

## LUDLOW TOWN COUNCIL

### A G E N D A A D D E N D U M

#### REPRESENTATIONAL COMMITTEE

To: All Members of the Council, Unitary Councillors; Press

**Contact: Gina Wilding, Town Clerk**  
**Ludlow Town Council, The Guildhall**  
**Mill Street, Ludlow, SY8 1AZ**  
01584 871970

[townclerk@ludlow.gov.uk](mailto:townclerk@ludlow.gov.uk)

**Dispatch date: Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> August 2025**

You are summoned to attend a meeting of  
Representational Committee at  
The Guildhall, Mill Street, Ludlow SY8 1RZ  
on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> August 2025 at 7pm

*Gina Wilding*

Gina Wilding  
Town Clerk

#### Key Agenda Items:

- Addendum item

**Public Open Session (15 minutes in total)** – Members of the public are invited to make representations to the Committee on any matters relating to the work of the Committee. The maximum time allotted per person is three minutes.

**19. GET MARCHES WORKING PLAN**

**19**

To consider and comment on the proposed plan.

**Membership**

Councillors Addis, Cowell, Gill, Ginger, Harris (Chair), Hepworth, Lyle, Owen, Parry, Scott Bell (Vice-Chair), and Tapley.

The next meeting of members of the Representational Committee  
will be held on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> September 2025

The document outlines the "Get Marches Working Plan," detailing the governance, stakeholder engagement, and strategic actions for enhancing employment opportunities in the Herefordshire, Shropshire, and Telford & Wrekin areas.

### **Get Marches Working Plan Overview**

The Get Marches Working Plan aims to enhance employment opportunities and support local businesses across Herefordshire, Shropshire, and Telford & Wrekin.

### **Contact Information and Governance Structure**

This section outlines the key contacts and governance framework for the Get Marches Working Plan.

- Brand Name: Get Marches Working Plan.

1

- Geography: Covers Herefordshire, Shropshire, and Telford & Wrekin.

2

- Accountable Body: Shropshire Council is responsible for governance.

3

- Point of Contact: Amy Farley, UKSPF Technical Officer at Shropshire Council.

4

### **Partnership Group and Their Roles**

The partnership group consists of various committees responsible for strategic oversight and operational management.

- Marches Joint Committee: Comprises executive directors and cabinet members from the three local authorities, meeting quarterly.
- Operations Board: Includes representatives from local authorities, employers, and community sectors, meeting monthly during development and annually for reviews.
- Responsibilities: Oversee strategic direction, governance, financial management, risk management, performance monitoring, and compliance.

### **Engagement Activities Conducted**

A variety of engagement activities have been undertaken to gather feedback and align local priorities with national goals.

5

- Stakeholder Consultations: Regular meetings with employers, training providers, and community organizations to identify skills gaps.

6

- Business Boards: Direct engagement with employers to understand recruitment barriers.

7

- Community Forums: Public forums and workshops to engage underrepresented groups.

8

- Online Surveys: Digital platforms used to gather wider audience feedback.

9

### **Wider Stakeholder Engagement Strategy**

The lead authority engages a broad range of internal and external stakeholders to inform the local plans.

10

- External Stakeholders: Includes voluntary and community sector organizations, Skills Boards, and post-16 education providers.
- Internal Stakeholders: Collaboration with various council departments such as Public Health, Economic Development, and Youth Employment services.

11

### **Existing Plans and Strategies Overview**

Several existing plans and strategies inform the development of the local plan, focusing on economic growth and social mobility.

- Herefordshire Council Corporate Plan: Aims to tackle inequality and improve access to skills development.

12

- Economic Development Strategy: Focuses on creating a zero-carbon, inclusive economy by 2050.

13

- Shropshire Employment & Skills Strategy: Prioritizes support for economically inactive individuals and promotes inclusive growth.

14

### **Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) Details**

The LSIP aims to align local skills provision with employer needs to enhance economic growth.

15

- Purpose: Create a responsive, employer-led approach to post-16 education and training.

16

- Funding: £2.5 million allocated for new specialist training centers.
- Actions: Over 30 course updates and modular training pathways introduced to meet job market demands.

17

## Connect to Work Initiative

Connect to Work is a supported employment initiative aimed at helping individuals with barriers to employment.

18

- Focus: Assists disabled individuals and those with long-term health conditions.

19

- Support Duration: Up to 12 months of tailored support through dedicated Employment Specialists.

20

- Approach: Utilizes evidence-based models like Individual Placement & Support (IPS) for effective job matching and coaching.

20

## Economic Inactivity in The Marches

Economic inactivity varies significantly across the Marches area, with notable concentrations in rural regions and specific demographic groups.

21

- Shropshire, Herefordshire, and Telford & Wrekin show high rates of economic inactivity, particularly among retirees, carers, and those long-term sick or disabled.

22

- Total economically inactive individuals: 236,594 (40.9% of the population).
- Retired individuals account for 26.6% of the economically inactive population.

23

- Areas of high deprivation exist alongside more affluent regions, affecting employment opportunities.

## Skills and Employment Issues

The skills profile of the unemployed and inactive population is lower than that of the employed workforce, necessitating targeted upskilling initiatives.

24

- Upskilling is a priority to enhance employability among the inactive population.

24

- Encouraging retired individuals to return to work could reintegrate valuable skills into the workforce.

25

- Employment pathways should be tailored to leverage existing experience or facilitate transitions to new roles.

26

### **Health Issues Impacting Employment**

Health status significantly influences employment prospects, with many individuals in poor health still engaged in work.

27

- Access to health services is limited in rural areas, complicating employability for those with health issues.

28

- Strategies are needed to assist individuals with declining health in seeking and maintaining employment.

29

- A quarter of those with bad health are still employed, indicating potential for improved support.

27

### **Specific Labour Market Challenges for Cohorts**

Various demographic groups face distinct challenges in accessing education, employment, and training opportunities.

30

- NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) rates are concerning, with 4.3% in Herefordshire and 3.1% in Telford & Wrekin.

31

- Care leavers experience barriers due to limited work experience and financial insecurity.

32

- Individuals with SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) face misconceptions and limited job opportunities.

33

### **Priority Actions for Labour Market Improvement**

A series of strategic actions are proposed to address the identified labour market challenges over the next 12-24 months.

- Develop credible projects for commissioning and implementation through the GBW Operations Board.

34

- Engage partners to ensure the strategy is inclusive and achievable.

35

- Implement targeted actions for specific cohorts, such as NEETs and SEND individuals, to improve employability and access to training.

### **Resource and Support Needs for GBW Plan**

Additional resources and support are necessary to effectively implement the local GBW plan.

36

- Access to timely labour market data is essential for informed decision-making.

37

- Policy alignment with national priorities will enhance the plan's impact.

38

- Capacity building for local authorities and delivery partners is crucial for successful implementation.

39

### **Timeline and Collaboration for GBW Plan Development**

A structured timeline and collaborative approach are in place for the development and publication of the GBW plan by September 2025.

40

- All three local authorities are engaged in the GBW plan development, ensuring broad representation and input.

41

- The plan will undergo formal approval processes through local authority channels and stakeholder engagement.



genecon

# Get Marches Working Plan

Initial Proposal (Final)

June 2025

# Contents

1.	Contact Information	3
1.1	Individual Plan Brand Name	3
1.2	Geography Covered by the Plan	3
1.3	Accountable Body	3
1.4	Specific Point of Contact for the Plan	3
2.	Outline of Initial Plan	3
2.1	Please detail the organisations who will form the partnership group to develop and provide the governance of your local plan.	3
2.2	Please advise of any engagement activity which has been carried out, to date, regarding your local plan.	5
2.3	In addition to the partnership group, which wider stakeholders, both internal and external, will the lead authority engage with in the development of local plans?	7
2.4	Please briefly describe any existing plans and strategies you have in place, or are developing, which could be used to inform the local plan.	8
2.5	Please provide a brief summary of the known key labour market challenges in your area.	18
2.6	Please provide a brief summary of the cohorts in your area which are known to face specific labour market challenges.	24
2.7	Please provide indicative priority actions for the next 12-24 months.	33
2.8	In addition to financial support, what other resource/support would you need to complete your local GBW plan?	35

- 2.9 Please set out your expected timelines, key activity and milestones for the development of your local GBW plan and publication by September 2025. 36
- 2.10 Please confirm the extent to which content of this template has been discussed and/or agreed upon by all relevant upper-tier and unitary local authorities within the delivery area. 36

---

# 1. Contact Information

## 1.1 Individual Plan Brand Name

Get Marches Working Plan.

## 1.2 Geography Covered by the Plan

The Plan area covers the local authority areas of Herefordshire, Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin.

This GBW area is coterminous with the former Marches LEP area and the extant Connect to Work delivery area.

## 1.3 Accountable Body

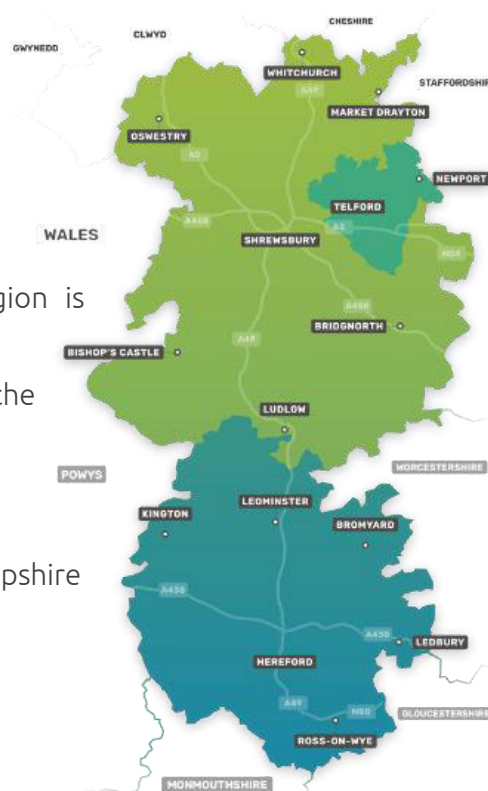
The designated Accountable Body for GBW in this region is Shropshire Council.

Shropshire Council also holds this responsibility for the Connect to Work Delivery Plan.

## 1.4 Specific Point of Contact for the Plan

Amy Farley, UKSPF Technical Officer – People & Skills (Shropshire Council).

[amy.farley@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:amy.farley@shropshire.gov.uk)



# 2. Outline of Initial Plan

## 2.1 Please detail the organisations who will form the partnership group to develop and provide the governance of your local plan.

Marches Joint Committee

[Committee details - Marches Joint Committee — Shropshire Council](#)

Members:

- Executive Directors - Herefordshire, Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin.
- Cabinet member/Leader - Herefordshire, Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin.

