



Get Tees Valley Working Plan

First Edition (September 2025)

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Foreword – Tees Valley Mayor and Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Education, Employment and Skills

Economic growth is the number one mission of Government. The national ambition to grow the UK’s economy is grounded in the development of ambitious Local Growth Plans, ensuring the benefits of a growing and future-facing economy are felt across local areas and by local people.

A business is only as good as its people. And so too is a region. We are dedicated to investing in our people, giving local people the skills they need to secure well-paid, good-quality jobs right here in the region.

We are also focused on ensuring our businesses have an expert workforce so that they can grow and continue to boost our local economy, in our existing sector strengths and our emerging sector strengths. We’re supporting the current workforce to upskill and nurturing a future workforce that equips businesses – and Tees Valley – with the specialist skills we need to succeed.

The Tees Valley region is a region of contrasts. Home to globally competitive industries and emerging growth sectors, yet burdened by long-standing deprivation and low living standards, health inequalities, and high levels of economic inactivity. The Get Tees Valley Working Plan bridges this divide with targeted, place-based solutions and a pioneering alignment of health, skills and employment support. We know that good work is good health.

At the heart of our Local Growth Plan, and this plan, is inclusive growth. Backed by strong partnerships, from our Local Authorities to the NHS, Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), Department for Education (DfE) and wider partners and stakeholders, the Get Tees Valley Working Plan is founded on the principle of inclusive economic growth that benefits all, tackles inequality, and creates opportunities for everyone in our region.

To reach the goal of an 80% employment rate, we need sustained investment and cross-sector collaboration.

We will continue to build a Tees Valley where everyone can thrive.

We will Keep Tees Valley Working.

Ben Houchen, Tees Valley Mayor & Councillor Lisa Evans, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Education, Employment and Skills



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Get Tees Valley Working Plan is a regional employment, health and skills strategy developed in response to the UK Government's Get Britain Working White Paper, which aims to increase employment, reduce economic inactivity, mitigate health-related barriers to work and improve job quality.

Tees Valley is comprised of the five local authority areas of Darlington, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar & Cleveland and Stockton-on-Tees. With oversight from the Tees Valley Education, Employment and Skills Advisory Group, acting as the local partnership group, the plan has been developed by Tees Valley Combined Authority, with our local authorities, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and Jobcentre Plus, and the North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board (ICB), wider partners and stakeholders.

This first edition of the Get Tees Valley Working plan provides a comprehensive analysis of the current labour market activity in the Tees Valley. It includes a detailed description of the scale and distribution of economic inactivity across the region, and the key risk factors that drive the high levels of regional economic inactivity. It covers the role of key stakeholders and starts to identify where we need to work differently to maximise opportunities and overcome challenges; and how collectively we can work together to do this.

The plan underpins the 'workforce' element of our Local Growth Plan and addresses how it will support national, regional, and local ambitions, including those in our Local Growth Plan.

The plan sets out how our integrated employment, health and skills system will work together to reduce inequalities, improve experiences of our health and care services and improve the health and wellbeing of people living and working in the Tees Valley by 2035.



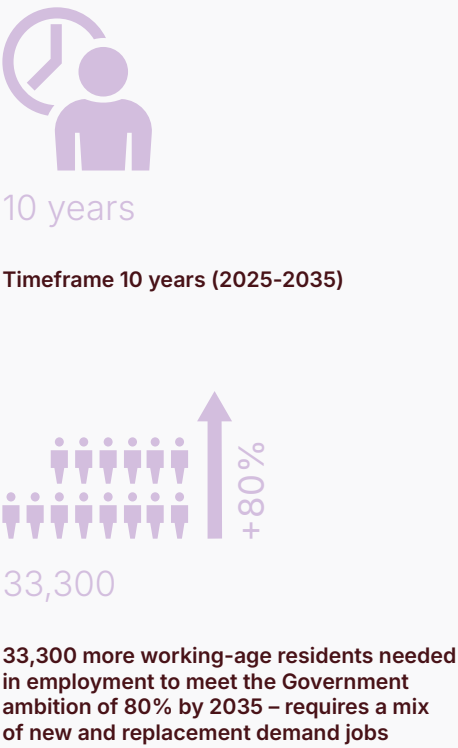
INTRODUCTION

Local Get Britain Working plans are the central starting point to the Government's long-term ambition to achieve an 80% employment rate by 2035.

This, the first edition of the Get Tees Valley Working Plan, focuses on the inactive target group and on addressing economic inactivity at the local level, however, the scope of the plan will be expanded over time to include unemployment and employment.

The current employment rate for the country is 75.7%.
The current employment rate for Tees Valley is 71.9%, which is equivalent to 295,800 working-age adults (aged 16-64).
To achieve the national employment rate of 80% – and assuming no change in the working age population – Tees Valley would need to move an additional 33,300 more local people into work.

We want to continue to increase employment in Tees Valley to achieve the long-term government ambition of an 80% employment rate by 2035.



Source: Employment. APS Year to March 2025: Number of Tees Valley working ages residents in employment, in Tees Valley or elsewhere.
Source: Employment Rate. APS Year to March 2025: Number of working age residents in employment, divided by the working age resident population

Our Opportunity

The priority for our local plan is to ‘Keep Tees Valley Working’.

With a current employment rate of 71.9% in Tees Valley, the majority, equivalent to more than seven out of ten working age adults, are employed. This means that many of the people forecast to be in the labour market in the next 10 years are already in work.

Our biggest economic opportunity is to keep our existing workforce in work. Retention of our existing workforce is critical and support for those in employment and accessing work, our existing and new workforce and their employers, is a priority.

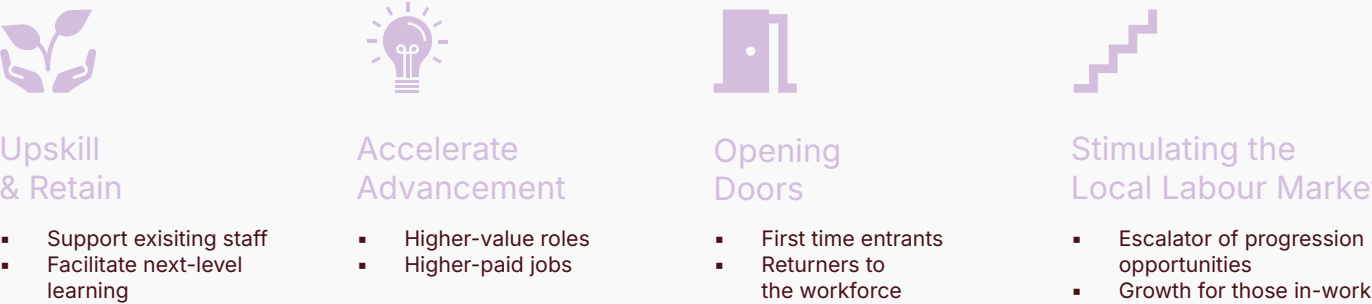
Our overarching strategic approach to this plan is structured around three pillars of support – Retention, Intervention and Preparation.



The development of this plan provides us with the opportunity to explore and better understand the transitions and interdependencies between the pillars through a work, health and skills lens.

The productivity and competitiveness of Tees Valley businesses are dependent upon the current and future workforce and their skills levels. Typically, around one third of productivity growth is delivered by improvements in the skills base of the workforce.

This is why we will maximise our opportunity to support our current workforce to upskill and retrain, facilitating progression onto next level learning and accelerating progression into higher value, higher paid jobs. This in turn will help to stimulate the local labour market, creating an escalator of progression opportunities for those already in-work and new opportunities for those entering the labour market for the first time or returning after a period away.





However, we also know that health, economic activity, employment, and productivity are interdependent and declining health among working-age people is a growing risk to both livelihoods and economic prosperity. In simple terms, too many people in Tees Valley are out of work due to ill health or are leaving work, with little support to stay employed.

Work on waiting list management with our NHS partners sits alongside a greater focus on preventing people becoming ill in the first place, and NHS organisations are thinking differently about how best to support those whose ability to work is at risk, including through ill health or disability, to remain in work or make a timely return to working.

NHS North East & North Cumbria Integrated Care Board

As one of only three **Health and Growth Accelerator** sites in the country, NHS North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board is leading the way to identify those whose health places them at risk of becoming economically inactive and then getting them the support they need.

Compared to England as a whole, Tees Valley (71.9%) has a relatively low employment rate (England 75.7%) and relatively high unemployment and economic inactivity rates. 13,200 (4.3% of the economically active) are unemployed and 102,300 (24.9% of the 16-64 population) are economically inactive. (England Unemployment 4.0% and Economic inactivity 21.2%).

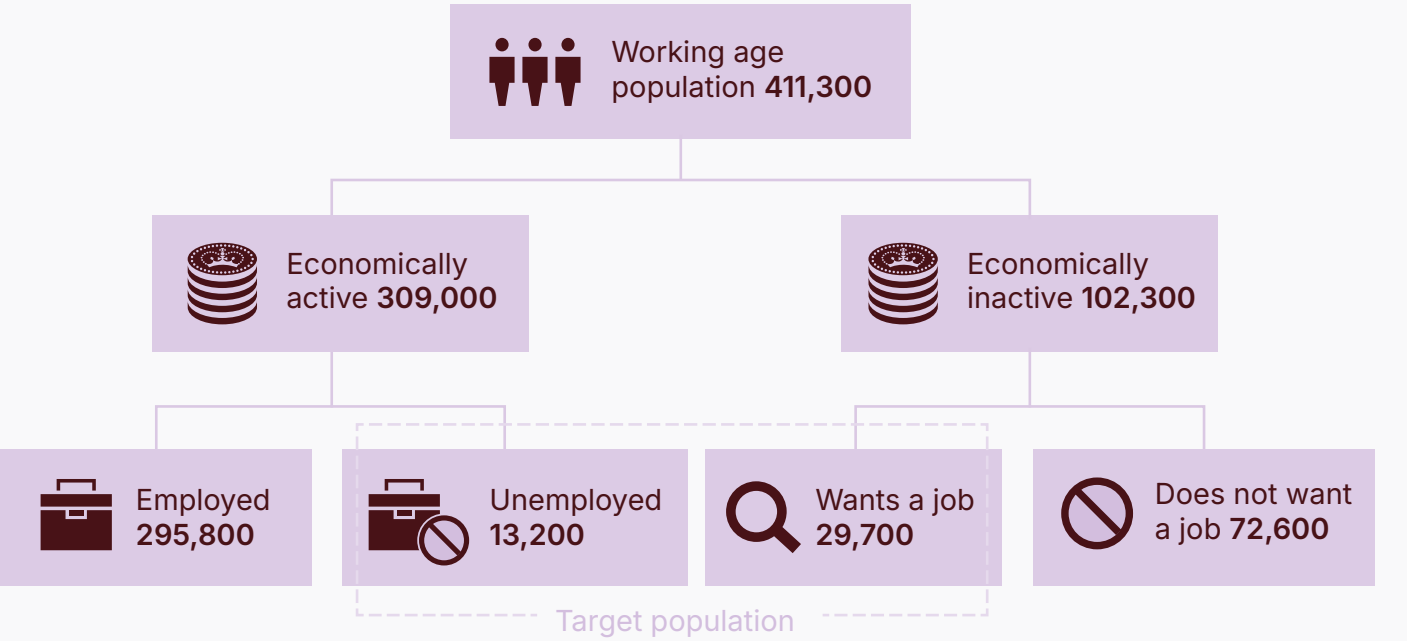
To match the UK economic inactivity rate would mean there would need to be 15,300 fewer Tees Valley working age residents who are economically inactive.

Government has asked local areas to develop detailed plans that look to address the challenges related to labour force participation (employment, unemployment and economic inactivity) and progression in work.

In total, we estimate there are 42,900 Tees Valley residents of working age who are not working and would like to work (unemployed and economically inactive). This group will be the target group population for our plan once fully expanded.



Tees Valley Working Age Population Overview



This Get Tees Valley Working Plan, focuses on the inactive target group and on addressing economic inactivity at the local level, however, the scope of the plan will be expanded over time to include unemployment and employment.

By investing in our residents we will ensure that we have a workforce that enables growth in the Tees Valley, both in terms of our existing sector strengths and our emerging sector strengths.

Source: APS, Year to March 2025

Five unique boroughs. One remarkable region. This is Tees Valley. Where anything is possible.

Home to a landscape that's
breathtaking and dramatic.

Where the beauty of the countryside,
meets the serenity of the coast.

And where our diverse town
centres are alive with culture.

An area united by a history of
industry and innovation, passed on
from generation to generation.

Where our adaptive, resilient and down
to earth nature stands proud.

And where grit, determination and
transformation form part of our DNA.

Today, we're carrying the same flame that
lit the first friction match, from the place
that built the world and kept it on track.

We're setting sail on a new journey, guided
by an enduring spirit of opportunity.

This is a corner of the North East
that's shaping its own future.

Where the next generation of creators,
makers and doers are defining tomorrow.

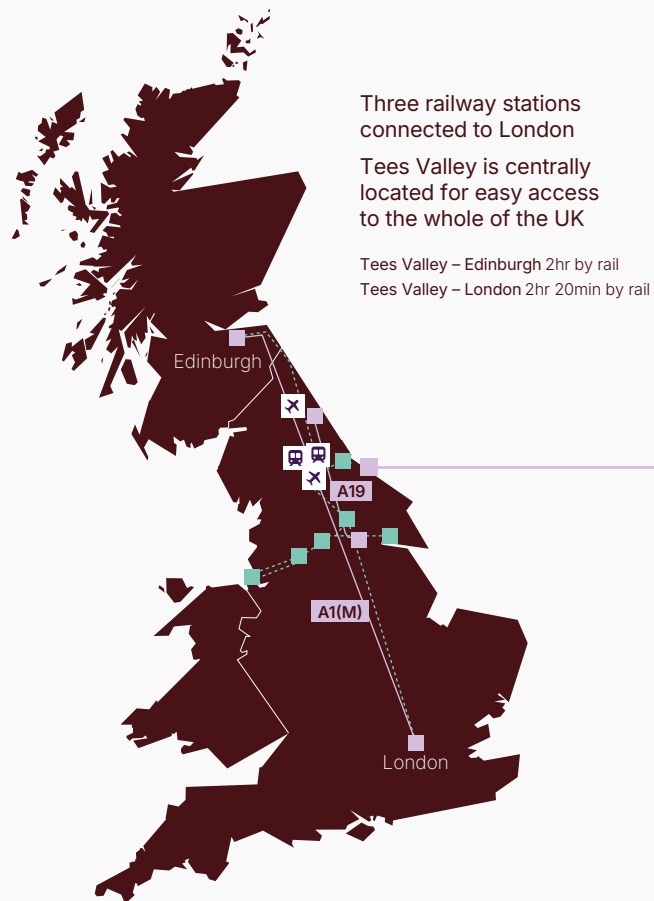
And where boundaries are being
pushed like never before.

A land of hard grafters, fine
crafters and good laughs.

A region that's surprising, inventive,
and unstoppable all at once.

**This is Tees Valley.
Where anything is possible.**





Tees Valley's central location makes it perfectly placed for investment.

Situated on the east coast between London and Edinburgh, there is easy access to the whole of the UK via the strategic road and rail network.



