

NO ONE LEFT BEHIND: CREATING COMMUNITY STARTER JOBS WHERE THEY ARE NEEDED MOST

George Williams, Christopher Wood and Alice Martin
October 2026

CONTENTS

Summary and introduction	4
1. Why the UK needs to invest in job creation	7
2. Introducing a new Community Jobs Fund	9
3. Establishing design principles	10
4. Estimating the potential benefits and costs	12
5. The benefits of investing in community jobs	17
Annex 1: Learnings from UK and Europe	18
Annex 2: Cost and impact methodology	22
References	23

WORK FOUNDATION AT LANCASTER UNIVERSITY

The Work Foundation is a think tank focused on improving working lives across the UK through applied research and new ideas. For over a century, we have worked to break down the barriers individuals and communities face in accessing good work.

We believe everyone should have access to secure, rewarding and high-quality work. By engaging directly with workers, employers, policymakers and leading academics, we deliver rigorous applied research to tackle structural inequalities in the labour market and improve working lives across the UK.

We are part of Lancaster University's Management School, and work with a range of partners and organisations across our research programmes.

CITATION

If you are using this document in your own writing, our preferred citation is: Williams, G.D., Wood, C., & Martin, A. (2026). No one left behind: Creating Community Starter Jobs where they are needed most. The Work Foundation at Lancaster University.

PERMISSION TO SHARE

This document is published under the Creative Commons Attribution Non Commercial No Derivatives 3.0 England and Wales Licence. This allows anyone to download, reuse, reprint, distribute, and/or copy this publication without written permission subject to the conditions set out in the Creative Commons Licence. For further information, please contact: info@theworkfoundation.com.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We gratefully acknowledge the support and challenge provided by our reviewers which much improved our report:

- Andrew Carter and Max Read (Centre for Cities)
- Anjum Klair (Trade Union Congress)
- Divya Jyoti, Martin Quinn and Hilary Ingham (Lancaster University)
- Jason Heyes (University of Sheffield)
- Katy Jones (Manchester Metropolitan University)
- Lukas Lehner (University College London)
- Sam Tims and Katie Schmuecker (Joseph Rowntree Foundation).

We are also grateful for the opportunity to discuss ideas in this report with officials in the Department for Work and Pensions, the Milburn Review team, the West of England Combined Authority, West Yorkshire Combined Authority and Greater Manchester Combined Authority. All of our reviewers' insights helped inform our thinking, but do not imply endorsement.

Thank you to Ben Harrison and Jon Fitzmaurice and colleagues at the Work Foundation team who have supported the delivery of this report in a multitude of ways.

SUMMARY AND INTRODUCTION

The Prime Minister has set an ambitious test for the Government's economic strategy: to deliver "good growth in every postcode".¹ This commitment recognises the need to address the long-term decline of many local economies and to ensure that the people who live there can access good-quality, secure employment.

For many weaker local economies, today's labour market challenges reflect four decades of cumulative economic disruption. De-industrialisation and a series of global and domestic crises over the course of the last forty years have resulted in the loss of large numbers of relatively well-paid, secure jobs, with many places struggling to replace their scale, pay and progression opportunities.^{2, 3}

The consequences extend beyond employment: weaker local economies have contributed to struggling high streets, diminished social capital and community infrastructure, and poorer health outcomes. In turn, this has led to a cycle in which weak labour demand, low investment and declining local assets have made it harder to generate the next generation of good jobs for local people.

The uneven backdrop against which the NEET crisis is playing out

These challenges are particularly important for young people, for whom the transition from education into work is critical to acquiring skills, financial security and routes to progression. Yet the number of young people not in employment, education or training in the UK has risen significantly in recent years, remaining close to one million at the time of publication.

Critically, this challenge is not playing out evenly across the country. The highest rates of youth worklessness are concentrated in parts of the North and Midlands, which are home to eight of the ten English local authorities where young people are most likely to become NEET. In Blackpool, almost one in four young people are NEET, compared with less than one in ten in Bath.⁴

These differences reflect variations in levels of ill health, educational attainment and skills, but also the strength of local labour markets. For example, in the North East, there are more than six young people who are NEET for every suitable available job, compared with three nationally. In addition, in weaker labour markets, young people not only experience fewer opportunities but also a greater risk that the jobs that are available are insecure, low-paid or offer limited progression.⁵

New policy agendas may struggle to deliver in weaker labour markets

The Government is responding to these challenges through a combination of structural reform and a growing package of youth employment support. The Cabinet Office's Rewiring the State Policy Paper sets out plans to devolve more power and funding to drive local economic growth and ensure employment services are better tailored to local needs. Meanwhile, Rt Hon Alan Milburn is due to deliver the final report of his Review into young people and work before the end of 2026, with recommendations for the reform of education, welfare, health and youth employment services anticipated.

The Government has also introduced a £2.5 billion Youth Guarantee, aiming to ensure all young people have a route to "earn or learn". Measures include:

- 300,000 additional work experience and training placements;
- a Youth Jobs Grant to incentivise hiring from employers;
- hundreds of new Youth Hubs;

- and a Jobs Guarantee providing six months of fully subsidised paid work and wraparound support for 18–24-year-olds who have been unemployed for 18 months.

Yet despite this range of interventions, those living in weaker labour markets who are most risk of unemployment, including many young people, are likely to continue to struggle to access sustained employment. While more tailored employment support and increased access to placements, training and work experience are positive steps, these policies are not designed to ensure sufficient good jobs exist locally to provide follow-on employment opportunities or wider economic renewal across communities.

While youth employment is the most high profile and pressing labour market challenge of the moment, young people are not the only demographic in need of support. In addition, future labour market strains will take multiple different forms, as the economy navigates a world of rising uncertainty and rapid technological change. Those same vulnerable communities with weaker labour markets will need support to navigate the transformations and shocks these trends will bring. Yet as things stand, they are likely to continue to rely on short term, ad hoc and piecemeal responses to help them do so.

The case for a new Community Jobs Fund

As Government develops its plans to deliver 'good growth in every postcode' and respond to the NEET crisis, there is an opportunity to institutionalise a new set of tools that policymakers can use to better equip places across England to deliver.

The Work Foundation recommends that the Government establish a new Community Jobs Fund (CJF). Drawing on the experience of successful UK and European programmes, the Fund would enable devolved authorities to create additional secure, socially valuable jobs that address unmet community needs. In doing so it would also support local economic renewal through increased wages and provide more people with a route into good quality employment.

The proposed Fund would help to:

- **Create good quality jobs where private demand is weakest,**⁶ with local public and third sector bodies providing opportunities in education and care, libraries, community centres and green-space renewal, alongside roles aligned with the needs of local SMEs and industrial strategies.
- **Guarantee meaningful paid work to a wider group,** offering up to 25 hours a week paying at least the adult minimum wage for up to three years, with eligibility shaped by the needs of the local labour market, prioritising those who face the greatest barriers to work.
- **Boost struggling local economies and providing wider societal gains,** reviving stagnant household income growth in participating authorities, supporting local spending and providing visible investment in communities.

The CJF would be a flexible instrument, offering devolved authorities the ability to shape qualifying criteria to meet their local needs and objectives, and to iterate on the programme as new challenges emerge.⁷ Given the challenges surrounding youth employment, this report primarily focuses on how it can be used to respond to rising NEET rates, mapping various illustrative scenarios of how authorities may deploy the fund.

For example, analysis suggests an initial pilot targeted at 12 areas in England where the shortage of good quality, entry level work is most acute could create up to 11,000 starter jobs in local areas where they are needed most. This could boost youth employment in participating local authorities by an average of 8.4%, and raise the decade-long stagnation in annual household income growth from a recent average of 0.7% to 0.9%. Such a pilot is estimated to cost between £48 million and £110 million annually.

An expanded scenario, covering 80 local authorities with the most challenging local labour markets, could reach up to 54,000 young people, enough to reduce national NEET rates by 5%. This more ambitious intervention comes at a cost of between £240 and £545 million annually, a figure that is still substantially lower than the price of inaction, which the Milburn Review estimates could cost the UK economy £125 billion annually.⁸ Additional delivery scenarios consider how the Fund could be adapted to address problems like long-term unemployment and health-related inactivity.