Frequency of meetings: Quarterly

Role:

1. **Strategic Oversight:** The board sets the overall direction and strategy for the Get Britain Working Plan, ensuring it aligns with the organisation's mission and goals.

- 
2. **Governance:** They establish policies and procedures to ensure the Plan operates effectively and ethically, maintaining transparency and accountability.
  3. **Financial Management:** The board oversees the budget, approves funding allocations, and ensures financial resources are used efficiently and responsibly.
  4. **Risk Management:** They identify potential risks and develop strategies to mitigate them, ensuring the Plan's sustainability and resilience.
  5. **Performance Monitoring:** The board regularly reviews the Plan actions performance, assessing whether they meet their objectives and making adjustments as needed.
  6. **Compliance:** Ensuring the Plan adheres to all relevant laws, regulations, and ethical standards is a critical role of the board.

#### **Responsibilities:**

- Approve strategic plans and budgets as per the Get Britain Working Plan.
- Monitor Plan performance and outcomes against local strategies and growth plans.
- Ensure compliance with legal and ethical standards.
- Engage in fundraising and resource development.

#### **Operations Board**

##### **Members:**

- Project Lead – Accountable Body (Shropshire County Council).
- Local Authority Skills representatives.
- Employer representee.
- Voluntary Community Sector.
- Job Centre Plus.
- Integrated Care Board.
- Education (FE and HE).

**Frequency of meetings:** Monthly in development stages – Annually in review and monitoring stages.

**Purpose:** The Get Britain Working Operations Group is established to develop, monitor, and review the Get Britain Working Plan for Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin, and Herefordshire. The group aims to develop a plan that enhances employment opportunities, supports local businesses, and ensures a coordinated approach to workforce development.

##### **Role:**

**Chairperson:** To lead meetings and ensure effective communication among members.

**Facilitator:** To set agendas, record minutes, manage documentation, and coordinate meeting logistics.

---

Members: To actively participate in meetings, contribute to discussions, and support the implementation of the Get Britain Working plan.

**Objectives:**

- Alongside consultants Genecon, to develop a comprehensive Get Britain Working Plan tailored to the needs of Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin, and Herefordshire.
- Monitor the implementation of the plan and ensure it aligns with local and national employment strategies.
- Review and update the plan regularly to reflect changing economic conditions and workforce needs.
- Foster collaboration among local authorities, Job Centre Plus, Integrated Care Boards (ICB), Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS), and employer representatives.
- Identify and address barriers to employment and skills development in the region.
- Promote inclusive employment practices and support disadvantaged groups in accessing job opportunities.

**Decision Making:** Approve key plan execution decisions, including major adjustments, budget revisions, and auditing. Make management decisions by consensus when required.

**Quality Assurance:** Ensure the quality of the plans development and monitoring by reviewing progress. Take corrective actions as needed to achieve the desired results.

## **2.2 Please advise of any engagement activity which has been carried out, to date, regarding your local plan.**

To date, a range of engagement activities have been undertaken to support the development and implementation of our local plan under the Get Britain Working strategy. These activities have focused on ensuring inclusive participation, gathering meaningful feedback, and aligning local priorities with national employment goals.

Key engagement efforts include:

- **Stakeholder Consultations/Get Britain Working Operations Board:** We have held regular meetings with local employers, training providers, Jobcentre Plus representatives, and community organisations along with local Integrated Care Boards to identify skills gaps and employment barriers specific to our area.
- All Local Authority **Skills Groups** are represented on the Get Britain Working Board, ensuring a two-way flow of communication. This structure enables each group to contribute to, and be informed by, the development of the plan.
- **Business Boards:** To engage with employers directly to gain insight into the barriers to recruitment, HR challenges and opportunities.
- **Careers Enterprise Company:** Their engagement ensures our local plan is aligned with national best practices in careers education and employer engagement. The CEC's expertise in connecting schools, colleges, and employers is invaluable in helping us design effective pathways for young people into the workforce. By collaborating with the CEC, we can better

---

understand local labour market needs, enhance the quality of careers guidance, and strengthen our approach to skills development.

- **Community Forums and Workshops:** A series of public forums and targeted workshops are in the process of being organised to engage residents, particularly those from underrepresented groups, in shaping local employment support services. This will be supported via each Public Health department in each Local Authority.
- **Youth Engagement Initiatives:** Collaboration with schools, colleges, and youth organisations has helped us to understand the aspirations and challenges faced by young people entering the workforce. This has informed our approach to apprenticeships and vocational training. This has been done through the CEC, Skills Groups, Education and employer group.
- **Online Surveys and Feedback Tools:** Digital platforms are being used to gather input from a wider audience, enabling us to reach individuals who may not attend in-person events. This feedback has been instrumental in refining our local plan priorities.
- **Education and Employer Groups:** Provide a medium through which we can ensure the input of real-world insights from both the education sector and the business community. This collaboration enables us to bridge the gap between education and employment by aligning curriculum development with current and future labour market needs. Engaging with this group helps us identify opportunities for work-based learning, apprenticeships, and employer-led training initiatives, ensuring that young people and adults are equipped with the skills and experiences needed to thrive in the local economy. Their input is vital in shaping a responsive and inclusive employment strategy.

---

### **2.3 In addition to the partnership group, which wider stakeholders, both internal and external, will the lead authority engage with in the development of local plans?**

In developing our local plans, the lead authority is committed to engaging a broad range of stakeholders to ensure the strategy is inclusive, evidence-based, and reflective of local needs.

Externally, we have engaged with the voluntary and community sector through the VCS representative bodies operating in each of the three constituent Marches authorities: the Shropshire Voluntary and Community Sector Assembly, Telford & Wrekin Council for Voluntary Service and the Herefordshire Voluntary Organisations Support Service, recognising the vital role these organisations play in supporting individuals furthest from the labour market.

We are also undertaking ongoing consultation with the respective Skills Boards and the Herefordshire Business Board to ensure alignment with local economic priorities and employer needs. These consultations are active and will continue to evolve throughout the development and review phases of the plan. Post 16 education & training providers, UKSPF delivery partners and community health providers are also key participants in this consultation activity.

Internally, we are working closely with key departments and teams across the three councils, including Public Health, Economic Development, Care Leavers Services, the Youth Employment services (e.g. Youth Employment Hub – Herefordshire, Youth Support Trust – Shropshire and SYA Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin), Community Wellbeing, and Talk Community Teams (Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin). This cross-departmental collaboration ensures that our approach is holistic, addressing the wider determinants of employment and supporting residents through an integrated service approach.



## 2.4 Please briefly describe any existing plans and strategies you have in place, or are developing, which could be used to inform the local plan.

	Policy Document	Summary
Herefordshire Council		
Herefordshire Council Corporate Plan 2024-28		<p>PEOPLE Theme: Herefordshire seeks to enable residents to realise their potential, to be healthy and to be part of great communities who support each other. We want all children to have the best start in life.</p> <p>Relevant objectives under this theme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support all residents to live healthy lives within their communities.</li> <li>• Tackle inequality and improve social mobility through timely intervention and prevention activities which allow residents to live independent and fulfilling lives.</li> </ul> <p>GROWTH Theme: Herefordshire will create the conditions to deliver sustainable growth across the county; attracting inward investment, building business confidence, creating jobs, enabling housing development along with providing the right infrastructure.</p> <p>Relevant objectives under this theme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support residents to access skills development, training and employment opportunities.</li> </ul>
Economic Development Strategy for Herefordshire		<p>The Herefordshire Economic Development Strategy (the Big Economic Plan) outlines a long-term vision for a vibrant, zero-carbon, inclusive economy by 2050. It aims to build a high-value, skilled and resilient economy by addressing deep-rooted challenges such as low productivity, below-average wages, and limited job progression. Central to this is a focus on reducing economic inactivity and improving access to meaningful work for all residents, including those currently disengaged from the labour market.</p> <p>To tackle economic inactivity, the strategy promotes inclusive growth through improved access to education, upskilling, and retraining. It supports lifelong learning opportunities and better alignment between local skills provision and employer demand—particularly via partnerships with NMITE and local colleges. There is a specific focus on re-engaging older workers, individuals with health conditions, and those with limited qualifications by developing flexible training pathways, digital inclusion programmes, and community-based outreach.</p>

	<p>The plan also invests in critical infrastructure—transport, digital connectivity, affordable housing, and local services—to reduce barriers to work, especially in rural areas.</p> <p>Regeneration projects in Hereford and market towns are designed not only to attract investment but to create accessible job opportunities close to where people live.</p> <p>Additional support for enterprise and social economy initiatives offers alternative routes into work, including for those facing multiple disadvantages.</p>
SEND Strategy	<p>Herefordshire’s SEND Strategy (2023–2026) sets out a collaborative vision to ensure children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are happy, healthy, included, and prepared for adulthood. Developed through extensive co-production with families, young people, and professionals, the strategy focuses on timely identification, responsive support, and empowering individuals to succeed in education, employment, and life.</p> <p>Inclusive employment is a central priority, particularly in supporting young people through transitions to adulthood. The Youth Employment Hub, launched in 2024, offers tailored support to 16–24-year-olds with SEND who are not in education, employment, or training. Co-funded by DWP and linked to Herefordshire’s SENDIASS, the hub helps young people develop skills, access opportunities, and gain meaningful work experience. The strategy also promotes life readiness by strengthening post-16 pathways and ensuring personalised support that bridges education and the workplace.</p> <p>Investments in workforce development and mental health further support inclusive employment goals. Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSAs) are being trained across schools to ensure emotional resilience—a key factor in sustained employment. Inclusion services equip staff with tools to support diverse needs, while young people directly shape services through participation networks like “Herefordshire Helpers.”</p>
Health & Wellbeing Strategy	<p>Herefordshire’s Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2023–2033) is a decade-long, partnership-driven plan focused on improving the health and wellbeing of all residents by addressing social determinants like employment, housing, and environment. Its two core priorities are ensuring a best start in life for children and promoting good mental wellbeing throughout life, supported by goals including helping people live and age well, improving access to services, and ensuring good work for everyone.</p>
Shropshire Council	

