which contributed to increased job readiness.
- Participants gained new skills and knowledge through accessing education and training, internal learning opportunities, and guidance from employment advisers. This included gaining work related skills and qualifications as well as broader 'soft' skills that can support progression
- JobsPlus supported participants to gain qualifications, access volunteering and work-based learning. These outcomes strategically addressed barriers to work and supported employment outcomes, particularly for younger participants.
- Participants further from the labour market often needed long-term, intensive, and flexible support. Their journeys through JobsPlus were often non-linear, relying on ongoing relationship-building with caseworkers, repeated re-engagement after setbacks, and a range of activities initially aimed at improving wellbeing and confidence, rather than immediate job entry.

6.1 Improved health, wellbeing and financial capacity

JobsPlus staff and participants highlighted improved wellbeing as a key outcome. Participants described feeling more resilient, less anxious, and feeling less socially isolated. For some, these improvements helped remove personal barriers which had previously made it harder to feel prepared to look for a job.

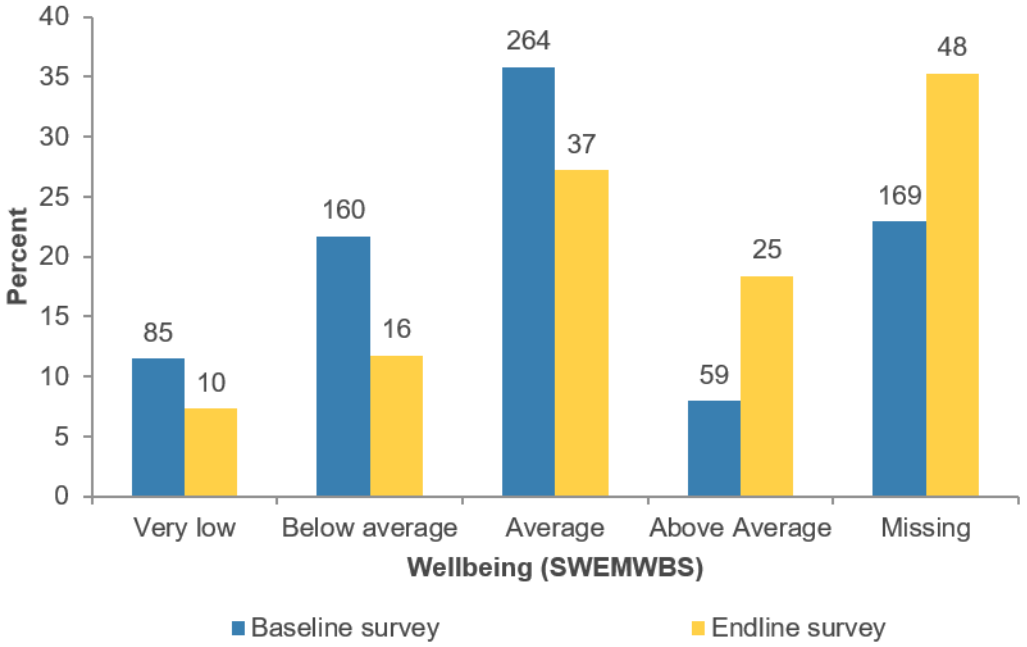
Participant wellbeing was measured through self-report using baseline and endline surveys, which included the Short-Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (SWEMWBS), a non-clinical wellbeing tool.[25] The data from the endline survey should be interpreted with caution, given the low response rate.

Responses indicated that around one-third of the baseline survey respondents (33%) had either very low (12%) or below average (22%) levels of wellbeing (see figure 6.1 below). In the endline survey, this proportion was lower at 19%, with 7% reporting very low and 12% reporting below-average wellbeing. When compared with the UK norms reported by Ng Fat et al. (2017) which indicate that 15% of adults typically fall into the low or very low wellbeing range, this shows a move towards the national distribution.

Similarly at baseline, 8% of respondents reported above-average wellbeing, compared with 18% at endline. This is again a move towards the UK average which show that 15% of adults can be expected to have above average wellbeing. These figures suggest a positive shift in wellbeing over time, and wellbeing levels of JobsPlus participants moving from being lower than the UK average to more in line with the general population between baseline and endline surveys.

[25] The SWEMWBS asks respondents to respond to seven positively framed statements using a five-point scale where one indicates ‘none of the time’ and five indicates ‘all of the time’. The sum of individuals’ scores is then calculated and categorised into levels of wellbeing. Scores range between 7-35 on the scale and higher scores indicate positive mental wellbeing. Score categories, low 7-17, below average 18-20, average 21-27 and above average 28-35.

Figure 6.1 JobsPlus participants' wellbeing (SWEMWBS)



Base: 737(baseline survey) and 136 (endline survey)
Note: 24% of the baseline survey respondents and 36% of the endline survey respondents did not respond to all of the wellbeing questions and therefore had missing responses.
Source: JobsPlus participant baseline survey and endline survey, IES, 2025

The case study below illustrates how participants with ongoing health challenges may move through support over time, the kinds of activities and encouragement that help them stay engaged and make progress.

Case Study: Improved wellbeing for a participant with long-term health conditions

A participant joined JobsPlus during a prolonged period of unemployment due to physical and mental health conditions when they felt unable to work and were struggling day to day. They described being unable to work due to health issues and suffering from and mental health issues:

I've worked all my life. I recently retired from [my previous role] because of the nature of the work. I've health problems, and I'm having a lot of mental issues after grief… So, that really sent me down in the dark, it really put me down.

JobsPlus participant

Meeting with their caseworker weekly, the caseworker initially focused on building trust and providing social support, recognising that employment-related activity would be only possible once their wellbeing had stabilised. As part of this early support, the adviser referred them to the housing association's wellbeing service where they received talking therapy. The participant described this as an important turning point:

It has helped me with the anger and resentment issues and helped me to turn a lot of negatives into positives, and it worked. It was good. [JobsPlus] helped me no end. I need it in my life.

JobsPlus participant

Progress was not immediate; the participant had periods where they struggled to attend appointments, so the adviser worked flexibly, checking in between sessions by phone and text, offering reassurance when setbacks occurred. Over time, their mental health improved, and gradually they were more able to engage with employability support.

They went on to complete a level 3 qualification and started volunteering. These activities were introduced gradually, starting with low-pressure tasks to rebuild confidence before moving on to more structured training. They explained that JobsPlus has given them a positive outlet, something constructive to focus on and that they are now feel open to part-time work in the future. Both the participant and their employment adviser described the change as significant:

For 10 years I was on anti-depressants, I'm not on any of those anymore, no antidepressants, nothing. I don't need them....and it's all down to JobsPlus and you wouldn't have even thought it by the title, would you? JobsPlus has turned things around. Just having support and someone to talk to, to [accessing] training and looking for work.

JobsPlus participant

The adviser reflected on the progress they had seen:

When I met them, they were suicidal. They were just very low. In a lot of physical pain, mental pain. They came to the event with us [recently], they were brilliant, and I think they saw what they were capable of doing.

JobsPlus caseworker

Some participants who experienced improved wellbeing benefited from referrals to external mental health services, or attending wellbeing activities provided by JobsPlus. These participants described the positive effect of weekly informal wellbeing groups, confidence-building courses and gym access provided by JobsPlus. However, relationships with caseworkers seemed to be the key driver of wellbeing outcomes. Participants reported that caseworkers provided a supportive space for listening, fostering close, trusting relationships that they greatly benefited from.

This was reflected by JobsPlus staff who echoed this, highlighting that being able to spend regularly weekly time typically 30-45 minutes, to build relationships and provide sustained and holistic support often had a positive effect on participants wellbeing. This was enabled by skilled staff with strong interpersonal skills, who often shared lived experiences with participants. One caseworker explained:

> *[What's worked has been having] someone advocating for them. Someone supporting them. Being there for them. Someone that actually is interested in them. Someone cares for them. We've got their back. I think that's what people are looking for. I know I was. That's what I was looking for [when I was unemployed and struggling with my mental health].*

JobsPlus caseworker

JobsPlus also provided participants with a routine and opportunities for social interaction with staff, peers, and residents through events and courses e.g. craft activities and wellbeing activities such as yoga and boxing, self-defence and social groups. Participants commented on reduced social isolation and having a greater connection to their

community which supported their wellbeing. For example, one participant who experienced significant mental health improvements said:

> *[My mental health has] been alright, I think mainly because I've been coming here and getting it all off my chest. I've not been depressed. Before I came here, I was on tablets for it, and whatnot, for both my anxiety and depression. But now I'm here, it's like getting out of the house and that kind of thing. My anxiety has [also improved], it's not been an issue for me. I'm glad something is working out.*
>
> JobsPlus participant

Physical health outcomes were not noted by either staff or participants. This may reflect challenges that sites faced in forming partnerships with healthcare providers (see 7.4). However, a few participants who previously felt unable to work due to physical health conditions had started looking for work with support from caseworkers to build confidence, identify suitable roles, and disclose their needs to employers. For example, one participant who had previously not been looking for work said:

> *I've gone from someone with some health conditions, not wanting to work because I had to focus on that, to someone who is now volunteering, who's getting to know people in the community and trying to help somebody else, and looking to get back to work. So that's a big step for me.*
>
> JobsPlus participant

Financial support also positively benefitted participants' health and wellbeing. Although given the lower response rate for the endline survey, the endline data needs to be interpreted with caution, responses showed some improvements in how participants were managing financially:

- One in four (26%) baseline survey respondents reported that they were 'doing alright' while almost one-third of endline survey respondents reported the same (32%).
- Over one-third (36%) of baseline survey respondents and over one quarter (28%) of endline survey respondents said that they were 'just about getting by'.
- Similar proportions of survey respondents reported finding it quite or very difficult to manage financially at registration and six months later. Close to one-fifth (17% of baseline and 16% of endline survey respondents) reported that they were 'finding it quite difficult' while one in ten respondents (10% and 11% respectively) reported that they were 'finding it very difficult'[26].

[26] *Base: 737 (baseline survey) and 136 (endline survey). Source: JobsPlus participant baseline survey and endline survey, IES, 2026*

Accessing basic needs like housing, food and heating was a precondition for some participants to engage with the support and work towards job outcomes. These participants described being supported to navigate and access housing support, receiving vouchers for food and energy bills, accessing food banks and receiving financial advice. Increased security around food, housing and finances supported health and wellbeing and provided stability needed to focus on their job search. Similarly, participants who entered employment described how increased income and financial stability had a positive impact on their wellbeing. For example, a participant described how entering work and receiving the Into Work Bonus has provided food security for her family:

> *It was really helpful because I used the money [from the bonus] to buy foodstuff for the house. We have lots of foodstuff. We don't have to worry about anything for now at home. These are special things, I know.*
>
> JobsPlus participant

Direct financial support for travel, interview clothes, equipment and personal ID also addressed immediate barriers and contributed to work readiness. Participants reported how this kind of direct financial support enabled them to access education or employment opportunities that would otherwise have been unavailable. For example, a JobsPlus participant described the outcome of receiving practical and financial support to go to college:

> *They're helping me get my college uniform, as well as get into college…I think if I didn't come here on results day, I wouldn't be in college.*
>
> JobsPlus participant

6.2 Improved job-readiness

JobsPlus had a positive impact on participants' work readiness. Employment advisers provided advice and guidance that supported improved understanding of jobs and careers and fostered a positive attitude towards work. Participants also developed their employability skills and became more confident and successful in their job search and applications.

Non-linear journeys and varied pathways through JobsPlus

Participants' journeys on the JobsPlus programme were often non-linear, with many not transitioning directly or quickly into employment. Instead, progress towards employment was described as gradual rather than following a straightforward or direct path. Interviews with participants and staff highlighted that these journeys were shaped by personal circumstances, such as health, caring responsibilities, confidence levels, and time out of the labour market, as well as wider factors, including the availability of suitable local job opportunities.

Rather than following a fixed pathway, participants often remained engaged with support while reassessing their goals and taking incremental steps towards work. Caseworkers played an important role in this process by providing consistent, flexible support that

helped participants navigate uncertainty, build readiness for employment, and maintain motivation when progress was not immediate. The case study below outlines a participant's journey that included a period of unemployment prior to joining JobsPlus, followed by approximately a year of sustained engagement with the programme.

For participants engaged with JobsPlus over longer periods, sustaining engagement was often a significant challenge. Caseworkers described investing substantial time and effort to support these participants to remain involved in the programme, particularly where health issues, personal difficulties, caring responsibilities or confidence levels fluctuated over time. This typically involved flexible appointment scheduling, regular contact by phone or text and tailoring activities to participants' changing readiness and circumstances. Progress was often uneven, with pauses or setbacks that required renewed focus on motivation before participants could take further steps towards work.

Case Study: Non-linear journey involving exploration and gradual progression into work

After leaving a long-term security sector role in 2024, the participant spent around 6 months unemployed and engaging with Jobcentre services. In early 2025, they became aware of JobsPlus through door-to-door outreach from JobsPlus staff in their local area. They described this informal contact as a low-pressure entry point at a time when their confidence was low.

During the early stages of engagement, support focused on exploring alternatives to returning to the security sector which the participant no longer felt able to work in. The participant was initially nervous about the time commitment of JobsPlus, but after the first session with their caseworker, they felt reassured, crediting their sustained engagement to their caseworker's responsiveness and friendly relationship.

This participant contrasted JobsPlus with the Jobcentre, describing the Jobcentre as difficult to access (distance and long waits), whereas with JobsPlus they could text and get quick, flexible appointments:

I can text him anytime. And I got easy appointments. Before, I had to wait two or three weeks. So that was really helpful.

This informal, 'always available' approach over several months helped reduce practical barriers for the participant (e.g., fitting support around family life) and provided continuity in their point of contact.

Over the subsequent months, the participant explored different employment options rather than moving directly into work. They undertook a taxi training course with their caseworker coordinating practical steps such as arranging meetings and linking them with advice about registering as self-employed.

Alongside this, the participant was supported to explore an alternative self-employment idea through a 'Google for Business' course related to a retail import option. Although this pathway was not ultimately pursued, the participant described it as providing space to test an idea, reassess plans, and continue engaging with JobsPlus support.

As the participant moved into driving work, they accessed the JobsPlus Into Work Bonus to help with early work-related costs, particularly fuel and car repairs. They reported that this support made it easier to sustain work during the initial weeks and months of self-employment.

At the time of interview (January 2026), the participant had been working with JobsPlus for nearly a year and reported being in full-time work and no longer claiming benefits. They described JobsPlus as having helped them “come back to normal life” and indicated that they would return for support again in the future if needed.

While some non-linear journeys resulted in employment outcomes, others involved sustained engagement without a transition into work during the evaluation period. In these cases, the focus of support was often on stabilising wellbeing and confidence, before employability activities were gradually introduced. These journeys highlighted both the intensity of support required and the slower pace of progress for participants furthest from the labour market. As shown by the case studies below, interview data revealed how some participants had pathways which involved much more of a gradual progression to employment:

Case Studies: Ongoing nonlinear journeys

Participant over 50 years

One participant aged over 50 had been registered with JobsPlus for around a year at the time of interview. They had previously worked in the security sector but had been out of the labour market for a prolonged period. They started work after college in the security industry and had also worked in management roles. They stopped working 10 years ago due to a mental health condition. During their time on the programme, they remained engaged, receiving regular weekly support from their employment adviser as they searched for suitable vacancies in the security industry. By January 2026, progress towards employment remained limited, which the participant primarily attributed to a lack of suitable local opportunities rather than the programme itself. This highlights both the intensity of support required, and the persistent barriers faced by some participants.

Parent who is single parent

A single parent with a long-term health condition had been registered with JobsPlus for approximately a year at the point of interview. After completing a nursing qualification, a bereavement delayed their job search and affected their confidence. They reported wanting to work as a nurse but feeling held back by a lack of entry-level jobs, a gap in their CV, and concerns about their age and interview skills. They has weekly meetings with their caseworker to support their job search activities, CV development, and interview preparation and explore funding for an epilepsy course to strengthen their applications. Their caseworker has contacted employers on their behalf and has involved them in decisions about their job search strategy. At the point of interview, they had not yet secured employment. However, they described increased confidence and motivation and remained actively engaged in applying for roles, with their progression towards work ongoing beyond the evaluation period.

These accounts illustrate the extent of emotional labour, persistence and flexibility required from caseworkers to support participants furthest from the labour market, particularly where progress towards employment was uneven. They suggest that job readiness is built through sustained, personalised engagement, highlighting the importance of a flexible delivery model that can adapt to participants' changing needs.

Career information, advice and guidance

Career information, advice and guidance provided by employment advisers helped participants to consider a broader range of options, identify suitable roles and career paths, and understand where to find opportunities in these fields. Participants also gained clarity and direction in their job search. From observations and interviews, it was clear that caseworkers helped participants clarify their goals, set clear steps to achieve them, and provide ongoing support that maintained motivation and resilience. In some cases, this included working with participants to set realistic expectations and identify accessible local jobs that would suit their needs and in line with their skills and qualifications. This was particularly important for young people who often described feeling unsure about their options and next steps. For example, one young participant described how they now have a clear career goal and plan to achieve it.

> *It's clearer now, the goals that I want to achieve…I know exactly what I need to do to get my foot through the door.*
>
> JobsPlus participant

For some participants, this led to increased motivation to seek work. These participants described shifting from having no clear goals or feeling unready to work to developing specific career ambitions. Often this was related to addressing real or perceived barriers to work, such as a lack of self-confidence, skill and qualification gaps, concerns about the financial impact of moving from UC into work, health conditions, or caring responsibilities.

