



Public Health Annual Report 2024-25

Work and Health

Foreword



Our health and our work are deeply connected. Good work can support mental wellbeing, provide financial security, build purpose and community, and help us live longer, healthier lives. On the other hand, insecure employment, poor working conditions, or being out of work can significantly impact physical and mental health, widening inequalities that already exist across our borough.

This report explores how the changing nature of work through technological advancements, the rise in hybrid working, and a shifting economic landscape presents both opportunities and challenges for the people of Bolton. We look at how work-related factors can impact throughout our lives from early childhood through to older ages, and consider how we can support residents to thrive in work that is fair, inclusive, and sustainable.

I am pleased to report that recommendations from last year's report have led to significant progress. We will shortly be launching a new Prevention Framework for Bolton, which brings a stronger focus on early intervention,

addressing the underlying causes of poor health and on the circumstances to create good health. Alongside this a new policy on community engagement and co-production has been adopted. Both these developments mark an important step in more responsible, inclusive and proactive approach to improving outcomes across the borough.

Bolton has a proud industrial past and a resilient workforce. But we also know that many people face barriers to accessing good jobs, whether due to health conditions, caring responsibilities, lack of qualifications, or structural inequalities. The report includes examples of organisations across the borough working together supporting those in work to stay well, and those out of work to gain the skills, confidence, and opportunities they need to return.

This report brings together evidence, local voices, and examples of positive action. It makes the case for continuing to strengthen our partnerships between employers, the NHS, local government, and the voluntary sector. By working together, we can build a healthier Bolton where everyone, regardless of background or circumstance, has the opportunity for good work and good health. I hope you enjoy reading this report and find it a useful resource.

Lynn Donkin,
Director of Public Health



With thanks to the editorial team
for bringing this report together
including...

**Clare Jackson, Suzanne Gilman, Anne Marie Carr, Shan Wilkinson,
Marie Parkinson, Annmarie Taylor, Leesa Hellings-Lamb, Tracy
Lumer, Jamie Agar, Munisha Savania, Omar Alrawi, Kev Malone.**

With special thanks to the
partners that contributed case
studies and further information...

**Suzanne Delaney and Indira McLean
(Digital Employment and Skills Team)**

Dee Luczka (Sapphire)

Katrina Berwick (Connexions)

**Alyson Hargreaves and Maggie Porter
(Bolton Council, The Workshop)**

Jenny Maher (Bolton Community Homes)

Chris Taylor (Mosodi)

Jessica Litherland (Health Improvement Practitioner)

**Benn Broadbent and Marie Henry
(Intuitive Thinking Skills, in partnership with Achieve)**

Benjamin Johnson Lewis (Ingeus)

GMCA Education Work and Skills Team

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1.

Introduction

1. Introduction

Work plays a central role in most people's lives, shaping not only their economic prospects but also their sense of purpose and social connection. On average, working adults in the UK spend around a third of their lives at work, underlining its significance in daily life.

This time we spend at work is one of the essential building blocks towards better health – what we do, how we do it, and how we are treated can have important knock-on effects on our wellbeing.

People in work tend to experience better health than those who are unemployed, living longer lives and reporting higher levels of wellbeing. This pattern also seems to increase with time, as the longer someone spends out of work the poorer their health prospects can become. Whilst the financial strain from unemployment is a key factor, studies show that even without the effects of poverty or loss of income, we still see the same connection between unemployment and poor health. We don't fully understand this association, but research suggests it could be linked to stress, isolation, loneliness, the lack of a sense of purpose, lower self-esteem, and higher likelihood of unhealthy coping mechanisms such as smoking or drinking.

However, the relationship between work and health isn't as simple as whether someone is employed. Not all work affects our health in the same way, and the quality of a job can play a key role in determining whether the impact is beneficial or detrimental.

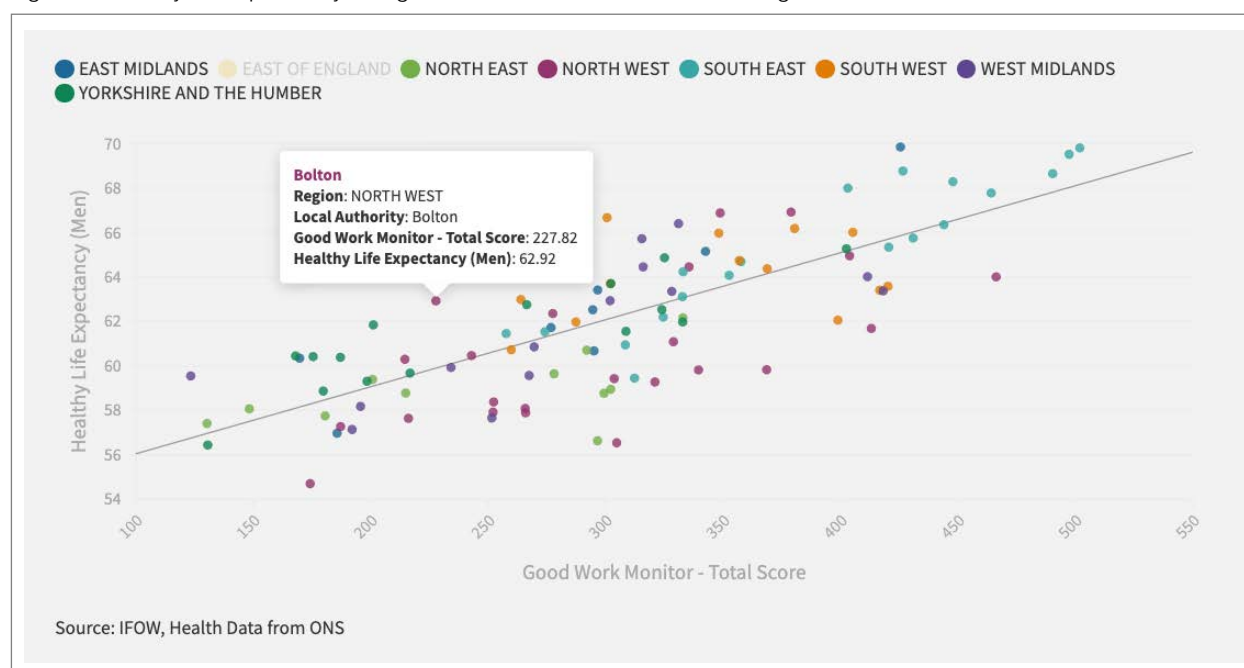
'Good work' refers to employment that treats workers fairly and promotes their overall wellbeing. It provides not only a work environment that is safe, but also having a sense of security, autonomy, good line management and communication within an organisation. It also protects against social exclusion by providing income, social interaction, a core role, identity and purpose¹.