The Shropshire Plan 2022-2025	<p>Healthy People Objective:</p> <p>Shropshire aims to tackle inequalities, including rural inequalities, and poverty in all its forms, providing early support and interventions that reduce risk and enable children, young people, adults and families to achieve their full potential and enjoy life.</p> <p>Healthy Economy Objective:</p> <p>Shropshire commits to provide access to lifelong learning, supporting people and our communities to prosper, and through providing the right skills developing greater productivity and improved wages.</p>
Shropshire Employment & Skills Strategy	<p>The Shropshire Employment &amp; Skills Strategy prioritises support for economically inactive individuals—those out of work and not actively seeking employment due to barriers such as ill health, caring duties, or low confidence. The strategy promotes inclusive growth by helping these residents gain skills, build confidence, and re-enter the workforce.</p> <p>Support is tailored and person-centred, offering one-to-one coaching, life-skills development, and practical help with CVs, applications, and interviews. Many programmes are delivered in community settings, increasing accessibility and engagement, particularly for long-term inactive individuals.</p> <p>Funded largely through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), key initiatives include Multiply (improving adult numeracy), digital literacy, and sector-specific training aligned to local job markets. These programmes target readiness for work in fields like care, logistics, and hospitality.</p> <p>The strategy is delivered through partnerships with voluntary groups, employers, and health providers, ensuring coordinated support and real employment pathways. Employers are encouraged to offer flexible opportunities, inclusive recruitment, and in some cases, guaranteed interviews.</p> <p>To date, over 50 people have moved into sustained employment, with more than 430 individuals participating in readiness programmes and 50 achieving formal qualifications. Priority groups include older workers, rural residents, and those with health conditions or caring responsibilities.</p>
Youth Strategy	<p>The Shropshire Youth Strategy is a coordinated plan to support young people aged 11–25 across the county, focusing on inclusion, wellbeing, and opportunity. Central to the strategy is a strong commitment to reducing inequalities, particularly for vulnerable groups such as those with SEND, in</p>

	<p>care, facing mental health challenges, or at risk of becoming NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training).</p> <p>The strategy promotes a partnership-led approach, bringing together the council, schools, youth organisations, and health services to provide accessible, high-quality youth provision. It balances universal services like open-access youth clubs with targeted, personalised support—such as mentoring and outreach—to ensure those facing the greatest barriers receive the help they need.</p> <p>Young people’s voices are integral to shaping services through consultations and the Shropshire Youth Forum, ensuring that interventions are relevant and responsive. The strategy also prioritises early intervention and prevention to improve mental health, build resilience, and support smooth transitions into education, training, or employment.</p> <p>By focusing on collaboration, youth participation, and tailored support, the Shropshire Youth Strategy aims to create an equitable environment where all young people can thrive, breaking down systemic barriers and closing opportunity gaps across the county.</p>
Shropshire Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy	<p>The Shropshire Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2022–2027) sets out a whole-system approach to improving population health through prevention, equity, and early intervention. With a vision for a healthier and fairer Shropshire, the strategy prioritises place-based, person-centred care and stronger cross-sector partnerships to address root causes of poor health and wellbeing.</p> <p>Four main priorities guide delivery: joined-up workforce and system collaboration; creating healthy environments that promote physical activity and reduce obesity; supporting children and young people through trauma-informed early help; and improving mental health through stigma reduction, prevention, and community support. These are underpinned by a commitment to reducing health inequalities across income, rural access, disability, and other social factors.</p> <p>Though not focused specifically on employment, the strategy recognises its role as a social determinant of health. Inclusive employment is promoted indirectly through social prescribing, early years support, and healthy weight programmes targeted at deprived communities—each designed to build resilience, reduce barriers, and support wider participation in society. Workforce development and access to services are also shaped by equity goals, including for working-age adults with complex needs.</p> <p>By aligning with strategies on weight management, suicide prevention, domestic abuse, and cost-of-living, Shropshire’s Health and Wellbeing Strategy promotes a connected</p>

	ecosystem where improving health outcomes and enabling participation—including in the workforce—go hand in hand.
SEND Strategy	<p>The Shropshire SEND Strategy prioritises reducing economic inactivity among children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) by creating a number of effective, personalised pathways into employment and independence. Central to this goal are supported employment services that provide tailored job coaching and ongoing workplace support, helping individuals identify career goals and maintain employment.</p> <p>The strategy promotes vocational training opportunities such as apprenticeships, traineeships, and supported internships. Notably, partnerships with organizations like DFN Project SEARCH and local institutions such as RAF Cosford offer valuable real-world work experience designed to build skills and confidence.</p> <p>Through continuous monitoring and evaluation, the strategy adapts and improves programmes to meet individual needs better, aiming to empower young people with SEND to achieve social and economic independence and a fulfilling working life.</p>
<b>Telford &amp; Wrekin</b>	
Telford Council Plan 2022-2026	<p>Priority - Every child, young person and adult lives well in their community:</p> <p>Key outcome - Everyone, whatever their background, receives the quality education and training they need to secure and maintain employment in an ever-changing job market.</p> <p>Priority - Everyone benefits from a thriving economy:</p> <p>Key outcome - All age unemployment is addressed by connecting residents to jobs, support and training.</p>
Invest Telford – Our Vision for Fair and Inclusive Economic Growth	<p>The Telford &amp; Wrekin Economic Development Strategy aims to deliver fair, inclusive, and sustainable growth by building a high-skilled, resilient economy. It prioritises ensuring that all residents, including the economically inactive, benefit from new opportunities through targeted support and improved access to employment.</p> <p>Significant infrastructure investment—such as the Telford Land Deal and Growth Fund—has created new employment space, supported over 240 jobs in 2023–24, and enabled projects like The Quad and Station Quarter campus. These developments are designed to reduce geographic and social</p>

	<p>exclusion through better transport, digital connectivity, and workspace availability.</p> <p>Business growth is supported through Thrive Telford, which has awarded over £1 million in grants, supported 170 start-ups, and funded energy assessments and skills development—encouraging entrepreneurship among underrepresented groups.</p> <p>Strategic coordination is led by a multi-agency partnership, aligning actions across economic growth, skills, innovation, and inclusion. The strategy is rooted in place-based regeneration to ensure that prosperity reaches all communities, particularly those facing structural barriers to employment.</p>
Skills Strategy	<p>The Telford &amp; Wrekin Skills Strategy prioritises reducing economic inactivity by providing flexible, locally tailored training for those furthest from the labour market, including people with low qualifications, disabilities, or caring responsibilities. Partners like Telford College and Harper Adams deliver modular courses and upskilling opportunities designed to meet individual needs.</p> <p>The strategy supports outreach through inclusive careers events and community partnerships, offering advice, digital skills training, and confidence-building. The Upskilling Grant Fund helps small businesses recruit and train economically inactive residents, linking jobseekers directly with employers.</p> <p>Investment in accessible learning hubs, such as the Station Quarter Digital Skills Hub, provides welcoming environments and wraparound support to help adults transition into employment. Together, these actions aim to equip economically inactive individuals with skills and pathways into sustainable work.</p>
SEND & Alternative Provision Strategy	<p>Telford &amp; Wrekin’s SEND &amp; Alternative Provision Strategy (2023–2028) sets out a unified, inclusive approach to supporting children and young people aged 0–25 with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), as well as those in alternative provision. The strategy was co-produced with families, young people, professionals, and health partners, guided by the borough’s <i>Working Together Charter</i>, which promotes equal partnership, respect for lived experience, and transparent communication.</p> <p>A core aim is preparing young people for adulthood through tailored, inclusive employment pathways. This includes strengthening the connection between education, skills development, and real-world work opportunities. The strategy supports initiatives that embed careers guidance, workplace experiences, and supported internships into SEND planning—ensuring young people gain the confidence, skills,</p>

	<p>and access they need for sustainable employment. Local programmes, such as “Challenges at Home” for neurodivergent children and targeted speech and language support, also play a role in building the foundational communication and emotional regulation skills essential for work readiness.</p> <p>Recognising ongoing challenges in areas like autism, ADHD, and speech and language diagnosis, the council implemented an Accelerated Progress Plan to expand workforce capacity, speed up assessments, and improve education, health, and care plan (EHCP) quality. These system-wide improvements are designed to reduce barriers that can hinder future participation in employment.</p> <p>Telford &amp; Wrekin’s inclusive approach has been nationally recognised for best practice, with its co-production model and early help initiatives lauded by NHS England. By embedding employment preparation within a broader, supportive SEND framework, the borough aims to ensure every young person has the opportunity to transition successfully into work and adult life—fully included, empowered, and equipped to contribute to their communities.</p>
Health & Wellbeing Strategy	<p>Telford &amp; Wrekin’s Health &amp; Wellbeing Strategy (2023–2028) outlines a whole-population approach to improving health, reducing inequalities, and building resilient communities. Rooted in prevention and person-centred care, the strategy focuses on place-based delivery, stronger system partnerships, and empowering residents to take control of their health and wellbeing.</p> <p>A central feature is the development of Community Live Well Hubs, which provide one-stop access to health advice, social prescribing, mental health support, and social care. These hubs are instrumental in promoting economic inclusion, helping residents—especially those in deprived communities—navigate barriers to work, training, and financial security through wraparound wellbeing services.</p> <p>Mental health is a key priority, with the Midlands Engine Mental Health &amp; Productivity Pilot embedding support in both GP practices and workplaces. This integration helps individuals manage mental health challenges early, improving job retention, employability, and workforce participation. Similarly, digital inclusion measures—such as free Wi-Fi, device loans, and digital literacy training—enhance access to online services, education, and employment, particularly for older adults and low-income groups.</p> <p>The strategy’s Healthy Lifestyles Service and behavioural-change programmes address long-term health conditions that can limit employment opportunities, with targeted outreach in communities most affected by poverty and exclusion.</p>

	<p>Additionally, the Ageing Well programme supports older adults to stay active, engaged, and economically connected through volunteering, learning, or re-employment opportunities.</p> <p>Overall, Telford’s strategy embeds economic inclusion by tackling the social and structural barriers—poor mental health, digital exclusion, long-term health conditions—that often limit access to meaningful employment. Through community infrastructure and integrated care, the strategy works to ensure all residents have the opportunity to live well and contribute economically, regardless of age, background, or health status.</p>
<b>Herefordshire &amp; Worcestershire ICB</b>	
WorkWell Pilot	<p>The WorkWell Programme is a joint pilot initiative by the Department for Work and Pensions and the Department of Health and Social Care, delivered through the Herefordshire &amp; Worcestershire Integrated Care System. Launched in autumn 2024, it supports individuals aged 16+ who are either in work but at risk of falling out due to health issues or who have been recently out of work (up to six months) because of illness or disability.</p> <p>WorkWell offers early, tailored support through work and health assessments led by specialist coaches. Participants receive personalised plans, low-intensity coaching (via phone or face-to-face), and referrals to a broad range of services including physiotherapy, mental health counselling, digital skills training, financial advice, and return-to-work planning. The aim is to intervene early to prevent long-term unemployment and help individuals stay in or re-enter work.</p> <p>The programme also engages employers, offering guidance on workplace health conversations, reasonable adjustments, and supporting staff to return after illness. It is delivered locally through Primary Care Networks and allows access via GPs, employers, or self-referral. Funded as part of a £64 million national pilot, WorkWell is being evaluated for wider rollout and is expected to support thousands across the two counties.</p>
<b>Marches Region</b>	
Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP)	<p>The Marches Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) is a key initiative led by the Chamber of Commerce to ensure that the local skills system is directly shaped by employer needs. Its core purpose is to create a more responsive, agile, and employer-led approach to post-16 education and training—closing persistent skills gaps, improving productivity, and supporting the county’s economic growth.</p>