The CJF is intended to complement, rather than replace, existing employment support measures and the Youth Guarantee. The scenarios outlined in this report indicate it could help ensure that where good jobs are hardest to find, young people are not only better prepared for work but have a genuine opportunity to access employment that is of value to the local community.

1. WHY THE UK NEEDS TO INVEST IN JOB CREATION

Since the 1990s the UK's labour market has become polarised between high-wage professional employment and precarious low-wage service roles.⁹ The contraction of manufacturing and operational jobs during the deindustrialisation of the 1970s and 1980s took with it a well-trodden path for school leavers to obtain sustainable employment, pay, and the potential for progression.^{10, 11} The hollowing out of middle-paying administrative and skilled manual occupations has served to reduce entry points that would provide long-term career prospects and progression.¹²

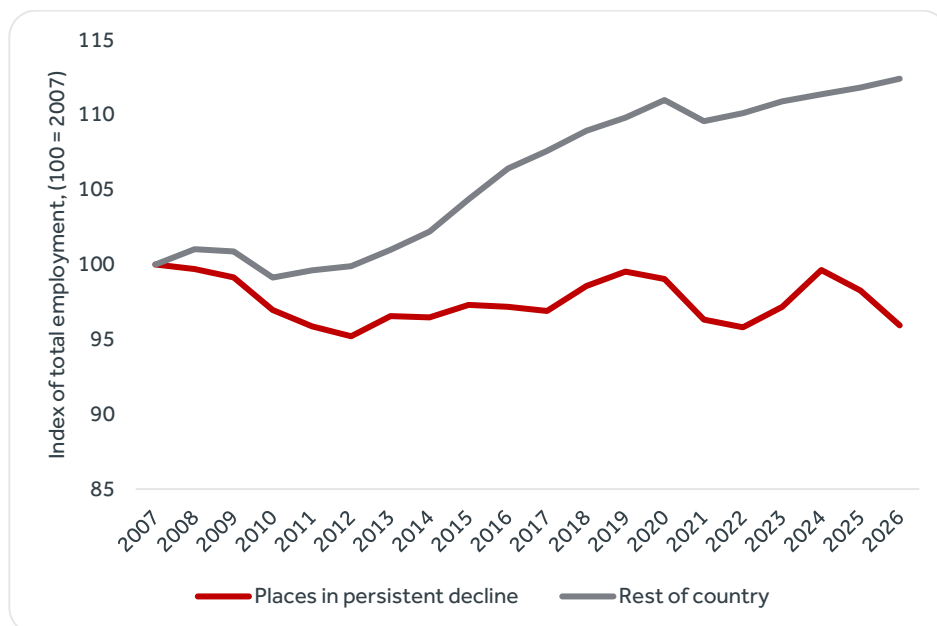
This polarisation persists today. Analysis by the Milburn Review finds that over the past two decades, the number of lower- and middle-skilled UK jobs fell by around 1.6 million, while higher-skilled employment grew by 6.3 million.¹³ Whilst the creation of highly skilled jobs is positive, the decline in entry-level roles creates challenges for people with limited work experience or formal qualifications, and for those places that have struggled to transition their local economies to higher skilled sectors.

Jobs drought and labour market inequities in struggling regions

The restructuring of the UK's employment landscape has contributed to a cohort of places that have faced persistent decline in employment locally, even during times of broader national jobs growth. As a stark example, at least 38 local authorities have fewer jobs today than they did two decades ago.¹⁴ This group is home to around 2.2 million working aged people, and over the last 20 years has collectively lost 4% of their total jobs (versus national job growth of 12%) and 12% of youth jobs (versus national growth of 6%).

The cycles of decline in these places often make policy interventions difficult, as an eroding local private sector requires more direct and sustained support from the state.

Figure 1: Pace of jobs growth in places in sustained decline vs rest of England since 2007.



Source: ONS Annual Population Survey. Places in persistent decline refer to those with fewer jobs in 2026 than in 2007, with controls to exclude areas with high local GDP per capita.

These developments have helped reshape the geography of opportunity in the UK. While low-wage service roles have appeared throughout the country, new professional roles have primarily

been concentrated in London and other major cities.¹⁵ While the availability of work in London and the South East has increased healthily, job growth and density in post-industrial areas, declining seaside towns, and other 'left behind' places has remained substantially weaker.^{16, 17} What often remains in these areas are insecure jobs that do not provide a regular wage or basic employment protections.¹⁸

These areas tend to have relatively weaker established private sectors, contributing to a lack of local spending power to maintain highstreets and the wider foundational economy. Therefore, new interventions are needed that support job creation in places where companies cannot.

Young people are inheriting these long-standing problems

A 2026 report published by the University of Birmingham which analysed data from 179 UK regions found that local unemployment and job availability are far stronger predictors of youth NEET rates than either poor qualification or ill-health.¹⁹ Similarly, longitudinal analysis using the Labour Force Survey between 1993-2018 has found that UK youth unemployment and NEET rates respond strongly to local labour market conditions, leading to persistent spatial clustering.²⁰

Structural changes in the youth job market, such as the retail sector losing 115,000 youth jobs since 2017,²¹ and hospitality vacancies halving in the last four years, reflect bigger changes in the economy that have an outsized impact on young people.²² Reflecting this, Work Foundation analysis has found that average weekly adverts for starter jobs halved (-49%) over the last decade, with pronounced reductions in retail, customer services, and entry-level professional service roles.²³ Many companies that might have created entry-level jobs have either closed or are operating different business models requiring fewer staff and supported by new technologies.²⁴ Incentives to hire young people or offset business costs won't bring back jobs lost to this form of restructuring.

While support to help unemployed young people into work or training is welcome, it is not enough to help them navigate poor labour market conditions once support ends. Young people in work face high insecurity and low pay,²⁵ alongside weaker workplace health support.²⁶ Rising health-related inactivity needs to be understood in this context, as a symptom of growing needs among young people increasingly exposed to both limited work opportunities and poor working conditions.

What is needed

While the Prime Minister has set out a long-term ambition to re-industrialise parts of the country, delivering change at that scale will come too late for people in the UK's weakest jobs markets today. Young people are particularly at risk: poor early employment experiences can lead to lasting 'scarring' through lower wages and fewer job opportunities²⁷ – meaning the impact does not go away with age. Tackling these challenges therefore requires sustained intervention to improve opportunities now and over the longer term.

In the short term, stimulating private sector hiring may help, but its reach is limited where employers lack demand or capacity. Business incentives cannot replace jobs lost through restructuring, while skills measures cannot reverse changes in the jobs available locally. Recent evaluations of youth guarantee trailblazers have highlighted their impact is limited by structural barriers, namely a lack of available jobs.^{28, 29} They call for a more long-term approach to support sound administration and relationship building, a clear focus on ring-fenced paid work, and taking a place-based approach.

In weaker labour markets, stronger public intervention is likely to be needed, led by strategic authorities and delivered with local authorities, employers and third-sector organisations to create new employment opportunities responsive to local needs.