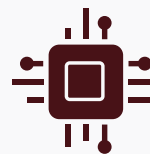
Home to the UK's largest and most successful Freeport



National Road and Rail connectivity via the A1(M), A19 and A66



International Airport offering global connectivity via Amsterdam's Schiphol airport



Superfast broadband connectivity



Sits on the East Coast Main Line route






Multiple deep water ports

LOCATION

NATIONAL & LOCAL POLICY CONTEXT

Alongside Local Growth Plans, local Get Britain Working plans should set out the economic ambition for the local area for the next 10 years. Central to our Local Growth Plan is our ambition to provide good jobs with long term prospects that local people can access.

National Policy Context		
The Growth Mission – Kickstart Economic Growth Raising living standards in every part of the United Kingdom		
<div>Place</div> <div>Regional growth through</div> <div></div> <div>investment, devolution and reform, and support for house building.</div>	<div>People</div> <div>More people in good jobs and</div> <div></div> <div>improved employment prospects, skills and productivity.</div>	<div>Industrial Strategy</div> <div>An industrial strategy to bolster</div> <div></div> <div>growth-driving sectors and free, open trade.</div>
<div>English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill (July 2025)</div> <div>Legislation to give new powers to Metro Mayors and Combined Authorities. This will support Local Growth Plans that bring economic benefit to communities.</div> <div>‘Areas of Competence’</div> <div><div>1. Transport and local infrastructure</div><div>2. Skills and employment support</div><div>3. Housing and strategic planning</div><div>4. Economic development and regeneration</div><div>5. Environment and climate change.</div><div>6. Health, wellbeing and public service reform</div><div>7. Public safety</div></div>	<div>Get Britain Working White Paper (November 2024)</div> <div>Long-term ambition to achieve an 80% employment rate.</div> <div>The approach is based on 3 pillars:</div> <div><div>1. a modern industrial strategy and Local Growth Plans – to create more good jobs in every part of the country</div><div>2. improving the quality and security of work through the Plan to Make Work Pay</div><div>3. reforms to employment support, bringing together skills and health to get more people into work and to get on in work</div></div>	<div>UK’s Modern Industrial Strategy and IS-8 Sector Plans (June 2025)</div> <div>Aim is to create a pro-business environment and play to the UK’s strengths, focusing on eight growth driving sectors:</div> <div><div>▪ Advanced manufacturing</div><div>▪ Clean energy industries</div><div>▪ Creative industries</div><div>▪ Defence</div><div>▪ Digital and technologies</div><div>▪ Financial services</div><div>▪ Life sciences</div><div>▪ Professional and business services</div></div>

Get Britain Working White Paper

The [Get Britain Working White Paper](#) is the UK Government’s proposal to reform employment, health and skills support to tackle economic inactivity and support people into good work. The paper set out three objectives - improving engagement; employment; and earnings.

This will be achieved by addressing six key issues:

- too many people are excluded from the labour market – especially those with health conditions, caring responsibilities or lower skill levels

■ too many young people leave school without essential skills or access to high-quality further learning, an apprenticeship or support to work so that they can thrive at the start of their career

■ too many people are stuck in insecure, poor quality and often low-paying work, which contributes to a weaker economy and also affects their health and wellbeing
- too many women who care for their families still experience challenges staying in and progressing in work

■ too many employers cannot fill their vacancies due to labour and skills shortages, holding back economic growth, driving up reliance on overseas labour, and undermining living standards

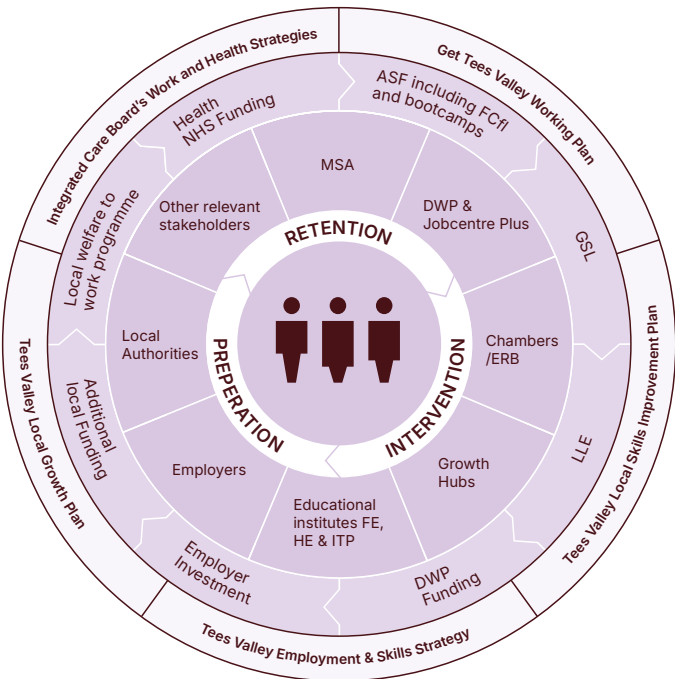
■ there is too great a disparity in labour market outcomes between different places and for different groups of people

Local Get Britain Working Plans are to be detailed plans that address the challenges related to labour force participation (employment, unemployment and economic inactivity) and progression in-work.

The plans will form a part of achieving the Government’s ambition of an 80% UK employment rate by identifying local labour market challenges and setting out how local areas will address them. It is the intention that these plans develop a whole system approach to tackling the supply and demand side challenges within local labour markets.

To this end, local Get Britain Working Plans will help integrate the new jobs and careers service, combining Jobcentre Plus and the National Careers Service, with wider local efforts, while also supporting better coordination across public services such as the NHS and DWP to inform future commissioning and delivery.

These plans are intended to align with Local Growth Plans, other local economic strategies, Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs), and Integrated Care Board’s Work and Health Strategies.



OUR LOCAL GROWTH PLAN

Vision

“Securing sustained and inclusive growth to exceed the UK growth rate – building on our success to date, to power a diverse and balanced economy, with job growth and productivity gain that creates opportunities for everyone.”

Local Growth Plans provide a long-term 10-year strategic framework for growth in regions across England. They are focused on the holistic needs and opportunities in the region, and set out where devolved powers and funding will be focused to drive productivity, support the national growth mission and help deliver the UK’s Modern Industrial Strategy.

Local Growth Plans should highlight connections between local and national initiatives to support the growth-driving sectors set out in the Industrial Strategy and its eight Sector Plans.



Long Term



Co-developed with Government, Business, Partners and Stakeholders



Connected Inclusive Region



Integrated & Flexible Delivery



Focused on Outcomes & Impact



Diverse, Balanced, Sustainable Economy

OUR PRIORITIES

To achieve our desired impacts and ambitions, we have agreed **five high-level growth priorities**, which reflect the need to ensure a strong foundation and recognise the levers to growth.

It is our intention that the Tees Valley Local Growth Plan provides the framing and opportunity for cross-region collaboration – allowing Government, stakeholders, partners, constituent local authorities and residents to understand how we shall collectively work to make Tees Valley a great place to live, study, work, invest and visit.

Five High-level Local Priorities



Grow our globally competitive modern industrial and technology cluster and enabling Advanced Manufacturing sector by securing further investment, deepening our innovation expertise and attracting and retaining talent.



Create the environment for growth and accelerate regeneration of our communities making Tees Valley an attractive place to live, work and invest.



Accelerate our rapidly growing digital cluster and creative cluster by securing further investment, growing our business base and attracting and retaining talent.



Accelerate the development of strategic transport, energy, digital and housing infrastructure to maximise the potential of our growth opportunities and create the environment for growth.



Diversify and drive the growth of our foundational economy by increasing business density and developing the skills of our people to get more people into work.

Three Shared Priorities



Skills & Employment



Transport



Housing & Commercial Development

ECONOMIC OVERVIEW



£18.9 billion growing economy (GDP)
In 2023



712,900 rapidly expanding population
Up by 34,500 or 5.1% (up 3.7% nationally)
in 3 years



Modern Industrial & Technology Cluster
Worth £2.0 billion in GVA.
Globally significant and high productivity (£153,200 p.a.)



Chemical & Process subsectoral strength exists
In Mining of chemical and fertiliser minerals (75% of national jobs located in Tees Valley) and Manufacture of organic basic chemicals (20% of national jobs)



Low productivity
GVA per hour worked at 84.5% of national rate



Low wages
At around 17% less than national rates



Advanced Manufacturing subsectoral strength exists
In Manufacture of steel pipes and fittings (14% of national jobs located in Tees Valley)



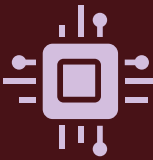
Advanced Manufacturing
A strong exporting sector (78% of all goods exports)



High rates of economic inactivity
24.9% of working age adults out of the labour market (21.2% nationally)



Widespread poverty & deprivation
125,000 residents living in left-behind wards



Digital & Creative Cluster – a fast-growing sector
Jobs up 45% between 2019 and 2024



Foundational Economy
A major employer (86% of all jobs)

ECONOMIC OVERVIEW

Tees Valley is home to a £18.9 billion economy (GDP) with unique strengths and associated opportunities for inclusive growth. The area is home to sectors with particularly high rates of productivity which are well above national rates even though regionally aggregate productivity is low. Whilst the Tees Valley economy provides a strong platform for growth, a number of economic challenges remain.

Tees Valley has an ageing society and in recent years the number of people living in the area has risen sharply. Rapid population change has significant implications for both society and the economy. Whilst Tees Valley has one of the largest gaps to the national average in terms of GDP per capita (67.8% of the UK rate in 2023), it performs significantly better when underlying core productivity is taken into account. Tees Valley GVA per hour worked was 84.5% of the UK rate in 2023. The GVA per hour worked measure focuses solely on work itself and removes employment rate, economic inactivity, demographic and commuting considerations, which all feed into GDP per capita. These differences highlight the need for the Tees Valley Local Growth Plan to focus on both productivity increase, such as innovation and skills, and labour market challenges, such as jobs and economic inactivity.

The Strategic Planning Framework reflects the significance of our globally competitive, high-productivity sectors, in terms of future inward investment and growth in gross domestic product. It highlights the importance of advanced manufacturing as an enabling sector and the growing digital and creative clusters. Collectively, these are the sectors where we are likely to record the greatest increases in productivity and innovation.

The Framework makes it clear that the ‘foundational’ economy is critically important for inclusive growth in the Tees Valley whilst acknowledging the Tees Valley’s contribution to the Modern Industrial Strategy and its links with the Government’s eight identified growth-driving sectors.

In terms of sectoral strengths at the local authority level, all areas have sectoral strengths across many of our priority sectors.

For example, whilst the Digital and Creative Cluster in Tees Valley is relatively small compared to some other parts of the country, it is growing fast across most of Tees Valley and has significant jobs numbers in all local authority areas.

In addition, jobs in our Modern Industrial & Technology Cluster are spread widely across the Tees Valley with distinctive strengths in each of Clean Energy, Chemical & Process and Bio-manufacturing & Life Sciences.

National Significance

Tees Valley is home to a globally significant, high productivity (GVA per job £153,200 p.a., 56% above the UK sectoral rate) Modern Industrial & Technology (MI&T) Cluster worth £2 billion to the local and national economy. This cluster is supported by a jobs rich Advanced Manufacturing sector which adds another £0.5 billion. Both MI&TC and Advanced Manufacturing have relatively more jobs and businesses in Tees Valley than they do nationally – almost twice as many in the case of Advanced Manufacturing businesses (a location quotient or LQ of 1.97) whilst there are 57% more MI&TC businesses (LQ 1.57).

The Government’s eight growth-driving sectors (IS-8) and their component Frontier Industries are strongly represented across the Tees Valley economy and display several areas of strategic alignment across our priority sectors.

All IS-8 are covered by our sectors. The Tees Valley MI&TC alone include elements from four of the IS-8 sectors with Advanced Manufacturing, Digital & Creative and Professional & Business Services covering the remainder

The MI&T Cluster includes two of the IS-8 - Clean Energy Industries and Life Sciences. Advanced Manufacturing is also one of the IS-8 and a key enabling sector in Tees Valley.

Tees Valley is also home to two more of the IS-8, Creative Industries and Digital and Technologies in the form of our fast-growing Digital & Creative Cluster. This cluster has seen strong job growth of 45% since 2019.

The two IS-8, Professional & Business Services and Financial Services, are both part of the Tees Valley Professional and Business Services sector, a key jobs rich sector in the area.

The eighth and final IS-8, Defence is included as part of our wider Advanced Manufacturing sector.

Tees Valley businesses play a key role in the country’s international trading position with goods exports dominated by its strong manufacturing sector which accounts for over three-quarter of goods exports in the region compared to around one-half nationally.

Despite the strengths of our nationally significant growth driving sectors, key challenges exist – the present gap to the national jobs density rate is presently 64,000 additional jobs and we have a shortfall of 10,000 businesses – and many sectors displaying relatively low productivity rates.

Perhaps the greatest constraint on Tees Valley’s growth potential is the skill level of the regional workforce. With high pay, high productivity jobs closely correlated to highly skilled workers, the area has one of lowest proportion of its population with higher level qualifications of anywhere in the country.

Economic inactivity acts as a major constraint on growth by limiting the size of the workforce and the availability of the skills that they bring. This impacts negatively on business efficiency and productivity and ultimately economic growth.

Economic inactivity also feeds poverty and deprivation. Tees Valley experiences some of the highest rates of deprivation in the country with Middlesbrough classified as the most deprived local authority in England in both 2019 and 2015 iterations of the Government’s Indices of Deprivation (IoD).

Added to this, approximately one in five people from Tees Valley (18.5%) which is equivalent to around 125,000 Tees Valley residents, live in what is termed as ‘left-behind’ places. The national rate is just 4%, which is equivalent to just one in 25 people. This methodology relates to places that have the greatest challenges in terms of poverty and deprivation. Tees Valley has over four-times the number of wards classed as left-behind places compared to nationally.

GROWTH & REGENERATION

We will create the environment for growth and accelerate regeneration of our communities making Tees Valley an attractive place to live, study, work, invest and visit.



£18.9 billion contributed by the Tees Valley economy to the UK's economy in 2023 (0.69% of the country's total economic output)



£9 billion increase to the value of the Tees Valley economy If the national productivity rate matched in terms of GDP per capita



84.5% productivity in terms of GVA per hour worked of the UK rate



17,450 businesses located in Tees Valley in 2024



63% Tees Valley business density rate of the UK rate – a gap of over 10,000 businesses in per capita terms



+40 Tees Valley scale-up businesses in 2022 (up 21%)



750 Tees Valley business births In the first quarter of 2025 (150 more births than deaths)



35.4% of innovation active businesses in Tees Valley Proportion is relatively low (37.1% nationally)



£48 per sqm for rateable value of commercial floorspace in Tees Valley Proportion is low (£88 nationally)



712,900 Tees Valley population in 2024 Driven by international in-migration up by an average annual 11,500 since 2021.



20% of Tees Valley population is aged 65+ This is projected to increase to one quarter over the next two decades.



100,000 adults and 72,000 children live in poverty across Tees Valley Nearly 200,000 people live in the 10% most deprived communities in the country.