	<p>The LSIP sets out to address the misalignment between what local employers need and what training providers currently offer. It does this through deep engagement with hundreds of employers, sector bodies, colleges, and training providers. Employers have highlighted pressing needs for practical, job-ready skills—particularly in areas such as communication, basic IT, factory-based roles, digital systems, and technical competencies in sectors like construction, engineering, and health &amp; social care.</p> <p>To act on these findings, the LSIP has driven a series of targeted, employer-informed actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• £2.5 million in funding from the Local Skills Improvement Fund (LSIF) is supporting the creation of 14 new specialist training centres across the region, equipping facilities with state-of-the-art industry technology—including robotic welding, programmable logic controllers (PLCs), and CNC machinery.</li> <li>• Over 30 course and curriculum updates have been introduced to ensure learning outcomes meet real-world job roles and industry standards, particularly in green technologies, advanced manufacturing, and digital skills.</li> <li>• Training providers, through the Marches Education Partnership, are rolling out modular short courses, micro-credentials, and flexible learning pathways to support upskilling for both new entrants and the existing workforce.</li> </ul> <p>The LSIP also promotes closer collaboration between employers and providers, encouraging co-designed training programmes, on-site learning, and SME-focused workforce development.</p> <p>The plan is not static. It is an evolving framework that continues to collect and act on employer feedback. Ongoing engagement aims to refine training provision, embed soft and digital skills across sectors, and enable faster, demand-driven course development.</p> <p>Though the LSIP is not a direct employment intervention for inactive people, it underpins and enables those interventions. By designing employer-aligned, modular training capacity, the plan ensures supply-side readiness for UKSPF and council-led programmes targeting the hardest-to-reach populations.</p>
Connect to Work	<p>Connect to Work is a new voluntary supported employment initiative under the UK Government’s Get Britain Working strategy, launched late 2024 and active in England and Wales</p>

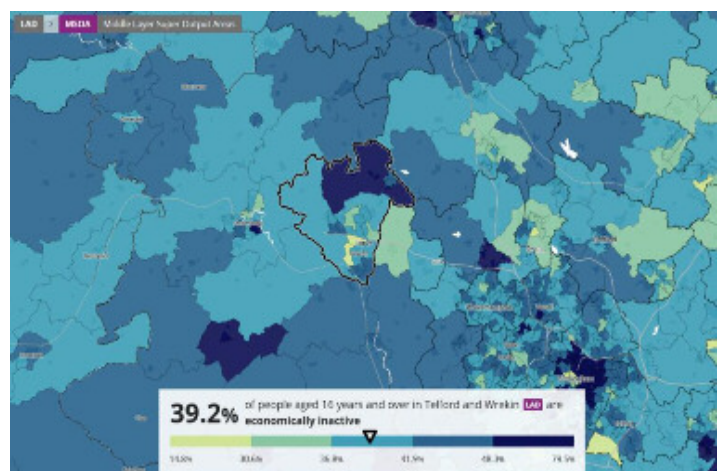
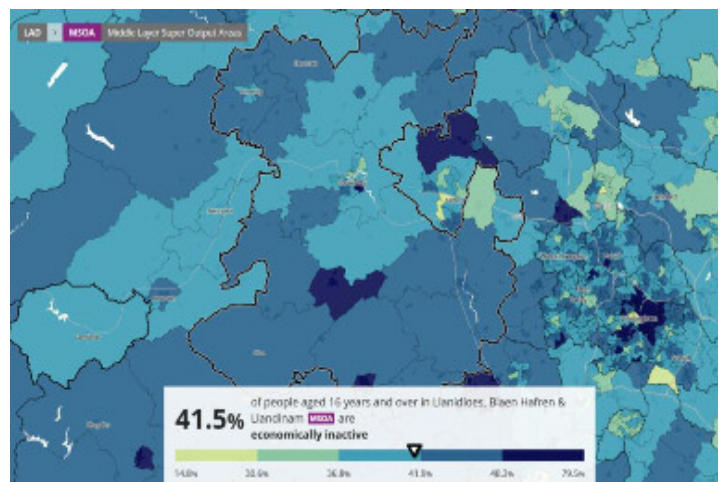
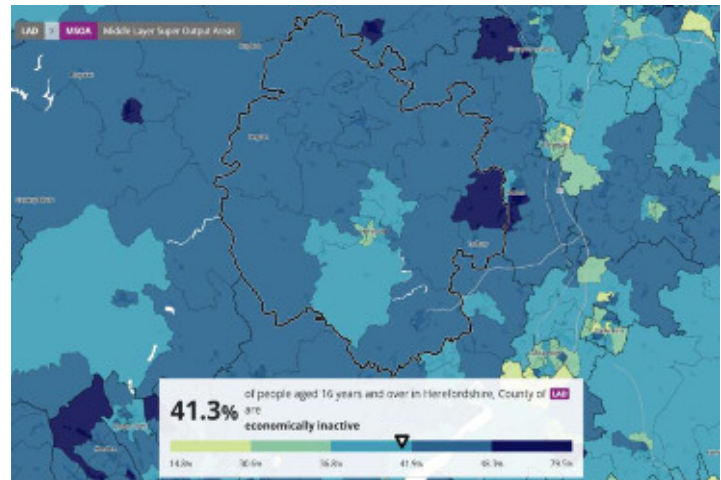
---

	<p>It focuses on helping disabled people, those with long term health conditions, or facing complex employment barriers to enter and sustain meaningful work.</p> <p>Participants receive up to 12 months of “place, train, maintain” support via a dedicated Employment Specialist (caseloads capped at around 25), using evidence based models like Individual Placement &amp; Support (IPS) and the Supported Employment Quality Framework (SEQF)</p> <p>The support journey includes vocational profiling, tailored job matching, in work coaching, and access to integrated services (e.g., health interventions, financial guidance, digital skills training).</p> <p>Shropshire Council has been designed as the Accountable Body (AB) for the Marches region. The AB is responsible for shaping the local offer within national guidance—ensuring effective funding, monitoring, and fidelity to IPS/SEQF models.</p>
--	---

## 2.5 Please provide a brief summary of the known key labour market challenges in your area.

### Economic Inactivity in The Marches

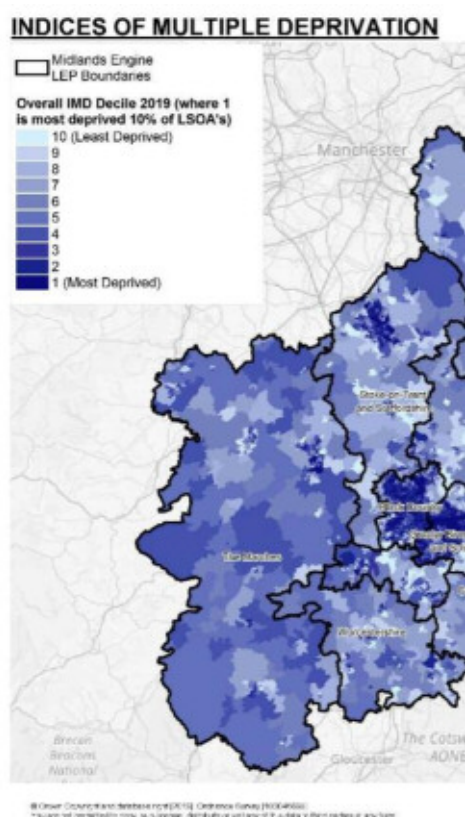
Economic inactivity is not spread evenly across the Marches area. Shropshire, Herefordshire and Telford & Wrekin all have pockets of very high inactivity, and large (mainly rural) areas where inactivity is relatively high.



The geographic spread, shown previously, does not tell the whole story. Shropshire and Telford have relatively high rates of retired people who are inactive, whereas Telford has higher proportions of carers and long-term sick or disabled.

Economic Inactivity in The Marches								
	Herefordshire		Shropshire		Telford & Wrekin		The Marches	
Economically inactive: Looking after home or family	5,836	3.7%	9,814	3.6%	7,460	5.0%	23,110	4.0%
Economically inactive: Long-term sick or disabled	5,614	3.6%	9,574	3.5%	7,886	5.3%	23,074	4.0%
Economically inactive: Other	3,867	2.5%	6,707	2.5%	4,317	2.9%	14,891	2.6%
Economically inactive: Retired	44,635	28.4%	77,553	28.5%	31,490	21.2%	153,678	26.6%
Economically inactive: Student	5,017	3.2%	9,687	3.6%	7,137	4.8%	21,841	3.8%
Total economically inactive	64,969	41.3%	113,335	41.6%	58,290	39.2%	236,594	40.9%
%Total population: Residents aged 16 years and over	157,132	100%	272,245	100%	148,670	100%	578,047	100.00

Source: Census 2021

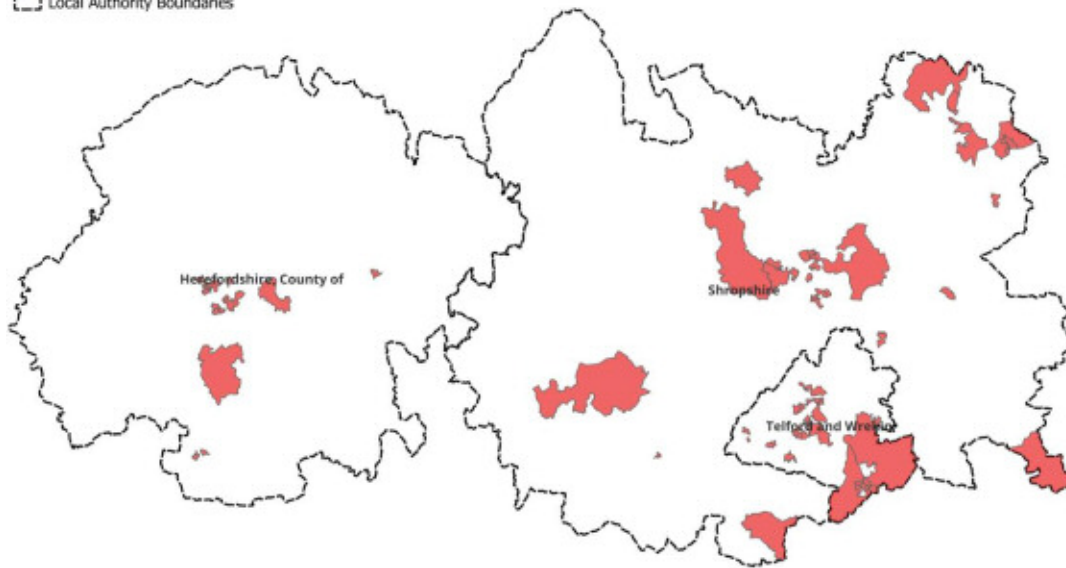


The Index of Multiple Deprivation reveals a pattern of large rural areas with high deprivation and some areas of very high deprivation in the larger urban settlements, e.g. Shrewsbury, Ludlow and Telford. These run alongside areas over relative affluence.

