

# Pathways to Work: a new system approach

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**South Yorkshire**  
Integrated Care Board

# Pathways to Work: a new system approach

- **The challenge:** South Yorkshire is severely impacted by a national trend in rising economic inactivity with 172,500 economically inactive residents, 31.4% of whom are inactive due to long term sickness or disability.
- **The ambition:** to support 10,000 economically inactive people into work over the next four years
- This is our opportunity to **do something different** at system level for our local population



# The Barnsley Commission

**How does Barnsley enable all of our working age population, particularly those currently outside the labour market, achieve pathways to employment?**

The Commission ran from July 2023 to July 2024.

It brought together a range of experts in their fields to generate valuable insights following reflection on the evidence available. Acting as an independent body, they shaped the final Commission recommendations to stakeholders and government.

**Our focus was on building an inclusive economy, championing the benefits of learning & work and giving all our residents a fairer chance at opportunities.**

The Commission was underpinned by innovation and evidence-based approaches.

Alan Milburn <b>(Chair)</b>	Chair of the Social Mobility Foundation, Chancellor of Lancaster University
Dan Jarvis MBE	Labour MP for Barnsley Central
Oliver Coppard	Mayor of South Yorkshire
Torsten Bell	Director of the Resolution Foundation
Ben Harrison	Director of the Work Foundation
Jennifer Dixon	CEO of the Health Foundation
Sue Pember	Director of Policy at External Relations at HOLEX
Dr Cath Sleeman	Head of Data Discovery at NESTA
Valerie Hannon	Co-founder of the Global Education Partnership
Alan Richardson	Chief Financial Officer at Evri
Salma Yasmeen	CEO of Sheffield Health and Social Care Trust
Denise Hampson	CEO & Behavioural Designer at Desire Code

# Commission Evidence

750

South Yorkshire residents engaged through a telephone survey

57

In-depth interviews with Barnsley residents

4

Focus groups to discuss solutions with Barnsley residents

100+

Reports reviewed and analysed to support the Commission

146

Partners and experts providing evidence to the Commission

8

Commission sessions to consider evidence and identify solutions

## Commission sessions covered topics including:

- Making sense of the data
- Understanding employment support
- National policy and welfare
- The role of businesses
- Health and inactivity
- Shaping recommendations

## Research

- Kada Research conducted a series of **in-depth 1-1 interviews** with individuals who are or have been out of work due to health or caring responsibilities.
- Kada Research conducting follow-up **focus groups** with an emphasis on identifying solutions.
- In-house **in-depth 1-1 interviews** with young people and adults struggling to stay in work.
- **Polling of 750 economically inactive residents** in Barnsley & South Yorkshire by IFF Research.
- **Business survey** invited further evidence from local businesses.
- **Local data pilot** explored data sources to provide hyperlocal data on inactivity and priority areas for targeted interventions.
- Ongoing **desk-based research** to support the Commission.

# What we found: understanding the cohorts

- Health is the key barrier for the majority
- People face multiple, overlapping barriers
- There are often missed opportunities for early intervention
- Work exits were avoidable in half of cases
- Economic inactivity often compounds deprivation
- Attitudes to work can be ambivalent

# What we found: helping people to work

- Leadership & funding
- Tailored support
- Work that is worth it
- Employer engagement
- Health interventions
- Improving education and skills

# Who most needs help to work?

Based on an assessment of who is most likely to want to work and could benefit the most from interventions to enable them to do so, we identified four key cohorts to prioritise:

1. those currently economically inactive due to ill-health or disability;
2. those currently economically inactive due to caring responsibilities;
3. young adults with low qualifications at risk of not entering the labour market;
4. young adults with poor health at risk of not entering the labour market.

To stem the rise in economic activity action is also needed to prevent non entry or early exits from the workforce.