50% of local people have witnessed anti-social behaviour in 2025 Compared to just over one-third nationally.

LOCAL GROWTH PLAN

STRATEGIC PLANNING FRAMEWORK

The Local Growth Plan – Strategic Planning Framework reflects the significance of our globally competitive, high-productivity sectors, in terms of future inward investment and growth in gross domestic product.

It also highlights the importance of advanced manufacturing as an enabling sector and the growing digital and creative clusters. It also makes it clear that the ‘foundational’ economy is critically important for inclusive growth in the Tees Valley, accounting for 86% of all jobs.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

- 1. Cluster includes Chemical & Processing, Clean Energy, Bio Manufacturing & Life Sciences.
- 2. Infrastructure includes planning, transport, highways, energy, resilience, digital, housing and quality of place.
- 3. Land includes availability and viability.
- 4. Workforce includes education and skills.
- 5. Access to finance includes SMEs and inward investment .

Industrial Strategy Growth Driving Sectors

1. Advanced Manufacturing

5. Creative Industries

2. Clean Energy Industries

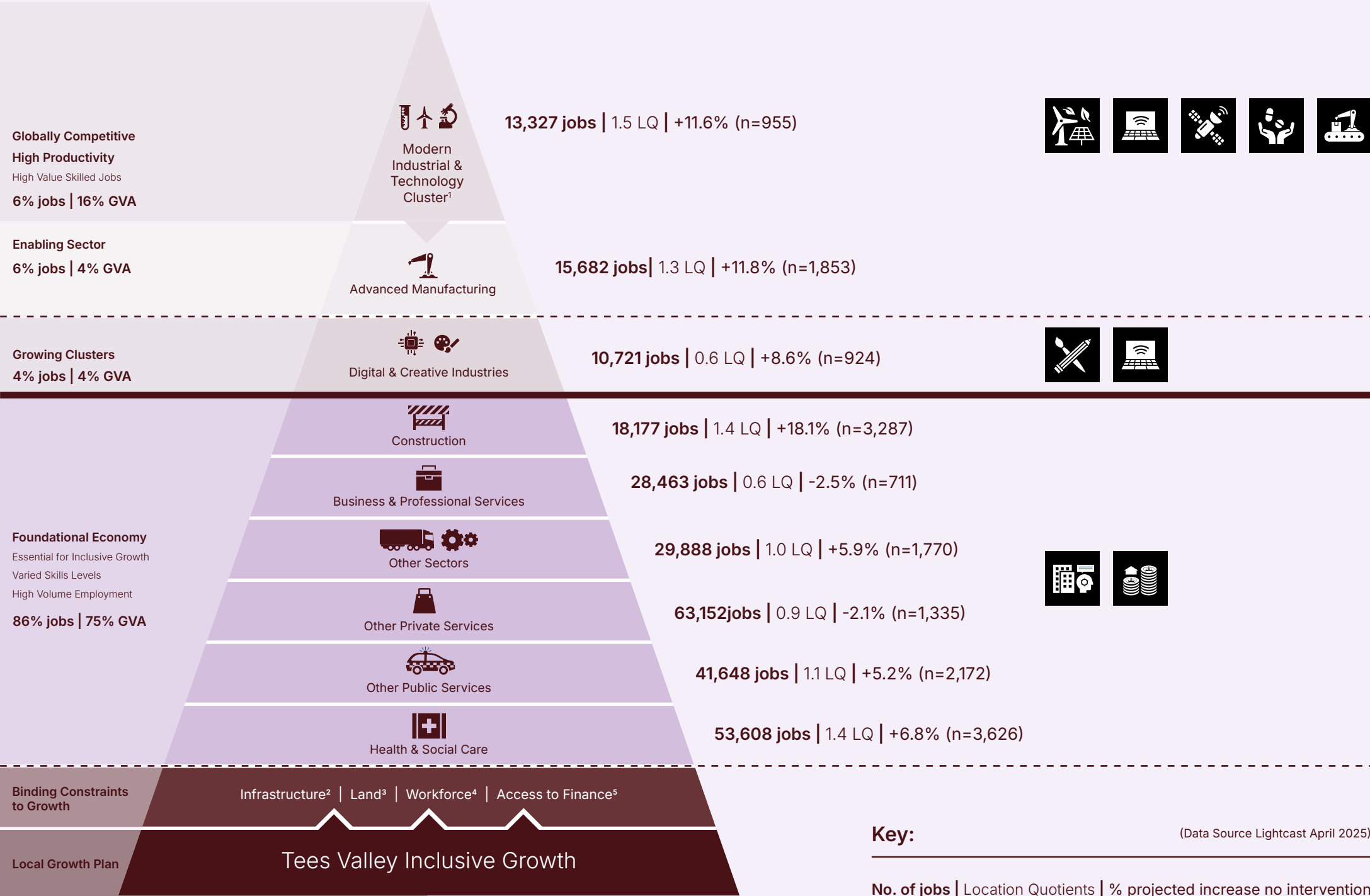
6. Financial Services

3. Defence

7. Life Sciences

4. Digital and Technology

8. Professional and Business Services



DIVERSIFY & DRIVE

We will diversify and drive the growth of our foundational economy by increasing business density and developing the skills of our people to get more people into work.



The Foundational Economy accounts for three-quarters of Tees Valley's total GVA
86% of employee jobs and 83% of businesses



Productivity in Tees Valley's Foundational Economy Cluster is £40,339, compared to £48,996 nationally.



53,600 people employed in the Health & Social care sector
in Tees Valley



19.5% of total jobs are in the Health & Social care sector
in Tees Valley, compared to 14.3% nationally



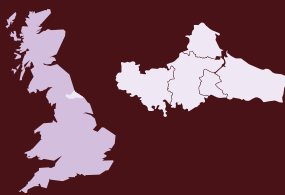
1.5% of jobs in the Residential Care subsector are located in Tees Valley
11,000 Tees Valley jobs



12% jobs growth between 2019 and 2024 in Health and Social Care



28,500 people employed in the Professional & Business Services sector
in Tees Valley



Tees Valley Professional & Business Services sector accounts for 10.4% of total jobs
compared to 17.6% nationally



1 in 20 of the UK's total jobs in the Social Sciences and Humanities R&D subsector are located in Tees Valley.
489 Tees Valley jobs



17% jobs decrease between 2019 and 2024 in Professional and Business Services



Construction sector employs 18,200 people in Tees Valley.



Tees Valley Construction sector accounts for 6.6% of total jobs
compared to 4.8% nationally



1 in 11 jobs in the Construction of Water Projects subsector are located in Tees Valley
242 Tees Valley Jobs



40% jobs growth between 2019 and 2024 in Construction

LABOUR MARKET ANALYSIS

Tees Valley Challenges

Economic inactivity acts as a major constraint on growth by limiting the size of the workforce and the availability of the skills that they bring. This impacts negatively on business efficiency and productivity and ultimately economic growth.

Economic inactivity also feeds poverty and deprivation. Tees Valley suffers some of the highest rates of deprivation in the country with Middlesbrough being the most deprived local authority in England in both 2019 and 2015 iterations of the Government's Indices of Deprivation (IoD).

The scale of our labour market challenge is measured by the gap to the national jobs density rate. This presently stands at an additional 64,000 jobs and we also have a shortfall of over 10,000 businesses with many sectors displaying relatively low productivity rates.

Perhaps the greatest constraint on Tees Valley's growth potential is the skill level of the workforce. With high pay, high productivity jobs closely correlated to highly skilled workers the area has one of lowest proportion of its population with degree level or equivalent qualifications of anywhere in the country.

In numerical terms 18.5% or around 125,000 Tees Valley residents live in what is termed 'left-behind' wards (nationally 4.0%). This methodology builds on the IoD and identifies wards that have the greatest challenges in terms of poverty and deprivation. Tees Valley has over four-times the number of wards classed as left-behind compared to nationally.

The bold economic ambitions of Tees Valley, set out in our emerging Local Growth Plan, are affected by several recognised labour market challenges within the region.

At the heart of our ambitions for Tees Valley is economic growth. Of course, we want to increase productivity within Tees Valley and accelerate regional economic growth, as part of our contribution to the UK's Modern Industrial Strategy and the Government's Growth Mission. However, the level of GDP generated from the Tees Valley economy is significantly less than the national rate and our current estimates indicate that the size of the productivity gap is somewhere in the region of £9billion.

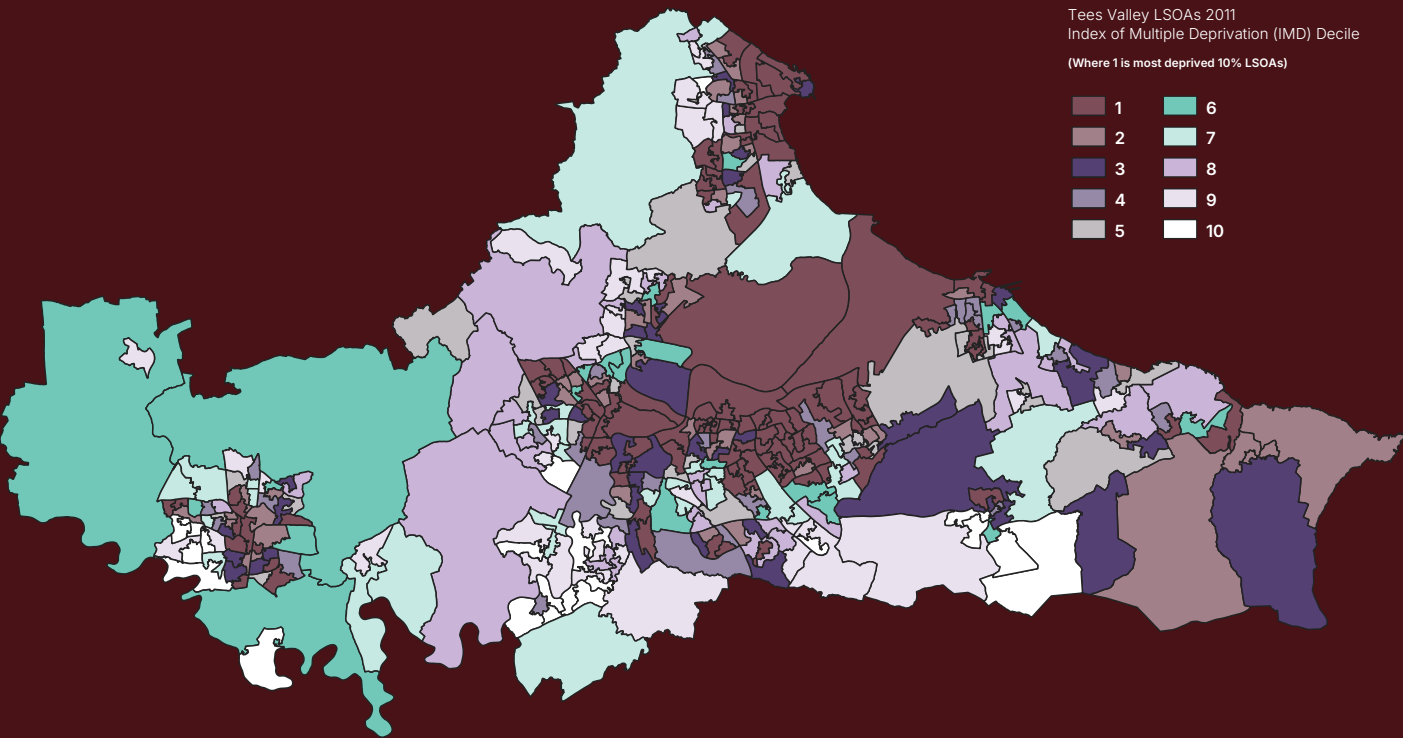
Added to this and due mainly to a relatively small private sector with the region, business density in Tees Valley is relatively low compared with UK business density. To match the UK business density rate, Tees Valley would need 10,240 more new businesses, on top of the current number, which is 17,450.

More notably, the employment rate in Tees Valley is significantly less than the national average and for us to bring the regional rate in line with the rest of the UK would require an additional 14,200 working-age residents in employment. To achieve the long-term Government ambition of an 80% employment rate, assuming no change in the working age population, Tees Valley would need an additional 33,300 working-age residents in employment. It is within this context and against this backdrop that we aim to tackle these types of challenges to get Tees Valley working and to super-charge the regional economy.

Deprivation

In the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019, Tees Valley ranks as the second most deprived LEP in England (out of 38 LEP areas). This ranking is unchanged since 2015.

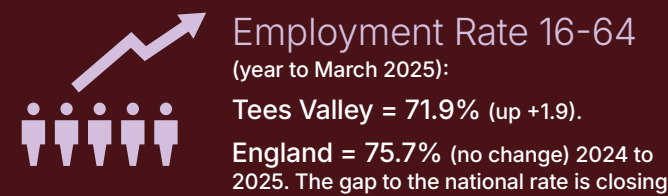
- All five Tees Valley local authority areas rank amongst the 15% most deprived local authority districts in England. 121 or 29% of Tees Valley's 417 LSOAs are in the 10% most deprived nationally, almost three times the national rate.
- At the local authority level, Middlesbrough has the highest proportion (49%) of LSOAs within the most deprived 10% nationwide, out of 317 districts nationally, with Hartlepool 10th (36%), Redcar & Cleveland 29th (24%), Stockton-on-Tees 39th (21%) and Darlington 47th (18%). 198,700 people in Tees Valley live in the 10% most deprived LSOAs nationally.
- Middlesbrough ranks as the most deprived local authority for IDACI based on the proportion of LSOAs in the most deprived 10% nationally, out of 317 local authority districts in England, Hartlepool ranks 3rd, Redcar and Cleveland 13th, Darlington 30th and Stockton-on-Tees 37th.
- Tees Valley recorded a particularly high proportion of wards classed as left-behind with 16 areas (source: Local Trust). The aggregate population of these left-behind wards is over 125,000 residents, around 18.5% of the total Tees Valley population compared to just 4.0% nationally.
- Based on the proportion of LSOAs in the most deprived 10% nationally, Tees Valley ranks as the most deprived LEP in England (out of 38 LEP areas) for the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI).



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Employment & Jobs

- Tees Valley has consistently had a lower employment rate than the UK. 295,800 Tees Valley residents aged 16-64 were employed in the 12 months to March 2025, 71.9% of the working age population, compared to 75.7% in England.
- Tees Valley consistently has a lower jobs density than nationally with 0.71 jobs for every working age resident in 2023 compared to 0.86 jobs in Great Britain. There was a decrease in jobs density in Tees Valley from 0.74 in 2021 to 0.71 in 2023 whilst nationally there was a rise from 0.85 to 0.86. The total number of jobs in Tees Valley is at 302,000 in 2023, no change from 2022.
- Online job vacancies in Tees Valley, as in England are lower than the previous 12 months. There were 8,632 active online job vacancies in July 2025, an 18.0% drop from the same month in the previous year (12.7% fall nationally).
- For those aged 18-21 year old, Tees Valley has significantly higher claimant count rates than nationally. 8.5% (2,460) of people aged 18-21 were claiming unemployment benefits in June 2025, compared to 5.6% in England. This is more than double the overall claimant count rate of 4.2% of the working age population in Tees Valley (4.0% nationally).



