

Meeting:	Hampshire Prosperity Partnership Board
Date:	9 th September 2025
Title:	Agenda Item 6 – Get Hampshire Working Plan
Appendices:	Appendix A – Draft Executive Summary of the Get Hampshire Working Plan (below) Draft Get Hampshire Working Plan (separate PDF file) Presentation (separate PDF file)
Report From:	Economy & Skills
Contact Name:	Jamie Mackay
Email:	Jamie.Mackay2@hants.gov.uk

Purpose of this paper

1. This paper follows on from the presentation at the 9th June meeting regarding the development of the Get Hampshire Working Plan, and provides an overview of the latest draft of the plan. In order to meet the Department for Work and Pensions' deadline for the plan to be published by the end of September, the draft plan will be submitted for approval at the Executive Member for Hampshire 2050 and Corporate Services Decision Day on 18th September.
2. This paper provides an update on what has happened since 9th June, and an overview of the approach to implementation and next steps. The draft Executive Summary of the Get Hampshire Working Plan is at Appendix A, below, and the full draft of the plan is attached as a separate PDF file.
3. HPPB is asked to comment on the draft Get Hampshire Working Plan, and to recommend it for approval by Hampshire County Council. A further draft will be published on 10th September, in advance of the Executive Member Decision Day.

Background

4. The Get Britain Working White Paper, published by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) with other government departments, set out a new approach to the employment support system to target and tackle the root causes of unemployment and inactivity, and better join up employment, health and skills support based on local needs.

5. Government has committed to support and enable local areas in England to take the lead in shaping a coherent offer of support across work, health and skills and engage local people, employers and providers in that offer.
6. In line with the [Guidance for Developing local Get Britain Working plans \(England\)](#), the draft Get Hampshire Working Plan identifies local labour market challenges, roles, provision, and the current support offer of key stakeholders, and outlines a coordinated approach to tackling the challenges.
7. This draft Plan has not been produced in isolation. Stakeholder engagement activity has actively involved representatives from local authorities, the NHS, education and training providers, Jobcentre Plus, the voluntary sector, employers and trade unions, as well as key internal stakeholders from Hampshire 2050, Public Health and Children's Services.
8. Delivery of the Get Hampshire Working Plan will support an integrated offer of local work, health and skills support, including the contribution of new and existing provision such as Connect to Work, Local Skills Improvement Plans and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.
9. The draft Get Hampshire Working Plan includes an Action Plan with priorities for the next 12-24 months, and actions aligned closely to key local priorities such as the Economic Strategy for Hampshire 2025-2027 and the two LSIPs. The guidance is clear that partners will need to work through these collectively to deliver the actions. Hampshire County Council (via its Strategic Skills function) will lead and coordinate partners in the delivery of the Action Plan, and monitor and report on progress.
10. Managing the delivery of the Plan will utilise existing governance arrangements, via quarterly reporting against the Action Plan to two existing partnerships:
 - a. The Hampshire Prosperity Partnership, which is led by the Hampshire Prosperity Partnership Board (HPPB) and includes the Hampshire Skills Partnership, which reports into the HPPB.
 - b. The Hampshire Health and Wellbeing Board, which includes representation from the two NHS Integrated Care Boards (Hampshire and Isle of Wight, and Frimley) that sit across Hampshire.
11. Following the creation of a Mayoral Combined County Authority for Hampshire and the Solent, it is anticipated that the Get Hampshire Working Plan will need to come together with the Get Solent Working Plan to create one, local Get Britain Working Plan for the devolved area.

Timeframes

12. On 27 June 2025, an initial proposal of the Get Hampshire Working Plan was submitted to the DWP, in anticipation of the final Plan in September. On 13 August, DWP confirmed they were content with the proposal.
13. In August 2025, the draft Plan was submitted to Jobcentre Plus and the two ICBs, via the Hampshire Health and Wellbeing Board for approval, as required by the DWP.
 - a. Jobcentre Plus approval of the draft Plan is expected shortly.