We believe there are three cohorts who need particular focus from policymakers and practitioners:

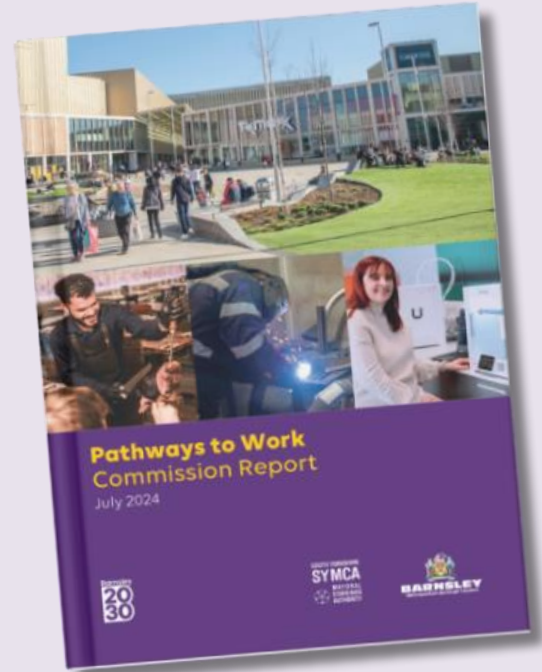
1. Older workers
2. Workers managing health conditions
3. Young people

# The Barnsley Pathways to Work Commission

- Pathways to Work Commission report published on 23 July 2024.
- Launched in Barnsley at the Town Hall, with partners, Commissioners and participants invite.
- Keynote from the Secretary of State – first major policy speech.
- Launched in Westminster on 24 July 2024 at a private event for MPs, policymakers, and civil servants.
- The findings of this Commission form the basis for our local and regional plans testing out our new approach

*Paper copies still available on request.*

*Read online here: [barnsley.gov.uk/PathwaysToWork](https://barnsley.gov.uk/PathwaysToWork)*



# P2W Proof of Concept

The model will:

1. **Sort the system:** building capacity through a system steward at the regional level and a system manager at the local level to fix the fragmentation issues.
2. **Prepare the jobs:** innovating with businesses to build training and roles for people who've been out of work for some time.
3. **Journey with people:** recruiting system navigators to journey with people one-to-one through their pathway to work, accessing the help they need and finding good employment.
4. **Work upstream:** investing in prevention by getting partners on board with a youth guarantee and a good employer charter.
5. **Invest in data:** Collecting, integrating and using data better across the system to monitor the quality of support and identify those who need help to work at the right time.

SYMCA:  
**System Steward**  
*...leading on governance and outcomes*

In each LA:  
**System Manager**  
*...leading on developing and aligning local support*

For individuals:  
**Personalised support**  
*...offering a co-developed pathway into work*

For businesses:  
**Employer activation**  
*...incentivising and trialling work placement schemes*

## National and local context

- The Get Britain Working White Paper outlined the government's mission to kickstart economic growth with good jobs and productivity making everyone, not just a few, better off. The White Paper drew on learning from the work done by the Pathways to Work Commission in Barnsley.
- In the White Paper, South Yorkshire was identified as one of eight **trailblazer** sites chosen to receive funding to reduce economic inactivity, and additionally one of three areas to be given funding to become a **Growth accelerator** to develop evidence of the impact of targeted action on the top health conditions driving economic inactivity.



A simplified, flexible approach to employment support that is tailored to the needs of individuals and businesses

## Pathways to Work System Change

- Pathways to Work will combine the new funding sources (the NHSE Growth Accelerator, the DWP Trailblazer funding and Connect to Work) with existing ones (such as WorkWell) to create a unified employment support system.
- The reforms will align strategies and operations, enhance personalized support, and work with employers to make sustainable workplace changes. The system will become more flexible and innovative through data integration and will introduce new interventions across health, skills, and employment sectors to prevent economic inactivity, especially for those at higher risk due to long-term sickness or health conditions.
- We anticipate that these changes will help 2,500 more people in South Yorkshire find jobs and prevent 950 people from becoming economically inactive next year. This effort aims to create a more inclusive and prosperous economy in South Yorkshire, serving as a model for other regions.