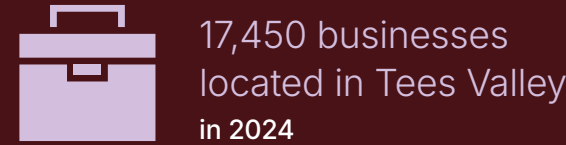
Productivity

- Productivity rates in Tees Valley have been consistently lower than national rates for many years and now has 15.5 percentage points gap. In 2023, Tees Valley GVA per hour worked was £35.4, up from £34.6 in 2022. UK GVA per hour worked increased from £41.0 to £41.9 over the same period. This meant that the Tees Valley GVA per hour worked index remained steady at 84.5 2022 (UK = 100).



Business

- The Tees Valley business density rate was 63.0% of the UK rate in 2024, the lowest index for a number of years. There were 17,450 business enterprises (including 17,360 SMEs i.e. 99.5% of total Tees Valley enterprises) in Tees Valley in 2024. Large firms (90) made up the remaining 0.5% of total Tees Valley enterprises. The 2024 Tees Valley business density rate of 308 businesses per 10,000 resident adult population is below the recent highs of 327 seen in both 2019 and 2022.



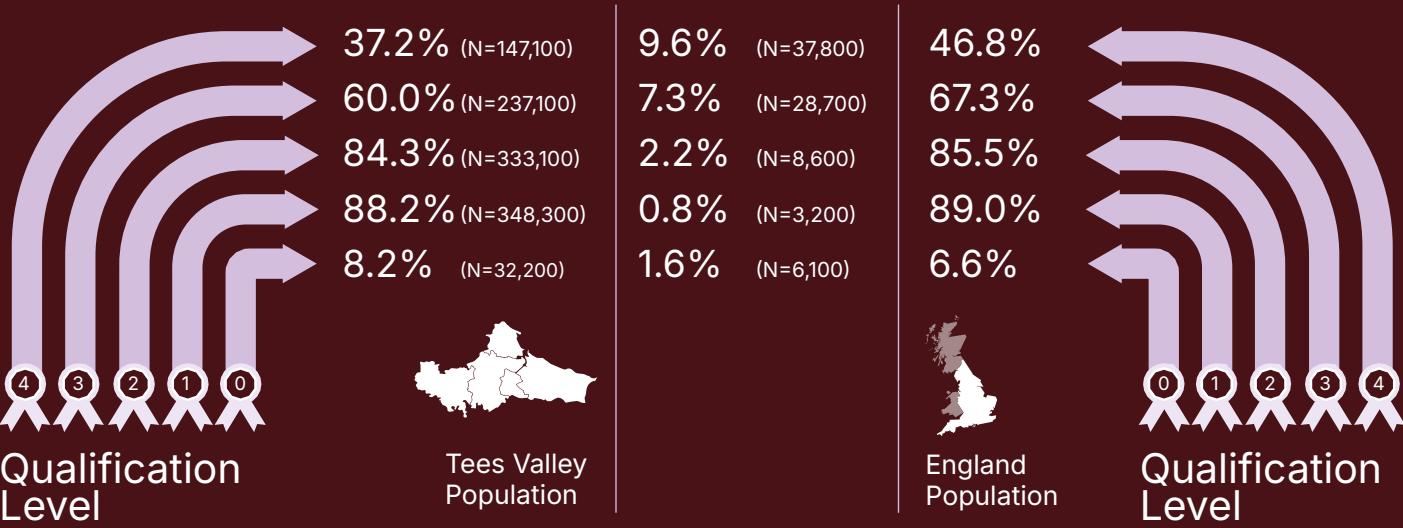
Wages & Income

- Average pay for payrolled employees in Tees Valley is below the national average. The average pay for payrolled employees in Tees Valley in June 2025 was £2,790 per month, compared to £3,290 nationally. This was 84.8% of the national average.
- Gross Disposable Household Income for Tees Valley households is significantly below the national average. In 2022 GDHI per head in Tees Valley was £17,994, compared to £23,338 nationally. Over the last five years, GDHI per head in Tees Valley has risen 14.9% from £15,665 in 2017, compared to a 15.9% increase nationally. Tees Valley saw a 4.5% rise in GDHI per head between 2021 and 2022 (£783 per head), compared to a 5.4% rise nationally.



Skills

- The working age population in Tees Valley had a lower percentage of people qualified at any level compared to the national average and a higher percentage of working age population with no qualifications. 37.2% of the Tees Valley working age population were qualified to a level 4 or above in 2024, compared to 46.8% nationally. 8.2% had no qualifications, compared to 6.6% nationally.
- The percentage of Tees Valley residents qualified to Level 2 including English and Maths by age 19 was lower than the national average in 2023/24, at 74% compared to 76% nationally. Between 2022/23 and 2023/24, the percentage decreased by 1 percentage point, compared to a 2 percentage point fall nationally. Between 2016/17 and 2023/23 the percentage increased by 4 percentage points, matching the change nationally.
- Skills shortage vacancies in Tees Valley have more than doubled between 2019 and 2022, with almost one in ten employers reporting at least one skills shortage vacancy. The 2022 DfE Employer Skills Survey reported that there were 3,200 skills-shortage vacancies in Tees Valley, an increase from 1,500 in 2019. 9% of Tees Valley establishments had at least one skill-shortage vacancy (10% nationally). This has increased from 4% in 2019.
- Apprenticeship starts in Tees Valley have fallen significantly between 2018/19 and 2023/24. However, Tees Valley consistently has a higher rate per 100,000 population starting an apprenticeship than nationally. 1,124 per 100,000 population started an apprenticeship in 2023/24, compared to 937 nationally. The rate per 100,000 population is significantly lower than the rate of 1,516 in 2018/19, a drop of 392 over the last five years compared to a fall of 178 nationally.



Health

- Tees Valley has the third worst male life expectancy and second worst female life expectancy out of the 11 combined authorities. The life expectancy at birth for Tees Valley residents is 77.1 years for males and 80.9 years for females, a difference of 3.8 years between males and females. This compares with 79.1 years for males and 83.1 years for females for England overall. Compared to the national average, this is a gap of -2.0 years for males and -2.1 years for females.
- Mean healthy life expectancy (HLE) at birth for Tees Valley residents is 55.4 years for males and 55.9 years for females, a difference of 0.5 years between males and females. This compares with 61.5 years for males and 61.9 years for females for England. This is a gap of 6.1 years for males and 6.0 years for females compared to the England rate.

DRIVERS & CAUSES

of Supply & Demand Side Labour Market Issues

A detailed summary of the economically inactive population in Tees Valley is set out below. A detailed and comprehensive overview of the scale and geographical distribution of economic inactivity is presented in the Get Tees Valley Working Plan – Workforce Evidence Base, which includes geographical maps to highlight variations in economic inactivity, key risk factors which drive economic inactivity, and the different sub-cohorts which comprise the overall target population. The regional unemployment rate in Tees Valley is currently (and is consistently) higher than the national figure. Youth unemployment, affecting those aged 18-21, is significantly higher, whilst NEET rates for 16-17-year-olds are also higher than the national average. If Tees Valley had the same youth unemployment percentage as the rest of the country, there would be around 1,000 fewer unemployed young people than it has today.

More importantly, the scale of economic inactivity in Tees Valley is perhaps our biggest labour market challenge. The current rate of working-age people who are not working and not looking for work is markedly higher than the national rate and equivalent to one in four of all the working age residents in Tees Valley, compared with approximately one in five people, for the UK. In total, there are more than 102,300 working age residents who are economically inactive at this time in Tees Valley. To match the UK rate would require a regional reduction of 15,300 fewer working age people who are economically inactive. This presents a significant challenge that we propose to tackle through this plan and other related programmes.

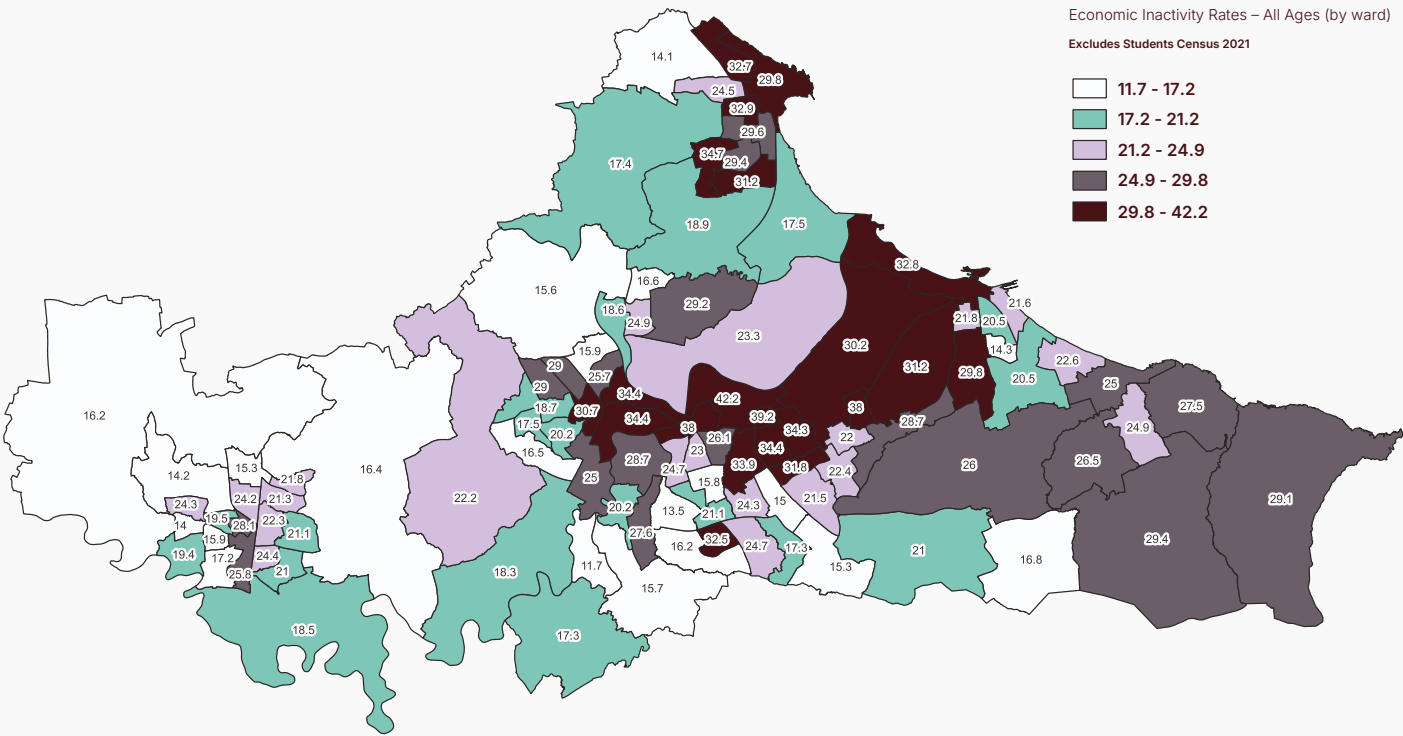


Key Messages

- Of the 411,300 working age (16-64) resident population in Tees Valley 295,800 (71.9% of the 16-64 population) are employed, 13,200 (4.3% of the economically active) unemployed and 102,300 (24.9% of the 16-64 population) economically inactive. Compared to England as a whole, Tees Valley has a relatively low employment rate (England 75.7%) and relatively high unemployment and economic inactivity rates (England Unemployment 4.0% and Economic inactivity 21.2%).
- To match the UK economic inactivity rate would mean there would need to be 15,300 fewer Tees Valley working age residents economically inactive.
- There are 42,900 Tees Valley residents of working age who are not working and would like to work. This is comprised of 29,700 economically inactive and 13,200 unemployed residents. Combined, this is 10.4% of the Tees Valley working age population, compared to 7.3% nationally.
- Economically inactive people in Tees Valley are significantly more likely to want to work than nationally – 29.0% of economically inactive working age Tees Valley residents want a job (comprised of 17,700 women and 12,000 men) compared to 19.4% in England.
- There are 24,750 or 5.7% of Tees Valley residents of working age who are working and in receipt of Universal Credit – an indication of increased likelihood of being in insecure low pay work and at risk of dropping out of work. This rate is higher than the equivalent England rate of 5.3%.
- Women are significantly more likely to be economically inactive than men – in Tees Valley there are 57,900 economically inactive women of working age compared to 44,400 men.

Distributional Imbalances

In terms of the geographical distribution of economic inactivity, there are significant differences between and within the five local authorities that make up the Tees Valley region. The highest concentrations of economic inactivity are centered in the north and north-eastern parts of Middlesbrough, central Stockton, and the north-eastern parts of Hartlepool, around the Headland area.



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Disadvantaged Groups

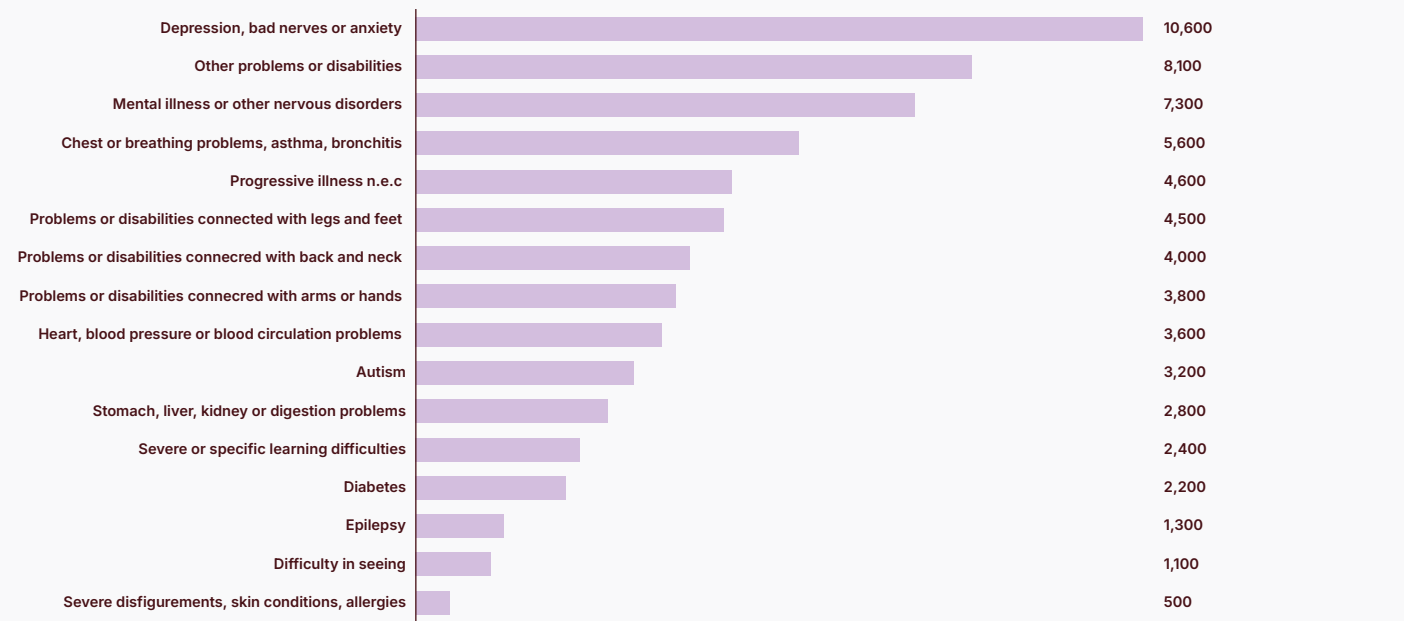
- Tees Valley has significantly higher proportions of working age people classed under disadvantaged groups than nationally. This applies across all age groups. Tees Valley's disabled population is 74,123, or almost one in five (19.7%) of the total 16-64 resident non-student population compared to 15.6% in England as a whole.
- Disadvantaged groups in Tees Valley are more likely to be economically inactive than their equivalents nationally. For example, 58.6% of working age non-student disabled Tees Valley residents are economically inactive (50.7% England), 38.3% of unpaid carers are economically inactive (31.1% nationally) and 18.7% of veterans are economically inactive (16.6% nationally).