Employability skills

Participants reported that they had gained key employability skills, including identifying suitable vacancies, writing CVs, completing job applications, and preparing for job interviews, through the programme. Some participants had lacked these skills before receiving the support, including this participant, who described what they had learnt on an employability skills course:

> *I went on an employability course to help me with my confidence, interview skills, CV, and cover letter. And I've just passed that, got my certificate for it, and I have a better, up-to-date CV. And I didn't even know you needed a cover letter, and now I do.*
>
> JobsPlus participant

Gaining these skills led participants to report feeling more confident, motivated, and resilient in their job search. Confidence with job search and applications was measured using the Job Search Self-Efficacy (JSSE) scale, a self-report measure included in the

baseline and endline surveys.[27] On average, respondents at both time points described themselves as ‘moderately’ confident in their ability to perform their job search, with mean JSSE scores increasing from 3.1 at baseline to 3.4 at endline (see Figure 6.2 below).

Endline survey respondents reported higher confidence across several specific job search tasks. One of the largest improvements was in completing an effective job application and creating a strong CV, which increased from 2.9 to 3.3. Their confidence in identifying their own skills for job searching increased from an average score of 3.2 to 3.5, while confidence in discussing potential job opportunities with friends or contacts increased from 3.2 to 3.4. Confidence in searching and applying for jobs online improved from 3.4 to 3.6. Overall, these results demonstrate a positive trend in participants' self-assessed job search capabilities. Note, as no statistical significance testing has been conducted, the findings should be interpreted as descriptive rather than as evidence of causal impact.

[27] The Job Search Self-efficacy scale presents nine key job search and application skills and asks respondents to rank their confidence with each skill on a 5-point scale where 1 is ‘Not at All Confident’ and 5 is ‘Very Confident’.

Figure 6.2 JobsPlus participants' Job Search Self-Efficacy (JSSE) mean scores

Base: 665 to 694 (baseline survey) and 113 to 119 (endline survey)
Source: JobsPlus participant baseline survey and endline survey, IES, 2025

Participants reported that improved job search skills led to outcomes, including sending more and higher-quality job applications, receiving more interview invitations, and ultimately finding work. The case study below illustrates how gaining job search skills led a participant to start an apprenticeship. Another participant who was still looking for work described the improved outcomes of their job search since joining JobsPlus:

> *The support, it's really useful. I started off with no CV and no job searching [skills] or anything…When I tried doing things independently I never really got anywhere, but now I've got someone to support me and lead me through, I feel like I'm actually getting somewhere.*
>
> JobsPlus participant

Case Study: Improved job search skills

A participant who had recently left Further Education enrolled with JobsPlus to receive support with their next steps. As they had just left full-time education, they were not enrolled with any

other employment services or receiving Universal Credit. Before JobsPlus, they lacked the skills and knowledge needed to find a job. The participant described feeling unsure about their options, how to find job vacancies, what to include in a CV or application, and what potential employers would expect. As a result, their independent applications for apprenticeships had not been successful.

They received support from JobsPlus for a short period of time (around 2 months). During this time, they attended weekly appointments with their caseworker who provided employability support to address the issues they were facing. This included support and training in job and apprenticeship searches, CV and application writing, and communication with potential employers by phone and email. This support improved the participants' skills, direction and motivation.

As a result, the participant secured an apprenticeship, which they applied for with their employment adviser's support. They reported they would not have achieved this without the programmes support:

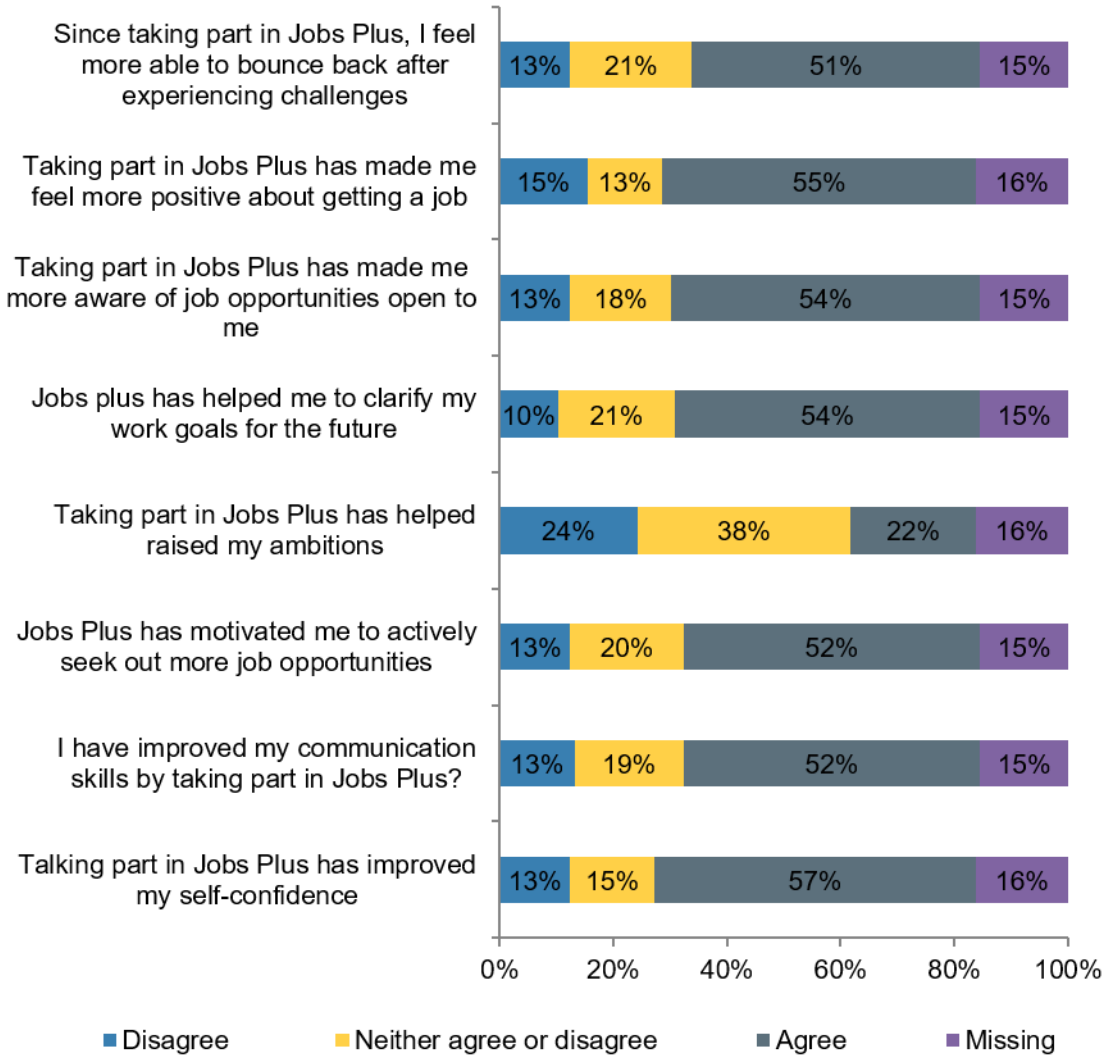
They've helped a lot of people, so they make it seem easier. I was struggling on my own, I didn't know what to do, where to go, what to look for. But they got me exactly what I wanted so I am happy.

JobsPlus participant

6.3 Personal development

JobsPlus supported notable personal development for participants, which staff and participants often described as a key step in participants' journeys towards work. Key areas of personal development were improved self-confidence, social skills and aspirations. These were explored in the endline survey (Figure 6.3). About 57% agreed or strongly agreed that JobsPlus improved their self-confidence. Over one-half agreed or strongly agreed that it clarified work goals (54%), increased awareness of job opportunities (54%), and boosted positivity about getting a job (55%). Most also believed it improved communication skills (52%), encouraged seeking more opportunities (52%), and helped bounce back from challenges (51%). However, 38% felt neutral about whether it raised their ambitions.

Figure 6.3 JobsPlus participants' personal development outcomes



Base: 136
Source: JobsPlus participant endline survey, IES, 2025

Qualitative findings providing deeper insights into these outcomes are presented below.

Self-confidence

Across interviews, staff and participants reported improved self-confidence as a particularly visible and meaningful change. Participants described feeling more assured in their skills and abilities, and more confident about their prospects in finding work. Staff observed that participants' increased confidence appeared to contribute to greater motivation to engage with the programme, to apply for jobs, and to enter employment. From interview data, improvements in self-confidence were commonly linked by staff and participants to specific features of the JobsPlus support such as personalised one-to-one support, making progress against small achievable goals (completing CVs) and opportunities to develop skills and experience in a non-judgemental and supportive

environment. Staff reflected that this was a particularly important outcome for young people, people who had been unemployed or inactive for a long period, and participants with mental health issues, SEND, or who were neurodivergent. An employment adviser reflected on how young neurodivergent participants particularly benefitted from support around self-confidence:

> *We've got a lot of people on our caseload who have got autism and ADHD…I think that they [face] barriers which prevent them from progressing, [including] self-belief... I think that, for many young people today, they need an external person to give them the push and the belief that they can do it.*
>
> JobsPlus caseworker

Social skills

Participants also reported that they benefitted from improved social skills, such as the ability to express themselves, maintain eye contact, and speak to new people. The case study below describes a participant who has been receiving support for over a year and identifies improved confidence and social skills as important outcomes of the support. It illustrates the major barriers some participants face and the need for long-term support to achieve intermediate outcomes that enable them to become work-ready.

Case study: Development of confidence and social skills

A young participant who has been working with JobsPlus for over a year described their experience of personal development. They left school without any GCSEs and had been NEET since dropping out of college due to mental health and social issues. They joined JobsPlus as they wanted to improve their mental health, self-confidence, and job search skills.

A trusted, long-term relationship with their employment adviser helped them to overcome these barriers. They received pastoral, social, and employability support and attended group wellbeing sessions at the hub.

[JobsPlus] have given me the support that I've needed, helping me make a new CV, helping me get the skills to apply for jobs by myself. Some days, we can come in and fully focus on finding jobs and applying, and that kind of thing, and other days, we come in, and we could just be sat there for about 10, 20 minutes, just talking about life.

As a result, their mental health has improved, and they are more confident and more able to speak to people. The participant attributes this change to JobsPlus as it gave them a reason to regularly leave the house and provided them with social support. A key milestone for them was speaking at a public event. They compared this to their past social anxiety, especially when they couldn't speak to her adviser during enrolment. This experience has boosted their confidence and shown their progress.

I overcame a fear of mine and actually stood up and [gave a] presentation. I was so nervous. [Afterwards] I felt very overwhelmed and very proud. That was my first time doing anything where I've stood up there… So, I felt super proud.

They now feel much closer to finding work and has a clear career goal due to this personal development and gaining job search skills. Reflecting on their journey they said:

If I look at myself now, and I I look at myself when I first started, I'm like, 'There's nothing to worry about, you're fine.' [This was due to] a mix between the wellbeing side [of the support], it pushes you to come out of your shell a bit more, which, I needed. Then, obviously, more skills. If I needed to make another CV…I feel confident enough that I could probably put it together.

Similarly, improvements in wellbeing were reported by staff and participants, who noted that the strong, supportive relationships formed by caseworkers were a key driver of increased participants' confidence and social skills. This was supported by opportunities for social engagement at group activities or community outreach events provided by JobsPlus.

Increased aspirations

While some participants needed career information, advice and guidance to set clear and realistic goals there were also indications among several participants that the programme contributed to increased aspirations as well as a greater sense of direction, purpose and hope. This was reflected by one participant's response when asked what participating in JobsPlus had changed for him:

> *Do you know what it's given me? Honestly, it's given me hope, and I know that sounds cliché. It's given me hope that I'm not just going to be doing a rubbish job [forever].*
>
> JobsPlus participant

Participants reported clarifying or raising their career aspirations, with some shifting from pursuing entry level work to more skilled roles. For example, a participant with a level 3 qualification described how he now aspires to higher-level roles that match his qualifications and experience, and is considering going to university or undertaking a degree apprenticeship:

> *My confidence has really improved, as well as my goal. Because I was ready to settle for less, but upon joining, I've realised my skills and capabilities. They really enlightened me on what I can do. Before I joined, I was only looking for care support and assistant roles. But upon meeting [my employment advisers], when they saw my CV they were like 'Nope, you're way beyond that'. So my mentality about the kind of job role that I wanted has changed upon meeting them. Now I'm looking for something higher and bigger than what I was ready to settle for.*
>
> JobsPlus participant

6.4 Education and training, volunteering and work-based learning outcomes

Developing skills and knowledge was a key intermediate outcome for JobsPlus participants and an important step towards and into employment. Support was provided to access education and training to acquire skills and qualifications aligned with their career goals. These participants reported that this support brought them closer to employment by bridging skills or qualification gaps that previously acted as barriers.

Participants attended short courses provided by JobsPlus through online portals or delivered at the hub by partners including barista training, self-employment training, digital skills, first aid and food safety courses. Some participants achieved level 1 qualifications from the training, others were given funding by JobsPlus to gain level 1 or 2 qualifications through short courses at local colleges including in advice and guidance, Construction Skills Certification Scheme and HGV training.

Participants also gained 'softer' skills including employability skills and social skills. Some participants were supported to learn to drive, with JobsPlus providing financial and administrative support for participants to obtain provisional licenses. Digital skills were also mentioned by a number of participants as an important outcome. As seen in the case study example below, this supported both their job search and their employability.

Case study: Increased digital skills

A 64-year-old participant enrolled in JobsPlus as they had physical health issues that meant they could no longer work in social care and cleaning roles. They needed to retrain and identified a lack of digital skills as a major barrier to finding suitable roles. They JCP work coach referred them to JobsPlus for support with this.

I have COPD so I couldn't carry on with the things I usually do, which is care and cleaning. So I asked about learning the computer and she [her JCP work coach] put me in touch [with JobsPlus].

JobsPlus participant

At the point of interview, they had been receiving JobsPlus support for several months, which included attending weekly, one-to-one Digital Skills training sessions delivered at the hub by a dedicated Digital Support Officer employed by JobsPlus. This support was tailored to the participant's needs and could be accessed as long as the participant required. As a result of this, the participant has gone from having limited digital skills to not only being confident in using a computer, the internet and Microsoft Office software, but also gaining higher-level Excel skills. They now feel more confident in themselves and their ability to find suitable work.

It showed me that I can do something that I didn't know I could. I've also come so far. It's amazing. And that's down to the people as well because they've also given me that confidence. The fact that I've achieved so much with the computer is just unbelievable, to be able to do spreadsheets and pivot tables and that.

JobsPlus participant

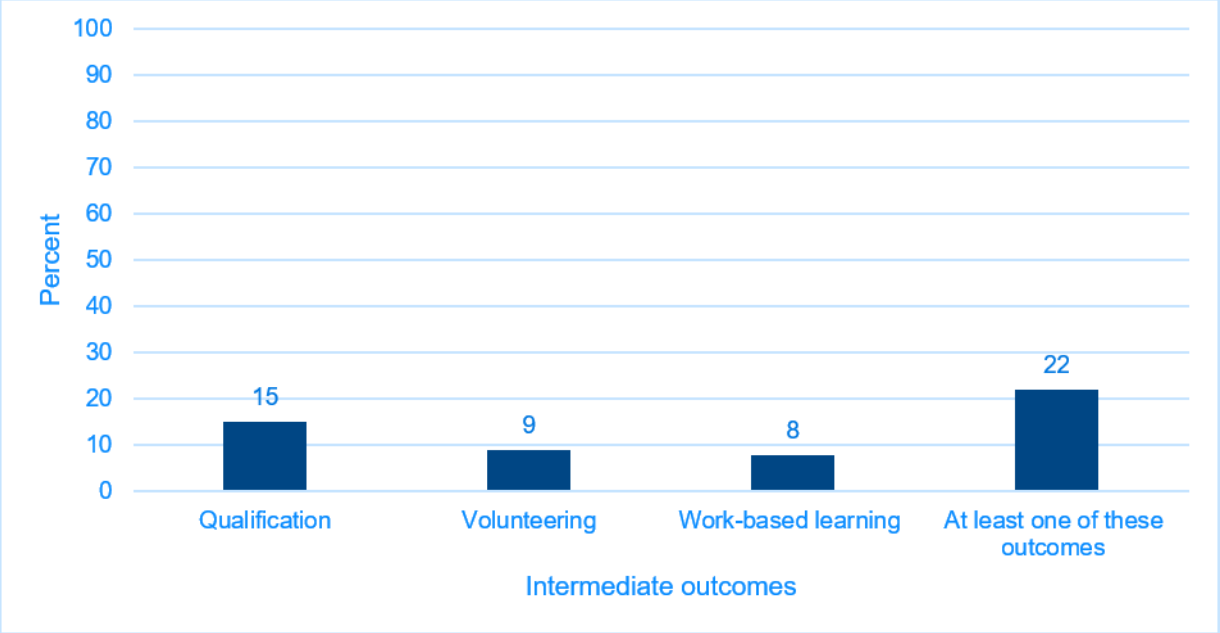
The participant is now able to look for and apply for work independently online and is being supported by JobsPlus to become a Digital Champion and teach IT skills to others in their community, which they feel will further improve their job prospects.

Education and training

Accessing education and training, volunteering or work-based learning were key intermediate outcomes for JobsPlus participants and were valuable steps towards employment. MI data showed that just over a fifth (22% N=144) of participants achieved at least one of these outcomes (see Figure 6.4 below). For instance, participants reported

accessing a range of courses to support their job search, including by gaining qualifications. Indeed, MI data showed that 15% (N=103) of JobsPlus participants achieved a qualification.

Figure 6.4 Qualification, volunteering and work-based learning outcomes



Base: 663-769
Source: JobsPlus MI data analysis, IES, 2025

Qualitative data suggested that these outcomes were a necessary part of a participant's journey to work, with relevant courses identified to address skills or qualification gaps towards a career goal. An example of this is provided in the case study below. As such, education and training outcomes covered a range of skills and qualifications, often related to key sectors in local labour markets, such as construction, health and social care, and hospitality. Participants who accessed training often felt more work-ready or confident in their job search. For example, the participant quoted below had no qualifications prior to JobsPlus and feels more confident in herself and her ability to find work after completing employability skills and mental health champion courses.

Now on my CV I can actually see some qualifications... I want to get more.