The geographic pattern of unemployment follows a similar pattern of both rural and urban clusters where it is above average. This is shown in the following graphic.

### Shropshire, Herefordshire, Telford and Wrekin Neighbourhoods with Unemployment Rates Above the National Average

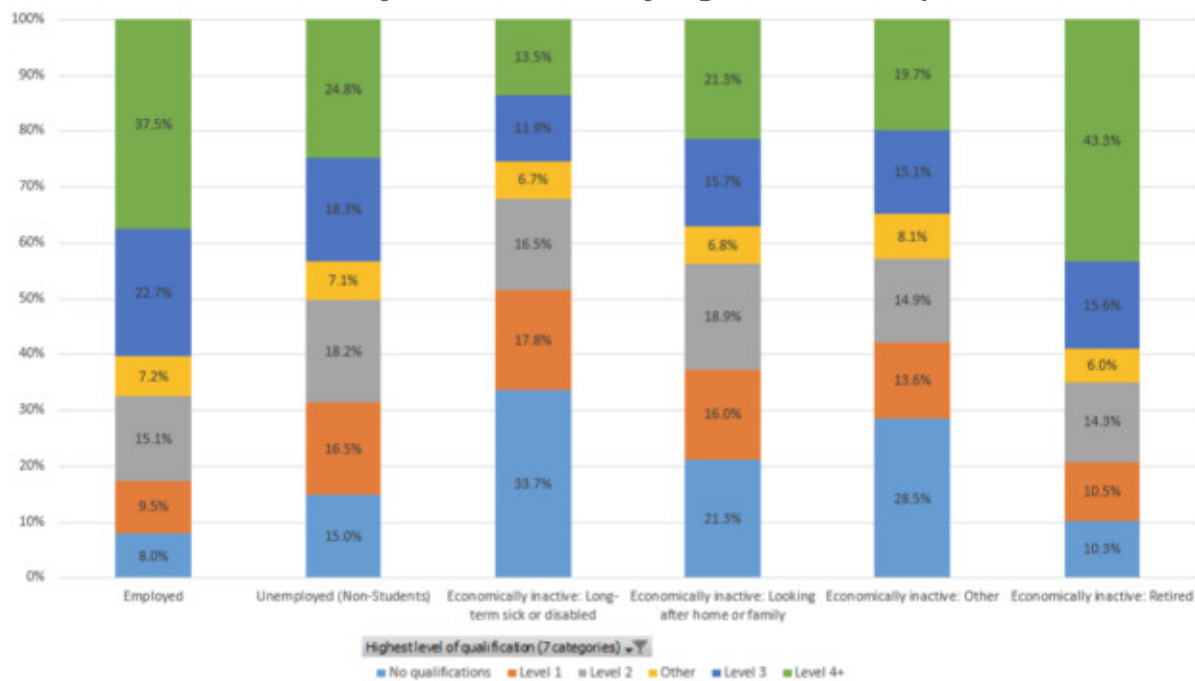
■ LSOAs with Above Average Unemployment Rates  
□ Local Authority Boundaries



Source: ONS

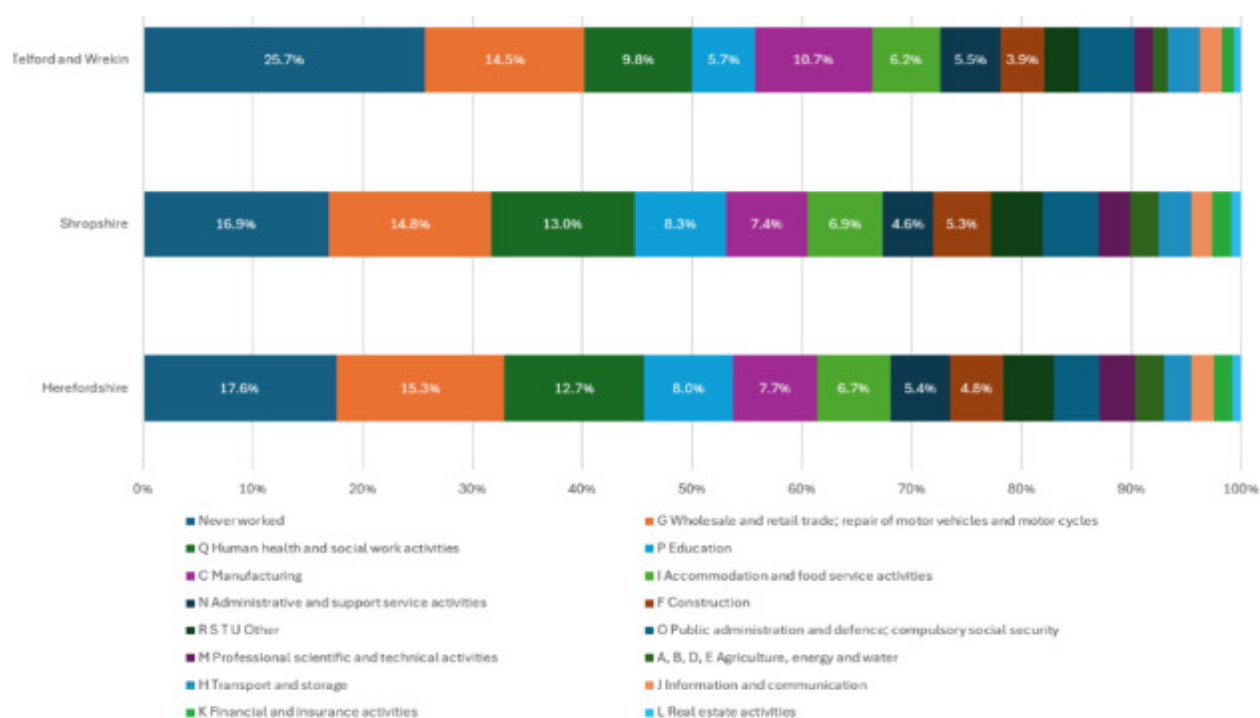
## Skills & Employment Issues

### Economic Activity Status Reasons by Highest Level of Qualification



- Skills profiles of those unemployed and inactive are lower than those within the employed workforce, making upskilling a priority action.
- Encouraging those inactive who have retired back into work would bring significant skills back into the local Marches workforce.

## Former Economic Sector of Employment of those unemployed



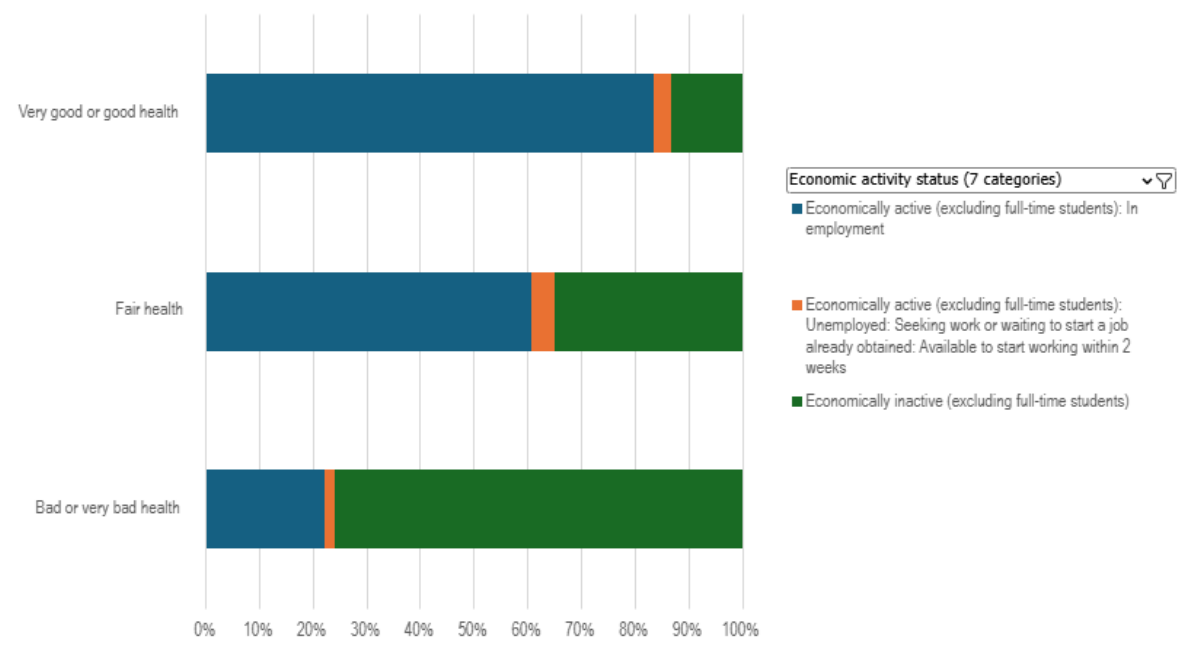
There are sectors with higher proportions of people who have experience of working within them, but there is also a reasonable spread across most sectors. This indicates a nuanced approach to create employment pathways is required, one that:

- Helps people find work where they have experience
- Or helps them shift to new work they can do, particularly those with existing or emerging health issues?

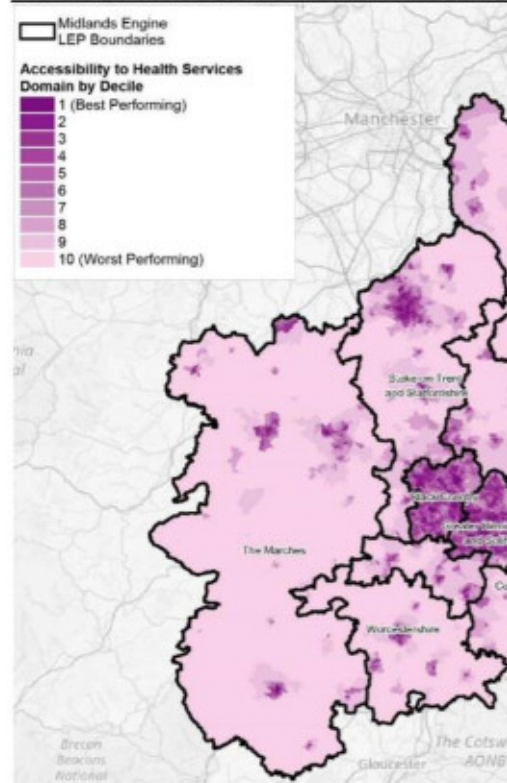
**Initiatives need to include:** Job matching; SWAP-style courses (sector based); other targeted interventions.