Not in Education, Employment or Training

- Tees Valley has a higher than average number of 16-17 year olds known to be NEET, however the number of 16-17 year olds NEET or not known is closer to the national average (i.e. a lower proportion of 16-17 year olds in Tees Valley are 'not known'). The percentage of 16-17 year olds known to be NEET in Tees Valley was at 5.1% (860) in 2025 compared to 3.4% nationally. In Tees Valley this has decreased 0.2 percentage points over the last year and since 2019 there has been a 1.1 increase. 5.5% of 16-17 year olds are NEET or Not Known in Tees Valley in 2025, equivalent to 920 young people, compared to 5.6% nationally.

Health & Inactivity

- Health outcomes are lower across Tees Valley. The Indices of Deprivation Health domain ranks all five local authority areas in the bottom quintile of local authority areas nationally and Tees Valley ranks as the second most deprived local enterprise partnership area in England.
- 39,900 Tees Valley residents are economically inactive because of long-term sickness. The two main groups health that contribute to economic inactivity in Tees Valley are physical conditions (18,700) and mental conditions (12,400).
- Long-term health issues are the primary driver of economic inactivity in Tees Valley. Nationally, around 1 in 20 (5.2%) of the total working age population are economically inactive due to long-term sickness. In Tees Valley as a whole this is closer to 1 in 10 (9.2%) and in Tees Valley's extreme employment deprivation areas over 1 in 5 (21.0%) of all working age residents are economically inactive due to long-term illness.
- The secondary driver of economic inactivity, and closely associated with the first, is looking after family or home. Nationally, around 1 in 23 (4.3%) of the total working age population are economically inactive due to looking after family or home. In Tees Valley as a whole this is closer to 1 in 20 (4.9%) and in Tees Valley's extreme employment deprivation areas on average 1 in 9 (11.1%) of all working age residents are economically inactive due to having to look after their family or home.



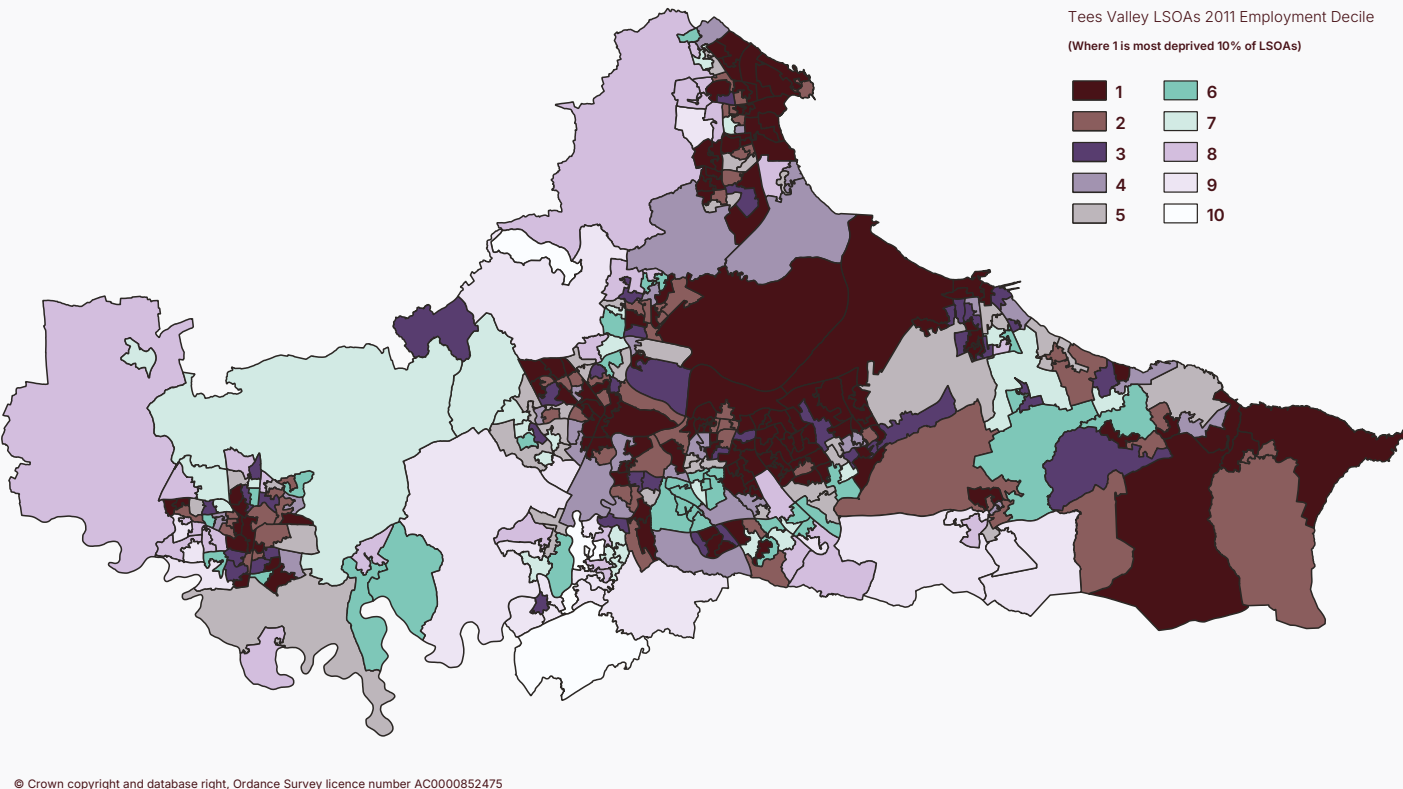
Young People

- 11.3% of Tees Valley residents aged 18-20 were economically inactive at the time of the census 2021, equivalent to 2,230 young people, and compared to 7.0% nationally. The percentage of people aged 18-20 and economically inactive was highest in Hartlepool at 11.9%, followed by Middlesbrough (11.7%), Stockton-on-Tees (11.6%), Redcar and Cleveland (11.2%) and Darlington at 9.6%.
- Of those aged 18-20 who were economically inactive at the time of the 2021 Census, the main reason was 'Other' at 53.8%, compared to 60.0% nationally. This was followed by 24.2% looking after home or family (22.0% nationally) and 21.7% long-term sick or disabled (17.6% nationally).
- 15.3% of Tees Valley residents aged 21-24 were economically inactive at the time of the 2021 census (equivalent to 4,640 young people), compared to 10.3% nationally. The percentage of people aged 21-24 and economically inactive was highest in Hartlepool at 17.1%, followed by Redcar and Cleveland (16.6%), Stockton-on-Tees (15.2%), Middlesbrough (14.4%) and Darlington at 13.7%.
- Of those aged 21-24 who were economically inactive, the main reason was 'Other' at 39.1%, compared to 44.9% nationally. This was followed by 34.3% looking after home or family (32.3% nationally) and 26.2% long-term sick or disabled (22.5% nationally).

Extreme Employment Deprivation

The Tees Valley has particularly high numbers and rates of residents living in extreme employment deprivation (defined here as the most deprived percentile nationally on the Indices of Deprivation 2019 Employment deprivation domain):

- If the Tees Valley had the same distribution of employment deprivation as England then Tees Valley would have four local community areas (LSOAs) in the most deprived percentile. In reality it has 33, over eight-times the amount of extreme employment deprivation compared to nationally.
- 35,200 working age Tees Valley residents live in areas of extreme employment deprivation. This represents 8.6% of the working age population compared to 1.0% in England.
- Extreme employment deprivation is present in all five local authority areas but most prevalent in Middlesbrough (11 LSOA areas), Redcar & Cleveland (8 LSOAs), Hartlepool & Stockton (6 LSOAs each) and Darlington (2 LSOAs).
- Tees Valley areas suffering from extreme employment deprivation have a very high average economic inactivity rate of 45.7%, almost 20% above the average Tees Valley economic inactivity rate.



CURRENT SYSTEM & OFFER

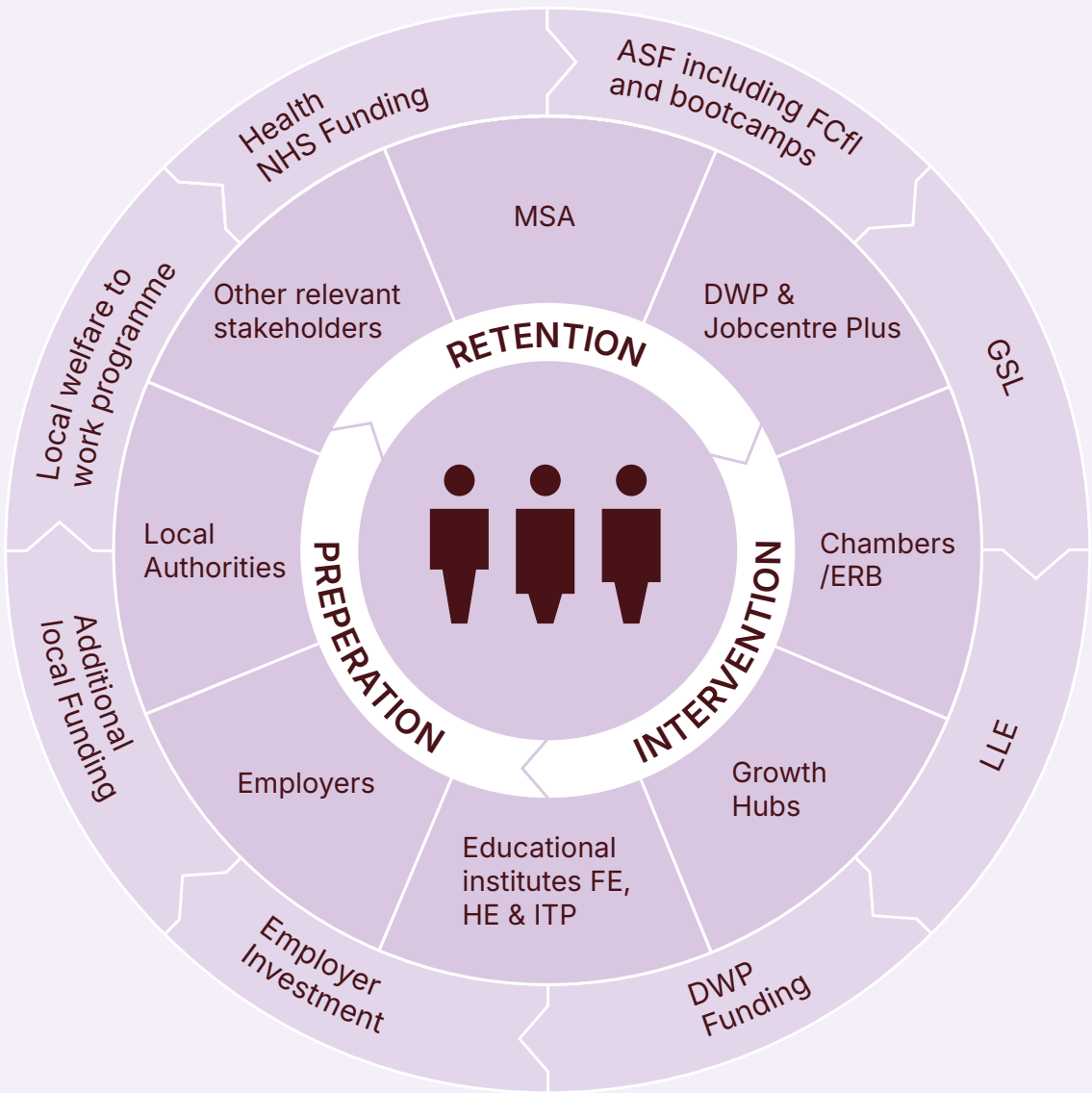
The work, health and skills system is made up of three core assets – individuals, employers, and resources and Infrastructure.

Individuals – who need to have a clear understanding of the range and nature of current and future labour market opportunities if they are to make informed choices about their future. They need to be able to access health and employment support and follow training paths to opportunities that exist, and be able to further develop their knowledge and skills to ensure they have secure, well paid and fulfilling careers.

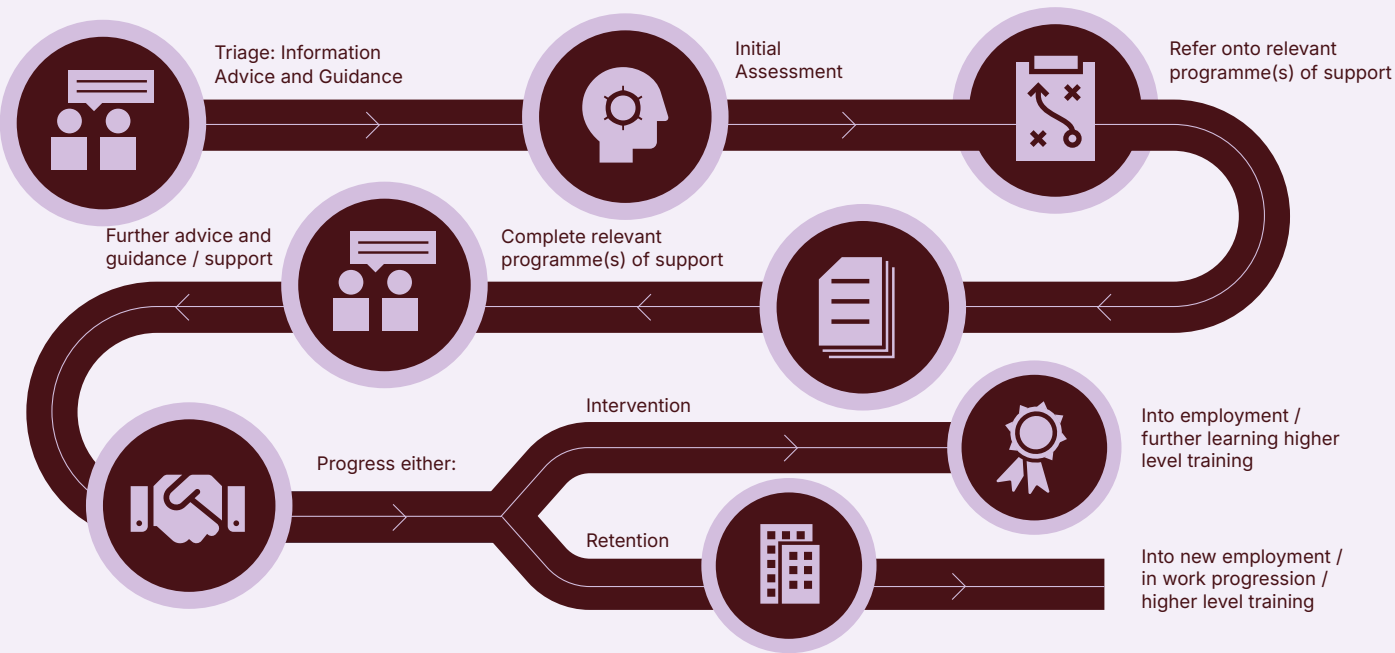
Employers – who need to be able to recruit people and develop the skills of their existing workforce if they are to thrive and grow. This means they need a ready source of the right people with the right skills at the right time and need to be supported to provide in-work development opportunities to help their employees progress in-work to higher value and higher paid roles.