2. INTRODUCING A NEW COMMUNITY JOBS FUND

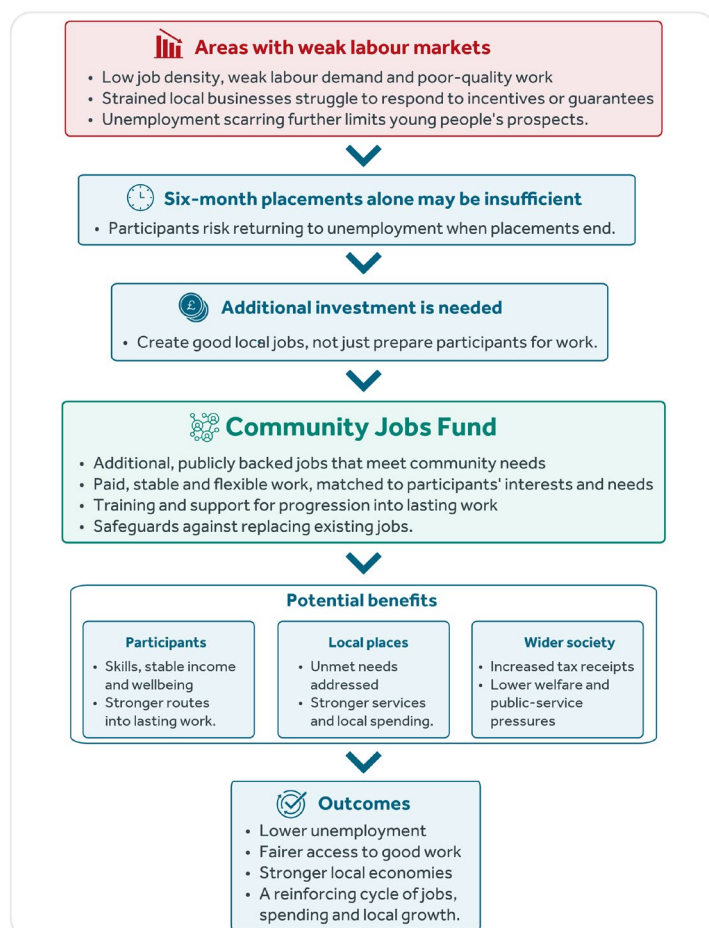
This section outlines a proposal for a new Community Jobs Fund – drawing on previous UK job creation policy initiatives stretching back over many decades and building upon the principles of emerging ‘community job guarantee’ initiatives from countries across Europe.

The purpose of such a Fund would be to enable devolved authorities to bolster wider efforts to support more people into work, including but not limited to young people. It would do so by boosting the stock of secure and purposeful employment opportunities in those parts of the country where they are most lacking.

A Community Jobs Fund would seek to provide work and wages as a viable and voluntary alternative to unemployment for a wider cohort of people living in areas that lack good jobs. While the Youth Guarantee supports young people into training, work experience and employment, including a six-month paid Jobs Guarantee, the CJF would serve a complementary purpose. It would create secure, socially valuable jobs of up to three years where suitable employment is lacking, flexed to local needs and different populations.

Led by Mayoral and Strategic Authorities, the CJF could be particularly valuable in weaker labour markets, creating jobs that meet local policy goals such as declining high streets, unmet care needs, poor public realm and health inequalities. Delivering these roles primarily through the public and third sectors would help ensure they do not crowd out existing commercial activity. Research suggests two in every five jobs (42%) supported by existing guarantees may have been created anyway, and this public-led approach may ensure a level of additionality that is difficult to achieve in private sector-led guarantees.³⁰

Figure 2: How a UK Community Jobs Fund could have a positive impact



3. ESTABLISHING DESIGN PRINCIPLES

The UK is not alone in seeking to tackle long-term unemployment and could benefit from learning lessons from international counterparts. In recent years, several European countries have begun experimenting with what can broadly be described as 'community job guarantee' schemes, as a means of addressing this challenge. This activity has been supported by the establishment of a fund by the European Social Fund Plus+ to support promising innovations in this area.³¹

European community job guarantees seek to directly eliminate long-term unemployment and address the societal and personal impacts of worklessness by redirecting social security payments into the creation of additional good-quality, socially valuable work for those who want it but can't obtain it in the open labour market.³² The costs of providing such work are understood to be outweighed by the benefits they provide to the individual and their local community. Job activities in contemporary schemes have included cycle repair, furniture restoration, food rescue, elderly care, and community gardening.

Evidence from the UK, such as the Future Jobs Fund and Kickstart, and Europe show that place-based employment programmes can improve employment, financial security, wellbeing and employability when they provide meaningful, paid work alongside training and support.^{33, 34} European approaches, including France's Territoires Zéro Chômeur de Longue Durée and Austria's Marienthal Job Guarantee (see Annex), highlight the value of creating socially useful jobs around local needs, tailoring roles to participants' skills and circumstances, and evaluating outcomes over time.

Drawing on the design of these schemes, while recognising the long term, place-based nature of the UK's challenges, a Community Jobs Fund should focus on the areas most in need of additional secure, decently paid entry level employment opportunities.

In particular, the following design principles are important:

- **Eligibility determined by Mayoral and Strategic Authorities:** Depending on local need, the scheme could target 18–24-year-olds claiming out of work benefits for over six months, or take a more universal approach open to all young people, regardless of whether they are in receipt of benefits. Alternatively the focus could be on mitigating long-term unemployment by opening it up to all working age residents out of work for 12 months. Crucially, this flexibility would be afforded to local decision-makers, to tailor based on the needs of the local population
- **Employment conditions:** Participants provided up to 25 hours of flexible work per week paying at least the adult National Minimum Wage. Participants receive full-employment rights and guaranteed employment for between one and three years, with support to move onto other roles within and after this period
- **Nature of work:** Socially valuable, aligned with local priorities and community needs. Jobs are additional, non-displacing, and matched to participants' skills, interests, health and personal needs
- **Voluntary:** Participation would be voluntary, with local government and third-sector organisations proactively identifying and supporting eligible people into suitable roles
- **Additional support:** Participants are provided with mentoring, access to training and support to obtain suitable and permanent work in the open labour market
- **Job providers:** Local government, third sector providers and selected local employers
- **Funding:** Re-direction of resulting welfare savings from some participants, additional tax receipts generated, plus additional national government investment
- **Delivery:** The scheme will be delivered through Mayoral and Strategic authorities, with more areas becoming eligible as the devolution agenda progresses.

Why prioritise the provision of longer-term job opportunities?

While short-term placements can be useful for providing experience for participants during temporary labour-market disruption,³⁵ the provision of longer-term jobs targets lasting outcomes in weaker labour markets. In particular, they will allow participants more time to build skills and experience, while reducing the risk of cycling between programmes and unemployment.^{36, 37}

Recent European programmes have moved beyond the traditional model of short-term placements, offering substantially longer employment opportunities to participants. France's TZCLD provides permanent contracts, Berlin's SBI offered jobs of up to five years, and Austria's MAGMA provided roles for up to three years.³⁸

This approach provides participants with the security to pursue different follow-on opportunities that are suited to their interests and circumstances, rather than feeling pressure to accept the first available job regardless of its quality or sustainability. For those with limited prior work experience, or those managing health conditions or other complex needs, this is likely to be critical in de-risking and tailoring the process of entering follow on work.^{39, 40}

Furthermore, the provision of longer-term roles offer participants greater financial security, providing more opportunity to save, reduce debt, contribute to a pension and meet costs associated with work, training, housing or transport.⁴¹ Evidence suggests this is likely to be particularly true for young people.⁴²

Alongside the potential benefits for employment outcomes, evidence from multi-year European programmes also suggests the provision of longer-term jobs can allow for administrative costs to be somewhat mitigated, due to the reduced need for repeated placement set-up and initiation.^{43, 44} In addition, more stable participation gives delivery teams greater time to understand which referrals and supports work best; build relationships with participants and employers; and plan progression routes.^{45, 46}

Longer-term roles can also help delivering authorities to meaningfully align the CJF with local policy objectives and allow community services to become established rather than disappearing after a short period of time.⁴⁷

It is not anticipated that all participants would remain on the programme for the full term, but transitions out would reflect their own choice rather than the expiry of a short-term placement. To address the risk that participants find themselves 'locked in' to job roles provided by the CJF, ongoing employment and training support should be made available, helping participants to connect with wider opportunities that their developing skills and experience are relevant for.

Finally, while the potential stimulus effects of the CJF are challenging to estimate (as is explored further in the following section), the provision of longer-term job opportunities is likely to bolster individual incomes and sustain additional spending in the community for longer. Bank of England research finds that financially constrained households spend a greater share of additional income, meaning sustained employment for these groups could provide a more persistent stimulus in weaker labour markets.⁴⁸

Given these factors, it is recommended that the Community Jobs Fund supports jobs that last between one and three years. In some cases, hours could taper to accommodate other work or training, but every role provided would last at least 12 months.