JobsPlus participant

Case study: Education and training outcomes

A young participant enrolled in JobsPlus as they were keen to work in construction. They had struggled to find employment independently due to a lack of experience in the sector and not holding a CSCS card, which is a required accreditation for most on-site construction jobs. They enrolled in JobsPlus after receiving a leaflet with information about on-site CSCS training at the hub.

At the time of the interview, they had only been enrolled for a few weeks and had not yet completed the training. However, they had already received support to improve their CV and

had been booked onto CSCS and first aid training. This support was intended to address a clearly identified barrier by supporting access to required accreditation and helping them better present their skills to employers. The participant reported feeling more confident about their next steps and their ability to pursue work in the construction sector with appropriate qualifications.

Staff reported that education and training outcomes were particularly common for younger participants in 16-25 age group. Some of these participants lacked key qualifications to meet their career goals and accessed short courses to gain them. Others were supported to enter full-time education at college, university or through apprenticeships to support longer term employment goals. Participants interviewed who had entered full-time education were all under 25 and living at home with their family. JobsPlus supported these outcomes by providing careers guidance to identify training needs and relevant courses, providing support for referrals and applications, and delivering ongoing support to those in education or training to sustain engagement.

Volunteering outcomes

JobsPlus participants were also supported to access volunteering placements. MI data showed that 9% (N=65) of JobsPlus participants achieved a volunteering outcome (Figure 6.4). Some participants volunteered as part of the JobsPlus programme, for example, as Digital Champions, community champions or outreach with young people around the estate. Others were supported to access external volunteer roles, including in charity shops, libraries or for charities.

Volunteering outcomes were considered by staff and participants as vital opportunities to gain work experience, skills and experience. This was particularly important for younger people as a lack of prior work experience could act as a barrier to gaining job opportunities (see case study below). Volunteering outcomes could also act as a step towards employment for participants who experienced barriers relating to mental health and self-confidence by supporting integration within the community, confidence building and social interactions. For example, an older participant who had been unemployed long-term described the positive impact of volunteering in a charity shop:

> *I've been out of work for many years and my confidence has gone. But everything just fell into place. But if it hadn't been for [my caseworker] I would never have got to the charity shop… It's exactly what I needed. The pace is fantastic and the shop is perfect for me. It suits me perfectly… I go out a little bit more now. I never used to go out a lot. So, I now make a bit more of an effort to go out a bit more.*
>
> JobsPlus participant

Case study: Volunteering outcome

An 18-year-old participant described their volunteering outcome with JobsPlus. They enrolled in JobsPlus to support their next steps after leaving school. They were interested in working in IT, but a lack of previous work experience and low confidence were discouraging them from looking for work. They were supported by JobsPlus to apply for a Digital Champion role at the hub, providing IT skills training to residents. Their adviser helped them with the application, and

they were given training for the role and support around confidence such as initially being accompanied by their parents and shadowing another volunteer. This opportunity allowed them to gain experience, skills, confidence and independence, which will support their job search.

The volunteer work I'm doing currently has helped me gain skills and also given me things to go on my CV, which will then help me get into a job.

JobsPlus participant

Work based learning

Finally, JobsPlus supported participants into work-based learning. Interviews with staff and participants indicated that most work-based learning outcomes were apprenticeships and work experience placements. MI data in the graph above (Figure 6.4) showed that 8% of participants entered work-based learning.

Staff reported that apprenticeships were a key outcome for young people and supported these participants to enter employment, gain qualifications and work towards long term career development. These participants benefited from support to identify and apply for apprenticeship opportunities, which was sometimes enabled by links between hubs and apprenticeship providers.

Participants were also supported to access work experience placements. As with volunteering outcomes, this was particularly valuable for young people, who struggled to find work due to a lack of prior experience. Participants undertook work placements in settings such as cafes, nurseries and libraries, often with hubs' employer partners. The case study below presents an example of a young person who benefited from a work experience placement.

Case Study: Work based learning

A young participant described how a work experience placement secured by JobsPlus was a key step in their journey to employment. Prior to joining JobsPlus they had struggled to find work due a lack of prior experience.

A lot of [employers] ask me for past experience, and it's hard to come from school and be asked, 'What's your past experience?' with no experience.

JobsPlus participant

During their first meeting, their employment adviser arranged an 8-week work experience placement for them with an employer partner.

I joined them within 5 minutes after my first meeting I got a job placement, and paid work experience. And I'd been with [another employment support] organisation for a few months, and they'd not been able to do anything for me, and within literally 5 minutes it was there.

JobsPlus participant

The placement was successful for both them and the employer and has now become a full-time apprenticeship.

7 Governance and partnership working

This chapter draws on qualitative data from interviews with housing association (HA) staff, delivery partners and wider stakeholders. It builds on the findings set out in the interim report, providing a more detailed account of how governance and partnership working, as well as employer engagement, developed between April and December 2025. It highlights what has been successful during this period and outlines the main challenges faced, including any changes in the situation since March 2025.

Key findings: Governance

- Governance boards mostly focused on operational management of the pilots, with more strategic oversight emerging in sites where governance was more mature.
- There was tension between ensuring broad community representation on governance and partnership boards, and making sure these spaces were confidential.

Partnership working

- As understanding of resident needs grew, some sites refined their partner networks.
- Partnerships at many sites were informal and flexible, enabling organic networks that best met participants' support needs.
- Proactivity and persistence of JobsPlus staff were key to developing successful partnerships.

Referral pathways into JobsPlus

- Jobcentre Plus referred residents to the pilot in some areas, helping to maximise engagement. This complemented the HAs own outreach activity, which remained the primary route for engaging residents, as intended in the JobsPlus model.
- Developing referral pathways with JCP was challenging in some sites as work coaches' large caseloads and the limited time in appointments reduced capacity to regularly identify and signpost JobsPlus eligible residents.
- Referrals from community-based organisations worked well because they understood local needs and were well-established within communities and well-placed to refer residents in eligible areas to the support.
- Strengthened relationships with community groups, facilitated knowledge sharing on reaching previously unengaged residents, and provided insight into wider support needs of JobsPlus participants.

Referral from JobsPlus to other support/services

- Referring to organisations that support health, wellbeing, training, and guidance services was important for removing barriers.
- Physical and mental health support was a need that sites could not meet alone. Many sites tried hard to broker partnerships with NHS services, though engagement could be challenging given wider service pressures and limited capacity.
- Engaging employers successfully remained one of the more difficult parts of JobsPlus delivery. Caseworkers addressed this by dedicating time to build relationships with local

employers, helping them gain a better understanding of the local labour market's composition and the roles in demand.

- Challenges in engaging employers included participants seeking nearby jobs, meaning caseworkers had access to a more limited pool of live vacancies, and difficulty finding employers with vacancies that fit with childcare.
- Some employers needed reassurance about participants' job readiness. Despite engagement challenges, local employers continued to show interest in recruiting JobsPlus participants, with some recognising the opportunity to support their social value aims.

7.1 Governance

By March 2025, formal governance arrangements were still in the early stages of development at many sites or had only just been established. The primary focus had initially been on outreach and recruitment. Since then, many sites have developed more formal governance structures, with some holding regular meetings attended by a range of partners, community members, and residents. In cases where governance structures, such as a steering group, existed, they were usually operational rather than strategic, with more strategic oversight emerging in sites where governance was more mature. There were still some sites, however, where formal steering groups were either not in place or had only recently been set up. This tended to be due to the informal nature of partnership working, or capacity challenges for delivery staff, meaning that it was challenging to put formal networks in place. Some sites without governance boards often held regular partner meetings; however, these groups usually lacked oversight of the programme.

7.2 From operational insight to strategic governance

Most JobsPlus sites used governance boards that were largely operational focusing on day-to day delivery updates and coordination rather than long-term strategic decision making. In sites with longer-established governance boards, some sessions were more strategic. For example, in one site, a weekly management meeting led by a strategic consultant complemented monthly governance meetings. The weekly sessions allowed for the development of an action log, with progress against key actions checked on a weekly basis. This improved oversight of delivery and targets. At another site, governance meetings helped partners collaborate more closely to support participants holistically. The case study below describes in more detail what strong, established governance looked like for one of the sites.

Some stakeholders noted that strengthening strategic oversight offers benefits. At one site, the HA lead reflected that the programme outcomes might benefit from a more consistent review. While recognising the commitment and efforts of the JobsPlus staff, they felt that greater accountability and discussions around targets could provide a clearer assessment of the programme's overall effectiveness.

Case Study: Strong governance

- One site has structured, consistent, strategic governance, supported by strong partners and clear leadership. The steering group, established in October 2024, became a central mechanism for delivery and sharing insights, aligning JobsPlus with local priorities.

Steering group

- The steering group met every six weeks with consistent attendance by most partners in nearly all meetings.
- Led by the JobsPlus manager, the group also included representatives from the HA's Communities Committee, the local council's Economic Development Department, DWP, youth-focused and multidisciplinary partners.
- Resident involvement was approached carefully because of confidentiality concerns and the complexity of community politics; instead, feedback was collected informally from residents.
- Meetings focused on reviewing progress, addressing delivery challenges and agreeing priorities with opportunities for partners to contribute ideas to strengthen implementation.
- Clear leadership from the JobsPlus manager and, since March 2025, administrative support for organising meetings contributed to more effective coordination

Governance model

- To ensure consistent information sharing, all governance documentation was circulated to all governance board members and wider HA staff. To ensure transparency and maximise opportunities for partnership and referrals, both members and wider partners also received a monthly governance newsletter.
- The steering group supported broader profile-raising, such as making links to local Get Britain Working teams. This site also worked with another JobsPlus HA to present their work at a local Office for Public Service Innovation meeting, showcasing how JobsPlus aligns with regional priorities to demonstrate its value and secure future funding.

Members and partnerships

- The HA built links with the right partners early on and recognised that access to multidisciplinary partners, disability advice and organisations supporting young people would be important to successful delivery of JobsPlus.
- The JobsPlus manager proactively broadened representation, regularly identifying and inviting relevant partners. This included engaging with a local councillor to support political visibility.

Involvement of community members and partners in governance

Where sites had regular governance board meetings, these were typically attended by JobsPlus staff alongside a broad mix of delivery and community partners, including training providers, housing officers, community groups, outreach workers and local schools. The involvement of community partners was important for embedding the community support for the work element of the JobsPlus model, allowing the community to have a voice in what was being delivered. While stakeholders considered participant representation important, because many steering groups were operationally focused, they felt that resident involvement could limit the ability to have open discussions about individual circumstances and raise confidentiality concerns.

Sites were keen to work towards an inclusive model of governance to make sure that resident voice is included. However, many sites were finding that residents were reluctant to get involved. This is linked to the issues around gaining residents' trust in the support, and to the time this has taken to embed. Despite these challenges, some sites found that community champions offered a practical route to resident involvement in governance. In a small number of cases, champions contributed to steering groups or provided structured feedback that helped shape priorities and identify emerging needs.

Some sites recognised gaps in their governance boards, especially among employers and youth-focused community groups, and noted that inconsistent attendance can reduce the effectiveness of partnership input. As governance structures continue to mature, there is scope for clearer guidance on the types of governance arrangements most likely to be beneficial. This includes supporting sites in balancing day-to-day operational coordination with the more strategic challenge of meeting residents' needs.

7.3 Partnership working

In March 2025, many HAs had built on strong existing partner networks to implement JobsPlus. Key partners commonly included the local authority, further education and training providers, voluntary and community sector organisations and JCP. Partners were supporting outreach activities and publicising JobsPlus, as well as delivering employment support and providing more specialist support.

Since then, many sites-maintained collaborations with the same partners, reinforcing their relationships and methods of working. This was especially true for those relationships pre-dating JobsPlus, where HAs and partners understood each other’s work and how JobsPlus complemented existing support. To do this, HA staff had taken time to meet with partners to find out more about the support that they offered. This enabled co-ordinated support to be offered to local residents and ensured that support was not duplicated. Sites that had strengthened the number of partnerships as delivery progressed found it useful to map local support organisations to identify services that could complement JobsPlus. Where possible, sites had encouraged partners to have a physical presence in community hubs. This helped to strengthen ties between the partner and the site, as well as increasing the volume of referrals, as partners were able to benefit from meeting participants when they attended appointments with their caseworker. Sites acknowledged that getting the right partnerships in place takes time, and developing viable partnership working also involved building trust in JobsPlus among prospective partners.

As delivery progressed and sites developed a deeper understanding of residents’ support needs, they were able to work flexibly to develop networks of partnerships that were better aligned with those needs. Increased insight into the support needs of residents prompted some sites to reassess existing partnerships to ensure their continued relevance. In some cases, this led to some partnerships ending and new ones being established in their place.

The persistence of caseworkers and delivery leads, particularly their consistent follow-up and proactive engagement with partners, was central to building effective partnerships. At some sites, they developed entirely new relationships as part of the JobsPlus programme. Partners were consistently complimentary about the personable and collaborative

approach of JobsPlus staff, which was important to establishing and sustaining these relationships.

7.4 Referral pathways into JobsPlus

Since March 2025, most referrals into JobsPlus have been from community-based organisations. In some sites this has been complemented by referrals from Jobcentre Plus, even though this cooperation was not an intended feature of the pilot.

Referrals from JCP

In a small number of sites, collaborative working between JCP work coaches and sites, helped to maximise the pilot's reach. This relationship worked especially well where the local JCP was physically close to community hubs. This meant that there was an overlap between JobsPlus residents and JCP caseloads, which made it easier for work coaches to identify clients who were eligible for JobsPlus. Where this partnership worked, it was a key enabler of referrals, leading to a good number of JobsPlus sign-ups. These relationships took time to establish and relied on the proactivity of both JobsPlus caseworkers and JCP work coaches.

The case study below illustrates the different experiences sites had of partnership working with JCP. This reflects that partnership working between sites and JCP was not a feature of the JobsPlus ToC, rather it has been the intention that community outreach would be used to engage residents. The first three examples illustrate how strong partnership working has been achieved and the positive impact it had on referrals to JobsPlus. Many sites did not establish effective collaboration with Jobcentre Plus and the final examples shows the challenges of partnership working.

Case Study: Partnership with JCP

- At three sites, there was strong partnership working with JCP, characterised by co-location, cross-referrals, strong communication and a commitment to the pilot. While two of the sites had strong pre-existing relationships with JCP, one site strengthened its partnership through programme governance arrangements. These examples show how different starting points and local contexts shaped the development of JCP partnerships.

Site 1: A deeply embedded, high-volume JCP partnership

- JCP was the HA's closest partner, with the majority of all referrals coming directly through the local Jobcentre.
- Daily co-location over two weeks, helped to establish strong working relationships, and a JobsPlus caseworker worked from the JCP once a week.
- JCP work coaches used a shared internal calendar to book JobsPlus participants directly into JobsPlus appointments. The partnership also enabled access to young people through the dedicated JCP youth work coach.
- The two organisations also collaborated on engagement activities, including joint stalls at community events and the delivery of mid-life MOTs at the Community Hub.

Site 2: A strong, proactive referral relationship centred on a single work coach

- A proactive JCP work coach searched local caseloads to identify all residents living in the JobsPlus-eligible postcode area. She texted claimants, updated Universal Credit journals, and maintained a regular presence in the Community Hub, performing 'better off in work' calculations.
- A JobsPlus caseworker also attended the Jobcentre to speak to eligible residents, which helped strengthen the referral pathway.
- HA staff highlighted this close working relationship supported high levels of engagement; however, they noted the reliance on a single individual posed risks if staffing changed.

Site 3: A partnership that strengthened over time through governance

- This site's relationship with JCP was less well-developed initially but strengthened following governance discussions, facilitated by the DWP partnerships manager.
- This engagement brought together representatives from various Jobcentre teams to explore how health, wellbeing, and long-term sickness teams could contribute to the model.
- Jobcentre teams started offering health and wellbeing MOTs in the Community Hub, strengthening ties with local organisations. However, referrals remained limited because JCP catchment areas do not align with the JobsPlus saturation model.

Site 4: Challenges partnering with JCP

- One site had a key contact at JCP who was supportive of JobsPlus and was keen to facilitate referrals. However, due to challenges sharing postcode data, it was difficult for JCP work coaches to identify eligible residents to signpost to the support.
- The JobsPlus team tried to overcome this by establishing a regular physical presence at JCP to promote JobsPlus.
- This worked to an extent, but the geographical area served by the JCP was vast, so only a low percentage of those attending appointments at JCP lived within JobsPlus eligible postcode areas.

Partnerships with JCP varied across sites. In some areas, identifying residents eligible for JobsPlus was more complex due to the size of local caseloads, and because manual checks are needed to determine postcode eligibility.

> *It is very difficult when the Jobcentre that's attached to that post code has about 30,000 customers for any work coaches to be able to sift and spend that extra time looking at their caseloads of customers that specifically fell underneath the [JobsPlus eligible] post code.*
>
> HA lead

These factors, combined with the limited time JCP work coaches have for their appointments and wider capacity pressures, made it difficult to establish consistent referral pathways.

Referrals from community-based organisations

Community-based partnerships worked well across many sites, with referrals to JobsPlus from organisations such as Citizens Advice, schools, food banks, children's centres, mental health charities, faith groups, youth groups, and sports clubs. As support was tailored to local needs, these trusted, long-standing organisations were well positioned to

refer residents in eligible postcode areas. In order to build relationships with these organisations to secure referrals, JobsPlus caseworkers had a presence at community spaces, both during existing events and by holding drop-ins to raise awareness of the support.

Forming these partnerships was especially effective in reaching younger and more marginalised residents, particularly those affected by anti-social behaviours like gang violence and knife crime. Some sites worked collaboratively with local youth groups to raise awareness of the support. Working with groups well-trusted by young people was key to securing engagement.

What has worked well

Since March 2025, sites have built on the key elements of successful partnership working established in the early stages of delivery, deepened existing relationships, and extended co-location of services where possible.

Key partnerships with community-based organisations has become stronger. This progress was driven by networks becoming more established, particularly as governance and partnership meetings were regularly held at most sites. There were generally clear lines of communication between the HAs and partners. This facilitated knowledge sharing about how to effectively engage resident groups that previously did not participate in JobsPlus and about residents' support needs.