Resources and Infrastructure – appropriate providers and provision to support the work, health and skills agendas. To prepare people for the world of work, specific opportunities within it and support to help people progressively move closer to or into employment or to further progress in-work.

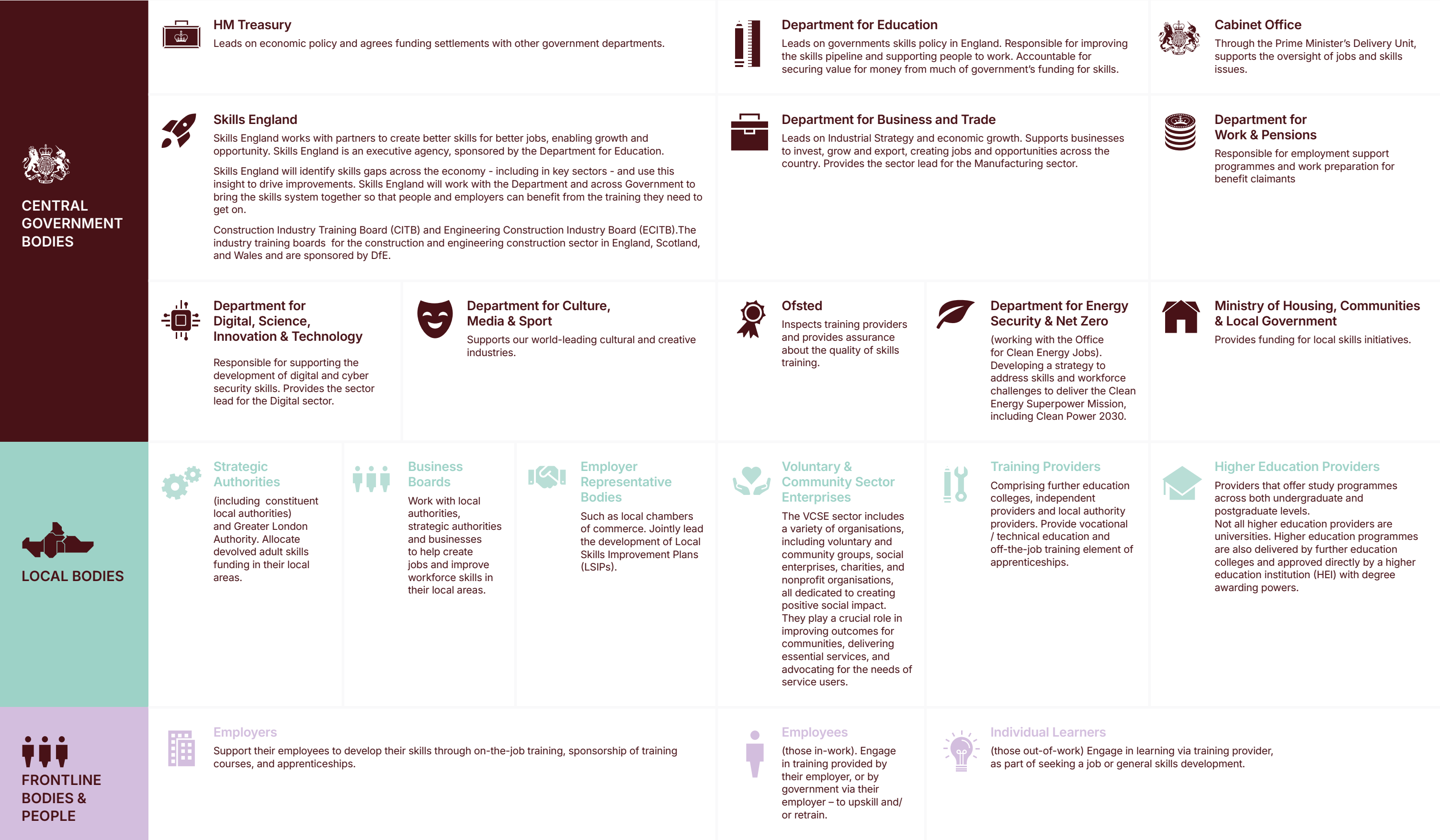
The work, health and skills system is complex, requiring multiple government departments and other bodies to work together effectively. We want to influence and facilitate the better integration of them in order to strengthen the overall work, health and skills system in Tees Valley.



Journey of support for people in Tees Valley



The employment and skills system is complex, requiring multiple government departments and other bodies to work together effectively



The Jobcentre Plus Offer

The Jobcentre Plus Offer is a package of personalised advice and support designed to help people find and retain employment. It supports the Government’s strategy for economic growth and poverty reduction by targeting support at the most effective point in a claim, helping individuals move into work as quickly as possible.

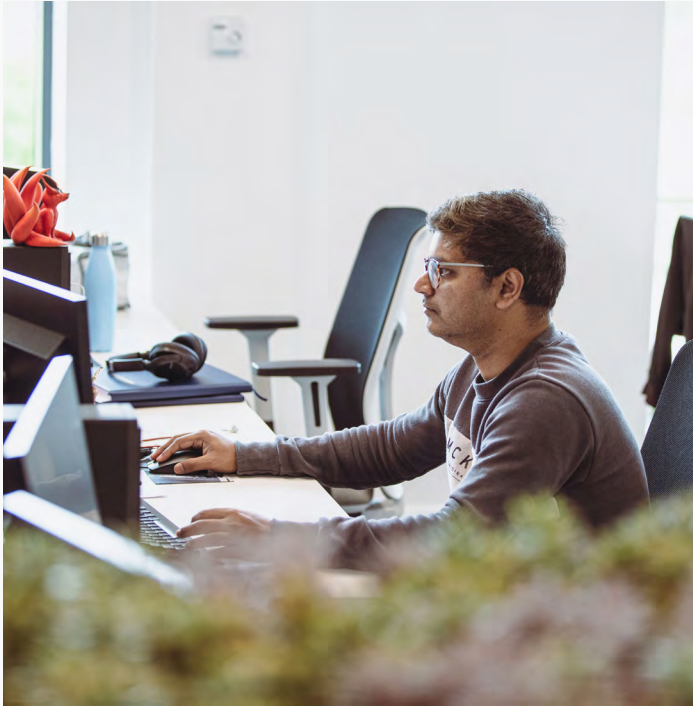
Work Coaches play a central role, offering tailored, work-focused support to ensure claimants remain close to the labour market. Wherever possible, the same Work Coach supports a claimant throughout their journey, helping them find jobs, gain new skills, and access information about disability-friendly employers.

Jobcentres also provide targeted support through specialist roles and programmes. These include the Youth Offer, Prison Work Coaches, Schools Advisors, and Disability Employment Advisors, who work with specific customer groups to address unique barriers to employment. Advanced Customer Support Senior Leaders provide additional support for vulnerable claimants with complex needs.

































Support is further enhanced through partnership working with local and national organisations, and through Employer Services teams, which connect claimants with job

opportunities and promote inclusive recruitment practices. Claimants may also be referred to national programmes such as the Restart Scheme and can access funding through the Flexible Support Fund.

The New Jobs and Careers Service, introduced in the Get Britain Working White Paper, builds on existing foundations to deliver more personalised, skills-focused support and strengthen employer engagement. To test this new approach, a Pathfinder was launched in June 2025 in Wakefield, North Yorkshire. Nationally, Jobcentre appointments have been tailored to individual needs, and 1,000 Work Coaches have been redeployed to offer intensive, voluntary support to claimants receiving health-related benefits. This support is designed to help individuals engage with appropriate employment programmes and move closer to the labour market.



Tees Valley Jobcentre Delivery Model

Customer Support	Employer Offer	Provision/Provider Support
 Personal Work Coach	 Recruitment Support	 District Provision Tool
 Flexible Support Fund	 Disability Confident Scheme	 Restart Contract
 Low Value Procurement	 Apprenticeships	 District Purchasing Scheme
 Restart	 Sector Based Work Academies	 Grants
 Distinct Procurement	 Work Experience	 AEB Provision
 National Careers Service	 Work Trials	 Signpost to charities or other supporting organisations
 Signposting via District Provision Tool	 Jobs Fairs	 National Careers Service
 Access to bespoke vacancies	 In Work Support	
 Work Trials	 Patient Advisory Service	
 Work Experience	 Redundancy Support	
 Training		
 Access to Work		
 Work Psychologists		
 SWAPs		
 Rapid Response Fund		

The North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Strategy, ‘Better Health and Wellbeing For All’, sets out how we will reduce inequalities, improve experiences of health and care services and improve the health and wellbeing of people living and working in our region by 2030 and beyond.

The system is led by the Integrated Care Board (ICB) and the Integrated Care Partnership (ICP). The ICP includes 14 local authorities and works with the ICB to improve health across the region.

Together, they created a ten-year plan called ‘Better health and wellbeing for all.’ This plan tackles major health problems, improves services, and reduces inequality.

WorkWell Programme

Helping you stay well and working... Good health and good work go hand-in-hand. When we feel well, we’re more able to stay in work, enjoy what we do, and support ourselves and our families. But when health problems – like stress, back pain, or long-term conditions – get in the way, it can be hard to stay in or return to work, even if we want to. Our WorkWell Programme is helping people to stay well and stay working.

Our WorkWell programme

We are one of three areas in England to receive money from the Government – £19m – to help people get the support they need, before they feel they have to give up work due to poor health. You might hear this described as a ‘Health and Growth Accelerator site’.

The Programme brings together the NHS, councils, job support services, voluntary organisations, and employers to offer joined-up support for people who need it most.

Our aim is to support around 2,000 people in the first year – including:

- Adults struggling to stay in work due to mental health, musculoskeletal (MSK) or long-term conditions – the leading causes of work -related ill-health in our region
- People who are under financial pressure or missing out on the benefits and support they are entitled to NHS and care staff who need extra support to stay in their jobs
- Small to medium size employers - who want to help support their staff and reduce absences.

What is the WorkWell service?

Funded by the Government as part of a national Health and Growth Accelerator pilot, WorkWell supports working-age people whose health puts them at risk of being out of work.

It’s a service that works with GPs to help identify patients who may be struggling in work due to health problems and/or personal circumstances.

With the support of WorkWell coaches/advisors, patients will be supported to access the health, employment, and financial advice that they need to help them stay in work.

The WorkWell programme complements the Trailblazer and Connect to Work programmes. The Trailblazer and Connect to Work programmes focus on supporting people with health conditions and disabilities to return to work from unemployment. We are working very closely to get the best results for people.

The programme includes a local and national evaluation which is looking at:

- The number of people supported and helped to stay in work
- Improvements in health, wellbeing, and confidence
- Reductions in sickness absence
- Cost-effectiveness and value for money

This is led locally by the ICB and nationally by the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) evaluation team.

Waiting Well

Waiting Well is an existing NHS programme that offers targeted support to certain groups of patients waiting for surgery in our region.

There’s lots of evidence to show that taking some simple steps to improve fitness, diet and mental health before surgery or treatment helps patients make a better and quicker recovery. It also reduces the risk of the treatment being cancelled because of them not being well or fit enough to have the operation.

Our NHS partners recognise that concerted action is needed to reduce waiting lists so people can get back to health and back to work. The NHS in our region continues to lead the way in delivering the best waiting times in England against the 18-week NHS Constitutional Standard for planned care has (70.2% versus a national average of 59.8%). Alongside this, the NENC award-winning ‘Waiting Well’ prehabilitation programme continues to improve the mental and physical health of patients awaiting elective surgery, reducing the risk of post-operative complications.

This work on waiting list management sits alongside a greater focus on preventing people becoming ill in the first place, and NHS organisations are thinking differently about how best to support those whose ability to work is at risk, including through ill health or disability, to remain in work or make a timely return to working.

As one of only three Health and Growth Accelerator sites in the country, NHS North East and North Cumbria ICB is leading the way to identify those whose health places them at risk of becoming economically inactive and then getting them the support they need. This support has been shaped by the impact that DWP’s Patient Advisor Service (PAS) caseworkers – co-located in GP surgeries – has made to help patients overcome the bio-psychosocial barriers to work that can lead to economic inactivity if left unaddressed.

Remaining in-work while managing Mental Health conditions or MSK pain brings clear economic and health benefits, helping individuals maintain financial security and reducing demand on the NHS.

Work Well Programme

Helping you stay well and stay working...






£19m Health & Growth Accelerator Government Funding



Collaboration Across NHS, Councils, Job Support Services, Voluntary Organisations, & Employers

Our mission:

- Support more than 2,000 people in the first year to stay well and working
- Tackle leading causes of work reacted ill-health - mental health, MSK, or long-term conditions

 New Local Work Well Services Including Work Coaches	 Extra Support For NHS & Care Staff	 Creating Healthier Workplaces
<p>People who need support will be referred by GP or other professionals to a service where a work coach will with work with them to build a personalised plan which would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Connecting them to services such as mental health or pain support■ Offering advice on benefits, money and housing■ Helping with workplace conversations or job changes■ Linking to local groups and community activities. <p>There will be Work Well services based in places which are easy to access such as GP surgeries or buildings where similar services already exist.</p>	<p>We will be offering extra help for those who are struggling with their wellbeing. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Faster access to mental health and wellbeing services■ Peer support networks and group sessions■ Support for everyday health challenges like stress, menopause, weight management, and long-term conditions - along with help to stop smoking and cut down on alcohol. <p>This will help staff stay in their jobs and get the support they need to thrive at work.</p>	<p>We’re also working with local employers to help them create fairer and more supportive workplaces. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Working with local employers, councils and partners to help businesses support staff with health issues■ Promoting flexible working, fair pay and better job conditions■ Expanding schemes to promote healthier working environments■ Looking at how we offer occupational health advice■ Supporting employers to spot when staff need such help.

Our Delivery Model

Tees Valley Adult Skills

The Combined Authority’s purpose is to drive economic growth and job creation in the region.

Through our devolution deal and a directly elected Mayor, we have been awarded powers and responsibilities for Adult Skills for Tees Valley residents. Since 2019, working closely with our delivery partners, we have been able to influence and commission more locally-responsive flexible training for adults and deliver a step-change in the Tees Valley economy.

The Tees Valley Adult Skills delivery model has three core elements - universal access, targeted approach and bespoke provision.