## Health Issues

### Economic Activity and Health in The Marches



### INDEX OF ACCESS TO HEALTH ASSETS



Health level clearly affects propensity to work, but not necessarily for all in The Marches. Almost a quarter of people with bad or very bad health are in work. Therefore, changing perceptions and assisting people with poor or declining health to seek, obtain and sustain employment is important and very possible.

Access to health services outside the urban areas of The Marches is very poor. This relates to access to GPs, hospitals, pharmacies, dentists and leisure services. Given the rural /urban patterns of inactivity and unemployment this may present a challenge in terms of: creating employability pathways for those with health issues who live in rural areas; and supporting those in-work suffering declining health.

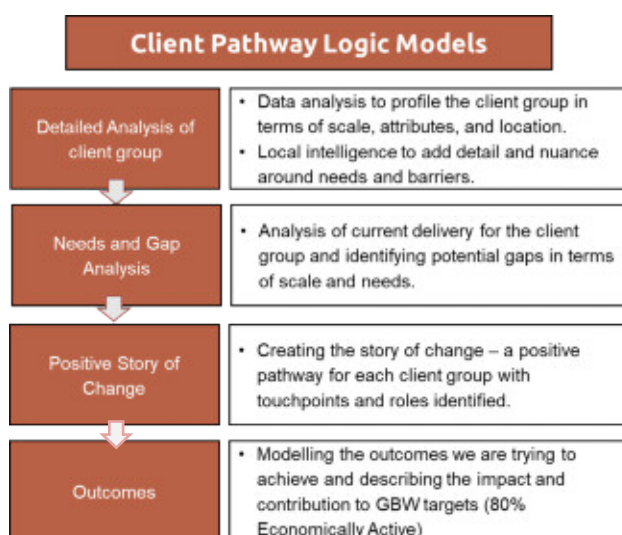


---

## Strategic Approach to develop the full Get Marches Working Plan

The area data for the Marches clearly shows the need for a tailored approach to the Get Marches Working plan that:

- Details an understanding of the nature and dynamics of multiple target groups.
- Presents a strong rationale and evidence for interventions that builds on and complements other efforts (e.g. Connect to Work and other local programmes; national programmes).
- Creates a series of positive pathways that target specific client groups where outcomes and impact, in terms of encouraging people into the labour market and into employment, will be high.
- Facilitates a strong partnership approach that links organisations' strategically and operationally to implement actions that are efficient and effective at delivering positive outcomes and impact on the local economy.





## 2.6 Please provide a brief summary of the cohorts in your area which are known to face specific labour market challenges.

Cohort	Sub Group	Specific Labour Market Challenges
<p>Disadvantaged Young People -</p> <p>In Shropshire, Telford &amp; Wrekin, and Herefordshire, several overlapping groups of young people face distinct challenges in accessing education, employment, and training. Young people who are NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) represent a key area of concern.</p>	<p><i>NEETs 18-24 –</i></p> <p>Those who are NEET are not a homogenous group. There are multiple causes a young person may become isolated from education, employment, or training.</p> <p>Young people who are NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) represent a key area of concern. Nationally, approximately 13.4% of 16–24-year-olds were classed as NEET by the end of 2024, an increase of 1.3 percentage points from the previous year.</p> <p>Herefordshire: NEET (16–17): 4.3%.</p> <p>This is below the West Midlands and England average (5.2%)</p> <p>The rate has fallen from a peak of 9.2% in 2019–20.</p> <p>Telford &amp; Wrekin: Proportion of 16–17-year-olds NEET sits at approximately 3.1% (compared to 4.0% for England overall).</p> <p>Shropshire: NEET rate for 16–18-year-olds around 4.0%.</p>	<p>Many NEETs lack the relevant qualifications or vocational skills required by employers.</p> <p>NEETs in the more rural or remote areas may find few job openings or vocational training options.</p> <p>Limited broadband and a lack of reliable public transport further reduce opportunities.</p>
	<p><i>Care Leavers –</i></p> <p>Care leavers, aged 16–25 and previously in the care system, are another group identified as requiring additional assistance.</p> <p>Local authorities such as Telford &amp; Wrekin have published pledges and support frameworks for care-experienced young people.</p>	<p>Limited work experience and lower educational attainment due to disrupted schooling.</p> <p>Financial insecurity and unstable housing hinder job-seeking and job retention.</p> <p>Lack of support networks limits access to informal job guidance and connections.</p>

Cohort	Sub Group	Specific Labour Market Challenges
	<p>Shropshire:</p> <p>As of the latest available data:</p> <p>286 care leavers aged 18 and over are currently supported by the council.</p> <p>Additionally, there are 734 children and young people in care, indicating ongoing demand for transition support.</p> <p>Telford &amp; Wrekin:</p> <p>Recently published data showed 259 care leavers aged 16–24.</p> <p>190 of this number were in the 18–24 age band.</p> <p>Herefordshire:</p> <p>392 – 16-24 year olds.</p>	<p>Mental health challenges and low confidence affect employability.</p> <p>Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) face language barriers, immigration issues, and cultural adjustment difficulties.</p>
	<p><i>SEND/LD –</i></p> <p>Shropshire and Telford &amp; Wrekin:</p> <p>As of January 2024, there were approximately 4,620 children and young people (age 0–25) within the Shropshire &amp; Telford &amp; Wrekin area who had an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) in place.</p> <p>This represents a 21% increase compared to the previous year (rising from ~3,804 to ~4,620) .</p> <p>With ~4,620 active EHCPs (age 0–25) in Jan 2024, and assuming consistency with national age-band distributions (~33% aged 5–10, ~36% aged 11–15, remainder in early years and post-16). Roughly 30–35% (~1,400–1,600 individuals) may fall in the 16–25 age band today.</p> <p>If the overall school-age population grows by around 10% by 2043, and</p>	<p>Misconceptions about the capabilities of individuals with SEND.</p> <p>Preponderance of SMEs within the Marches economy tends to translate into a greater level of reluctance to make reasonable adjustments in the workplace.</p> <p>There is also a fear of additional costs, time, or legal risk associated with hiring someone with SEND/LD.</p> <p>Limited availability of jobs that are designed or adapted for diverse needs and abilities.</p> <p>A lack of vocational training opportunities that match the needs and learning styles of this sub-group.</p> <p>Difficulties travelling independently to workplaces due to mobility, cognitive, or sensory impairments.</p> <p>Inaccessible public transport or work environments.</p>

Cohort	Sub Group	Specific Labour Market Challenges
	<p>EHCP prevalence remains constant or continues modest growth, the post-16 cohort may reach 1,600–1,800 by the early 2030s, and possibly 2,000+ by mid 2040s.</p> <p>Herefordshire:</p> <p>0–25 EHCP total: ≈ 1,900 individuals.</p> <p>16–25 age band: ≈ 500–510 individuals.</p> <p>If population trends hold steady and the EHCP rate remains stable, the 16–25 cohort is likely to grow gradually—potentially reaching 550–600 by the early 2030s.</p>	<p>Extent of the region’s rurality means there is limited access to reliable, accessible transport in many parts of the Marches.</p> <p>For those areas which are served by public transport options and/or are living in remoter parts of the region, the long or complex commutes may not be feasible due to mobility impairments.</p> <p>Again, the dominance of SMEs within the region means that the majority of job opportunities are being created by companies with limited existing capacity. This could lead to fewer employers being able to provide the necessary adaptations or flexible working arrangements (e.g., remote work, part-time roles).</p> <p>They may also have only a limited understanding of legal obligations under disability rights legislation.</p>
<p>Disabled Adults -</p> <p>In Shropshire, Herefordshire, and Telford &amp; Wrekin, disabled adults, particularly those with learning disabilities or long-term health</p>	<p><i>Adults with SEND/LD –</i></p> <p>In Herefordshire, approximately 1,050 individuals of all ages were registered with learning disabilities in 2020–21 (0.6% of the population). Modelled estimates suggest the actual number among adults may be closer to 3,800 (2.3%). Locally,</p>	<p>The challenges, outcomes and interventions largely follow those set out above.</p>

Cohort	Sub Group	Specific Labour Market Challenges
<p>conditions, face persistent challenges in accessing and sustaining employment.</p>	<p>around 600 adults received long-term social care support for learning disabilities in 2019–20 (<a href="http://herefordshire.gov.uk">herefordshire.gov.uk</a>).</p> <p>Shropshire Council’s Enable service supported 5.6% of adults under 65 with learning disabilities into paid employment during 2020–21—a rate second highest among West Midlands authorities (<a href="http://shropshire.gov.uk">shropshire.gov.uk</a>). This aligns with the national average (~4.8%) but highlights consistent regional efforts to improve employment rates.</p> <p>Telford LD not available at the time of writing.</p>	
	<p>Physical Disabilities –</p> <p>Telford &amp; Wrekin (2021 Census): 9.1% of residents reported being “disabled and limited a lot” 11.4% reported being “disabled and limited a little,” up from 10.9%</p> <p>Health data: 20.5% of the overall population are classed as disabled under the Equality Act; 36.1% of households contain at least one person with a disability (<a href="http://telford.gov.uk">telford.gov.uk</a>)</p> <p>Telford’s rising economic inactivity (22.5% of those aged 16-64) reflects long-term sickness and disability inclusion (<a href="http://ons.gov.uk">ons.gov.uk</a>)</p> <p>Census data from 2021 shows that 6.7% of Herefordshire residents reported being “disabled and limited a lot,” down from 7.8% in 2011 (<a href="http://herefordshire.gov.uk">herefordshire.gov.uk</a>).</p> <p>In Shropshire, the overall employment rate for adults aged 16-64 was 78.8% by December 2023, slightly above the West Midlands average. However, 3.5% were economically inactive due to long-</p>	<p>The challenges, outcomes and interventions largely follow those set out above.</p>