Some sites acknowledged that it took time to build relationships with partners and to earn the trust of groups deeply embedded in the community. Clearly articulating the goals of JobsPlus and holding consistent, regular partnership meetings helped partners better understand how JobsPlus complements their own support. Over time, partners observed the positive impact of JobsPlus on residents, which strengthened their perception of its effectiveness.

What has worked less well

- Competing priorities sometimes made it difficult for partnerships to gain momentum.
- At the time of interim reporting, it was clear that developing partnerships had been challenging when partners had concerns that JobsPlus competed with their own support. While this was still a challenge, sites worked hard to build trust and clarify how support complements that of partner organisations. This helped identify the best agency for support, avoiding duplication.
- Ongoing challenges relating to GDPR restrictions continued to limit the ability of some partner organisations from referring residents to JobsPlus.

JobsPlus referrals and signposting to other support/services

Across the sites, caseworkers identified key support needs among participants, including health and wellbeing, training, career guidance, and exposure to criminal and anti-social behaviour. They partnered with local providers to complement JobsPlus support, recognising that referring participants to other services helped them overcome challenges and skills gaps affecting employment prospects.

Health and wellbeing support

Poor physical and mental health limited some participants' engagement with JobsPlus. To overcome health barriers, these participants needed access to NHS healthcare, but long waiting lists negatively affected this. Many sites tried hard to broker a partnership with the NHS to support access to healthcare, but capacity issues prevented timely progress. Signposting to healthcare remained difficult, and lengthy waiting times sometimes weakened engagement with JobsPlus. As a result, some sites were more successful in partnering with local wellbeing and counselling services, which could offer timely and accessible support. Where this was the case, this was due to existing relationships, combined with the persistence of site staff to establish these links. One site hired a psychotherapist to deliver rapid access to counselling, helping participants avoid long waiting lists.

> *We arranged to have a psychotherapist on the books… if a person is struggling, we can arrange support the same day or within two days. Normally it's six to nine months.*
>
> Caseworker

Training providers

Training providers became key partners in many sites, with JobsPlus referring individuals to both local colleges and Independent Training Providers (ITPs). Sites referred participants to a variety of training opportunities, for example, mandatory training needed for careers in construction, compliance training for security roles, and food safety courses for entry into catering and hospitality jobs. Establishing strong connections with local training providers also enabled sites to keep up to date with apprenticeship opportunities. Signposting to these helped to maintain young people's engagement at some sites.

In addition, caseworkers collaborated with training providers to develop bespoke courses such as digital skills and financial literacy sessions delivered within community hubs. This approach benefited both partners: sites were able to offer more comprehensive support to participants, and providers could reach local residents who might not usually access the training opportunities they offer.

Career guidance

To better support young people's aspirations, some sites developed relationships with local career guidance services. These partnerships were especially beneficial for enabling participants to access targeted career guidance delivered by qualified career guidance professionals. This advice complemented the intensity of the holistic support the JobsPlus case worker offered. This type of careers support helped participants to consider aspirations and careers rather than just any job.

Positive activities to reduce anti-social behaviour

Some sites identified residents who needed support for anti-social behaviour or criminal activity. Caseworkers developed networks of specialist support to which they can signpost individuals.

These needs were most present among young people who were not engaged with JobsPlus, but who, from conversations with partners who support young people, caseworkers identified those who would benefit from accessing wider support. Caseworkers hoped that taking part in this type of support would become a stepping stone to accessing JobsPlus in the future. One site developed a partnership with a local youth support charity that provided a mobile youth bus at a local secondary school one evening a week, bringing a DJ booth, games console, sports kit, structured activities and hot food. Caseworkers raised awareness of this service among young people living in the JobsPlus area. The support offered by the charity was successful in reducing anti-social behaviour, building confidence, and providing young people with positive role models. Some of the young people taking part in JobsPlus volunteered to facilitate some sessions.

At a site facing substance misuse issues, a partnership was formed with a local neighbourhood officer and a police community support officer (PCSO). This collaboration allowed caseworkers to share resident concerns about those involved in substance abuse with the neighbourhood officer and local PCSO. It was hoped that over time, the PCSO and neighbourhood officer would be able to signpost those engaging in this behaviour to wider support services. Building this relationship was important and has been key to fostering trust in JobsPlus within the community, serving as a catalyst for positive change.

Complementing, not duplicating local services

Overall, sites perceived that JobsPlus support had little overlap with other local support services. Caseworkers were seen as able to offer more intensive assistance than participants might otherwise access to secure employment. Participant interviews indicated that JobsPlus was the primary employment support programme they engaged with. There was limited evidence of active collaboration between sites and local Get Britain Working teams or Trailblazer sites as strategic partners. Not all sites were in a Trailblazer area, and for those that were, Trailblazer delivery tended to be focused on a part of the Combined Authority that did not fall within the JobsPlus-eligible postcode boundaries.

Case Study: Developing new partnerships

Partnerships expanded significantly for one HA after targeted efforts led by a new JobsPlus programme manager who joined in August 2025. Their priority was to understand the local community landscape, identify organisations whose aims aligned with JobsPlus and develop trust-based relationships that could support both day-to-day delivery, and strategic governance. The aim was to identify areas of shared interest and establish how JobsPlus could complement rather than duplicate existing provision. This approach led to new partnerships and the strengthening of existing partnerships. By December 2025, partners contributed to steering group meetings and planned the co-location of services at the Community Hub.

Stakeholder mapping

This was achieved by:

- Identifying organisations in the community using platforms, directories, local forums and networking opportunities, as well as internal knowledge from the HA’s Communities Team.

- Utilising connections, including existing partners as well as the programme manager's links with organisations in the local area from previous experience in community-focused roles. A more targeted youth strategy connected youth partners to increase youth engagement and develop employment pathways for young people through SWAPs and apprenticeships and linked with health partners to introduce social prescribers at the Hub.

There are key organisations that it's worth tapping into, and then as I say, utilise the links from those relationships. I think having knowledge of who those organisations are, where their gaps are, and where the challenges are for them. And then on the back of that, looking at where, as a collaborative, we can help each other.

JobsPlus programme manager

6.2.3 Employer engagement and partners supporting job brokerage

Effectively engaging employers remained one of the more challenging aspects of JobsPlus delivery. The lack of large local employers meant JobsPlus participants have mostly secured jobs with a wide range of local small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). These local businesses tend to be unaware that their new employee was taking part in JobsPlus, and this has meant that after they were recruited, employers did not typically have ongoing engagement with JobsPlus. This made it challenging for delivery partners to build relationships with employers and made ongoing engagement with JobsPlus staff less likely.

To address this challenge, caseworkers dedicated time to build relationships with local employers, enhancing their understanding of the local labour market and the most in-demand roles. While this successfully raised awareness and support for JobsPlus among local employers, the fact that many were SMEs meant that they often had few job opportunities available for participants to access. Compounding this, many participants wanted the opportunity to find employment very close to home, which made it challenging for caseworkers to connect them with suitable vacancies, even if the employer was open to recruiting residents taking part in JobsPlus. Employers near eligible estates often had few current job openings and lacked the capacity to provide work experience placements.

At several sites, caseworkers reported that some participants expressed interest in becoming self-employed. This was especially true among parents who wanted to fit work around childcare. While sites tended not to have the specific knowledge to support participants in becoming self-employed, several sites had established links with local organisations that provided business start-up and self-employment courses. Another site developed links with a local Chamber of Commerce and a youth charity that supports young people into self-employment to build referral links for self-employment.

Many sites promoted JobsPlus by attending job fairs and hosting events, such as a festival at a local school in the summer of 2025, inviting employers and training providers. Despite engagement challenges, local employers showed interest in recruiting JobsPlus participants, seeing it as a way to meet social value commitments. One challenge was that available jobs often did not match participants' expectations: those with caring responsibilities preferred part-time roles near schools, and those with health conditions wanted remote work, but such roles were scarce. Larger HAs effectively brokered job

opportunities by directing candidates to internal vacancies or offering apprenticeships and work experience.

> *[HA name] has their own positions available all the time. We will refer customers to those opportunities. And the apprenticeships that come up, and any of the partners that work with x housing, such as [local construction company] and those kind of opportunities, we would put them forward. And a lot of those opportunities get ring-fenced for our customers as well.*
>
> JobsPlus caseworker

Job brokerage

Caseworkers also found that employers tended to want reassurance that participants would be job-ready and that recruitment would be straightforward. To provide this reassurance, one site developed a brokerage model to screen candidates. This involved participants undertaking tailored training for hospitality-sector roles, followed by a work placement with the employer. The site received positive feedback from employers about the personalised matching of candidates to job roles and the support potential candidates could access. As outlined in the case study below, one site had begun collaborating with local employers to facilitate paid work placements. This meant employers could assess a participant's suitability before offering them a more permanent opportunity. Another site worked closely with employers to facilitate smooth recruitment and address necessary adjustments for smooth entry into the workplace, especially for participants with physical or mental health needs.

Case study: Brokering employer engagement

One of the sites had begun developing links with local SMEs in the childcare, hospitality, and retail sectors, along with the local council, to provide paid work experience opportunities.

Approach taken

- The site identified local SMEs who best represented the sectors that participants expressed aspirations to work for.
- Caseworkers then contacted the employers to find out whether they would be happy to take on a participant on a short-term paid contract. While the impact of this on benefit entitlement wasn't reflected on by the site, this is something that should be considered when offering this type of opportunity to participants.
- To de-risk this approach for employers, the site re-imbursed the employer for the wage paid to the participant:

What we're asking employers is to take on young people or someone for 8 weeks on a 14 hour a week contract, so that they get some experience from that. We will agree with them how much we'll be paying the participant. They'll pay the participant then they'll invoice us so that we can pay them back that money. So, it is a 0% risk for the employer.

JobsPlus caseworker

- Caseworkers supported participants in the run-up to the placement so that they knew what the employer expected of them.

Benefits to participants and employers

- Employers were able to see first-hand how much of a match a participant was to a job role. The fixed nature of the placement meant that they were not committed to providing a longer-term role to an unsuitable candidate.
- Participants had the opportunity to take part in a paid placement that allowed them to gain valuable experience in a credible job role that matched their job aspirations.
- Although this was a recent initiative, one participant had already progressed from the placement into an apprenticeship with the same employer.

One site acknowledged that additional efforts were needed to increase engagement with local employers and questioned whether a dedicated resource was necessary.

> *So, we're already thinking, 'Well, if we were to go beyond April [delivery of JP], what might our model look like? Maybe we do need half [part-time] an employer engagement officer*
>
> HA lead

One site that provided employment support prior to JobsPlus had a dedicated employment engagement lead, and they found that their employer connections could be drawn upon by JobsPlus caseworkers. This was because the lead had a strong reputation and trust among local employers due to their long experience in the employability sector. The JobsPlus manager acknowledged that building these relationships had taken time and that it had taken several years for the person in the role to develop strong relationships with local employers.

The case study below illustrates the experiences of one site that has a dedicated employer engagement lead.

Case study: Brokering employer engagement

One of the sites has a dedicated employer engagement lead who takes a 'vacancy led' approach. He has links to a range of employers across sectors and industries, including those that will take on people with no employment or education history.

The employer engagement lead has a strong reputation among local employers due to his length of time working in the employability sector, and has good knowledge about labour market information.

Approach taken

- The employer engagement lead proactively searches for employers in sectors that match the aspirations of participants. One challenge that he has found is that many employers have not yet heard of JobsPlus. To overcome this, he uses the name of the HA and not JobsPlus as the brand when he talks to employers.
- He creates a weekly vacancy list, which is shared with participants and the JobsPlus caseworkers. Within 24 hours of a participant expressing an interest in a role, the employer engagement lead contacts them to conduct pre-screening, where they check their right to work documents, discuss why they are applying and consider their suitability. Based on the outcome of that conversation, he will contact the employer and arrange the next steps. If the participant is not appropriate or successful for that role, he will proactively contact them if something suitable comes up in the future (cc'ing the JP caseworkers in).

- The JobsPlus manager reported that this is the easiest route to vacancies but that it can be limited to specific roles, so it is supplemented by the contacts and experience brought by the caseworkers.

It is clear that sites need the opportunity to maintain sustained engagement with employers to make meaningful connections. This would allow caseworkers to recommend relevant vacancies to participants and employers, keeping them informed about upcoming vacancies suitable for participants to apply for. Generally, sites felt that strengthening relationships with local employers and formalising employer engagement strategies remained priorities for ongoing delivery of the support.

8 Qualitative Comparative Analysis

Key findings

- Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) identified a clear set of factors associated with above-median employment outcomes across JobsPlus pilot sites. The findings emphasise that no single element alone drives success; rather, outcomes are strongest when multiple components of the model are implemented together and embedded effectively.
- Sites achieving higher work outcomes were characterised by a consistent combination of three core conditions, alongside high-quality, personalised caseworker support: a higher proportion of social rented housing (over 50%) in the local area; a well-established and visible community champion presence; and strong, flexible use of discretionary financial support.

8.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out findings from additional analysis of area-based case-study research exploring the implementation of JobsPlus across the pilot sites. The qualitative comparative analysis (QCA) approach was used to understand and strengthen the analysis of how JobsPlus provision supported participants in finding work, and how local contexts and implementation may affect participants' job outcomes.

QCA is based on a mathematical ‘set theory’ method that uses software (fsQCA) to systematically compare data collected from a set of cases to identify causal combination(s) of factors that bring about a specified outcome. QCA is used to explore which combinations of local conditions and delivery factors help explain variations in outcomes across JobsPlus pilot sites. Further details of the methodology and analysis approach are available in the Technical Annex.

In this context, the QCA focused on interactions within JobsPlus provision, the profile of the local area and context (including demographics), as well as interactions between JobsPlus provision and provision funded through other sources. The use of QCA aimed to highlight key interactions and interdependencies, identify any gaps in implementation, and surface reasons for differences in engagement in programmes across areas.

8.2 Analysis approach

There were three main elements to this analysis

Cases: The ‘cases’ referred to in this analysis are the ten JobsPlus sites: Barnet, Borehamwood, Leyton, Liverpool, Penge, Maltby, Sheffield, Sittingbourne, Stockton-on-Tees and the Wirral.

Outcome: Using the theory of change and available evidence from the management information, the outcome measure used in the QCA is the proportion of JobsPlus participants recorded as having a positive work outcome. While the theory of change suggests that positive outcomes for participants include job outcomes or progression into education or training, the management information (MI) did not provide a consistent quantitative measure of education and training as an outcome across sites. Therefore, only work outcomes were used for this QCA. Five sites recorded outcomes at or above median for the selected cases and were given an outcome score of 1.

Factors/sets: Through an iterative process, from an initial 16 potential factors, the six most influential were used in the final analysis, to ensure that a meaningful explanation could be found for the ten cases. The factors were as follows.

JobsPlus provision

- **Appropriateness of training and skills development offer *(SkillsDev):*** The extent to which the training and skills development offered to participants is high quality, relevant to participant needs and motivation, as well as being aligned to the local labour market employment opportunities. The training and skills development offer is supported by deep caseworker knowledge of local opportunities and a proactive approach to connecting participants with appropriate training and skills opportunities. This set is based on a judgement derived from the qualitative evidence.
- **Wider financial support (flexible, immediate barrier-removal support) *(FincSup):*** The extent to which sites provide flexible, discretionary, and immediate/short term financial support (e.g. vouchers for food, interview clothes, travel, phone credit, emergency funds) to help remove practical barriers and to enable participants to progress toward work through its provision. Financial support is targeted appropriately to the needs and goals of the participant, often because of effective and sustained engagement activities that build trust between staff and participant, and addresses barriers effectively. This set is based on a judgement derived from the qualitative evidence.

Engagement conditions

These capture the degree to which stakeholders respond, engage, or behave in ways the programme expects.

- **Community champion role and approach *(CChamp):*** Assesses how structured, embedded, visible and trusted the community champion role is. Effective role inclusion includes evidence of a clear role definition for community champions, as well as local trust and support for the role. It also covers delivery of quality engagement activities as well as participant awareness, including strong role coverage across the site area for engagement and outreach activities. This set is based on a judgement derived from the qualitative evidence.

Partnership conditions

These conditions describe the partnership and support ecosystem surrounding the hub, especially inter-organisational coordination and support that remove barriers.

- **Range and appropriateness of referrals to and from support organisations *(SupRef):*** The extent to which participants are connected to relevant and varied external support services, based on participant need, circumstances, or specific groups e.g. young people, those with health issues, and parents. This includes both range and quality of referrals to support services. This set is based on a judgement derived from the qualitative evidence.
- **Effectiveness of employer engagement *(EmpEng)***: The extent and relevance of relationships between staff and employers, and the effectiveness of brokerage. The ability of caseworkers to understand and respond to local labour market conditions, as well as the appropriateness of employer links for participants and seeking out connections where there are gaps in their knowledge. This set is based on a judgement derived from the qualitative evidence.

Area profile

- **Proportion of participants in social rented housing/accommodation above 50% (SocRent):** In most case study areas, the proportion of households renting their property through social housing was higher than the national average (29.8%)[28] (excluding Rotherham and Sittingbourne), which established a high social rent baseline for case study areas. Other housing tenures include renting privately or live without paying rent, homes owned outright or with a mortgage or shared ownership. For inclusion in this condition, the threshold of socially rented accommodation was therefore set as greater than half of households in the local area (>50%). The IMD value of each site was a separate condition but was excluded in the minimisation process due to the lack of variation in decile scores between sites (see Technical Annex for further detail).

8.3 Findings

QCA was used to identify the combination of conditions linked to the outcome. QCA produces a score for coverage and consistency; these indicate how much of the outcome the combination explains and how reliably it leads to the outcome. For both measures, a score above the minimum of 0.75 was achieved.

The analysis produced two results; the logically simplest, with the most reduced configuration of causal conditions that explain the outcome (the parsimonious solution),

[28] https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/sources/census_2021

and an intermediate solution, which uses theory-based assumptions to identify core and peripheral conditions.