4. ESTIMATING THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS AND COSTS

This section presents a high-level, illustrative cost-benefit analysis of introducing a Community Jobs Fund, exploring scenarios where Government devolves funding in England to support the creation of additional secure, longer-term jobs in communities where with persistently weak labour demand.

The results highlight the range of potential benefits for local places and the national economy of a CJF, while also identifying elements that require further fiscal and economic appraisal.

4.1. Illustrative delivery scenarios and design choices

Two primary delivery scenarios are assessed, both focused on addressing the NEET challenge in England. In the first, it is assumed that the CJF is initially introduced in a select number of strategic authorities, with the potential costs and benefits of creating and supporting jobs estimated across a limited, twelve local council area pilot.⁴⁹ These authorities were identified based on having low job densities and high levels of youth unemployment, which could each be clustered into sets of four adjacent council areas, all of which are located in an existing strategic authority.

In the second, the number of strategic and local council areas included is expanded according to similar need measures,⁵⁰ but excluding major urban centres that may be better suited to alternative support, making for a total participation of eighty local council areas across eleven strategic authorities.⁵¹

Figure 3: Scope of impact assessments



While both delivery scenarios focus the introduction of a CJF towards tackling youth unemployment, it is anticipated that in reality, local leaders will be equipped to tailor the eligibility criteria to meet the specific employment challenges of their areas. However, as outlined in previous sections, it is anticipated that local leaders may wish to adapt the eligibility criteria of the CJF to meet other local employment needs in the future.

Eligibility criteria for the two primary delivery scenarios

In order to illustrate the likely number of young people who could benefit from a CJF the assessment utilises data on benefit recipients as its pool of possible participants.

For this illustration participants are regarded as eligible for the programme if they:

- are between 18 and 24;
- are currently receiving Universal Credit (UC) and/or legacy Jobseekers Allowance (JSA);
- and have been out of work for at least six months.

Assumptions

To calculate an upper limit estimate of costs, it is assumed that:

- all participants stay at least a year in the job;
- all unemployed people in this group take-up the job;
- additionally, 22% of those in this group who are inactive for health reasons are also assumed to take up the job, with this rate calculated from the national average of people who are health inactive but are willing or would like to work.*

Results are presented as a range between this upper limit, and a lower threshold in which half as many of each group take up the guarantee.

Other design features

Participants are:

- paid at the adult minimum wage (costed at 2025 rates of £12.71, to match the year of available data)
- for an average of 25 hours per week
- they do not lose access to their UC benefits when taking up the guarantee but see the value of benefits decline at the current policy rate.*
- they pay income taxes and National Insurance contributions on their job guarantee earnings.

The assessment includes the potential for increased employment and earnings, reduced welfare spending, additional tax revenues, and longer-term economic and social gains from preventing detachment from work. All scenarios are purely illustrative, recognising that the choice to implement specific instances of the CJF would be decided by devolved authorities, with the specific design of the programme varying according to local needs and priorities.

4.2. Estimating benefits and costs of a youth Community Jobs Fund

On average nationally, rolling out a programme of this type focused on boosting youth employment is estimated to result in a net cost per participant of a little over £10,000 annually, or £838 per month. The basic cost of the programme per month is notably higher, at £1,376 per month, but the offset of reducing benefits costs and rising tax receipts is estimated to lower this cost by 40%.

This offset effect is indicative of a policy that grows better the more ambitious it is. The higher the level of ambition in terms of pay and hours worked, the lower the residual benefit cost of supporting participants, and the higher the value for money of the fund. For example, while our baseline scenario of 25 hours of work per week would see total benefit costs for participants falling by 44%, the same programme at 16 hours would reduce the benefits bill by only 22%.

Targeted pilot: 12 local council areas in three MCAs

In the more limited pilot programme, estimates for the total net cost to the exchequer range between £48 and £110 million annually. It is estimated that between 4,700 and 11,000 good quality, guaranteed jobs would be created, and while this is small in national terms, it has a notable local impact given the size and scale of youth labour market participation in the authorities included.

Across all authorities involved, this level of uptake would see total youth employment increase by an average of up to 8.4%, a turnaround that would end more than a decade of year-on-year declines in these places. On average, if the maximum uptake was achieved, youth unemployment in these areas would be expected to fall by 33%, with youth unemployment effectively halving in places like North and South Tyneside.

Expanded rollout: 80 local council areas in 11 MCAs

In a larger delivery scenario of eighty local authorities, the reach expands to between 24,000 and 54,000 participants. At this scale, the programme starts to have a notable impact on national NEET rates, which at the upper threshold would be expected to fall by almost 5% in the UK (from one million to 958 thousand young people), enough to rollback the recent growth in NEET rates to 2024 levels.⁵²

This expanded intervention is estimated to require between £240 and £545 million annually. But with the Milburn Review estimating that current NEET levels could cost the UK economy £125 billion, this level of intervention remains significantly lower than the potential price of inaction.⁵³

A devolved, flexible approach

While these illustrative scenarios demonstrate the potential direct impacts and associated costs of a CJF focused on addressing youth unemployment and inactivity, it is anticipated that local leaders may wish to adapt the eligibility criteria of the Fund to respond to other local employment needs.

For example, a programme targeting young people inactive for health reasons in the West Midlands could reach over 3,000 participants at the cost of around £30 million, contributing to the Combined Authority's aim to help 93,000 people back into work by 2035.⁵⁴ This represents an estimate of the share of young people in the West Midlands who are currently inactive for health reasons and claiming benefits, but have expressed a desire to work.

Elsewhere, South Yorkshire's objective to create high-quality local jobs could be supported by a programme for any long-term unemployed adult, which could reach up to 7,500 people across Doncaster, Rotherham and Barnsley at an upper cost of £64 million annually.⁵⁵

Implications for devolved funding

While feasibly viable at the national level, costs of this nature would prove extremely challenging to bear if they had to be funded locally by strategic authorities or councils themselves.

On average, the total cost of the programme would be equivalent to between 2% and 4% of a current local authority's budget. But with the lowest budgets often coinciding with the highest levels of deprivation, there is a large variation in the likely impact of this cost burden on local

finances, with the likes of Mansfield and Pendle seeing potential costs larger than 10% of their entire current budget in the upper uptake scenario. Unassisted, these costs would be higher, because local authorities would not directly receive the savings from lower benefit costs or higher tax revenue.

Therefore, a programme of central funding with devolved implementation represents the most realistic option for delivery of a Community Jobs Fund.

Limitations of the assessment

Unless otherwise stated, these estimated costs should be treated as an upper threshold for the wage component of such a programme, given the assumption of universal uptake among the targeted cohorts. In reality smaller scale programmes would be cheaper and could be scaled progressively as the programme is tested and refined. This costing does not include the price of the underlying work being done by those participating in the programme, on the assumption that these initiatives will be costed and budgeted separately, but this would raise costs to some extent. The estimate cited above excludes administrative expenditure. Alternative modelling that incorporates these additional requirements increases the overall figure by between 3% and 4%.⁵⁶

5. THE BENEFITS OF INVESTING IN COMMUNITY JOBS

The analysis in the previous section underlines the potential direct costs and benefits of implementing a Community Jobs Fund in England. While it is important to recognise that the scheme will represent a net cost to the public finances, there are also a wider range of anticipated benefits that are harder to measure but are likely to bring an additional boost to local economies and wider Government objectives.

This section makes the case that Government should therefore not only see the Community Jobs Fund as an employment intervention, but as a critical investment in local economic and community renewal.

Boosting local spending which benefits high street businesses

As established in earlier sections, in weaker local labour markets a lack of good quality jobs is contributing to a damaging cycle: fewer jobs reduce local household spending, weakening high streets and the viability of local businesses. This further limits employment opportunities and can heighten the risk of individuals falling out of the labour market, or leaving the area.

Among the 12 local authorities included in the proposed CJF pilot, only one has seen gross disposable household income growth of more than 1% over the last ten years. And among the much wider eighty authority group, average growth over the last decade is only just over 1%. Many of these areas have seen their economies transition from externally-oriented productive sectors, like mining or manufacturing, towards more locally-oriented sectors rooted in the foundational economy, such as retail, hospitality and private services.