In November 2024, the Government published its Get Britain Working White Paper detailing plans for £240 million of investment to trial new ways to get people back into work. Government committed to support local areas to shape an effective work, health and skills offer for local people, with Mayoral Combined Authorities being responsible in England. This includes the Connect to Work and Youth Guarantee initiatives.



Tees Valley Connect to Work



The Connect to Work programme is a supported employment programme in England and Wales (phased in from 2025) to help disabled people, those with health conditions and people with complex barriers to employment, to find sustainable work. Tees Valley Combined Authority is the Accountable Body for the regional programme.



The primary focus of the programme is on supporting people who are economically inactive 'Out-of-Work', but the programme will also provide some support for people who are at high risk of falling out of work 'In-Work' retention.









The combined authority and constituent local authorities will develop the programme to meet local needs and provide a coherent local offer, alongside wider health and skills support services, including alignment with the North East and North Cumbria ICB Health and Growth Accelerator, and active links with local employers, to help people either remain in employment or find and fulfil their potential to work.

Tees Valley Youth Trailblazer

The Youth Trailblazer is a government initiative aimed at supporting young people in England aged 18-21 by providing access to education, training, or employment support. Tees Valley is one of eight Youth Trailblazer areas to test new ways of supporting young people into training.

Informed by a robust evidence base and working with partners and key established groups, a set of high-level core interventions have been co-developed which include paid work placements and non-paid taster sessions for young people aged 18-21 who are not in education, employment, or training.

CORE INTERVENTIONS (2025-26)	INTERVENTION	OUTCOME
 INTERVENTION 1 – Convening & Local Leadership	Convene key service providers and organisations (national, regional and local) to build an evidence base to inform what structures are needed locally to ensure young people don’t miss out on support	Enhanced collaboration between existing services – more efficient and effective use of services and improved co-ordination and management of pathways for young people
 INTERVENTION 2 – 18-21 Youth	Deliver a programme of Paid Work Placements / Non-Paid Work Placement Taster Sessions. For young people aged 18-21 who are currently NEET – and for whom a lack of work experience is their biggest barrier to employment.	Lack of work experience as a barrier to employment is reduced – more young people can progress into employment.
 INTERVENTION 3 - 18-19 Gap	Extend the tracking of young people to those aged 18-19. To ensure those who are currently NEET in this cohort and those at risk of becoming NEET are identified and connected / reconnected to routeways of support and do not become ‘unknown’.	All young people aged 18-19 are tracked and have a positive post-18 destination. Reduce the number of young people becoming NEET at age 18-19.
 INTERVENTION 4 – Year 13 AY 2024/25 Leavers	Post-18 positive destination. Engage with young people currently in Year 13 to understand if there are young people without a positive post- 18 destination – and who may be at risk of becoming NEET. Young people without an identified positive post-18 destination to be connected to existing NEET prevention and engagement activities	All young people have a positive post-18 destination. Reduce the number of young people becoming NEET at age 18.
 INTERVENTION 5 – Mapping & Analysis of Current Landscape & Provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Leadership and accountability requirements: what structures are needed locally to ensure young people don’t miss out on support.What provisions come under the Youth Guarantee: identifying what support can be accessed at national level, local offers, third sector programs, and employer support.How to establish streamlined connections and routeways to support: enabling accessibility and smooth transitions into, through and out of the Youth Guarantee.Who delivers support: determining who are the best organisations to deliver support at different stages and understand who should be accountable.How to identify and engage young people: seeking innovative ways to identify and engage young people who need support and preventing disengagement.	A robust evidence base to inform further development of the Youth Guarantee.
 INTERVENTION 6 – Local Evaluation		

Local Authorities

Local authorities play a crucial role in supporting residents. Much of this work is carried out under the umbrella of local Employment Hubs – a model which is in place within each Local Authority to incorporate offers covering work, health and skills. These efforts contribute to a more integrated and responsive health, employment support and skills system at the local level.

Local authorities have a broadly consistent offer of support for residents, this includes, but is not limited to:



Providing Employment Initiatives

Local authorities are involved in initiatives like the Local Supported Employment (LSE) Initiative, which helps adults with learning disabilities and autism to secure competitive employment.



Addressing Economic Inactivity

They focus on economic inactivity due to ill-health, providing tailored support to individuals facing barriers to work.



Promoting Economic Inclusion

Local authorities aim to promote economic inclusion by reducing disparities in employment opportunities and supporting local businesses.



Collaborating on Employment Programmes

Working with local partners to design and deliver employment and skills support programs that address the unique needs of their communities.



Facilitating Skills Development

They work within the skills system to deliver adult skills provision to Tees Valley residents. They also support employer representative bodies in developing Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs).



Specialist Support

They offer specialist support for veterans, people with disabilities, mental health conditions and ex-offenders for example.



Youth-Focused Programmes

Such as Youth Hubs



Connect to Work

Connect to Work is a new, UK Government-funded, supported employment programme. It aims to help disabled people, those with health conditions, and others facing employment barriers to find and maintain employment. In Tees Valley local authorities will be delivering Connect to Work directly, working in partnerships with various organisations, including NHS providers, and other service providers.

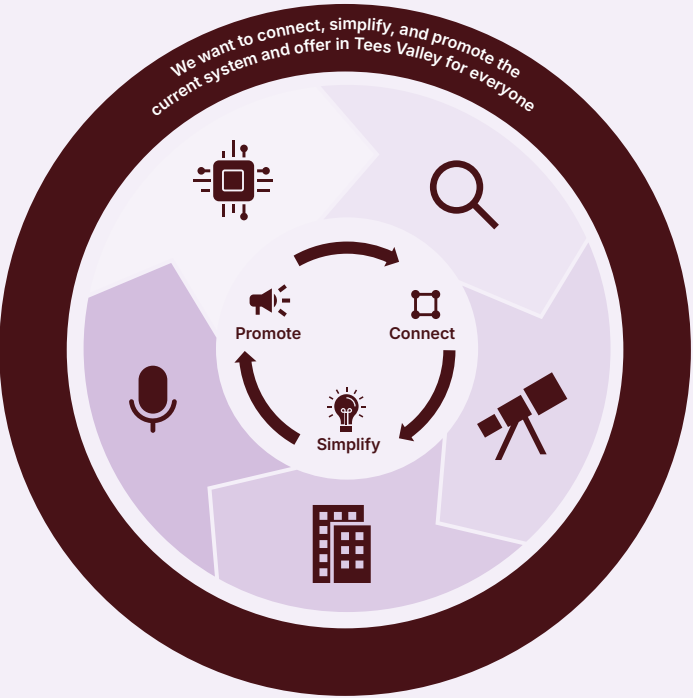
WORKING WITH PARTNERS

Our overarching strategic approach for the lifetime of this plan is to **connect, simplify and promote** the multiple national and local health, employment, training, skills, and economic growth initiatives so they are greater than the sum of their parts and reach more people and businesses.

Government guidance states, the development of local Get Britain Working plans should be overseen by a formal partnership of key local stakeholders alongside the accountable body and any constituent authorities in the local area. This must consist of a nominated lead from Integrated Care Board and Jobcentre Plus, and should include representation from:

- voluntary, community, and social enterprise organisations
- education and skills providers
- employer and business representative groups (it is recommended this includes representation from the Employer Representative Body responsible for the development and implementation of Local Skills Improvement Plans within that area)

In addition to the formal oversight provided by the partnership, local areas may wish to seek insights and input from wider local stakeholders. This may include local authorities with the current responsibility for delivering UK Shared Prosperity Fund, local academic institutions, social partners (including housing associations), Health and Wellbeing Boards, trade unions and citizen voices. Integrated Care Partnerships will offer a key leadership forum for engagement with a broad alliance of partners concerned with the care, health and wellbeing of the population.



PRIORITY ACTIONS & LONGER-TERM GOALS

The Get Tees Valley Working Plan will direct the work to forge a new way of working for the benefit of Tees Valley’s residents, employers and economy, but most importantly it will be driven by the evidence.

It is clear from the work on developing Get Tees Valley Working that integrating work, health, skills and employment support across the region, through collaboration among the Local Authorities, NHS, local Jobcentre Plus, housing and skills providers, and the VCSE sector, can drive systemic change.

This approach has the potential to strengthen the interdependencies of health, employment, housing, and skills, and offers a more holistic response to the needs of individuals and communities across the Tees Valley.

These actions align closely with key local priorities, such as in our emerging Local Growth Plan including the Shared Priorities as detailed on pages 49 and 50. Tees Valley Employment and Skills Strategy, Tees Valley Local Skills Improvement Plan, and integrated care strategy. This alignment will help us to demonstrate how our local plans support broader ambitions to grow the local economy at both national and local levels.

Our Get Tees Valley Working Plan First Edition sets out our initial summary of priorities for the next 12-24 months, which partners will work through collectively to achieve.

While initial mapping undertaken of the current system and offer with partners and stakeholders in recent workshops has highlighted areas of strength, collaboration, and good practice across the region, it has also revealed gaps and fail points, most notably that partners and stakeholders have varied and often limited awareness of the wider system and offer, resulting in an un-coordinated approach.

Partners and stakeholders are extremely committed to working together effectively and recognise that this is a missed opportunity to maximise our collective efforts, ensuring much better strategic alignment.

The development of the Get Tees Valley Working Plan has accelerated this way of working, enabling critical discussions to take place and raising awareness of important services and provision in our region.

As this is the first edition of the Get Tees Valley Working Plan the priority actions listed below is a summary of our initial proposals. These priority actions will be expanded on in our full plan the second edition due to be published March 2026.

The proposed focus of our priority actions for the next 12-24 months will be:



To better understand the drivers and causes of supply and demand side labour market issues

Further detailed analysis of the primary drivers and causes of economic inactivity within the region – including, but not limited to, issues related to education, skills and health, as well as factors that may limit people’s ability to access work like transport, housing, caring responsibilities (including childcare), and the availability, accessibility, and flexibility of jobs.



To better understand the local labour market

Further detailed analysis of the key challenges faced in the labour market across both labour market participation (employment, unemployment and economic inactivity) and progression at work (earnings and job quality).



To explore systemic change requirements – work to achieve better alignment of existing systems and offer in readiness for further devolution and greater local influence and flexibilities

This will include an assessment of capacity – for the priority groups and areas identified across organisations including through the health service, local government, and Jobcentre Plus.

This will also include an assessment from the perspective of the end user (the individual / the employer) in each of the priority groups.

As one of only three Health and Growth Accelerator sites in the country, NHS North East and North Cumbria ICB is leading the way to identify those whose health places them at risk of becoming economically inactive and then getting them the support they need. This support has been shaped by the impact that DWP’s Patient Advisor Service (PAS) caseworkers – co-located in GP surgeries – has made to help patients overcome the bio-psychosocial barriers to work that can lead to economic inactivity if left unaddressed.

Alongside commissioning additional clinical capacity in MSK services to reduce waiting times, the ICB is working with primary care, DWP and third sector delivery partners to deliver innovative ‘Work Well’ services at scale (based on the tried and tested PAS model). This will use fit note data to identify a target patient cohort for early intervention and support to keep them well and keep them working, reducing health-related economic in our region.

Building on the above, we will explore the opportunity to further align the existing work, health and skills support systems and offer with that of the local Employment Hubs model which is in place within each Local Authority to incorporate offers covering work, health and skills to fully understand if this delivery model would provide the local infrastructure and capacity to effectively deliver on the Get Tees Valley Working Plan.

OUR PRIORITIES

Five High-level Local Priorities



Grow our globally competitive modern industrial and technology cluster and enabling Advanced Manufacturing sector by securing further investment, deepening our innovation expertise and attracting and retaining talent.



Create the environment for growth and accelerate regeneration of our communities making Tees Valley an attractive place to live, work and invest.



Accelerate our rapidly growing digital cluster and creative cluster by securing further investment, growing our business base and attracting and retaining talent.



Accelerate the development of strategic transport, energy, digital and housing infrastructure to maximise the potential of our growth opportunities and create the environment for growth.



Diversify and drive the growth of our foundational economy by increasing business density and developing the skills of our people to get more people into work.



Local Growth Plan Shared Priorities

Local Growth Plans must include shared priorities, which should underpin the plan as a whole.

Shared priorities should be the region's most significant opportunities and constraints to economic growth. They are cross-cutting priorities that can benefit a wide range of sectors and the regional economy at large.

Our Shared Priorities have been co-determined with government (via the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government) and now agreed, these shared priorities will guide both national and regional policy – informing collaborative working to design and develop services and

interventions and make investment decisions.

These shared priorities will benefit from the support via both the Mayoral Strategic Authorities' devolved powers and national government levers.

Shared priorities do not represent the totality of everything important to inclusive growth in our region and our plan covers these wider local priorities and identifies opportunities and issues wider than our shared priorities.



SKILLS & EMPLOYMENT

Increase the skills base and reduce economic inactivity to enable residents to rejoin or increase participation in the workforce and support them into better employment opportunities.

Addressing this will require HMG and TVCA to work together to explore actions. This would deliver a more joined-up approach which addresses local workforce challenges, providing the talent pipeline for key growth sectors.



TRANSPORT

Improve transport accessibility and travel experiences to better connect workers across the region to employment and industrial sites.

Addressing this will require HMG and TVCA to work together to explore actions. This would support residents to access more economic opportunities, with businesses better able to attract talent across a wider geography and facilitate growth and inward investment.



HOUSING & COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Increase the availability and viability of high-quality commercial land and space, such as office, industrial, research and development space, and appropriate housing, to increase business density and to attract and retain talent.

Addressing this will require HMG and TVCA to work together to explore actions. This would provide the foundations for greater business investment and expand the available talent pool for business, boosting growth and productivity in key sectors.

HOW WE WILL WORK

Our Principles

Our strategic approach is one that enables greater collaboration and supports a move towards a work, health and skills system which is driven by the following principles.

- 

Prioritise delivery that is strategically and economically advantageous to Tees Valley
- 

Ensure skills provision and employment support is directly linked to employer needs across Tees Valley
- 

Develop collaborative and strategic working relationships with partners and stakeholders to benefit Tees Valley residents and employers
- 

Develop and support a sustainable workforce in Tees Valley
- 

Maximise the amount of funding that reaches the individual
- 

Ensure that all investment adds value and does not duplicate or displace other available provision
- 

Establish better measurement and evidencing of positive outcomes to demonstrate how provision is meeting the needs of individuals and employers across Tees Valley
- 

Support value for money and high quality commissioning of provision

Our Values & Behaviours

In taking forward this approach, the following key values and behaviours have been identified that we would expect all partners and stakeholders delivering provision to Tees Valley residents and businesses to display.

- 

Delivering with integrity – putting the needs of individuals and employers at the centre
- 

Communicate openly and transparently with individuals and employers, partners and stakeholders – build relationships based on trust and respect
- 

An ambition and desire to deliver best practice in the sector and invest in quality, staff and learners
- 

Work with partners and stakeholders to effectively drive forward provision that will deliver key economic benefits for Tees Valley residents and employers
- 

Providing extensive support to individuals to deliver meaningful outcomes moving them closer to, or into employment
- 

Demonstrate exemplary behaviours with regards to commissioning arrangements that support positive outcomes for individuals and employers
- 

A determination to collaboratively develop the work, health and skills system across Tees Valley to benefit all residents and employers
- 

Work collaboratively and strategically with all relevant partners and stakeholders within the Tees Valley

GOVERNANCE, LOCAL ENGAGEMENT & FUTURE EDITIONS

In accordance with the government guidance, the development of the Get Tees Valley Working Plan has been overseen through a formal partnership group.