A simplified, flexible approach to employment support that is tailored to the needs of individuals and businesses

# P2W Trailblazer

Undertaking ambitious system redesign at South Yorkshire and Local Authority level to move from a fragmented, difficult to navigate system to one which is cohesive, easily navigable and has a single point of access/no wrong front door approach

## Priority 1: Ambitious redesign of local systems

Establishing a **System Steward (SS)** function, positioned at the South Yorkshire level, to drive system change, provide system oversight, a shared vision for those that are economically inactive, a governance mechanism to manage the system and a capacity to align with existing infrastructure and partners working across South Yorkshire.

Establishing a System Service Manager (SSM) at Local Authority level to build capacity across service providers to respond to those that are economically inactive; address system barriers to outcomes; manage system level performance against agreed targets and to address gaps in service system operations in conjunction with the System Steward.

## Priority 2: Employer engagement and employment activation

Proactive engagement with employers to shift attitudes, change hiring and employment practices, increasing confidence and identify opportunities to support employment of those with potentially complex needs.

The approach will have both an activation layer (made up of SS and SSM input) as well as practical support including design, contract award and ongoing management cost, specialist employer support and development fund allocation for a combination of third-party services and direct delivery (to be further designed), as well as a work simulation pilot and peer support allocation for retention.

## Priority 3: Delivery of a Personalised Support Service

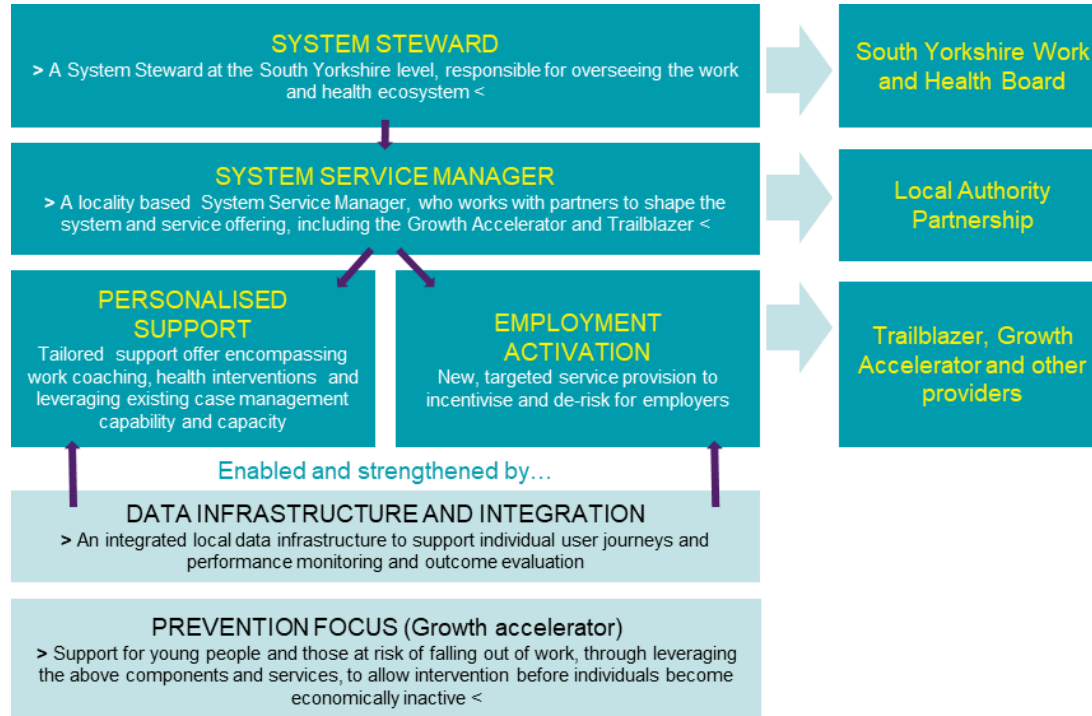
Delivering an individual-centric, strengths based, trauma informed Personalised Support service that places people into work and connects those who are economically inactive to the complex ecosystem of support services in South Yorkshire. Every personalised support journey will be unique, while adhering to specific key stages such as being engaged and attached to the Pathways to Work system, triage support, and ongoing interaction with support services in South Yorkshire, ultimately always working towards sustained employment that aligns with the complex needs of every individual.