This shift has led to local economies that are particularly dependent on the spending power of local residents.⁵⁷ As that spending power has stagnated or declined, the knock-on effect has been to weaken the local foundational economy, thus further eroding local economic growth and spending power.⁵⁸

A Community Jobs Fund could make a contribution to breaking this cycle by increasing local incomes while funding jobs that meet genuine local needs. Increased spending can support local retailers, hospitality and services, creating wider economic benefits beyond the initial job. Indeed, modelling indicates that the 12-authority pilot could create a once-off increase in annual income growth in participating local authorities from an average of 0.9% to 1.1%, while the broader programme would be expected to raise household income growth from 1.3% to 1.5%.

In this way, the CJF could support the stabilisation of these local economies by meeting community needs and increasing household spending power. This would help strengthen local businesses while supporting services such as housing and care. While reindustrialisation on the scale alluded to by the Prime Minister will take many years and significant additional investment to deliver, the Fund could help establish the conditions for a sustained recovery and more diverse private sector growth in the future.

Community impact

This assessment of the Community Jobs Fund can only estimate the potential economic impact of the pay associated with the programme, and thus almost certainly doesn't capture the full, wider potential positive benefits on offer. The value of the socially beneficial work undertaken as part of the programme is likely to be significant in local authorities that often have diminished public sector capacity and high levels of need for the type of work participants will be undertaking.

For more than half of the eighty local authorities assessed for the wider roll out of the CJF, public sector employment to population ratios are below the national average, and at times this represents a significant gap. The likes of Redcar & Cleveland, for example, has one public sector

employee (including the likes of teachers and doctors) for every 12 people, versus a national average of one to seven.⁵⁹ And this already weaker public sector employment base has been under pressure, with areas of high need, like Redcar or Oldham, seeing declining public sector employment over the last decade, even as nationally similar employment has grown by 27%.⁶⁰

This represents a major challenge, as in many of these areas local needs remain very high, and local capacity in the labour market remains low. Areas with few youth job opportunities tend unsurprisingly to age faster than the rest of the country, with this aging being accompanied by a rising need for carers.⁶¹ In some of the pilot authorities assessed, there is a ratio of one carer for every eight people over 65, versus an average of one for every five nationally.⁶² And in the broader pool of authorities, this ratio can stretch as high as one for every sixteen older people, all pointing to the need to boost the number of care related jobs, and retain more people in the local economy who can do those jobs.

Government should therefore see the Community Jobs Funds not only as an employment intervention. By increasing jobs and spending power in communities where the market is failing to provide sufficient opportunities, government can help strengthen high streets, retain young workers, meet local social needs and create the conditions for sustainable private-sector growth in the future.⁶³

In this way, the Community Jobs Fund can become the catalyst for turning the Prime Minister's ambition of "good growth in every postcode" into a reality for communities across the country.

ANNEX 1: LEARNINGS FROM UK AND EUROPE

The origin of 'job guarantee' models stretches back to the Keynesian full-employment commitments of the mid-twentieth century post-war consensus.⁶⁴ Typically these interventions have been enacted in response to specific periods of crisis – such as the mass youth unemployment in the 1980s, the 2008 financial crash and the COVID-19 pandemic.⁶⁵

Case study A: Future Jobs Fund (FJF), 2009–2011

- FJF was introduced in 2009 as an emergency response to the sharp rise in youth unemployment following the 2008 financial crisis.
- FJF created around 105,000 six-month, subsidised jobs for young people and others facing long-term unemployment, primarily in the public and voluntary sectors.*
- Jobs were additional, paid at least the National Minimum Wage, and designed to provide meaningful work alongside skills and work experience.
- DWP's evaluation found participants were significantly more likely to move into unsubsidised employment and spent less time claiming benefits over the following two years of the scheme than comparable non-participants.*
- The programme generated net benefits for participants and society, with estimated gains of around £7,750 per participant despite a net Exchequer cost of around £3,100 per participant.*
- Independent evaluations also found improvements in skills, confidence, employability and wellbeing, particularly for young people with limited work experience.*

Other common characteristics of similar UK interventions is the short-term nature of funding available – meaning jobs themselves would be provided for limited periods, and the schemes themselves would typically last for a small number of years. These design features reflect the fact such schemes have generally been introduced to provide routes to employment against the backdrop of particular time-limited shocks.

Case study B: Kickstart Scheme, 2020–2022

- Launched during the COVID-19 pandemic, Kickstart aimed to prevent long-term unemployment and labour market scarring among 16–24-year-olds on Universal Credit by providing subsidised jobs.
- The scheme funded six-month, 25-hour-per-week jobs, covering the National Minimum Wage, employer costs and £1,500 per placement for training and employability support. The jobs created had to be new and additional.
- Kickstart Delivered 163,000 job placements between September 2020 and March 2022, with a budget of around £2 billion.*
- A DWP evaluation found participants were more likely to move into unsubsidised employment, with around 11 additional participants per 100 entering work after two years compared with similar non-participants.
- The scheme improved outcomes particularly for young people with weaker labour market prospects, while evaluations found high levels of participant satisfaction and access to workplace experience.
- DWP evaluation estimated Kickstart generated a positive return when wider benefits were considered, with £3.15 of benefits per £1 spent over five years across all perspectives.*

In contrast, a new wave of place-based job creation schemes has emerged across Europe, reflecting growing recognition of the need to address persistent long-term unemployment

through demand-side interventions. This has been supported by European Social Fund Plus funding for innovative approaches to reducing long-term unemployment.⁶⁶

These 'community job guarantee' schemes typically seek to create good-quality, socially valuable work for people who want to work but cannot secure employment in the open labour market, by redirecting existing social security spending towards job creation.

Job activities in contemporary schemes have included cycle repair, furniture restoration, food rescue, elderly care, and community gardening.

Case study C: Territoires Zéro Chômeur de Longue Durée (TZCLD), France, 2016-present

- TZCLD, is based on three principles: no one is unemployable, there is no shortage of useful work, and creating jobs costs less than long-term unemployment.*
- The scheme operates in designated territories which typically have between 5,000-10,000 residents. Local Employment Committees identify unemployed residents' skills and unmet community needs, creating new, socially useful jobs paid at least the French statutory minimum wage.
- Since its inception TZCLD has expanded from 10 to 85 territories (2025), employing 4,200 people across 94 enterprises.* As of 2024 annual funding for the project stood at €80 million.*
- TZCLD primarily operates in areas with disadvantaged communities and supports those furthest from the labour market.*
- Analysis of the scheme has found that participants are more likely to secure permanent work, alongside improvements in health and wellbeing.*
- TZCLD has an estimated net cost of €6,000 per full-time job per year, with additional social and community benefits not included in this figure.*
- The model has since inspired similar schemes in Belgium and is being considered in Italy.

Most European schemes of this nature launched to date have been comparatively small in scale, rooted in specific, relatively small communities. This brings with it the benefit of reducing the cost associated with the creation of new jobs, but equally has significant implications for the national impact on reducing unemployment. The extent to which these schemes can be expanded to encompass more of the population is an active focus for many countries that have introduced them.

Case study D: The Marienthal Job Guarantee (MAGMA), Austria, 2020-2024

- MAGMA pilot scheme ran in Gramatneusiedl a post-industrial region that has long struggled with long-term unemployment.
- The scheme was guided by the philosophy that it is better to directly employ people rather than manage them in unemployment because work offers support, meaning, structure and dignity.
- MAGMA provided a voluntary job guarantee to anyone unemployed for over 12 months or at risk of long-term unemployment.
- Participants received tailored training before entering socially useful jobs with subsidised employers or social enterprises, paid the collective bargaining minimum wage.
- MAGMA received an ongoing evaluation by academics from Oxford University's Institute for New Economic Thinking. Their analysis found that participants were far more likely to be employed in comparison to a control group (53% vs 6%), with long-term unemployment falling and no evidence of negative effects on other jobseekers.*
- The scheme also improved financial security, social recognition and wellbeing, while increasing unsubsidised employment and self-employment.
- The schemes net costs to the public sector were estimated at around €220 per month, and participants income increased by €153, after accounting for reduced benefit payments, revenues of social enterprises, and tax and social insurance contributions.
- The scheme was found to be cost-effective with net public cost falling to just €41 per participant per month in the programme's second half.
- Following its success, the Austrian Government committed €50 million in 2025 to expand the model nationally.