- b. On 28 August, Frimley ICB approved the draft Plan and on 29 August, Hampshire and Isle of Wight ICB approved the draft Plan.
14. A further draft of the Plan is due to be published on the Hampshire County Council website on 10th September, in advance of the Executive Member Decision Day on the 18th September, when the Plan will be considered for formal adoption.
15. HPPB is asked to comment on the draft Get Hampshire Working Plan, and to recommend it for approval by Hampshire County Council. At the HPPB meeting on 9th September, we would welcome input on the following discussion questions:
- a. Are there any important points of clarification that we need to address?
 - b. Is there anything missing that needs to be included in the final Plan?
 - c. Do you have any comments on the draft Action Plan and/or the approach to its implementation?

Appendix A – Draft Executive Summary of the Get Hampshire Working Plan

16. The draft Get Hampshire Working Plan sets out a county-wide response to the UK Government's Get Britain Working White Paper, which aims to stimulate inclusive economic growth through integrated work, health, and skills support. This is our plan for increasing employment, reducing economic inactivity, improving job quality and mitigating multiple barriers to work.
17. This Plan has been developed collaboratively by Hampshire County Council, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), NHS Integrated Care Boards, and a wide range of local stakeholders and continues the theme of collaboration not only to deliver the Plan but also in working towards the creation of a Jobs and Careers Service and preparing for Pathways to work.
18. ***A work, health and skills profile of Hampshire***
 - a. Hampshire benefits from a large workforce, characterised by relatively high economic activity and low unemployment. However, a sizeable proportion of its population of working age is not economically active and there are discrepancies in labour market outcomes at local levels.
 - b. There is a large business base – mainly SMEs – with concentrations of knowledge intensive business services, aerospace defence and local services such as health and social care. However, the resident workforce is ageing – particularly in foundational sectors such as construction and health and social care – and also shrinking.
 - c. Although Hampshire's labour market remains tight, jobs demand has weakened over the past 12 months with vacancies in May 2025 down by a third compared to May 2024. People are also staying in employment for longer, especially when they can't afford to retire early. The fall in demand constraints opportunities for those looking for work – especially young people and those with low skills.
 - d. Hampshire consistently reports higher life expectancy than counties with similar population sizes and deprivation levels. However, not everyone in Hampshire enjoys the same level of good health. Some are dying earlier than they should be and the number of years they are living in good health is less than others in the county.
 - e. The NHS is one of the biggest employers in Hampshire and it continues to diversify – both in terms of the workforce and roles but also making the switch from analogue to digital. However, it faces persistent recruitment and workforce retention challenges.
 - f. Many of our education and training providers have strong reputations for meeting skills needs through effective relationships with employers, stakeholders and

each other (often across borders). However, employers continue to report young people lack employability skills such as communication, problem solving and resilience.

- g. Flexible learning provision, such as Skills Bootcamps, continues to grow and respond directly to local employers' needs with strong feedback helping to stimulate further growth. However, a significant proportion of economically inactive people of working age have no formal qualifications which can restrict access to these and other pathways into employment.
- h. In Hampshire, the legacy of the Covid-19 pandemic has not manifested in high unemployment, but rather a significant rise in economic inactivity. I.e. individuals of working age (typically 16 to 64) who are neither employed nor actively seeking employment.

19. *The primary drivers and causes of economic inactivity in Hampshire*

- a. Excluding the economically inactive student population, there are about 113,000 economically inactive people of working age in Hampshire.
- b. The largest group of economically inactive are those classified as long-term sick and/or with a disability. This group has risen by 11,000 since 2019 and can be found mostly in South Hampshire, especially in Gosport, Havant but also Rushmoor in the north of the county. The group is mainly female and there are differences between younger (mostly mental health issues) and older (mostly with physical, muscular and skeletal health issues) individuals.
- c. The second largest group are those retiring early. This group are found across the County with concentrations in Central Hampshire and are mainly female. Education levels tend to be higher than for other groups of economically inactive.
- d. The third largest group are those, mainly (84%) female individuals, with caring responsibilities and/or looking after family or home. Although the numbers have decreased since 2019, these individuals are found across the County with significant concentrations in South Hampshire. This group is driven by a lack of affordable childcare and flexible work opportunities.
- e. It is also important to highlight young people who struggle to secure and maintain employment as well as milestones towards employment such as securing work experience and volunteering opportunities.
- f. And for those who try to (re-)enter the labour market, there are multiple, overlapping barriers that often face them, linked to health, work and skills but also economic and societal challenges.