The governance arrangements in place locally which will maintain oversight of the Get Tees Valley Working plan and which will support alignment with future initiatives and strategies across relevant stakeholders are set out below.

Governance

The governance, clearance and sign off processes for our Get Tees Valley Working Plan will be in accordance with the Tees Valley Assurance Framework and in accordance with government Guidance for Developing local Get Britain Working plans (England), published 3 April 2025.

For Tees Valley, the formal partnership group is the Tees Valley Education, Employment & Skills Advisory Group, chaired by the TVCA Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Education, Employment and Skills.

Membership of the Tees Valley Education, Employment & Skills Advisory Group has been widened to include the NHS North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board and fully meets the membership requirements for the formal partnership.

EES Advisory Group membership includes:

- Tees Valley Combined Authority (the accountable body)
- Constituent local authorities
- NHS North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board
- Department for Work and Pensions
- Jobcentre Plus
- Department for Education
- Voluntary, community, and social enterprise organisations
- Education and skills providers
- Employer and business representative groups (this includes representation from the Employer Representative Body responsible for the development and implementation of the Local Skills Improvement Plan within our area).

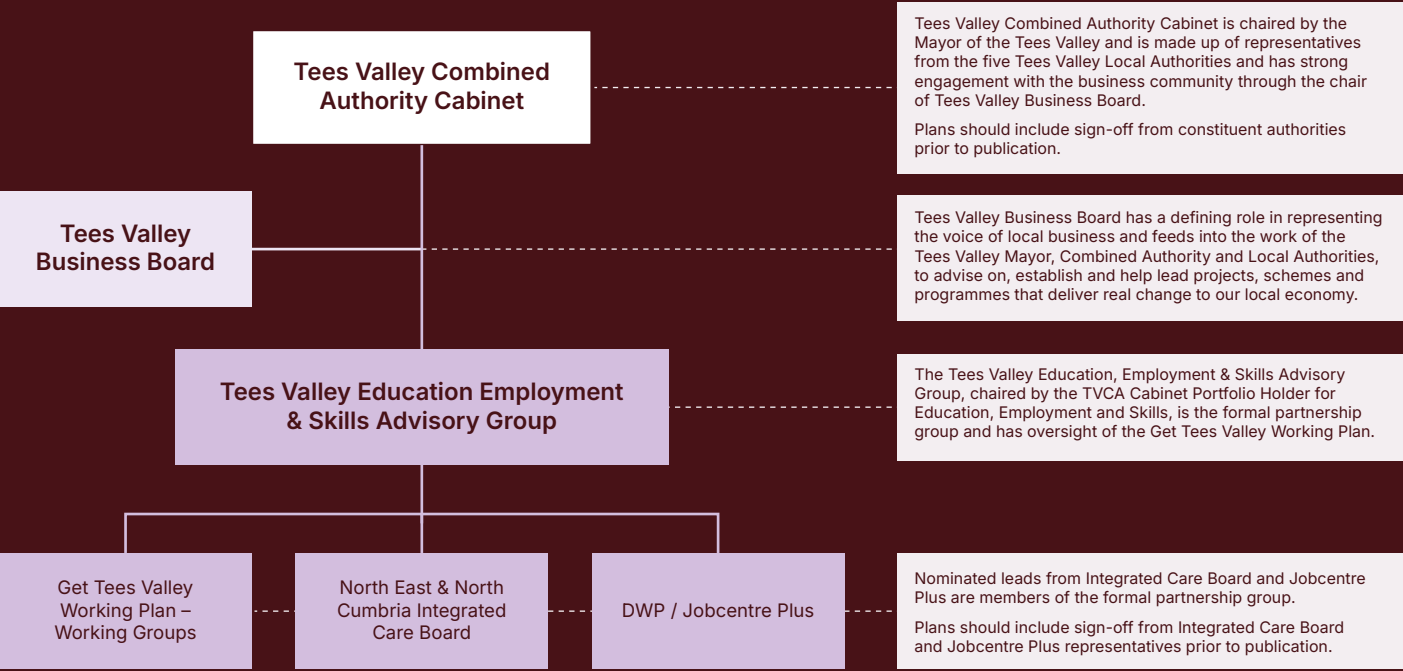
Local Engagement

In addition to the formal partnership group, we have and will continue to engage with a wider range of stakeholders to extend the scope of the plan to include unemployment and employment.

Wider stakeholders include:

- Operational representatives from Jobcentre Plus
- Academic institutions and research bodies, offering insight into skills pipelines, graduate retention, and local innovation.
- Housing associations, who support vulnerable residents and have an understanding of wider social barriers that will be important in shaping inclusive employment strategies.
- VCSE organisations, particularly those with strong links into underrepresented or disadvantaged communities.
- Local employer groups and representative bodies beyond those in the core partnership, ensuring a wider business voice.

Engagement will span the full Tees Valley geography, reflecting the footprint of the five constituent authorities, ensuring the plan can respond to common regional challenges while retaining flexibility to reflect localised needs.



Future Iterations

Government recognise that areas are at differing stages and while some areas will be able to publish comprehensive plans, for other areas the process may be more iterative. As a minimum all areas are expected to have initial plans covering inactivity completed and published by September 2025.

The emerging Local Growth Plan will be a key strategic document influencing and aligning with the Get Tees Valley Working Plan, the ‘workforce’ element of the Local Growth Plan. As such, the GTVWP will be kept under review and updated, as necessary, to reflect the Local Growth Plan, recognising the importance of our ‘workforce’ in helping us achieve our economic growth ambitions.

In developing the Get Tees Valley Working Plan – First Edition (covering inactivity) it is evident that this has already further enhanced discussions and identified several core elements that need to be further explored with key partners and stakeholders.

In order that the plan and priority actions can be updated at appropriate junctures - including following major fiscal events and changes to significant programmes (this includes locally delivered provision such as UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Connect to Work, or national provision), it is proposed that the Get Tees Valley Working Plan – Second Edition is published in March 2026.



Outcomes & Impacts

In developing our emerging Local Growth Plan and Get Tees Valley Working Plan – First Edition. We have taken a holistic and blended approach to capture our region's strengths and opportunities, building on the progress achieved.

Through these metrics, there has been a conscious focus to ensure that whatever we – Government/Combined Authority/ Local Authority/Private Sector/Third Sector/Communities – do will result in residents having more disposable income at the end of the month and live healthier, happier lives such as through expanding opportunities for employment by increasing business density, whilst being mindful of the need to make sure residents have the required skills to access good quality, well paid employment so they can enjoy what Tees Valley has to offer.

Importantly, the Tees Valley Local Growth Plan is not a standalone document. Across our region, there are several programmes, plans and strategies which are already in action and being delivered to support residents, grow businesses and improve the lived experiences and perception of our region.

Local Growth Plan – Impacts



+0.5% will be the annual Tees Valley GDP growth
To match the UK rate going forward



10,000 more business created
To match the UK business density rate



14,200 more working age residents in employment
To match the latest UK employment rate



37,800 more L4+ qualified working-age residents
To at least match the UK rate



£4,795 more in annual gross disposable household income (GDHI) per head needed
To match the UK GDHI per head rate and close the income gap



6 more years of healthy life expectancy needed
To match the UK healthy life expectancy rate and tackle inequalities in health



64,000 more jobs
To match the UK rate



30,000 fewer residents in employment deprivation
To match the UK rate

Get Britain Working Outcomes

The Get Britain Working outcomes policy paper (published 3 April 2025), sets out the key outcome metrics that government will continue to monitor closely in relation to local Get Britain Working plan are:

Key Outcome Metrics

- Employment rate – the number of people aged 18 to 66 in employment divided by the population aged 18 to 66.
- Real earnings amongst non-retired households (all ages) – a component of real household disposable income (RHDl).

Intermediate Outcome Metrics

Local variation in employment rates – employment rates (i.e. the number of people aged 18 to 66 in local authorities, defined as unitary local authorities/local authorities counties in the UK, their distribution and gap between the bottom 10% and median.

Health related economic inactivity rate – number of people aged 18 to 66 who are economically inactive due to being long-term sick divided by the 18 to 66 population.

Disability employment rate gap – the difference in the employment rate of people, aged 18 to 66, who report they are disabled as defined by the Government Statistical Service (GSS) Harmonised Standard, and those who do not.

Proportion of 18 to 24 year olds not in education, employment or training, supported by an increase in the proportion of 16 to 21 year olds in education or a job with training.

Employment among parents aged 18 to 66:

1. The employment rate gap between lone parents and parents in a couple - the difference in the employment rate of lone parents and parents in a couple. The employment rate of lone parents is calculated as the number of lone parents in employment divided by the number of all lone parents. The employment rate for parents in a couple is calculated as the sum of fathers employed in couple and mothers employed in a couple divided by all parents in a couple. Both are relevant for families with people aged 18 to 66.
2. The percentage of coupled families where at least one parent is out of work – the number of families with parents in a couple, where one or more of the parents are out of work divided by the number of families with coupled parents. Relevant for people aged 18 to 66.

And aim to increase:

3. Female employment rate – the number of women aged 18 to 66 in employment divided by the number of women in the population, aged 18 to 66.



Monitoring & Evaluation

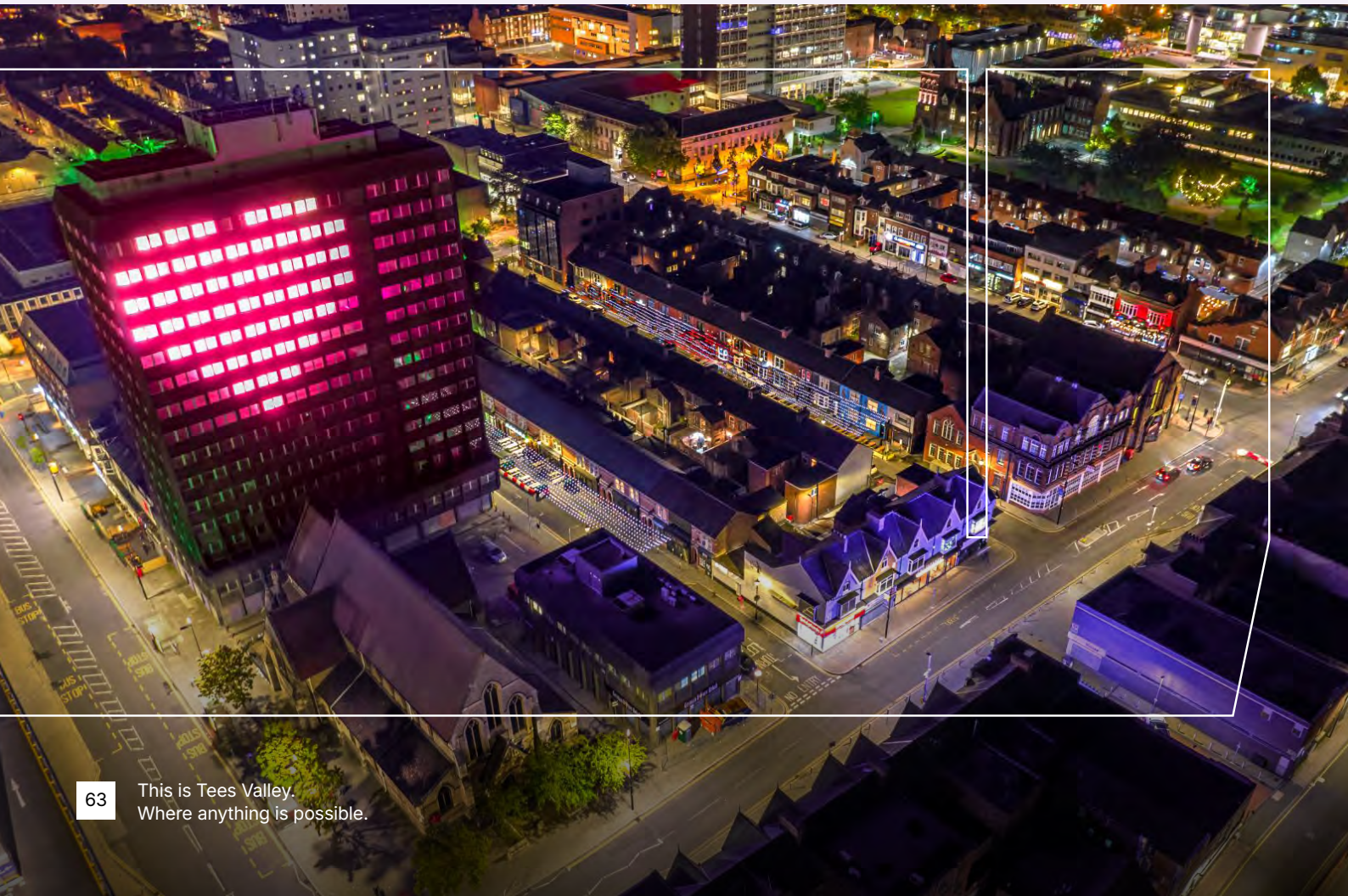
So that we can demonstrate the impacts of the Tees Valley Local Growth Plan and Get Tees Valley Working Plan at both a local and national level, it is proposed to develop a new monitoring and evaluation framework. This framework will ensure robust monitoring of the Local Growth Plan and Get Tees Valley Working plan and give confidence to businesses, strategic partners and stakeholders, and Government.

It is proposed that this framework will be informed by reviewing relevant models of good practice and with input and guidance from the Office for National Statistics (ONS Local) and What Works Centre for Local Economic Growth.

KPIs will be internally monitored regularly and updates on progress towards their achievement will be reported on regularly.

It is proposed that, in due course, evaluation of the Tees Valley Local Growth Plan and Get Tees Valley Working Plan will be externally commissioned

It is proposed that it will include a new performance management regime underpinned with a suit of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) aligned to the Local Growth Plan and, where relevant, aligned to KPIs in the national industrial strategy and Get Britain Working White Paper outcomes, highlighting the current baseline position and long term target for each metric.



Get Tees Valley Working – Logic Model

Over the lifetime of the Get Tees Valley Working plan there will be multiple national and local health, employment, training, skills, and economic growth initiatives that will help to deliver the ambitions of the plan.

To capture all the inputs and activities, we intend to develop a Get Tees Valley Working Plan Logic Model.

This will provide a visual representation that outlines how the plan is intended to work, linking resources, activities, and expected outcomes to guide future programme and project planning, implementation, and evaluation.

 Opportunities	Key challenges/opportunities – identified in evidence base	Why
 Inputs £	Funding and/or Resources	How
 Eligibility Criteria	Who can be supported	Who
 Timeframe	When will the activity or intervention be delivered	When
 Activities	What will be delivered	What
 Outputs	What will be the direct result of the activities or interventions	
 Outcomes	Results or changes produced by the activities or interventions	
 Impact	Economic impact – what impact has the activity or intervention had	



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