ANNEX 2: COST AND IMPACT METHODOLOGY

Estimates of the cost and impact of various scenarios for the rollout of the CJF are derived from a Work Foundation assessment tool developed as part of this research. The tool is not limited to the scenarios considered, but is a general-purpose methodology for assessing job guarantees, that has been used in the specified scenarios by setting criteria like qualifying age, qualifying areas, qualifying time out of work, rates of uptake, CFJ hours and wages, and levels of benefit support.

Recipients & savings

With qualifying participants limited to those currently receiving benefits support, data on recipients is primarily drawn from DWP Stat-Xplore data. In addition to recipients of Universal Credit (UC), a small number of people on legacy Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) are also included (and make up about 1% of the sample). Recipient data is structured at local authority level, and all overarching assessments reflect the aggregate or average of local impacts and costings.

As a simplifying assumption, recipients are assumed to receive a constant level of benefits support, set at the average of UC and JSA recipient values as detailed in DWP's Benefits expenditure and caseload tables. For the scenarios considered, this results in an average UC monthly value of £1031, and an average JSA monthly value of £409.

In the scenarios considered in the paper, recipients of CJF support do not lose access to existing benefit support, but see the level of that support decline at the current policy rate. That states that for earnings above a baseline working allowance, UC declines by 55p for every £1 earned. Working allowance levels vary by UC recipient, and the assessment uses the midpoint of the two key thresholds (£427 and £710), for a level of £568.50. Benefits for legacy recipients of JSA are assumed to fall to zero.

Declines in UC are based on earnings after tax and employee National Insurance contributions. Tax rates follow current policy rates, with an assumed personal allowance of £1047.50, and an assumed basic tax rate of 20%. National Insurance is assumed to be paid at rates of 8% for earnings above the primary threshold (£242), and at 2% for those above the Upper Earnings Limit (although this limit is not reached in any of the examined scenarios).

The sum of declines in benefits costs and rises in tax and NI contributions, are collectively assumed to offset the primary cost of the CJF.

Costs & affordability

Costs for individual local authorities are derived by multiplying the number of potential qualifying candidates by the uptake assumptions, and multiplying these by the assumed salary cost for the specified wages and hours. Qualifying criteria – such as age, months out of work, employment status, health status, and location – are used to filter qualifying recipients.

In the main scenarios considered in the paper, simple illustrative uptake rates are used for the costing, in which 50% and 100% of qualifying unemployed recipients take up the guarantee. In addition, between 11% and 22% of those currently inactive for health reasons are assumed to take up the CJF, with this rate based by the share of people inactive for health reasons who express a desire to work in the Labour Force Survey. Those inactive for health reasons are based on benefit recipients who do not have working requirements, but this is an imperfect proxy and may include some recipients inactive for other reasons.

In addition to the core cost of the guarantee, an illustrative administration cost is included in the scenarios above. Admin costs are calculated using a simple assumption in which administering the programme to the first 100 recipients costs 5% of the CJF's wage cost, 4% for the next 100

recipients, and so on to a baseline of 1% of wage costs from 400 recipients onwards. Programme costs for the work undertaken by participants are not included in the cost estimate.

Costs are contextualised against local authority budget data, using MHCLG's local authority revenue expenditure and financing data.

Impact

Estimates for the number of recipients of the CJF are also used to calculate changes in employment, unemployment and inactivity rates. Because significant shares of unemployed or inactive people do not claim benefits, these estimates use local authority employment data from ONS's Annual Population Survey (APS). In addition, the ONS's model-based estimates of unemployment for the APS are used to fill gaps in this underlying data.

Estimates of the change in gross household disposable income are based on the ONS's Regional gross disposable household income data; while estimates of changes in NEET rates are based on the ONS's series on young people not in education, employment or training.

The impact estimates do not include the effect of stimulus to the local economy, which is expected to be a primary mechanism by which the CJF creates onward growth effects. Initial modelling of stimulus impacts suggested they could be considerable, but these results are not included in the paper, due to the limited availability of input-output data at local authority level.

The value of the actual work done by recipients is also not included in the impact assessment, given that this work would vary considerably at the discretion of implementing authorities. However, it similarly would be expected to have considerable value to the community and local economy.

REFERENCES

- ¹ Burnham, A. (2026). Andy Burnham Speech at the People's History Museum, Manchester – 29 June 2026. Available at: <https://web.archive.org/web/20260703052127/https://www.andyburnham.org.uk/speech-29-june>
- ² Beatty, C. and Fothergill, S. (2020). The long shadow of job loss: Britain's older industrial towns in the 21st century. *Frontiers in Sociology*, 5, article 54. Available at: [Frontiers | The Long Shadow of Job Loss: Britain's Older Industrial Towns in the 21st Century](#)
- ³ Florisson, R. (2023). Delivering Levelling Up? How secure work can reduce regional inequality. Work Foundation, Lancaster University.
- ⁴ Department for Work and Pensions. (2026). Young people and work: interim report. Available at: [Young people and work: interim report - GOV.UK](#)
- ⁵ Jyoti, D., Suttill, B., Quinn, M., Watt, P., Redmond, J., Williams, E., Fitzmaurice, J. and Martin, A. (2026). Starting out: Boosting youth employment in local labour markets. The Work Foundation at Lancaster University.
- ⁶ Jones, K. (2025). Putting "good work" at the centre of employment policy. MetroPolis, Manchester Metropolitan University. Available at: [Putting "good work" at the centre of employment policy](#)
- ⁷ Regan, A., Quinn, M., Romaniuk, A., Sampson, S., Stratton, T., Brittain, B. and Taylor, A. (2021). Devolution and governance structures in the UK: Lessons from evidence. Industrial Strategy Council. Available at: <https://research.birmingham.ac.uk/en/publications/devolution-and-governance-structures-in-the-uk-lessons-from-evidence/>
- ⁸ Milburn Commission. 2026. Young People and Work: Interim Report. Department for Work and Pensions. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/young-people-and-work-interim-report/young-people-and-work-interim-report>.
- ⁹ Giupponi, G. and Machin, S. (2024). Labour market inequality. *Oxford Open Economics*, 3(Supplement 1), pp. i884–i905. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1093/ooec/odad039>
- ¹⁰ Roberts, K. (2020). Regime change: Education to work transitions in England, 1980s–2020s. *Journal of Applied Youth Studies*, 3, pp. 23–42. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s43151-020-00004-6>
- ¹¹ Yates, E. (2017). Reproducing low-wage labour: Capital accumulation, labour markets and young workers. *Industrial Relations Journal*, 48(5–6), pp. 463–481. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1111/irj.12195>
- ¹² Goos, M. and Manning, A. (2007). Lousy and lovely jobs: The rising polarization of work in Britain. *The Review of Economics and Statistics*, 89(1), pp. 118–133. Available at: [2.pdf](#)
- ¹³ Department for Work and Pensions. (2026). Young people and work: interim report. Available at: [Young people and work: interim report - GOV.UK](#)
- ¹⁴ Overall, 49 local authorities in England experienced declining employment over this time, but in some select cases this resulted from, for example, rising housing prices squeezing businesses out of the area. To account for these outliers, any local authorities that rank in the top 100 of local GDP per capita are removed from the list.
- ¹⁵ Xu, X. (2023). The changing geography of jobs. Institute for Fiscal Studies. Available at: [The changing geography of jobs | Institute for Fiscal Studies](#)
- ¹⁶ Office for National Statistics. (2020). Coastal towns in England and Wales: October 2020. Available at: [Coastal towns in England and Wales - Office for National Statistics](#)
- ¹⁷ Beatty, C. and Fothergill, S. (2021). Beyond the pandemic: Older industrial Britain in the wake of the crisis. Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research, Sheffield Hallam University. Available at: [beyond-the-pandemic.pdf](#)
- ¹⁸ Florisson, R. (2023). Delivering Levelling Up? How secure work can reduce regional inequality. The Work Foundation at Lancaster University.
- ¹⁹ Houston, D. (2026). Local labour market buoyancy holds the key to solving the UK's NEET 'crisis'. City-REDI, University of Birmingham. Available at: [Local Labour Market Buoyancy Holds The Key To Solving The UK's NEET 'Crisis' - University of Birmingham](#)