Cohort	Sub Group	Specific Labour Market Challenges
	term sickness or disability, a rise from 3.0% in 2011 (ons.gov.uk). When compared to national figures, 53.6% employment rate and 7.1% unemployment for disabled individuals) the local data suggest that while general adult employment appears robust, disabled adults likely remain underrepresented in work roles.	
<p>People with a health condition –</p> <p>Long-term health conditions, especially MSK and mental health, are widespread and significantly affect adults in Shropshire, Herefordshire, and Telford &amp; Wrekin. High levels of economic inactivity, increasing urban/rural deprivation, and ageing populations underscore the need for targeted health checks, accessible services, employment support, and inclusive planning.</p>	<p>MSK –</p> <p>See stats above.</p>	<p>MSK conditions often cause chronic pain, stiffness, and fatigue that vary day-to-day. This unpredictability can make regular work schedules difficult to maintain.</p> <p>Employers may underestimate the impact of MSK conditions or assume reduced productivity. This fear of ongoing absence or cost of adjustments can lead to reluctance in hiring.</p> <p>Insufficient provision of work place adjustments (e.g. ergonomic equipment, such as adjustable chairs, desks, or assistive technology) and limited flexibility around working hours, remote work, or rest breaks could make job sustainability an issue for some MSK sufferers.</p> <p>For those areas which are served by public transport options and/or are living in remoter parts of the region, the long or complex commutes may not be feasible due to mobility impairments.</p>
	<p><i>Chronic Conditions (e.g. MS, ME, Long Covid, COPD).</i></p>	<p>Chronic conditions often involve unpredictable flare-ups, severe fatigue, or pain, making it hard to maintain consistent work hours. Symptoms may worsen with physical or mental exertion, affecting productivity.</p> <p>Rigid workplace structures (e.g. 9–5 schedules, long commutes) do not accommodate the variable energy levels and recovery needs of people with chronic illnesses.</p>

Cohort	Sub Group	Specific Labour Market Challenges
	<p><i>Mental Health Conditions –</i></p> <p>Approximately 3,700 adults in Shropshire, Telford &amp; Wrekin are diagnosed with psychosis, bipolar disorder, or schizophrenia and are offered annual physical health checks (shropshiretelfordandwrekin.nhs.uk).</p> <p>Telford and Wrekin include some of the most deprived wards—such as Woodside—where mental health issues correlate strongly with poverty and unemployment</p> <p>Shropshire &amp; Rural Considerations: Shropshire combines an aging population (over 23% aged 65+), low population density, and increasing demand for health services related to MSK, dementia, and mobility issues (shropshiretelfordandwrekin.nhs.uk)</p> <p>Telford is in the top 30% most deprived areas nationally, exacerbating health disparities (shropshiretelfordandwrekin.nhs.uk)</p>	<p>Fewer part-time, remote, or hybrid roles available which are designed with health variability in mind.</p> <p>Limited access to reasonable accommodations, such as modified duties, extended breaks, or ergonomic equipment.</p> <p>Symptoms like anxiety, depression, or mood instability can make it difficult to maintain consistent performance or attendance. Relapses or crisis episodes may require time off or flexible adjustments.</p> <p>In a regional economy in which SMEs are the dominant form of business operation, many workplaces lack the capacity to offer reasonable adjustments such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flexible hours.</li> <li>• Remote working.</li> <li>• Reduced workloads during difficult periods.</li> </ul> <p>Also, there maybe limited access to occupational health support or mental health resources.</p> <p>Many existing employment services are generic and not adapted to the needs of people with mental health conditions.</p> <p>A shortage of supported employment schemes, mental health job coaches, or gradual return-to-work programs.</p>
People with Caring Responsibilities	<p><i>Lone Parents –</i></p> <p>Shropshire: 8.4% of all households; 11,675 lone parent homes.</p> <p>Telford &amp; Wrekin: 11.9% of all households were lone parent families, up from 11.7% in 2011.</p> <p>Herefordshire: 8.8% of households were lone parent families, a slight increase from 8.6% in 2011 (ons.gov.uk).</p>	<p>High cost or lack of access to affordable, flexible, and reliable childcare.</p> <p>Difficulty finding work that fits around school hours, holidays, or child illness. Also, limited options for evening or weekend work due to lack of childcare at those times.</p> <p>Many jobs do not offer part-time, remote, or flexible working arrangements.</p>

Cohort	Sub Group	Specific Labour Market Challenges
		<p>Inflexible hours make it hard for lone parents to balance work and caring duties.</p> <p>Limited access to affordable or convenient transport, especially in the rural or underserved areas, can make commuting difficult.</p>
	<p><i>Young Carers –</i></p> <p>Shropshire, T&amp;W &amp; Herefordshire: Specific figures for young or parent carers are not readily available locally. However, broader carers' strategies (e.g. Herefordshire's new All-Age Carers Strategy) highlight recognition of unpaid carers across all ages.</p>	<p>Time constraints from ongoing care duties reduce availability for full-time or flexible work and limit access to training.</p> <p>Emotional strain, including anxiety and burnout, can affect confidence and job readiness.</p> <p>Many young carers also face a lack of understanding from employers and support services, resulting in few workplace adjustments.</p> <p>Financial pressures may push them into low-paid, insecure work, especially when they contribute to household income.</p> <p>The transition from education to employment is often unsupported, with young carers losing access to youth services.</p>
	<p><i>Parents of children with complex needs</i></p>	<p>Few childcare providers are equipped to support children with complex medical, behavioural, or developmental needs.</p> <p>Specialist childcare is often unavailable, unaffordable, or not offered during standard work hours.</p> <p>Parents may need to attend frequent medical appointments, therapies, or emergency care. Unpredictability of their child's condition makes consistent employment difficult.</p> <p>Many jobs do not accommodate flexible hours, part-time work, or remote working. Employers may be unwilling or unable to offer the adaptability needed for caregiving.</p> <p>High levels of stress, sleep deprivation, and emotional strain can lead to burnout, making sustained employment challenging.</p>

Cohort	Sub Group	Specific Labour Market Challenges
People who face multiple disadvantages	<p><i>Homeless –</i></p> <p>1,537 households were threatened with homelessness in Shropshire in 2023 (up 25% from 1,234 in 2022); over 100 people were in B&amp;Bs at the same time</p> <p>In Herefordshire, 2022–23 figures show 1,328 households assessed as homeless or threatened, a rate of 16 per 1,000 households and above the England average of 12 per 1,000 (herefordshire.gov.uk)</p> <p>Telford &amp; Wrekin recorded 3,479 approaches to their housing team in 2022–23, with 1,144 households owed a homelessness duty and 929 cases prevented or relieved (ons.gov.uk)</p>	<p>A lack of essential documents, a permanent address, or a bank account, which are often required by employers.</p> <p>Physical and mental health issues can impact job readiness and consistency.</p> <p>Criminal records or past substance misuse may lead to stigma and reduced job opportunities.</p> <p>Challenges with personal hygiene and appearance can affect employability, especially during interviews.</p> <p>Additionally, many jobs will be located far from shelters, and the cost or lack of transport (when available) makes accessing them difficult.</p>
	<p><i>Ex-offenders –</i></p> <p>Nationally, only 19.3% of ex-offenders are employed six weeks after release (ONS, nomis).</p> <p>Local data is not publicly available for these areas, but given high regional economic inactivity (22.5% in Telford &amp; Wrekin and 18.0% in Shropshire) employment prospects for ex-offenders are likely to be similar (ons.gov.uk)</p>	<p>Many employers are reluctant to hire them, viewing them as untrustworthy or unsafe.</p> <p>Limited access to education and training in prison often leaves them underqualified, reinforcing negative perceptions.</p> <p>Mental health issues, low self-esteem, and poor self-presentation can hinder job searches, while practical challenges like lack of transport, bank accounts, or time management skills make it difficult to maintain employment.</p> <p>Substance abuse and other health problems may further complicate matters.</p> <p>Additionally, confusing legal requirements around disclosing criminal records can create further obstacles for both applicants and employers.</p>
	<p><i>Refugees –</i></p> <p>In Shropshire, 11 refugee or asylum-seeker households were assessed as homeless in Q4 2023 compared to</p>	<p>Language barriers can limit communication and job opportunities, while a lack of local work experience often disadvantages them in competitive markets.</p>



Cohort	Sub Group	Specific Labour Market Challenges
	<p>none in the same period the previous year (MHCLG).</p> <p>Herefordshire participates in resettlement schemes (e.g., Afghan resettlement and UKRS), however there is limited local data on homelessness or their employment outcomes (herefordshire.gov.uk).</p> <p>Telford &amp; Wrekin lacks specified public data for refugee housing or employment, but the region's growing ethnic diversity suggests resettlement efforts may reflect those in neighbouring areas.</p>	<p>Many refugees also struggle with non-recognition of their foreign qualifications, making it hard to access jobs matching their skills.</p> <p>Uncertainty around legal status and work rights can delay or restrict access to employment.</p> <p>Additionally, mental and physical health issues—often related to trauma—can impact job readiness.</p> <p>Homelessness or unstable housing further complicates job searching and maintaining employment.</p>
	<p><i>Older People –</i></p> <p>Nationally 21.4% of 16–64-year-olds are economically inactive (9.23m people) (ons.gov.uk).</p> <p>Universal Credit data available via StatXplore shows that in the Marches, aside from Telford which has a very high rate of youth unemployment, most rural Jobcentres have an above average claimant count of individuals aged over 50.</p> <p>The local breakdown is: Herefordshire: 18.8% of 16–64-year-olds are economically inactive (21,100 people). Shropshire: 18.0% of 16–64-year-olds are economically inactive (32,800 people) (ons.gov.uk). Telford &amp; Wrekin: 22.5% of 16–64-year-olds are economically inactive (~25,000 people).</p>	<p>Despite their skills and experience, stereotypes can limit opportunities in hiring, promotion, and training, and may lead to workplace bullying or pressure to downplay experience.</p> <p>Technological changes can create skills gaps, especially for those out of the workforce or without training access. Adapting to new technologies and work cultures can also be challenging, highlighting the need for training and mentoring.</p> <p>Health issues may affect performance and attendance, requiring supportive and flexible workplace policies which may not be available.</p> <p>Many older workers have caring responsibilities for children or elderly relatives, which can impact availability.</p>

## 2.7 Please provide indicative priority actions for the next 12-24 months.

Action	Purpose	Lead
Delivery Planning	Develop strategic actions into credible projects for commissioning and implementation.	GBW Operations Board.
Partnership Engagement & Development	Ensure that the strategy is relevant, inclusive, supported, and achievable.	GBW Operations Board.
Longitudinal Impact Evaluation - Framework Development and Research Strategy.	Lays the foundation for a robust, reliable, and meaningful assessment of an initiative's long-term effectiveness and sustainability.	GBW Operations Board with external consultant support.
Programme Monitoring Framework	Ensures that implementation stays on track, that performance is measurable and transparent, and that decision-making is informed by real-time evidence.	GBW Operations Board with external consultant support.