- g. It's perhaps no wonder that a common theme that arose during external stakeholder engagement activity was lack of confidence.

20. *The current support system and offer*

- a. The current landscape of work, health, and skills support available across Hampshire is extensive and draws on a wide range of organisations from different sectors.
- b. The Jobcentre Plus offer remains a cornerstone of employment support, providing personalised guidance through Work Coaches and specialist programmes. These services are designed to help individuals move into and stay in work, with additional support for those with health conditions and/or disabilities.
- c. Hampshire's education and skills ecosystem is rich and varied, comprising colleges, independent training providers, and universities, some which sit outside the County but nevertheless play roles. These institutions offer a mix of technical, vocational, and academic pathways aligned with local skills needs and informed by the Solent and Enterprise M3 Local Skills Improvement Plans. Targeted support is available for key groups and programmes such as ESOL, Skills Bootcamps, SEND Independence Hubs, and Supported Internships reflect a growing integration of employability and mental health support.
- d. Housing associations play an important role, not only in providing accommodation but also in supporting residents with employment guidance, skills development, and business start-up advice. Their household-focused approach presents opportunities for greater collaboration with other sectors.
- e. Local government contributes through coordinated employment and skills partnerships across Hampshire's 12 local authorities. These partnerships offer targeted support with initiatives such as Hampshire Achieves, Hampshire Futures, and the Link Up Youth Hub in Havant – with more Youth Hubs likely to follow. The County's Public Health team lead on work to create conditions that enable healthier lives and work closely with the NHS to improve the health and healthcare outcomes of the local communities – supporting residents to live healthier lives for longer.
- f. The NHS, through Hampshire and Isle of Wight and Frimley Integrated Care Boards, offers health-linked employment support. Programmes such as 350+ NHS Careers, Widening Access Demonstrators, and WorkWell aim to engage young people and those from deprived communities in healthcare careers, while NHS Talking Therapies provide employment support alongside mental health treatment. A jointly developed Mental Wellbeing Guide supports employers in meeting national standards for workplace mental health.

- g. The Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector is a vital partner in delivering integrated support across Hampshire. VCSE organisations provide tailored services for diverse groups including veterans, refugees, ex-offenders, homeless individuals, women, and young people. Their work ranges from intensive employability support to enterprise and wellbeing programmes.
- h. A key development is the Connect to Work programme, part of the Government's Get Britain Working strategy. This initiative will support around 5,000 people in Hampshire with disabilities, long-term health conditions or other complex barriers to secure and maintain employment.
- i. Employer involvement is key to success and national initiatives such as the Armed Forces Covenant, Disability Confident scheme, and the Menopause Workplace Pledge help employers demonstrate commitment to aspects of equality and diversity as a way to attract, support and retain some of those who might otherwise sit outside the labour market.

21. *Priorities to Get Hampshire Working*

- a. Three priorities were identified and agreed by stakeholders to form a framework for an action plan that will help tackle the root causes of unemployment and inactivity in Hampshire:
 - i. Increase labour market participation of those facing barriers to employment.
 - ii. Inspire and support young people to thrive at the start of their careers.
 - iii. Increase employer engagement to better match local talent to local sustainable opportunities to make work pay.
- b. Each of these priorities will form a workstream that will be led by key organisations and supported by Hampshire County Council. Each workstream will agree a set of targeted actions for the next 12–24 months, with a focus on collaboration, innovation, and systemic change.
- c. The draft Plan also outlines how Hampshire will work towards a future local Get Britain Working Plan for the wider Hampshire and Solent area, ensuring alignment with devolution ambitions and regional strategies.
- d. By integrating services, focusing on prevention and early intervention, and strengthening partnerships, the draft Get Hampshire Working Plan aims to unlock the potential of Hampshire's residents, reduce inequalities, and build a healthier, more resilient workforce.