- ²⁰ Bradley, S., Migali, G. and Navarro Paniagua, M. (2020). Spatial variations and clustering in the rates of youth unemployment and NEET: A comparative analysis of Italy, Spain, and the UK. *Journal of Regional Science*, 60, pp. 1074–1107. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1111/jors.12501>
- ²¹ Office for National Statistics. (2026). Labour Force Survey – Composite Database of Multiple Years of Microdata. [Data series]. 7th release. UK Data Service. Available at: (Office For National Statistics 2026)
- ²² Department for Work and Pensions. (2026). Young people and work: interim report. Available at: [Young people and work: interim report - GOV.UK](#)
- ²³ Jyoti, D., Suttill, B., Quinn, M., Watt, P., Redmond, J., Williams, E., Fitzmaurice, J. and Martin, A. (2026). Starting out: Boosting youth employment in local labour markets. The Work Foundation at Lancaster University.
- ²⁴ Department for Work and Pensions. (2026). Young people and work: interim report. Available at: [Young people and work: interim report - GOV.UK](#)
- ²⁵ Florisson, R. (2024). The UK Insecure Work Index 2024. The Work Foundation at Lancaster University.
- ²⁶ Atay, A., Wood, C., Holland, P. and Leka, S. (2026). Unequal support: Employer views on workforce health in 2026. The Work Foundation at Lancaster University.
- ²⁷ De Fraja, G., Lemos, S. and Rockey, J. (2021). The wounds that do not heal: The lifetime scar of youth unemployment. *Economica*, 88(352). Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1111/ecca.12384>
- ²⁸ Cabral, D., Gerard, E., Bronovsky, K., Aylward, N., Nermond, O., Treneman, S. and Vempalli, S. (2026). Cambridgeshire and Peterborough's Youth Guarantee Trailblazer: Implementation and process evaluation. Learning and Work Institute. Available at: <https://learningandwork.org.uk/cambridgeshire-and-peterboroughs-youth-guarantee-trailblazer-implementation-and-process-evaluation>
- ²⁹ Bronovsky, K., Price, D., Robey-Turner, C., Bradstreet, J. and Aylward, N. (2026). Evaluation of Central London Forward's Youth Guarantee Trailblazer. Learning and Work Institute. Available at: https://learningandwork.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/07/Evaluation-of-CLFs-YG-Trailblazer_FINAL-1.pdf
- ³⁰ Nye Cominetti, Julia Diniz, Lindsay Judge, Imogen Stone, and Greg Thwaites. 2026. Take a Chance on Me. Resolution Foundation. <https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/publications/take-a-chance-on-me/>.
- ³¹ European Commission. (2024). New ESF+ funding for innovative ideas to reduce long-term unemployment and help people find jobs. Available at: <https://european-social-fund-plus.ec.europa.eu/en/news/new-esf-funding-innovative-ideas-reduce-long-term-unemployment-and-help-people-find-jobs>
- ³² MERGE consortium. (2025). Potential policy instruments for sustainable and inclusive wellbeing. Available at: <https://mergeproject.eu/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/Potential-policy-instruments-for-sustainable-and-inclusive-wellbeing-1.pdf>
- ³³ Department for Work and Pensions. (2012). Impacts and costs and benefits of the Future Jobs Fund. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/impacts-and-costs-and-benefits-of-the-future-jobs-fund>
- ³⁴ Department for Work and Pensions. (2024). Kickstart Scheme: A quantitative impact assessment. DWP Research Report No. 1053. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/kickstart-scheme-a-quantitative-impact-assessment>
- ³⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/impacts-and-costs-and-benefits-of-the-future-jobs-fund>
- ³⁶ McVicar, D. and Podivinsky, J. M. (2010). Are active labour market programmes least effective where they are most needed? The case of the British New Deal for Young People. Melbourne Institute Working Paper No. 16/10. Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research, University of Melbourne. Available at: <https://ideas.repec.org/p/iae/iaewps/wp2010n16.html>

³⁷ IFF Research. (2023). Kickstart Scheme: Process evaluation. DWP Research Report No. 1032. Department for Work and Pensions. Available at: [Kickstart Scheme - process evaluation - GOV.UK](#)

³⁸ Markowitsch, J. and Scharle, Á. (2024). Towards zero long-term unemployment in the EU: Job guarantees and other innovative approaches. European Commission. Available at: [Jobs primarily offered by local government and third sector providers, but have included selected local employers](#)

³⁹ Office for National Statistics. (2021). Which groups find it hardest to find a job following a period out of work? Available at: [Which groups find it hardest to find a job following a period out of work? - Office for National Statistics](#)

⁴⁰ Department for Work and Pensions. (2025). Work Choice impact evaluation. Ad Hoc Research Report No. 110. Available at: [Work Choice impact evaluation - GOV.UK](#)

⁴¹ Brewer, M., Cominetti, N. and Jenkins, S. P. (2025). Unstable pay: New estimates of earnings volatility in the UK. Resolution Foundation. Available at: [Unstable Pay • Resolution Foundation](#)

⁴² Department for Work and Pensions. (2026). Young people and work: interim report. Available at: [Young people and work: interim report - GOV.UK](#)

⁴³ National Audit Office. (2021). Employment support: The Kickstart Scheme. Available at: <https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Employment-support-the-Kickstart-Scheme.pdf>

⁴⁴ Kasy, M. and Lehner, L. (2026). Employing the unemployed of Marienthal: Evaluation of a guaranteed job program. Working paper. Available at: https://maxkasy.github.io/home/files/papers/Jobguarantee_marienthal.pdf

⁴⁵ Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations. (2022). Community Jobs Scotland evaluation report. Available at: [SCVO Community Jobs Scotland Evaluation Report](#)

⁴⁶ Markowitsch, J. and Scharle, Á. (2024). Towards zero long-term unemployment in the EU: Job guarantees and other innovative approaches. European Commission. Available at: [Jobs primarily offered by local government and third sector providers, but have included selected local employers](#)

⁴⁷ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2026). Territories with zero long-term unemployed people in France. Available at [Territories with zero long-term unemployed people in France](#)

⁴⁸ Albuquerque, B. and Green, G. (2022). Financial concerns and the marginal propensity to consume in Covid times: Evidence from UK survey data. Staff Working Paper No. 965. Bank of England. Available at: [Financial concerns and the marginal propensity to consume in Covid times: evidence from UK survey data | Bank of England – the UK's central bank](#)

⁴⁹ Barnsley, Doncaster, Gateshead, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, North Tyneside, Redcar and Cleveland, Rotherham, Sheffield, South Tyneside, Stockton-on-Tees, Sunderland.

⁵⁰ East Midlands, Greater Lincolnshire, Greater Manchester, Hull and East Yorkshire, Lancashire, Liverpool City Region, North East, South Yorkshire, Tees Valley, West Midlands, West Yorkshire.

⁵¹ Amber Valley, Ashfield, Barnsley, Bassetlaw, Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool, Bolsover, Bolton, Boston, Broxtowe, Burnley, Bury, Calderdale, Chesterfield, Chorley, County Durham, Coventry, Darlington, Derby, Derbyshire Dales, Doncaster, Dudley, East Lindsey, East Riding of Yorkshire, Erewash, Fylde, Gateshead, Gedling, Halton, Hartlepool, High Peak, Hyndburn, Kingston upon Hull, City of, Kirklees, Knowsley, Lancaster, Lincoln, Mansfield, Middlesbrough, Newark and Sherwood, Newcastle upon Tyne, North East Derbyshire, North East Lincolnshire, North Kesteven, North Lincolnshire, North Tyneside, Northumberland, Nottingham, Oldham, Pendle, Preston, Redcar and Cleveland, Ribble Valley, Rochdale, Rossendale, Rotherham, Rushcliffe, Salford, Sandwell, Sefton, Solihull, South Derbyshire, South Holland, South Kesteven, South Ribble, South Tyneside, St. Helens, Stockport, Stockton-on-Tees, Sunderland, Tameside, Trafford, Wakefield, Walsall, West Lancashire, West Lindsey, Wigan, Wirral, Wolverhampton, Wyre.