## Priority 4- Innovation in reducing economic inactivity rates.

There is local appetite to be bold and innovative, both within the trailblazer and Growth Accelerator. We are currently exploring what that might look like, considering novel partnerships, digital solutions and work simulation pilots.

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# P2W Trailblazer



An integrated, systematic approach that focuses on people, not conditions:

## P2W Growth Accelerator

The Pathways to Work report recognised that the longer someone is out of work, the more likely they are to see their barriers to work multiply. Timely interventions and support can prevent the 'spiralling' of these barriers; new barriers may be developing while people wait for treatment.

NHS England is providing additional funding to South Yorkshire through the Health and Growth Accelerator to strengthen the system's prevention focus and work with specific sub-cohorts to address their health issues holistically and through a people-centred approach, aligning closely to the personalised support model embedded through the Trailblazer, and utilising an integrated approach to triage. It will also embed different ways of working between health, work and education professionals and strengthen the infrastructure which will allow the combined authority, Integrated Care Board and local authorities to work more closely together in the future.

Following initial work to scope the Health and Growth Accelerator, local partners have identified three priorities for support -

### Priority 1: Supporting people in work with repeated or longer-term absences at risk of falling out of work

For the majority of people, health conditions worsen gradually over time, eventually resulting in the person leaving the labour market. There is an opportunity to build on the success of WorkingWin and strong networks with primary care providers as well as those individuals presenting for work capacity assessments to provide enhanced support to facilitate a reduction in absences from work. We also envisage working with GP practices to strengthen alternative pathways which do not require Fit Notes.

### Priority 2: Supporting young people struggling to remain in work or education or enter the workplace due to experiencing depression and anxiety

Over the last 5 years, the number of economically inactive people aged 16-24 has been rising at faster rates than in other age groups, with difficulties with mental health and mood disorders and / or additional educational needs a recognised key driver for this. By ensuring that transitions from Child to Adult services are tailored to young people's needs and focus particularly on those with neurodiversity issues, we want to enable more young people to enter the world of work successfully.

### Priority 3: Enhanced occupational health and wellbeing support through local employers

Only 45% of workers in Britain have access to some form of occupational health services, with the majority of small and medium-sized enterprises unable or unwilling to provide support. There is an opportunity for South Yorkshire to build on existing offers and hubs to widen access, utilising digital and AI technologies. We also want to develop more innovative enhanced wellbeing and support offer targeted to those with specific needs, such as MSK-related pain.

## Progress to date and next steps

### Progress to date

- ✓ Joint delivery plan submitted Dec 2024
- ✓ Wide ranging stakeholder engagement including design workshops with over 100 participants
- ✓ Core working groups established for both Trailblazer and Growth Accelerator inc. Connect to Work
- ✓ Target cohorts and priority areas identified
- ✓ Outline proposals of interventions scoped
- ✓ Roles and responsibilities within the new structure scoped (with recruitment underway in some areas)
- ✓ We are working with central DWP to develop the process and programme
- ✓ South Yorkshire is leading an Economic Inactivity Trailblazer MCA group with all other MCAs

### Next steps

- ❑ Ongoing design work to define what the participant journey through the service will look like, as well as specific delivery elements.
- ❑ Further ecosystem mapping to identify what services already exist and where there are gaps. Particular focus on digital needed
- ❑ Agreement of proposed governance structures to ensure partner alignment at all levels
- ❑ Recruitment and/or commissioning of the required elements
- ❑ Work with delivery partners to ensure alignment to existing employment support services
- ❑ Development of a Work, Health and Skills Strategy
- ❑ Go live – from April 2025

Thank you



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