### First Priority Cohorts and Proposed Actions:

Target	Action	Reason	Relevant Agencies
Inactive & unemployed <b>Over50s</b> cohort in rural areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Digital/ flexible/ remote employment opportunities.</li> <li>Training and re-skilling for rural jobs and self-employment.</li> <li>Transport initiatives to overcome accessibility barriers.</li> </ul>	Over50s in rural areas have poor access to employment opportunities. Higher rates of over 50s Universal Credit claimants in rural parts of Shropshire & Herefordshire.	Shropshire Council. Herefordshire Council. Telford & Wrekin Council. Adult skills providers. Local transport operators. DWP.
<b>NEETs age 18-24</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HR, Training and financial incentives schemes to support NEETs into SMEs and larger firms.</li> <li>Use of Adult Skills Fund to provide supported employment and employability routes.</li> <li>Health &amp; Wellbeing Support.</li> </ul> <p><b>For Rural NEETs:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Digital/ flexible/ remote employment opportunities.</li> </ul>	Preventing young people from becoming NEET helps them live more fulfilling lives, strengthens communities, and supports a healthy, sustainable economy. Many of the issues associated with being NEET are further compounded by rurality of Marches region (as are the barriers to employment).	Shropshire Council. Herefordshire Council. Telford & Wrekin Council. Chambers of Commerce (employer partnerships). Employability skills providers. DWP. Local employers.

Target	Action	Reason	Relevant Agencies
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Training and re-skilling for rural jobs and self-employment.</li> </ul>		
SEND & LDD	<p><b>School-Leavers:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Personalised careers advice focussing on individual strengths, needs, and aspirations, with support available to explore options like education, training, and employment.</li> <li>Expand prevocational training opportunities to build foundational skills and address barriers to employment can be beneficial.</li> </ul> <p><b>Post-18:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use ASF to support internships and work trials for people with SEND, with job coach support and linked education.</li> <li>Improving employer access to facilities which allow for reasonable adjustments, such as assistive technology or modified work environments (Access to Work programme).</li> <li>Learn from the Herefordshire Workwell and extend across area.</li> <li>Large employer/medium employer supported employment pilot programme.</li> </ul>	<p>At the national level, over 900,000 people with SEND are of working age, yet only 5% are employed, despite 86% wanting to work. Disabled children face early disadvantages due to a strained SEND system, leading to unequal access to education and limited future opportunities. Inadequate preparation for employment, poor access to careers advice, and delays in support services leave many unsure about their post-school options, reinforcing long-term inequality.</p>	<p>Shropshire Council. Herefordshire Council. Telford &amp; Wrekin Council. VCSE/Third sector SEND support specialists. Adult skills providers. Chambers of Commerce (employer partnerships). Employability skills providers. DWP. NHS ICS.</p>
Mental Health Conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provision of workplace support for employees with mental health (i.e. Access to Work). Examples of types of accommodations include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Flexible working hours.</li> <li>Modified assignments.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Work benefits mental health by providing structure, purpose, and social connection, which boost self-esteem and reduce isolation. It encourages personal growth and skill development, improving confidence and well-</p>	<p>Shropshire Council. Herefordshire Council. Telford &amp; Wrekin Council. VCSE/Third sector Mental Health &amp; Wellbeing support specialists.</p>

Target	Action	Reason	Relevant Agencies
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supportive meetings with supervisors.</li> <li>Introduction of return-to-work programmes which combine work-directed care with clinical care to support individuals returning to work after an absence related to mental health conditions.</li> <li>Boosting accessibility to occupational health support or mental health resources.</li> </ul>	being. Additionally, financial stability from work lowers stress, while staying engaged helps distract from negative thoughts, supporting overall mental resilience.	Chambers of Commerce (employer partnerships). DWP. NHS ICS. Community health providers.

## 2.8 In addition to financial support, what other resource/support would you need to complete your local GBW plan?

- **Data and Labour Market Intelligence:** Timely access to local and regional labour market data, including sectoral trends, skills gaps, and employment outcomes, will be essential for evidence-based planning and targeted interventions.
- **Policy and Strategic Alignment Support:** Guidance from central government to ensure our local plan aligns with national priorities, funding streams, and complementary programmes (e.g. LSIPs, UKSPF, and DWP initiatives) will help maximise impact and avoid duplication.
- **Capacity Building and Workforce Development:** Support to upskill local authority staff and delivery partners in areas such as employer engagement, data analysis, and inclusive employment practices will strengthen implementation capacity.
- **Digital Infrastructure and Tools:** Access to digital platforms for collaboration, case management, and performance monitoring will enhance coordination across partners and improve service delivery.
- **Facilitation of Cross-Area Collaboration:** Opportunities to share learning and best practice with other local authorities and regions will help us refine our approach and scale what works.
- **Ongoing Engagement Support:** Continued support in engaging hard-to-reach groups, including through national campaigns or toolkits, would help ensure the plan is inclusive and reaches those most in need.

## 2.9 Please set out your expected timelines, key activity and milestones for the development of your local GBW plan and publication by September 2025.

Action	Completed by	Responsible Officer
Update stakeholder list	11th April 2025	Shropshire, Herefordshire and Telford Council
Create Members for the Operations group - Send request to join the group	11th April 2025	Shropshire
Genecon start with data and Research	May-25	Genecon
First Operations group meeting - Overview, introductions and instructions	4th June 2025	Shropshire, Herefordshire and Telford Council
LA's feed into plan	13th June 2025	Shropshire, Herefordshire and Telford Council
Draft Initial plan - Internal approval	26th June 2025	Shropshire, Herefordshire and Telford Council
Submit final plan to DWP	27th Jun 2025	Shropshire Council
second Operations Group - Review and action questions, establish community groups	30th June 2025	Shropshire, Herefordshire and Telford Council
Gather all information from Operations and feed into plan and send gap analysis to LAs	15th July 2025	Genecon
Complete gap analysis	30th July 2025	All stakeholders
Community groups in each LA	30th July 2025	Shropshire, Herefordshire and Telford Council
Complete plan with answers from LA and Operations group	15th August 2025	Genecon
Send to Operations Group and LA's for comments	15th August 2025	Shropshire
Return comments	30th August 2025	All stakeholders
Action comments and complete final version	15th September 2025	Genecon
LA's to sign off	20th September 2025	Shropshire, Herefordshire and Telford Council
Sign off by JC/ICB/JCP	21st September 2025	Shropshire
Submit final plan to DWP	30th September 2025	Shropshire Council

## 2.10 Please confirm the extent to which content of this template has been discussed and/or agreed upon by all relevant upper-tier and unitary local authorities within the delivery area.

All three local authorities within the Marches area are fully engaged in the development of the Get Britain Working (GBW) Plan. Each local authority is represented on the GBW Operations Board, which provides a collaborative platform for discussion, feedback, and decision-making. Full approval of the Plan has been formally sought and secured through The Marches Joint Committee, which includes the Executive Directors from each of the three local authorities.

The Operations Board has convened to discuss the Plan and has had multiple opportunities to review and contribute to the draft at various stages. This Board includes representatives from the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS), the Integrated Care Board (ICB), Jobcentre Plus (JCP), local authorities, education providers, and employers (via the Chambers of Commerce) from across all three areas, ensuring a broad and inclusive perspective.

Each local authority has agreed to the current draft of the Plan and remains committed to ongoing collaboration with the Accountable Body as the Plan continues to evolve and develop.

The final published Plan will be formally agreed by each Local Authority through the Officers and the Directors, by the JCP and ICB in each area and (informally) by the other stakeholders.

The contact details and position of the nominated representatives from each of these organisations are listed on the following page:

Get Britain Working Operations Board			
Rep	Organisation	Email address	LA Area
Matt Laws	Shrewsbury College Group	<a href="mailto:matthewla@shrewsbury.ac.uk">matthewla@shrewsbury.ac.uk</a>	Shropshire
David Williams	Herefordshire, Ludlow and North Shropshire	<a href="mailto:d.williams@hlnsc.ac.uk">d.williams@hlnsc.ac.uk</a>	Herefordshire
Sarah Davies	Telford College	<a href="mailto:Sarah.Davies@telfordcollege.ac.uk">Sarah.Davies@telfordcollege.ac.uk</a>	Telford
Charlie Lloyd	Job Centre Plus	<a href="mailto:charlie.lloyd@dwp.gov.uk">charlie.lloyd@dwp.gov.uk</a>	All
Alison Trumper	ICB	<a href="mailto:alison.trumper1@nhs.net">alison.trumper1@nhs.net</a>	Shropshire & Telford
Denise Horton	ICB	<a href="mailto:denise.horton@hwccg.nhs.uk">denise.horton@hwccg.nhs.uk</a>	Herefordshire
Andriane Usherwood	CEC Shropshire Council	<a href="mailto:Andriane.Usherwood-Brown@shropshire.gov.uk">Andriane.Usherwood-Brown@shropshire.gov.uk</a>	All
Richard Probert	Telford Council	<a href="mailto:richard.probert@telford.gov.uk">richard.probert@telford.gov.uk</a>	Telford
Alexia Heath	Herefordshire Council	<a href="mailto:aheath1@herefordshire.gov.uk">aheath1@herefordshire.gov.uk</a>	Herefordshire
Amy Farley	Shropshire Council	<a href="mailto:amy.farley@shropshire.gov.uk">amy.farley@shropshire.gov.uk</a>	Shropshire
Louise Harding	Telford Council	<a href="mailto:louise.harding@telford.gov.uk">louise.harding@telford.gov.uk</a>	Telford
Delia Yapp	Shropshire Council	<a href="mailto:delia.yapp@shropshire.gov.uk">delia.yapp@shropshire.gov.uk</a>	Shropshire
Jeni Kuczynska	T&W CVS	<a href="mailto:Jeni.Kuczynska@tandwcvcs.org.uk">Jeni.Kuczynska@tandwcvcs.org.uk</a>	Telford
Tara Foran	Telford Council	<a href="mailto:Tara.Foran@telford.gov.uk">Tara.Foran@telford.gov.uk</a>	Telford
Will Lindesay	Herefordshire VCS	<a href="mailto:will.lindesay@hvoss.org.uk">will.lindesay@hvoss.org.uk</a>	Herefordshire
Ruth Ross	Shropshire Chamber	<a href="mailto:r.ross@shropshire-chamber.co.uk">r.ross@shropshire-chamber.co.uk</a>	Shropshire & Telford
Fran Romberg	Shropshire VCS	<a href="mailto:Fran.Romberg@shropshire.gov.uk">Fran.Romberg@shropshire.gov.uk</a>	Shropshire
Judy Gibbs	ICB	<a href="mailto:jgibbs@worcestershires.gov.uk">jgibbs@worcestershires.gov.uk</a>	Herefordshire
Phil Taylor	Telford VCS	<a href="mailto:phil.taylor@landau.co.uk">phil.taylor@landau.co.uk</a>	Telford
Roshni Shroobree	Supported employment services	<a href="mailto:roshni.shroobree@shropshire.gov.uk">roshni.shroobree@shropshire.gov.uk</a>	Shropshire and Herefordshire