⁵² Office for National Statistics (ONS). 2026. 'Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)'. August 27.

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/unemployment/datasets/youngpeoplenotineducationemploymentortrainingneettable1>.

⁵³ The Milburn Review estimates the total annual cost of current youth NEET rates at £125 billion. The cited figure excludes from this estimate the value of direct benefit savings and tax revenues (which are separately accounted for in the modelling) and the value of direct economic potential lost (which refers to programme costs not covered by the CJF's wage subsidy). This prices the cost of NEET rates which the CJF can engage with at £72,2 billion annually. When applied to the 5% of NEET young people benefiting in the scenario, this results in a general economic cost saving of £3.9 billion.

⁵⁴ West Yorkshire Combined Authority. (2026). Region of Learning and Creativity Strategy. Available at: [Region of Learning and Creativity Strategy – Inspiring Futures](#).

⁵⁵ South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority. (2025). South Yorkshire's Growth Plan. Available at: <https://www.southyorkshire-ca.gov.uk/explore/education-skills-employability>.

⁵⁶ Admin costs reflect a simplified assumption, in which costs are valued against the overall cost of support, with this cost declining as participation grows, to reflect improved economies of scale and learning-by going. Admin costs are valued at 5% of support for the first group of beneficiaries, decline to 4% for the next 100, 3% for the subsequent 100, and so on until a minimum rate of 1%.

⁵⁷ Beatty, C. and Fothergill, S. (2020). The long shadow of job loss: Britain's older industrial towns in the 21st century. *Frontiers in Sociology*, 5, article 54. Available at: <https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/sociology/articles/10.3389/fsoc.2020.00054/full>

⁵⁸ Bevan Foundation. (2021). Making the everyday economy work for smaller places. Available at: [Making the everyday economy work for smaller places FINAL](#)

⁵⁹ Office for National Statistics. (2026). Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES): Local authority district – Table 6. Available at: [Local authority district – Business Register and Employment Survey \(BRES\): Table 6](#).

⁶⁰ Office for National Statistics. (2026). Annual Population Survey (APS). Available at: [Annual Population Survey \(APS\) QMI - Office for National Statistics](#).

⁶¹ Ingham, H. (2026) 'A future jobs market', *Fifty Four Degrees*, Issue 25, pp. 8–9. Lancaster University Management School. Available at: [Fifty Four Degrees Issue 25](#)

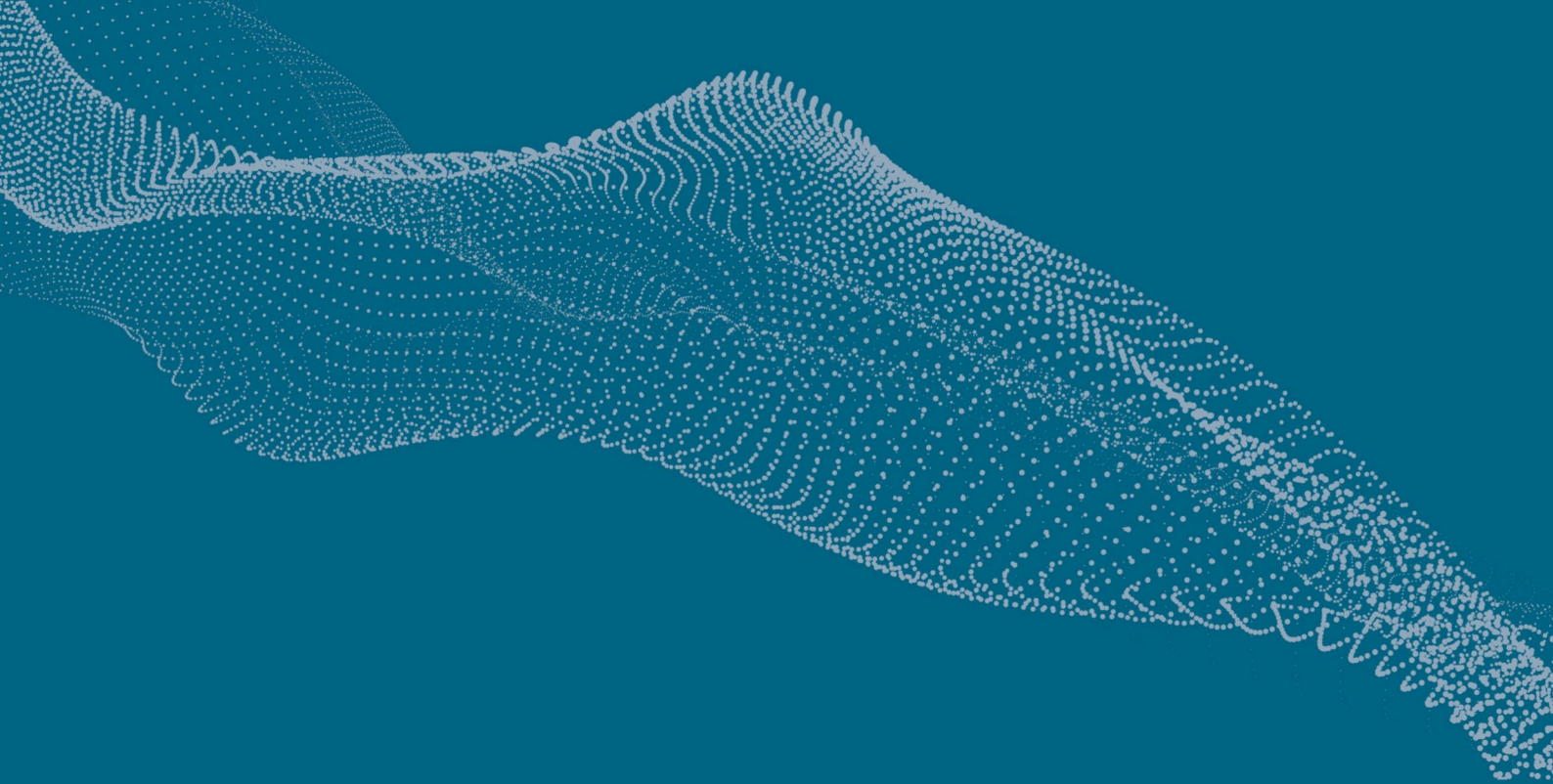
⁶² Office for National Statistics. (2026). Annual Population Survey (APS). Available at: [Annual Population Survey \(APS\) QMI - Office for National Statistics](#).

⁶³ Quinn, M. (2015). The impact of place on policy outcomes. *Regional Studies*, Regional Science, 2(1), pp. 230–236. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/21681376.2015.1019956>

⁶⁴ Tcherneva, P. R. (2018). The job guarantee: Design, jobs, and implementation. Working Paper No. 902. Levy Economics Institute of Bard College. Available at: https://www.levyinstitute.org/pubs/wp_902.pdf

⁶⁵ Tcherneva, P. R. (2022). The job guarantee and economic democracy. *Revue européenne du droit*, 4. Available at: <https://geopolitique.eu/en/articles/the-job-guarantee-and-economic-democracy-why-a-legally-enforceable-right-to-employment-is-needed-and-how-it-can-be-implemented/>

⁶⁶ European Commission. (2024). New ESF+ funding for innovative ideas to reduce long-term unemployment and help people find jobs. European Social Fund Plus, 18 April. Available at: <https://european-social-fund-plus.ec.europa.eu/en/news/new-esf-funding-innovative-ideas-reduce-long-term-unemployment-and-help-people-find-jobs>



WORK
FOUNDATION 



Lancaster University
Management School