Parsimonious solution

Above median work outcomes occurred where:

- Social rent housing made up more than 50% of the local area, and
- There was an engaged and embedded community champion approach, and
- A high level of tailored discretionary financial support for programme participants

This combination has high consistency (0.858), exceeding the sufficiency benchmark of 0.80. This indicates that cases with these features almost always achieved above median work outcomes. This solution has moderate coverage of 0.40, meaning that it explains 40% of the outcomes across the case studies.

Intermediate solution

Above median work outcomes were achieved where:

- Social rent housing makes up more than 50% of the local area, and
- There was a highly engaged and embedded community champion approach, and
- A high level of tailored discretionary financial support for programme participants, and
- Employer engagement was effective, and
- Referrals to and from support organisations were wide-ranging and well matched.

Consistency for this combination remains high at 0.835, indicating that it also represents a reliable route to above median work outcomes. However, the coverage is lower (0.334), showing that this combination explains a smaller proportion of cases achieving the outcome.

In both solutions, two cases meet these conditions. Both case study areas share the combination of a strong community champion approach and discretionary financial support within a high social-rent area context. This suggests a clear mechanism where local capacity and embedded support structures may jointly contribute to achieving higher than average work outcomes.

8.4 Interpretation of causal pathways

The analysis found that successful outcomes were most strongly associated with three elements working together: the JobsPlus programme operating in an area profile with a high proportion of social housing (above 50% of the local population), having an active, trusted and well-connected community champion approach, and providing a strong discretionary financial support offer to participants.

Locations that combined these three factors were consistently more likely to achieve positive results, suggesting that this blend of the area context of social housing tenure,

community champion embeddedness and implementation of practical financial support forms a powerful foundation for success, and may be the most appropriate elements of the programme to focus on in areas where maximising work outcomes is desired. Other aspects of delivery, such as employer engagement or wide-ranging, relevant referrals to other services, were nevertheless often present in successful cases but were not essential on their own. Overall, the findings highlight the importance of embedding support within local communities and ensuring it is backed by strong, visible community leadership and adequate financial resources.

It should be noted that employment support offered across the sites was consistently scored highly, and within these findings should be assumed to be present e.g. all sites demonstrated personalised and sustained caseworker-participant support.

Additionally, it should be noted that this analysis is based on judgements derived from qualitative evidence. These scores are relational; they do not indicate that some sites performed ‘well’ and others ‘poorly,’ but rather show how sites compare to one another, with some scoring relatively higher than others.

Overall, the analysis identifies one clear evidence-based pathway. Successful cases tend to be in areas that combine a high level of social-rent housing, active community champion(s) and strong financial support for participants. This pathway appears in two cases and shows high consistency and moderate coverage. Additional conditions are best understood as context-specific additions that are complementary, rather than essential.

9 Impact evaluation

This chapter uses DWP and HMRC administrative data to describe the characteristics of individuals residents of JobsPlus pilot and comparison sites, their history over two years before their baseline, and their outcomes in both sites. It then presents the causal impact analysis which controls for differences, including pre-intervention outcomes, estimating JobsPlus's effect on employment, earnings, and benefit receipt. The chapter ends by discussing how to interpret these results, considering the limited observation period and early implementation stage.

Key findings

Findings from the impact analysis

An analysis which estimated the impact of JobsPlus by comparing observed outcomes for residents against an estimate of the outcomes they would have been expected to achieve in the absence of the intervention found the programme did not have a clear impact on the likelihood of claiming out-of-work benefits or being in employment in the five months after the baseline observation.

There were some signs that JobsPlus had a negative impact on monthly earnings towards the end of the five-month period considered in the analysis, reducing earnings in the pilot sites relative to what would have been expected in the absence of the intervention. The reasons for this finding are unclear but may be due to lock-in effects reducing the likelihood of individuals attaining outcomes while actively engaged with the programme.

Analysis (reported in section 2.2) suggested that the assumptions underlying the robustness of the methods used to estimate the causal impact of JobsPlus are likely to hold and so the findings are expected to be robust.

Likely explanations for the findings

It was only possible to estimate impacts at an early stage after delivery commenced. It is unlikely that the saturation model used by JobsPlus, which aims to affect outcomes for local residents by changing attitudes to work in the local area, was fully effective over this period. As a result, any impacts were only likely to be experienced by the limited number of individuals who received direct support from the programme.

The implementation and process evaluation found that the intended beneficiaries of JobsPlus faced a range of barriers to work which it took time to overcome. It also took time for some pilots to implement all aspects of the JobsPlus model. This was also the case in the US pilots, where impacts only became apparent over the longer-term.

In addition, there was a period of uncertainty over the continuation of the pilots in early 2025 that may have affected delivery to the analysis sample.

The fact that impacts could only be considered at an early stage of delivery likely explains why the JobsPlus model was not found to be effective. This is because aspects of delivery were not yet fully embedded.

Recommendations

It would be beneficial for a future evaluation to estimate the impact of JobsPlus for a later cohort, to capture the impact of the intervention once all aspects of the model are fully functional.

There would also be value in a future evaluation estimating the impact of JobsPlus on employment, earnings and benefit receipt over a much longer period, consistent with the expectations set out in the theory of change that these outcomes would only be affected over the intermediate and longer-term.

9.1 Methods and context

The impact evaluation used difference-in-differences (DiD) methods to track outcomes for a cohort of individuals eligible for JobsPlus, both in the pilot sites and a set of comparison areas, over time, spanning a period before and after the introduction of JobsPlus. This provides an estimate of the impact of the intervention, net of any changes in outcomes that the intervention group would have been expected to experience even if JobsPlus had not been introduced. The impact evaluation focused on outcomes for all individuals aged between 16 and 65 living in the JobsPlus pilot sites or the chosen comparison areas who were claiming out-of-work benefits or earning less than the Universal Credit Administrative Earnings Threshold within the following data ranges:

- 1 to 31 October 2020 – referred to as the earliest cohort
- 1 to 31 October 2022 – referred to as the pre-intervention cohort
- 1 to 31 October 2024 – referred to as the post-intervention cohort

Individuals who meet these criteria are referred to as the analysis samples. The methods used to select the comparison areas and conduct the DiD analysis are explained in detail in Chapter 2.

The pre-programme tests reported in section 2.2. found that the chosen comparison areas closely mirrored the trend in outcomes seen in the pilot sites in the period before JobsPlus was introduced. As the comparison areas had similar trailblazer activity over the period that the JobsPlus pilots were rolled out and outcomes were observed, DiD methods were expected to produce a credible estimate of the impact of JobsPlus.

However, a major limitation of the current study is that it has only been possible to estimate short-term impacts from JobsPlus, given the very limited timeline for implementation, analysis and reporting. The pilots commenced delivery in July 2024, and the analysis focuses on impacts for a cohort observed to be resident in the pilot sites in October 2024. Outcomes were observed up to the end of March 2025. The experience of US pilots was that it took years for intervention delivery to become established and for statistically significant impacts to emerge. For this reason, the expectation was that there was a low probability of detecting any impact from JobsPlus so soon after roll-out. A longer-term impact study would be needed to assess whether the impacts of the programme grew over time.

To aid the interpretation of findings, the text focuses on results that are statistically significant at conventionally accepted levels, i.e. at the 5% (or a p-value of 0.05 or smaller) level. This means there is a low probability that the finding has occurred purely by random chance.

9.2 Characteristics of the analysis sample

This section describes the key features of the post-intervention analysis sample in the pilot sites and comparison areas, based on analysis of the Registration and Population Interaction Database (RAPID), DWP's Single Housing Benefit Extract (SHBE) and HMRC Real Time Information (RTI). It presents information on their personal and household characteristics at the baseline observation in October 2024, as well as their history of employment and benefit receipt and the outcomes that they attained in the months following the baseline observation. It provides a descriptive analysis of the differences between the analysis samples in the pilot and comparison areas in the post-intervention period without controlling for any differences which were present in the pre-intervention period, so any differences in outcomes between the pilot and comparison sites in this section should not be attributed to the impact of JobsPlus.

Baseline characteristics

The post-intervention analysis sample consisted of 11,439 individuals from pilot sites and 13,867 individuals from the comparison areas. The two samples closely matched each other on demographic characteristics (see Table 9.1). Approximately three in five individuals were female (58.9% of those in the pilot sites and 58.6% in comparison areas). The mean age was 41.3 years and 41.8 years for the pilot and comparison areas respectively. The age distribution was similar across both groups, with residents aged 35 to 49 accounting for over one-third of the sample (35.5% in pilot sites and 35.9% in comparison sites). The next largest age group was those aged 50 and over, who accounted for 30.1% and 31.6% of all individuals in the pilot and comparison areas respectively.

A slightly higher proportion of individuals in the pilot sites were in receipt of housing benefit compared with those in the comparison areas (14.7% versus 12.5%). As a large share of residents in the pilot and comparison areas were not in receipt of housing benefit, information on household characteristics was missing for a large proportion of both groups (85.3% in pilot sites and 87.5% in the comparison areas).

For the subset of individuals who were in receipt of housing benefit at baseline, there were modest differences in household characteristics between the pilot and comparison sites. Approximately two in three (67.4%) residents in the pilot sites and three in four (74.1%) residents in comparison areas were single and childless. Lone parents (10.6% versus 7.8%) were more prevalent in the pilot sites, while couples with children (11.2% and 6.0%) were more prevalent in the comparison areas. However, there were a similar proportion of couples without children in the pilot and comparison sites (10.8% versus 12.0% respectively). Households with dependent children (21.8% versus 13.9%) or a non-dependant adult in addition to the head (19.3% versus 15.5%) were slightly more prevalent in pilot sites compared with the comparison areas.

There were differences between the pilot and comparison sites in patterns of tenancy types. Approximately three-fourths (75.3%) of residents in the pilot sites had a housing association tenancy compared with only one-half (49.8%) of residents in the comparison areas. Conversely, there were approximately three times as many residents in the comparison areas who had local authority tenancies than those in the pilot sites (33.6% and 11.3% respectively). Around one in seven residents in the pilot sites (13.4%) and one in six residents in comparison sites (16.6%) had a private tenancy.

Table 9.1 Baseline characteristics of individuals in the pilot sites and comparison areas

	Pilot sites		Comparison areas		
Baseline characteristics	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**P values**
Female	6,733	58.9%	8,125	58.6%	0.667
Age					
Mean age in years		41.3		41.8	0.003**
16–24	1,229	10.7%	1,412	10.2%	0.051
25-34	2,658	23.2%	3,131	22.6%	0.051
35-49	4,105	35.9%	4,937	35.6%	0.051
50+	3,447	30.1%	4,387	31.6%	0.051
Housing benefit in payment at the baseline	1,678	14.7%	1,736	12.5%	0.000***
Household characteristics missing due to individual missing from SHBE	9,756	85.3%	12,129	87.5%	0.000***
From those in receipt of housing benefit at baseline:					
Family type: Single and childless	1,134	67.4%	1,288	74.1%	0.000***
Family type: Lone parent	178	10.6%	136	7.8%	0.005**
Family type: Couple without children	182	10.8%	209	12.0%	0.266
Family type: Couple with children	189	11.2%	105	6.0%	0.000***
Households with dependent children resident	367	21.8%	241	13.9%	0.000***
Household has at least one non-dependant in addition to the head	324	19.3%	270	15.5%	0.004**
Local authority tenancy	190	11.3%	584	33.6%	0.000***
Housing association tenancy	1,268	75.3%	866	49.8%	0.000***
Private tenancy	225	13.4%	288	16.6%	0.009**

*Source: DWP data. Based on analysis of data for 11,439 individuals from pilot sites and 13,867 individuals from the comparison areas. ***=statistically significant at the 1% level; **=statistically significant at the 5% level; *=statistically significant at the 10% level.*

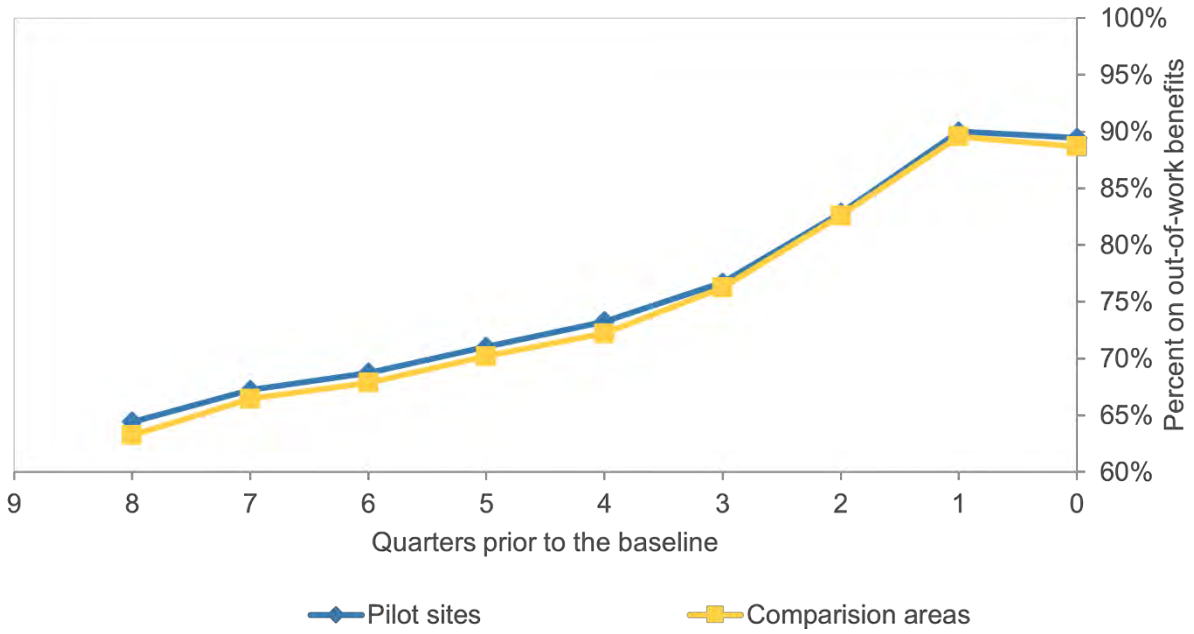
9.2.1 History of out of work benefit claims and employment

Figure 9.1 and Figure 9.2 show the percentage of residents claiming out of work benefits and the percentage in employment, respectively, across the eight quarters preceding October 2024 in the pilot sites and comparison areas.

As shown in Figure 9.1, the percentage of residents claiming out of work benefits rose by approximately 25 to 26 percentage points over two years in both groups (64% to 89% in the pilot sites and 63% to 89% in the comparison areas). The upward trajectory was broadly parallel throughout, with a more pronounced acceleration in the final three quarters before the baseline in both samples.

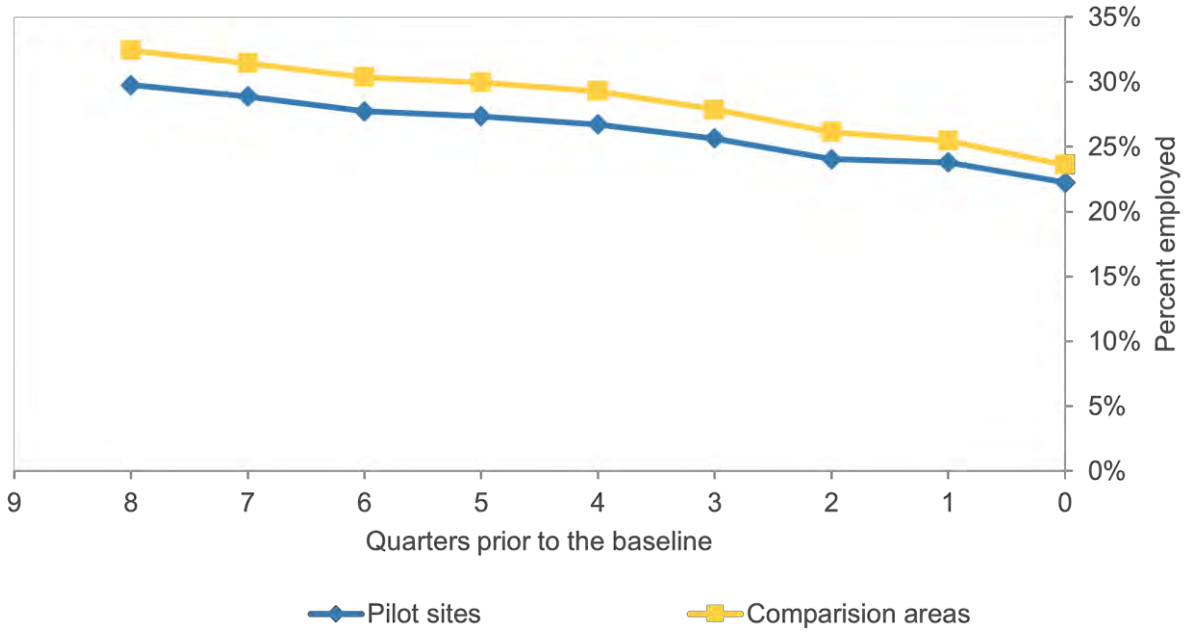
The percentage of the analysis sample in employment moved in the opposite direction over the same period, as illustrated in Figure 9.2. The percentage of residents in employment fell by 8 to 9 percentage points over two years in both groups (30% to 22% in the pilot sites and 32% to 24% in the comparison areas). The trajectory was also broadly parallel throughout with most of the decline concentrated in the final four quarters before the baseline.

Figure 9.1 Percentage of residents claiming out of work benefits in the two years prior to the baseline



Source: DWP data. Based on analysis of data for 11,439 individuals from pilot sites and 13,867 individuals from the comparison areas.

Figure 9.2 Percentage of residents in employment in the two years prior to the baseline



Source: DWP data. Based on analysis of data for 11,439 individuals from pilot sites and 13,867 individuals from the comparison areas.

Table 9.2 reports the status of irregular employment at baseline and the mean taxable pay of residents in the pilot sites and comparison areas. An employee might be paid on irregular basis for a range of reasons, including being in casual employment or on long-term sick leave. Approximately 1 in 30 people were in irregular employment at the baseline (3.2% from pilot sites and 3.0% in comparison areas). Mean taxable pay was higher in the comparison areas than in the pilot sites in both of the two tax years before the introduction of JobsPlus. It stood at £3,358 in the pilot sites and £3,732 in the comparison sites in April 2022 to March 2023 (a difference of £374 over the entire tax year), rising to £3,641 in the pilot sites and £4,186 in the comparison sites in April 2023 to March 2024 (a difference of £545 over the tax year).

Table 9.2: Baseline employment and historical pay of individuals in the pilot sites and comparison areas

	Pilot sites		Comparison areas		
Baseline characteristics	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**P values**
In irregular employment at the baseline	366	3.2	417	3.0	0.379
Mean taxable pay April 2022 to March 2023		£3,357.92		£3,732.45	0.000***
Mean taxable pay April 2023 to March 2024		£3,641.26		£4,185.86	0.000***

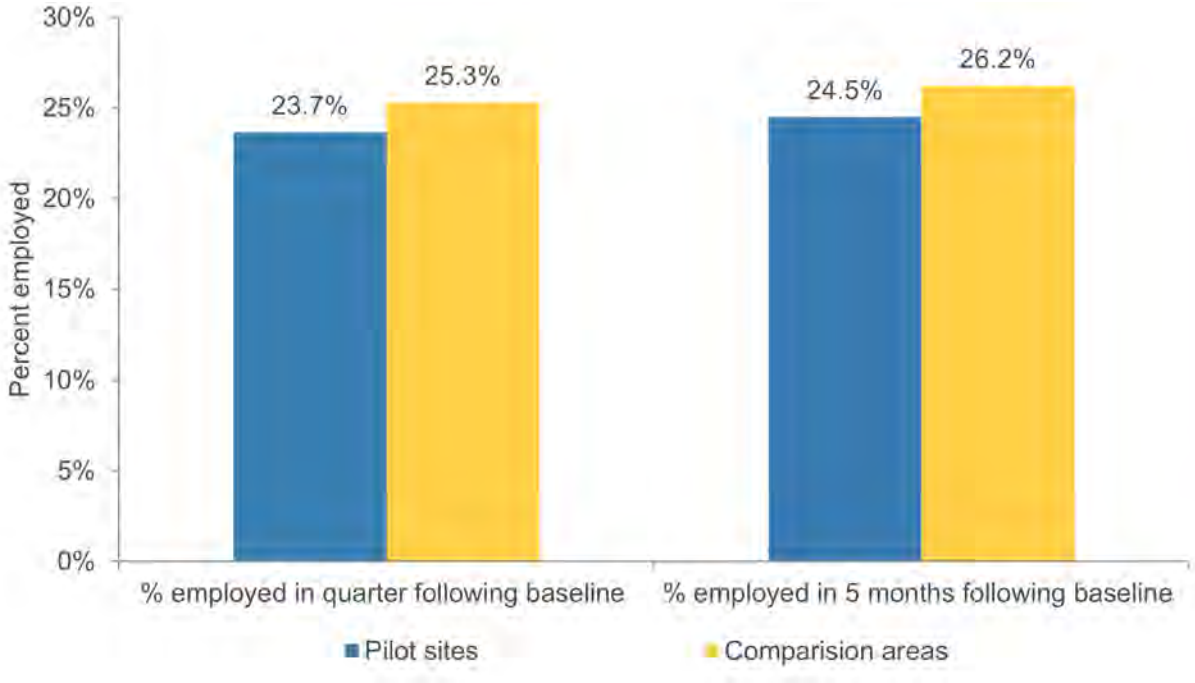
*Source: DWP data. Based on analysis of data for 11,439 individuals from pilot sites and 13,867 individuals from the comparison areas. ***=statistically significant at the 1% level; **=statistically significant at the 5% level; *=statistically significant at the 10% level.*

9.2.2 Outcomes

This section reports the outcomes for the post-intervention (October 2024) analysis sample in the JobsPlus pilot sites and comparison areas. Unlike the analysis reported in the next section, this is based on a descriptive analysis which does not adjust for any differences in the observed characteristics of individuals in the pilot and comparison areas. The numbers underlying the figures presented in this section are found in Table 9.1 in the Technical Annex.

In regard to the primary outcome, defined as the percentage of the analysis sample employed at some point during the first three months following the baseline observation, Figure 9.3 shows that around one in four residents in the JobsPlus pilot and comparison areas were employed over this period (23.7% in the pilot sites and 25.3% in the comparison sites). Over a five-month period a slightly higher percentage of individuals in pilot and comparison areas were employed (24.5% and 26.2% respectively).

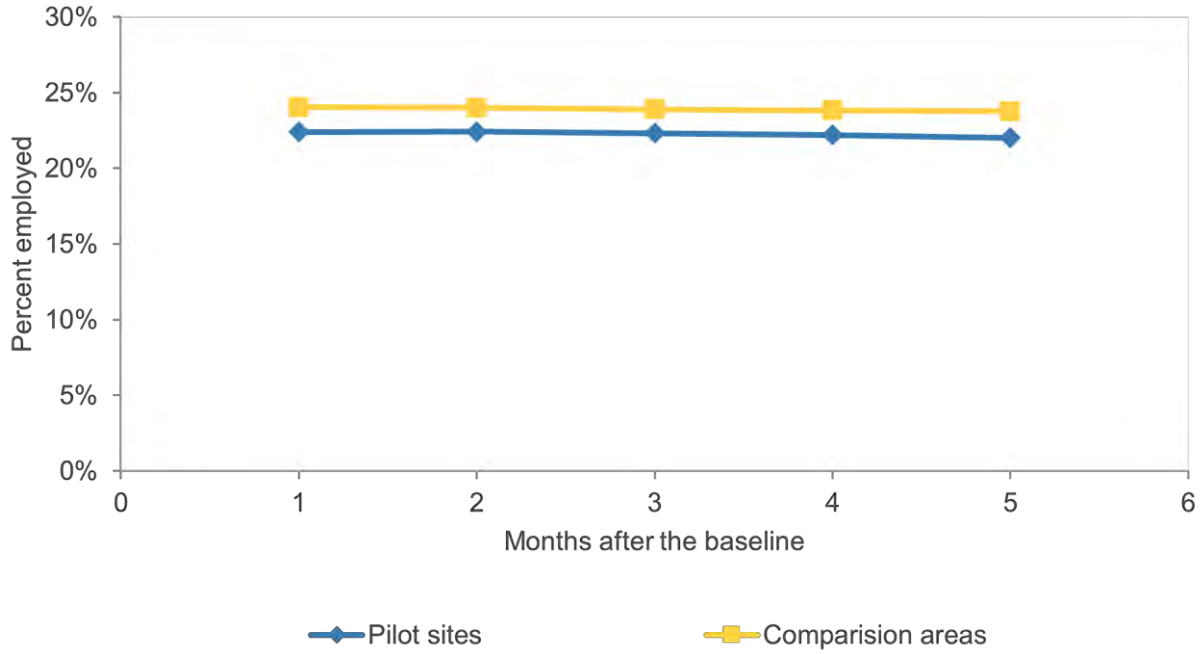
Figure 9.3 Percentage of residents employed at some point in the 3- and 5-month periods after baseline



Source: DWP data. Based on analysis of data for 11,439 individuals from pilot sites and 13,867 individuals from the comparison areas.

Additionally, monthly employment rates remained stable throughout this five-month period, ranging from 22.0% to 22.4% in the pilot sites and from 23.8% to 24.0% in the comparison areas (Figure 9.4).

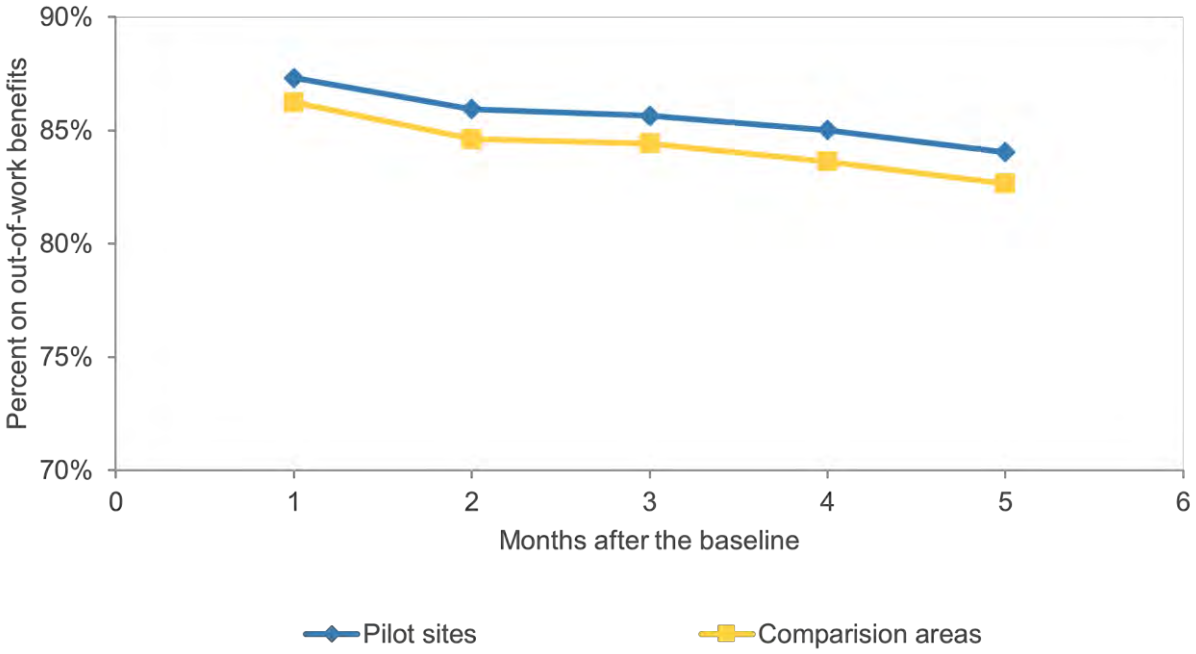
Figure 9.4 Percentage of residents employed in each of the 5 months following baseline



Source: DWP data. Based on analysis of data for 11,439 individuals from pilot sites and 13,867 individuals from the comparison areas.

As shown in Figure 9.5 the receipt of out of work benefits declined gradually in both the JobsPlus pilot sites and the comparison areas (falling from 87.3% to 84.0% in the pilot sites and from 86.2% to 82.6% in the comparison areas) between the first and the fifth month after the baseline observation. The magnitude of the decline was comparable across both groups (3.3 and 3.8 percentage points respectively).

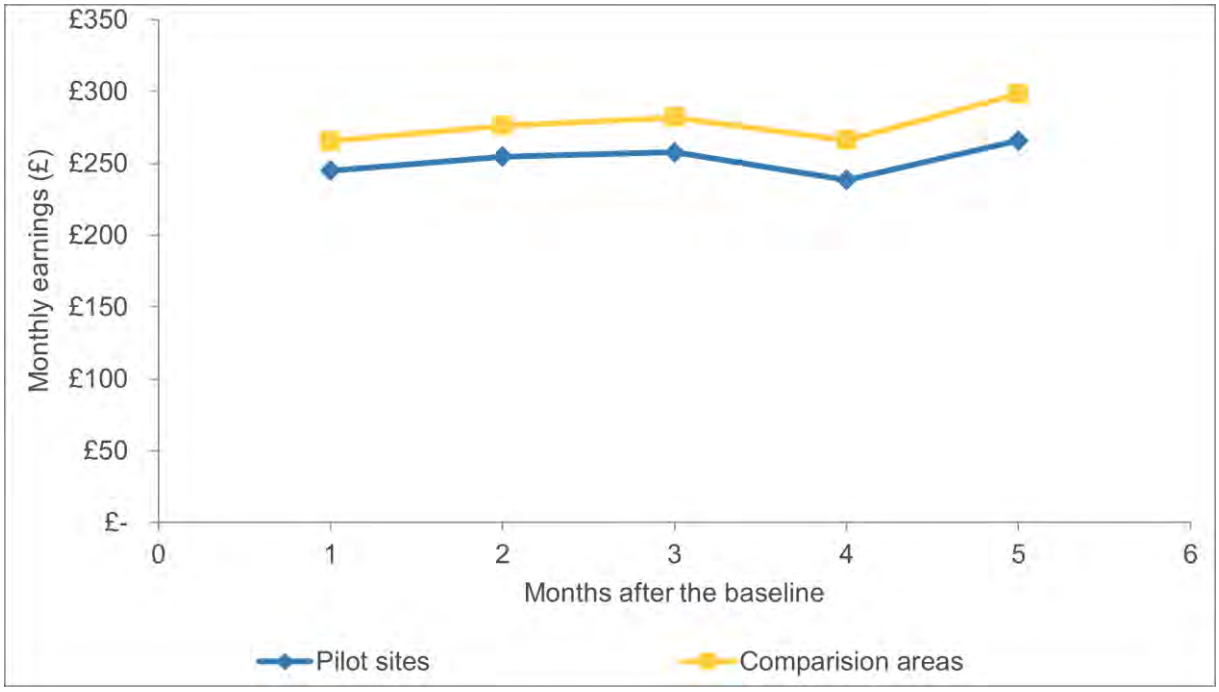
Figure 9.5 Percentage of residents claiming out of work benefits in each of the 5 months following baseline



Source: DWP data. Based on analysis of data for 11,439 individuals from pilot sites and 13,867 individuals from the comparison areas.

Mean monthly earnings followed a similar profile for both groups (Figure 9.6), rising over the first three months before declining in the fourth and recovering in the fifth month. Earnings ranged from £238.49 to £265.72 in the pilot sites and from £265.40 to £298.22 in the comparison areas.

Figure 9.6 Earnings of residents in each of the 5 months following baseline



Source: DWP data. Based on analysis of data for 11,439 individuals from pilot sites and 13,867 individuals from the comparison areas.

Cumulative earnings over the first three months following the baseline observation were £760.45 in the pilot sites and £825.72 in the comparison sites (Figure 9.7); a difference of £65. Cumulative earnings over a five-month period were £1,265.77 in the pilot sites and £1,396.15 in the comparison sites (a difference of £130).

Figure 9.7 Earnings of residents 5 months following the baseline

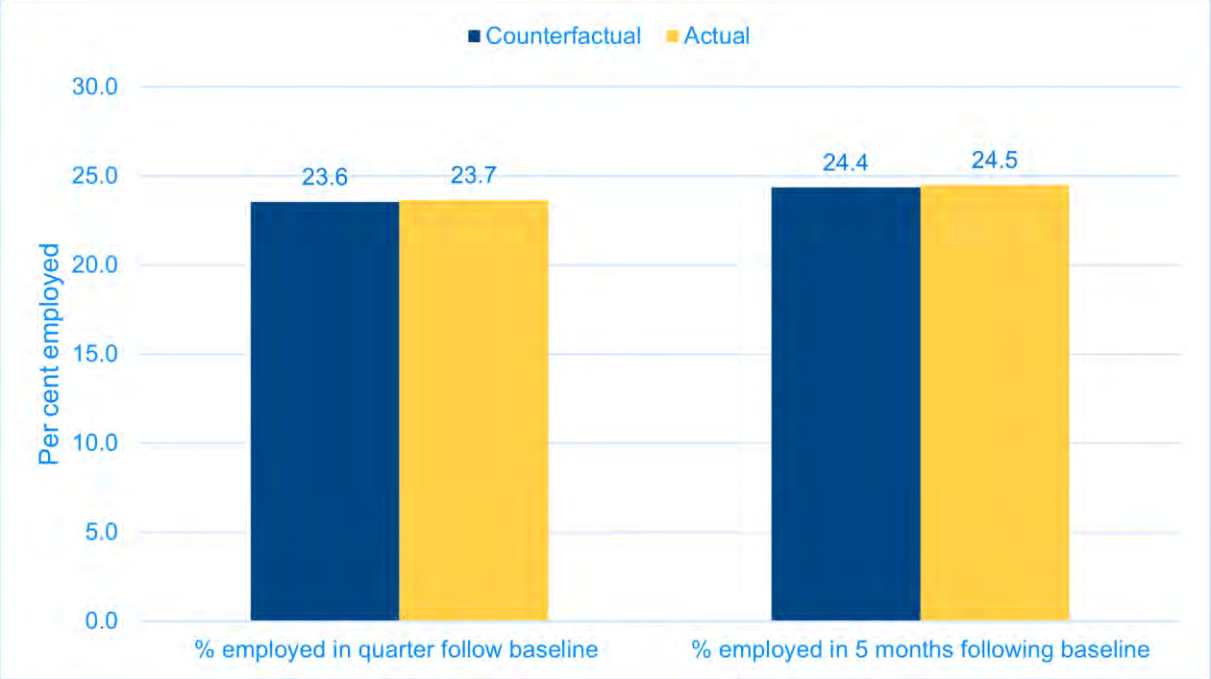
Source: DWP data. Based on analysis of data for 11,439 individuals from pilot sites and 13,867 individuals from the comparison areas.

9.3 The impact of JobsPlus

Impact on the primary outcome – the percentage employed in the quarter following baseline

JobsPlus increased the likelihood of being employed at any point in the first quarter following the baseline month by just 0.1 percentage points. Furthermore, this finding was not statistically significant at the 5% level. Figure 9.8 demonstrates that JobsPlus did not have a clear impact on the likelihood of being employed in the November 2024 to January 2025 quarter (see Table 9.2 in the Technical Annex for more details). Although 23.7% of those in the JobsPlus pilot sites were employed at some point in this three-month period (the actual employment outcome), 23.6% would have been expected to have been employed at some point even without JobsPlus (the counterfactual employment outcome, estimated in the DiD analysis) at the stage impact was assessed.

Figure 9.8 Counterfactual and actual employment outcomes



Source: DWP data. Based on analysis of data for 20,763 individuals in the pilot sites and 25,384 individuals in comparison areas.

The impact of JobsPlus on the secondary outcomes

Further details on all the figures in this section are found in section 9 of the Technical Annex. As it was possible to observe outcomes for a period of up to five months (November 2024 to March 2025) after the baseline observation (October 2024), Figure 9.8 in the previous subsection also showed that 24.5% of the analysis sample in the pilot sites were employed at some point in the first five months after the baseline observation. Without JobsPlus, 24.4% of this group would have been expected to be employed at

some point over this period. Again, the estimated impact of JobsPlus was only 0.1 percentage points and this finding was not statistically significant.

The impact of JobsPlus on cumulative earnings in the quarter following the baseline was also negligible, again as might be expected given the short-term tracking that has been possible in time for this report. Those in the pilot sites had earnings that were £1.94 lower over this 3-month period than would have been expected without JobsPlus. Once again, this impact estimate was not statistically significant and the true impact of JobsPlus on this outcome may have been either positive or negative. Figure 9.9 shows that earnings for the analysis sample in the JobsPlus pilot sites were £757.49 over the 3-month period following baseline, compared with expected earnings of £759.42 if JobsPlus had not been introduced.

There was a slightly bigger negative impact from JobsPlus on cumulative earnings over the five months following baseline. Over this period, earnings were £30.78 lower for the analysis sample in the pilot sites than would have been expected if JobsPlus had not been introduced. However, this finding was still not statistically significant at conventionally accepted levels, again meaning that there is uncertainty over whether JobsPlus had a positive or negative impact on this outcome measure. In total, over this 5-month period, cumulative earnings were £1,261.70 in the pilot sites. Without JobsPlus, estimated earnings would have been £1,292.49 over this same period (Figure 9.9).

Figure 9.9 Counterfactual and actual earnings outcomes

Source: DWP data. Based on analysis of data for 20,763 individuals in the pilot sites and 25,384 individuals in comparison areas.

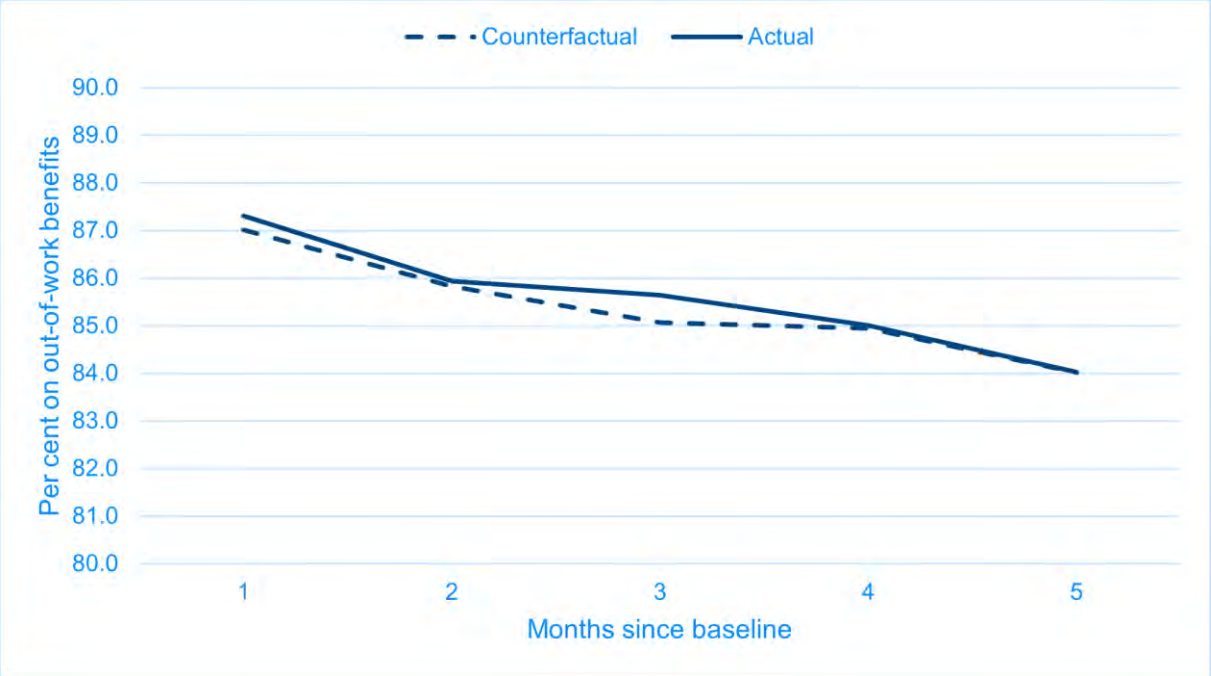
As well as considering whether JobsPlus had an impact over a given period of time (three or five months), the impact evaluation estimates effects in each successive month following the baseline observation. This made it possible to explore whether the impact of JobsPlus changed over time. This was likely to be the case, given that it usually takes

time for delivery to become established and for those in receipt of support to find employment, leave benefits or start to experience any earnings effects.

The impact of JobsPlus on the likelihood of being on out-of-work benefits in successive months

Figure 9.10 shows how the likelihood of being on out-of-work benefits for the analysis sample in the JobsPlus pilot sites differed from what would have been expected in the absence of JobsPlus (the counterfactual). The slight negative impact of JobsPlus is evident from the fact that the actual line is higher than the counterfactual three months after baseline in particular, but the gap narrows again by month 5, suggesting that any effect that JobsPlus had in extending the time that the analysis sample spent on out-of-work benefits was only temporary, and in any case was not statistically significant.

Figure 9.10 Counterfactual and actual benefit outcomes

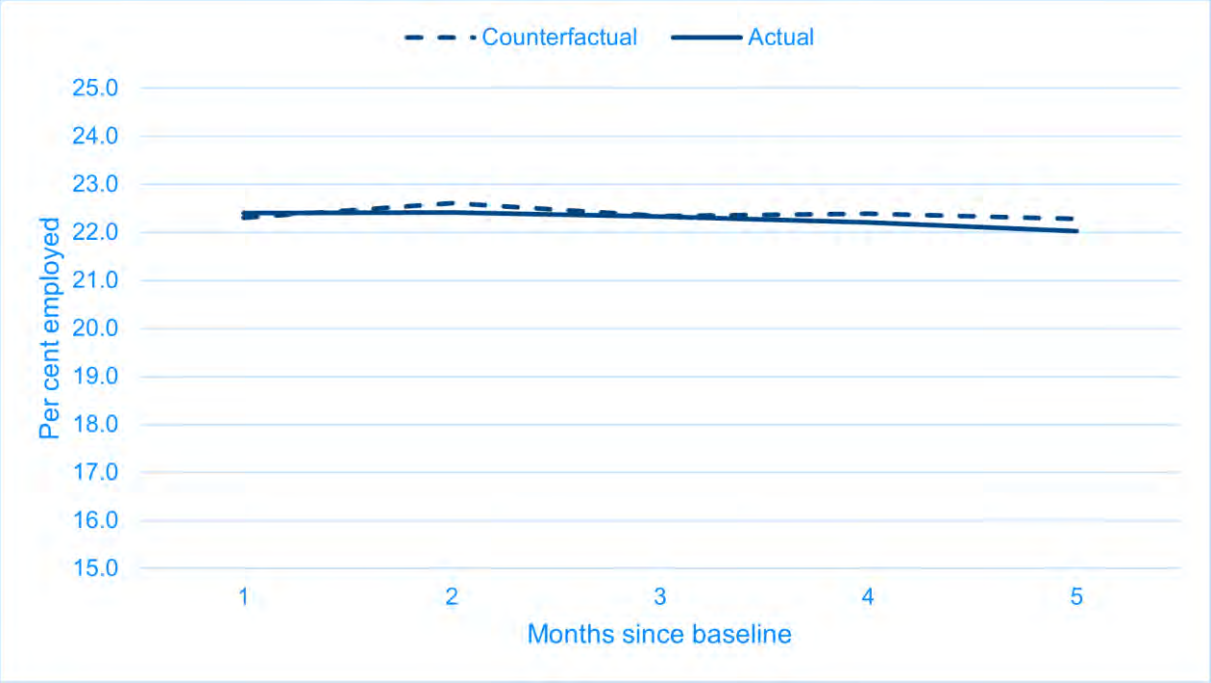


Source: DWP data. Based on analysis of data for 20,763 individuals in the pilot sites and 25,384 individuals in comparison areas.

The impact of JobsPlus on the likelihood of being employed in successive months

Figure 9.11 reports the likelihood that the analysis sample in the JobsPlus pilot sites were employed in each of the five months following the baseline observation compared with the estimate of what employment outcomes would have been if JobsPlus had not been introduced. The counterfactual line is very slightly higher than observed outcomes in three of the five months, but the gap is only 0.3 percentage points at most, and the estimated impact is not statistically significant. Overall, there is no evidence that JobsPlus reduced the likelihood of being employed over this five-month period.

Figure 9.11 Counterfactual and actual employment outcomes



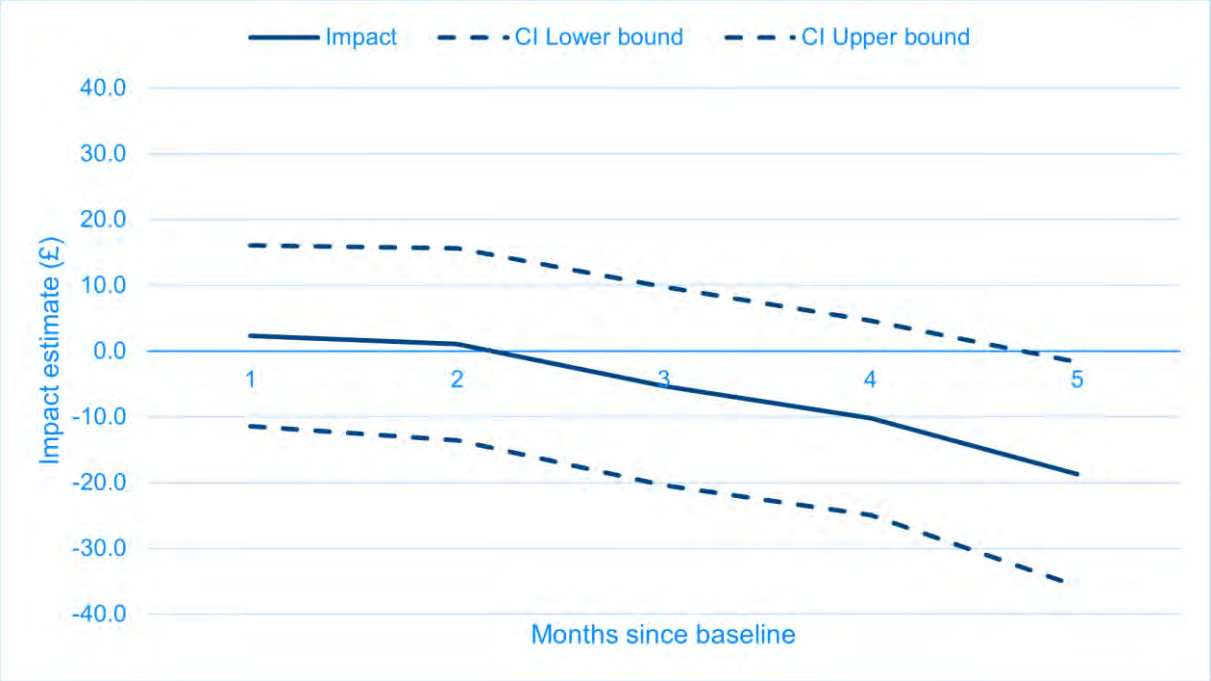
Source: DWP data. Based on analysis of data for 20,763 individuals in the pilot sites and 25,384 individuals in comparison areas.

The impact of JobsPlus on monthly earnings

Finally, Figure 9.12 reports the impact of JobsPlus on earnings in each month following the baseline observation. The impact estimates were statistically insignificant in the first four months following the baseline observation, but by the five-month point, there was emerging evidence that JobsPlus participants had monthly earnings around £18.70 a month lower than the counterfactual.[29] This finding was statistically significant at the 5 per cent level. The fact that the impact of JobsPlus on monthly earnings followed a downward trajectory from month-to-month, rather than showing a more erratic pattern suggests that the statistically significant negative impact in month 5 is unlikely to have occurred purely by chance.

[29] It is important to note that the analysis of earnings impacts had to ignore any total taxable pay from irregular earnings or one-off payments as there was no way of knowing what period the payment covered and thus to calculate monthly earnings. In these cases, the payments were ignored and effectively treated as zero earnings.

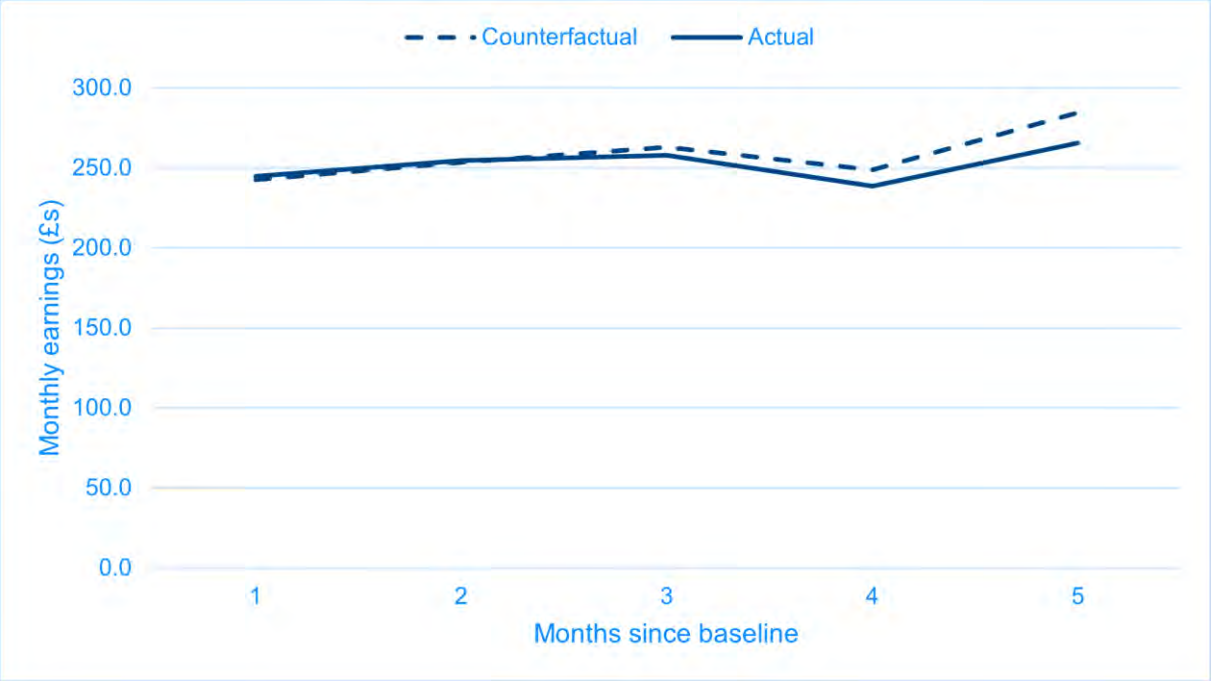
Figure 9.12 Impact estimates for monthly earnings outcomes



Source: DWP data. Based on analysis of data for 20,763 individuals in the pilot sites and 25,384 individuals in comparison areas.

To place the size of the impact estimates in context, Figure 9.13 reports actual monthly earnings for the analysis sample in the JobsPlus pilot sites alongside their estimated counterfactual earnings. It is apparent that monthly earnings were low for the analysis sample (around £250 in each of the 5 months considered). As these were based on total taxable pay, earnings were zero for anyone who was not in paid employment. The figure reflects the growing difference in earnings between the analysis sample in the JobsPlus pilot sites and the estimated counterfactual over time seen in Figure 9.12.

Figure 9.13 Counterfactual and actual earnings outcomes



Source: DWP data. Based on analysis of data for 20,763 individuals in the pilot sites and 25,384 individuals in comparison areas. Source: DWP data.

9.4 Interpreting the findings

This chapter has presented findings from a DiD analysis which estimated the impact of JobsPlus by comparing actual outcomes for residents against an estimate of the outcomes they would have been expected to achieve in the absence of the intervention. It is unsurprising to find that JobsPlus did not have a clear impact on the likelihood that the analysis sample were claiming out-of-work benefits or were in employment, given that it was only possible to estimate impacts at an early stage after delivery commenced, and over a period of less than six months. The saturation model used by JobsPlus aims to affect outcomes for local residents by changing attitudes to work in the local area. Although the impacts of the intervention were expected to be felt beyond direct participants, it is likely to have taken some months for the saturation approach to become fully effective. The impact evaluation considered outcomes for a broad range of individuals who were not working at all or in very low-paid employment in the local area, rather than only direct participants, to seek to capture saturation effects. However, given that the analysis focused on an early stage of delivery, it is possible that the saturation approach was not fully functional at this point. This could mean that any impact that JobsPlus had on direct participants was diluted by the inclusion of non-participants in the analysis sample.

Even if the JobsPlus model was being delivered as intended over the period considered in the impact analysis, it was unlikely that outcomes would be affected immediately, given the barriers to work faced by the intended beneficiaries. The expectation was that it would take some time for JobsPlus to start to have an impact on the outcome measures

considered in the analysis. Indeed, this was the case with the US pilots. A longer-term evaluation would therefore be needed to make a fuller assessment.

Evidence from the implementation and process evaluation also indicated that some pilots took time to implement all aspects of the JobsPlus model. Many elements of the programme were not fully embedded in October 2024 and key relationships with supporting partners and employers were not yet fully developed. The fact that elements of the JobsPlus model were not implemented during at least part of the period over which outcomes were observed is likely to explain, at least in part, why the intervention did not appear to be effective in the short term. In addition, there was a period of uncertainty about funding and the continuation of the pilots in early 2025 that may have affected delivery and the reported impact estimates. The period of uncertainty and delay in decision making affected delivery as pilot sites prepared to close the project and then ramped it back up once funding was confirmed.

A further limitation of the impact analysis was that it was only possible to estimate the impact of JobsPlus on a subset of the outcomes that the intervention seeks to effect. Specifically, the impact evaluation was not able to estimate impacts on any of the short-term outcomes identified in the theory of change, such as confidence, job readiness and improved job search skills, as these were not recorded in administrative data sources. Instead, it was necessary to focus on identifying impacts on intermediate and long-term outcomes from the theory of change. At the point in delivery considered in the analysis, it is more likely that any impacts would have been evident only on short-term outcomes such as improved confidence, job readiness, or engagement with learning.

There were signs that JobsPlus was beginning to affect monthly earnings towards the end of the 5-month period considered in the analysis. However, rather than the intervention increasing average earnings, the analysis sample in the pilot sites actually appeared to earn less than would have been expected in the absence of JobsPlus. The reasons for this are unclear. However, it may be due to lock-in effects where individuals are temporarily delayed in achieving outcomes while they actively engage in a programme, with positive effects only emerging once this period of active engagement is complete (Wunsch 2016). As JobsPlus offers support for as long as it is required, it is uncertain when, and for how long, individuals in the analysis sample might experience any lock-in effects.

As noted previously, the pre-programme tests suggest that the assumptions underlying the robustness of the methods used to estimate the causal impact of JobsPlus are likely to hold. As a result, the findings are expected to be robust. However, it would be beneficial for a future evaluation to estimate the impact of JobsPlus for a later cohort, to capture the impact of the intervention once delivery had become fully established and all aspects of the model were functioning as intended. Given that many of the intended beneficiaries from JobsPlus had substantial barriers to employment that need to be overcome before any positive effects employment, earnings and benefit receipt are likely to emerge, there would also be value in a future evaluation estimating the impact of JobsPlus on these outcomes over a much longer period.

10 Conclusions

Building on evidence from the interim evaluation, this chapter sets out key conclusions on how JobsPlus was implemented over its first 15 months, what worked well, what varied across sites, the factors that shaped successful implementation, and the extent to which the model shows potential for scalability.

Overall, the evidence indicates that JobsPlus was operating broadly as intended in the UK context. The programme has successfully engaged residents furthest from the labour market, established trust-based, personalised support within communities, and supported sustained engagement and progression within a relatively short timeframe.

10.1 Was it possible to implement JobsPlus effectively in the UK?

Evidence from across pilot sites demonstrated that JobsPlus can be implemented effectively in the UK, with core components of the model translating well to local contexts. From July 2024, sites moved from setup to more stable delivery; refining staffing, operating systems and developing a stronger understanding of resident needs.

Quality improved over time through stronger partnership working and clearer support pathways. There was good adherence to the original JobsPlus model; implementation matured at varying rates, but the core components were present across sites. There was some adaptation to local contexts, demonstrating that the model is sufficiently flexible to operate across different contexts.

Community trust and engagement strengthened over time, although there was little evidence at this early stage of deeper community leadership, such as residents being actively involved in programme design or governance. This is consistent with the US JobsPlus experience, where community-led elements took longer to develop. At this stage, the UK pilots are demonstrating good adherence to the model, with early community engagement laying the foundations for stronger resident ownership over time.

The section below summarises how each component operated.

Onsite employment service

- The onsite employment services continued to be the most consistently delivered and valued component across all pilot sites. Participants compared the onsite support favourably to mainstream employment services, considering it more personalised, holistic and welcoming than the standard support provided through Jobcentre Plus.
- Some sites faced practical constraints on co-location, such as limited space for partners in hub buildings, which led to variability in how fully the onsite element could

be delivered. However, these constraints did not undermine feasibility; sites could adapt the available space without compromising the quality of support.

Community support for work

- Sites maintained a strong focus on outreach and engagement, delivering locally relevant events and workshops to raise awareness and strengthen connections with residents and community organisations. There was a sustained local presence, which increased recognition and trust, particularly as staff became more embedded in the area over time.
- Word-of-mouth referrals emerged as one of the strongest recruitment channels, often facilitated by positive participant experiences.
- Outreach and engagement activities continued to reach people who would not typically engage with employment services, including those with parental or caring responsibilities or a long-term health condition.
- The community champion component developed more slowly than other components of the model, and there was greater variation in how it was implemented across sites. In some neighbourhoods, community champions were well-embedded, trusted residents with strong networks who were effectively reaching underserved groups. In other sites, the role was less developed and less involved. This was largely due to:
  - Challenges identifying a community champion with the right local profile or community credibility
  - Champions not having strong networks to draw on
  - Some community champions needing more support to build confidence and skills
  - Natural turnover, as community champions often progressed into employment, resulting in shorter involvement and less continuity.
- This aligns with the experiences of the US JobsPlus pilots, where the community champion role took time to embed. In the US, the role became more stable once supported by paid positions, several connectors per site, structured supervision, and training. Despite early challenges, there is clear potential for the community champion role to enhance outreach and facilitate informal engagement within communities.

Saturation

- Recruitment increased over time, surpassing 1000 participants by December 2025. Recruitment and saturation levels varied across sites, reflecting differences in local context, delivery maturity and catchment size. Seasonal fluctuations persisted, with lower engagement around Christmas and during summer at some sites, consistent with earlier recruitment patterns.
- Hyper-local catchment remained a key strength, helping to reduce stigma and engage those who are often less likely to access mainstream employment support.

- Tight post-code boundaries occasionally created challenges with residents living outside the designated area, with staff expressing disappointment at not being able to support these residents.
- Smaller sites perceived they were close to achieving saturation, which allowed them to target resources and efforts on those not yet engaged.

Financial incentives

- The Into Work Bonus continued to be administered effectively and was viewed as practically useful for covering bills and transport costs in the early months of work. However, it was not a major motivator for engaging with the programme, although it encouraged some people to remain employed. Further, just under one-half of participants who achieved a job outcome qualified for the Into Work Bonus, indicating the design of the financial incentive likely needs review.

Overall, the UK experience of delivering JobsPlus was different to that of the US because the UK model was implemented with most core components in place earlier than in the US. In the US, there was a longer lead-in time for set-up and early implementation, with the first year of delivery being a transitional period for recruiting staff, building partnerships and establishing suitable delivery locations. In the UK, this work took place over a more compressed timeframe, allowing intensive employment support to be delivered more consistently from the outset than in the US. Conversely, the US pilots had more secure and longer-term funding than the initial one-year funding in the UK, and this shaped how implementation unfolded.

How did the programme work overall, in different contexts and for various groups?

The model's holistic, tailored support was central to engaging residents facing multiple, complex barriers to employment. A consistent strength across sites was the quality of participant–caseworker relationships, which supported sustained engagement regardless of context. Its focus on improving confidence and wellbeing provided a foundation for progression into work.

Overall, evidence shows that contexts in which there was a combination of the following factors, alongside high-quality, personalised one-to-one employment support, achieved above-median work outcomes.

- Higher percentage (over 50%) of social renting in the local area;
- A strong community champion presence; and
- Strong and widespread use of the discretionary financial support element of the JobsPlus model.

These factors should inform both ongoing delivery and future scale-up.

The programme also demonstrated adaptability in responding to the needs of different participant groups:

- Young people benefitted from confidence-building support focused on routines, social engagement and developing aspirations. Many had limited prior experience of structured employment services, meaning they were not always aware of the full range of support available. Several sites adapted their delivery to include a stronger focus on education and training pathways, supporting young people to progress toward sustainable employment over a longer timeframe.
- Older adults (60 years upwards) often needed support to retrain, build digital skills and identify roles suited to their physical capabilities.
- Parents and carers valued help to identify work that aligned with school hours and caring responsibilities, alongside discussions about childcare costs and access to flexible or part-time roles.
- People with long-term health conditions appreciated guidance on finding appropriate roles, understanding workplace adjustments, and disclosing their needs to employers. However, gaps in support persisted, as some participants found it difficult to access local NHS mental health services, which often had long wait times in certain areas. In response, some sites supplemented support by engaging private mental health services, counselling, or wellbeing charities.
- People with complex needs, including those experiencing long-term unemployment, substance misuse, homelessness, or significant mental health challenges, often required longer-term, non-linear support. For this group, early progress focused on stability and wellbeing before employment became achievable outcome.

Delivery approaches varied according to the local context. In more ethnically diverse areas, sites needed to spend more time building rapport and providing English-language support, while post-industrial areas faced more constraints, including limited job opportunities, transport barriers, and lower trust in authority. These factors did not reduce effectiveness but highlighted the importance of flexibility and relationship-based delivery.

What outcomes were achieved and for whom?

Although participants faced a wide range of barriers, the pilot achieved job entry and job sustainment outcomes for a diverse cohort. As delivery matured, increasing numbers of participants moved into and remained in work, demonstrating that the model can support both quick job entry and longer-term support.

Employment rates were higher among those who joined the programme earlier. Despite this, early participants were more likely to report health difficulties than those who joined later, suggesting that sustained engagement can help individuals with multiple and complex needs make progress. It is also likely that early joiners were more motivated and had more positive attitudes towards work than later joiners, given the programme's voluntary nature.

Later cohorts also had higher proportions of young people, reflecting targeted outreach driven by YFF funding. As many participants joined after July 2025, and this analysis

covers outcomes to December 2025, further employment outcomes are likely to emerge over time. Continued evaluation will be important to capture longer-term impacts.

Outcomes showed notable differences across participant groups. There was a lower likelihood of job entry for those already in work at programme start, women, people aged over 55, those with parental or caring responsibilities, and individuals with substantial health issues. This underlines the need for more tailored and flexible support for these groups, alongside closer working with employers to develop appropriate opportunities. Participants with higher qualifications were more likely to sustain work, reinforcing the importance of maintaining strong links to training and skills provision to support progression into sustainable employment.

Beyond employment, the programme generated improvements in participants' wellbeing, confidence and motivation. These broader benefits emphasise the value of an approach that tackles both employment and the wider circumstances that influence people's readiness for work.

Overall, the evidence suggests that JobsPlus can make a positive difference for people furthest from the labour market, provided that support remains holistic, sustained, and responsive to individual needs.

What factors contributed to the success of implementing JobsPlus and achieving outcomes?

A number of factors contributed to the successful implementation of JobsPlus and positive outcomes:

Local partnerships

- Partnership quality varied between sites, influenced by the extent of existing relationships with community organisations. In sites with more established partnerships, sites benefitted from smoother referral pathways, and participants were connected to a wider range of support services. In some cases, partnership networks continued to expand over time, further strengthening delivery.
- Persistence and proactive engagement were central to building and maintaining effective relationships with participants and a broad range of stakeholder organisations.

Quality of the support

- JobsPlus was able to provide 'quick wins' such as resolving a practical issue at the first appointment, which boosted motivation upon registration and helped sustain engagement.
- Support was tailored to individual circumstances, compassionate and non-judgmental, which enabled open discussion of employment barriers and built trust. It was also flexible and self-paced, allowing individuals time to work through complex issues if required.

- Support was also holistic, offering access to wide-ranging services in relation to training and skills, health, housing and finances, for example. In some sites, specialist support for health and wellbeing, delivered through partnerships with wellbeing and counselling providers, enabled faster access to mental health support, improving confidence, resilience and job readiness.
- Discretionary funding enabled staff to provide rapid, practical support that alleviated immediate pressures and helped build trust among residents.

Community outreach

- Local community organisations (e.g. food banks, schools) acted as trusted messengers and played a key role in reaching residents who were harder to engage.
- Community hubs functioned as trusted informal spaces. Where hubs were accessible and well-located within estates, drop-ins occurred naturally, and participants valued being able to reach the hub easily on foot or by public transport.
- Where community champions and outreach networks were well established, champions have strengthened local credibility and reached underserved groups. At a small number of sites, community champions also contributed beyond outreach by providing resident-led insights that helped shape priorities and identify emerging needs, feeding into steering groups and governance arrangements. Their involvement strengthened local decision-making.

Employer engagement

- Effective employer engagement, in sites with dedicated employer leads, personalised vacancy matching, screening, and recruitment support, improved access to suitable vacancies and work experience opportunities.

10.2 Would this or similar programmes be scalable in the future?

Evidence to date suggests that the programme has promising potential to scale, both into new areas and within existing areas as participant numbers increase. Successful scaling into new areas would require a focus on strong governance arrangements, sustained investment and flexibility to respond to local labour market conditions and community needs.

Expansion into new areas

- New sites would benefit from clear expectations around the role of steering groups, resident voice and leadership, and strategic partners. Existing sites vary in their strategic steering and community leadership arrangements. Strengthening these arrangements in any new areas would support more consistent oversight, ensure alignment with wider local priorities, and strengthen partnership working.

- There is a risk that partner engagement, particularly from health, youth and community organisations, is limited due to capacity pressures, especially within the NHS, which affects referral pathways into this provision. To address this, partner incentives could be explored, alongside light-touch support such as funded time to attend governance meetings or coordinate referrals.
- The community champion model may need adaptation in different neighbourhoods. Champions can be highly effective where individuals are already well-connected and trusted within their communities. However, not all neighbourhoods will have people with the right profile or connections; an alternative, more flexible interpretation of the role may be needed in such communities.
- Local tailoring of the model will continue to be important, as the programme expands. Sites operate within communities with varied needs, labour market conditions, and referral networks. In places with limited existing local support infrastructure, additional investment would be required to develop and sustain the networks that underpin effective delivery.
- Practical delivery considerations could influence the feasibility of scaling. The availability of physical space for hubs and co-location may restrict adoption in some new locations. The existing place-based, saturation model uses specified postcode areas as the sole eligibility criteria. This can lead to stakeholder organisations and residents feeling frustrated that people who live nearby but outside of the postcode area cannot access JobsPlus support. Adopting more flexible geographic boundaries may be necessary to promote greater acceptability among stakeholders.

Expansion within existing areas as participant numbers increase

- As participant numbers increase, employer engagement will need continued focus. Some areas may require additional employer-facing capacity, such as specialist roles in brokering and screening. This will ensure the model stays demand-driven.
- Effective management of staffing capacity and caseloads is essential for maintaining the quality of employment support at scale. The personalised support approach requires considerable resources, and sites have raised concerns about workload pressures as caseloads grow. Offering guidelines on caseload ratios, establishing regular supervision and gradually increasing caseloads through phased scaling could help manage this pressure. Securing long-term funding would further support staff retention and reduce risks associated with staff turnover.
- Expanding within existing areas will depend on investing in essential infrastructure and securing steady funding. This includes increasing team capacity by recruiting additional staff, developing employer-engagement roles and systems, maintaining regular collaboration with JCP, and ensuring access to ongoing technical support. Providing multi-year funding would facilitate strategic planning, build trust with partners, and help retain skilled staff.
- Finally, there are risks associated with scaling the programme, though these appear manageable with the right planning and resourcing. Increased staff turnover and poor quality support may arise if workloads increase faster than teams can be expanded or supported, leading to burnout. Variations in local labour markets may make it harder to

achieve consistent results across areas. These risks can be mitigated through phased scaling, ongoing technical assistance to support implementation, partnership guidance, and specialist support for employer engagement, use of labour market information to inform delivery, more flexible geographical boundaries and an adaptable champion model.

Final reflections and recommendations

Taken together, the findings indicate that JobsPlus provides a relevant, place-based approach for engaging residents who are underserved by mainstream provision. The model is highly relevant to policy priorities aimed at reducing economic inactivity and creating a more inclusive labour market.

The programme is still developing but has shown promising early signs of effectiveness. While the impact evaluation did not detect early impacts on employment or benefits receipt within the short follow-up window, the MI data indicate positive employment outcomes among participants. Qualitative evidence also highlights growing confidence, engagement, and readiness for work. Future impact evaluations should prioritise longer-term tracking to assess whether these early signs translate into sustained improvements in employment, earnings, and progression.

Recommendations for ongoing delivery

To support the model's ongoing development and effectiveness, several recommendations are proposed:

- Allow sufficient time for the model to embed and mature, recognising that trust-based community approaches strengthen as relationships, partnerships and local presence mature.
- Adapt the community champion role to local conditions. Keep community champions where strong local networks exist and explore alternative methods where they do not, such as partnerships with trusted community organisations. The availability of community champions is not always within a site’s control, as individuals may take up employment or leave the role for personal reasons. Sites should therefore avoid relying on just one or two community champions by planning for turnover, maintaining ongoing recruitment, and, where appropriate, treating the role as a transitional stepping stone for residents.
- Enhance opportunities for resident voice, ensuring residents can influence design and delivery while safeguarding confidentiality and data protection. This will improve trust and the programme's relevance to residents.
- Maintain strong employer engagement, including access to specialist brokering or screening capacity.
- Strengthen tailored support for groups with lower job entry rates (older participants, carers, women and those with significant health limitations) by developing specialist pathways. Work with employers to create more inclusive opportunities, such as flexible and adjusted roles. This may include job carving, which involves identifying specific

tasks within existing roles and reorganising them into a new, tailored position that aligns with a person's strengths and needs. These approaches enable employers to better accommodate caring responsibilities or health conditions.

- Sustain the programme's hyperlocal delivery model and ensure it remains visible, easily accessible, especially for those with health conditions or disabilities, and embedded in existing community relationships.
- Review financial incentives to ensure they incentivise the maximum number of people to enter work and remain in work, while also encouraging people to maximise their earnings and reduce reliance on out-of-work benefits. This requires balancing the size, structure, and eligibility criteria of the incentive, and considering it in the wider context of the tax and benefit system. The review should consider how the incentive supports sustained employment by maintaining clear financial gains as hours and earnings increase. It should also consider how the incentive can promote progression in work, so that individuals are better off when they increase their hours or earnings in ways that align with the wider tax and benefit system.
- Improve access to skills and training by making pathways clearer and strengthening links with providers, including routes into apprenticeships, for participants with lower qualifications.

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