'Good work' can look quite different across different roles and job sectors, but there are some common factors. The Institute for the Future of Work (IFOW) sets out some core principles in the Good Work Charter, such as fair pay, fair conditions, equality and autonomy at work. We have our own regional Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter too, which lays out similar guidelines that employers can sign up to as supporters, committing to improving the quality of their workplaces for employees. When comparing high-quality work to work which performs poorly across these criteria, we see that workers in lower quality roles report much worse health on average². The Good Work Monitor tracks these criteria in areas around the country. Across metrics of Access & Participation, Status & Autonomy, and Pay & Conditions, Bolton ranks 94 out of 117 regions in England, with room for improvement across all three scores. People living in Local Authorities with better opportunities for good work tend to live healthier, longer lives.

As well as the direct impact of work, workplaces are also a setting which can potentially support healthy behaviours.

The Good Work Charter

- 1. Access**
Everyone should have access to good work
- 2. Fair pay**
Everyone should be fairly paid
- 3. Fair conditions**
Everyone should work on fair conditions set out on fair terms
- 4. Equality**
Everyone should be treated equally and without discrimination
- 5. Dignity**
Work should promote dignity
- 6. Autonomy**
Work should promote autonomy
- 7. Wellbeing**
Work should promote physical and mental wellbeing
- 8. Support**
Everyone should have access to institutions and people who can represent their interests
- 9. Participation**
Everyone should be able to take part in determining and improving working conditions
- 10. Learning**
Everyone should have access to lifelong learning and career guidance

Figure 1: Healthy life expectancy and good work monitor scores across English local authorities³

For some, poor work can mean unsafe manual labour that can lead to musculoskeletal problems such as back pain, whilst for others it may be long working hours or stress impacting upon their mental health. Overall, the most common complaint is poor pay, with many in Bolton and across the country struggling to keep up with bills that have been rising faster than household income^{4,5}. Generally, younger adults and ethnic minority groups are more likely to work in lower-quality jobs and whilst some progress to better work with time, many employees in low-quality work can find it difficult to find jobs with better conditions⁵.

It is important to note that the relationship between work and health works both ways – with work affecting health and health affecting work. Intuitively, this makes sense; we can see from the data above that those in unemployment or poor-quality jobs are more likely to suffer ill-health, whilst people in poor health are much likelier to struggle to maintain the demands of a job. Over 8 million people in the UK now have health conditions which limit the work they can do, which is around 1 in 5 people aged 16-64. For many, this can create a vicious cycle that is difficult to escape from: poor work leads to worse health, which then makes it even harder to find or keep a job. When taking into account the impacts of sickness absence, lost productivity, and

informal care giving, it is estimated that working-age ill-health costs the UK economy over £100bn a year, a staggering figure that has been steadily rising in recent years. This demonstrates the importance of getting it right when it comes to work and health. If we can transform this vicious cycle into a virtuous cycle, we can improve people's lives as well as the economy at large.

The recent Get Britain Working White Paper has identified this mission as a national priority for the new government⁷. The strategy is a recognition of many of the issues highlighted above, aiming to target the root causes of economic inactivity with a “fundamentally different approach” based on three pillars:

- **A modern Industrial Strategy and Local Growth Plans – to create more good jobs in every part of the country**
- **Improving the quality and security of work through the Plan to Make Work Pay**
- **The biggest reforms to employment support for a generation, bringing together skills and health to get more people into work and to get on in work**

Central to these plans is “enabling local areas – especially through mayoral authorities – to lead and drive action”. The Mayor of Greater Manchester, Andy Burnham, has voiced his support for the reforms, aiming to get 150,000 people across Greater Manchester back to work over the next five years. Among his proposals are local ‘Live Well’ centres, which would aim to bring health services, skills and employment support, and housing advice under one roof to help people live healthier lives and support them to find and maintain work. These national and regional ambitions are all echoed by our Vision 2040 here in Bolton.

This report considers the work environment for people in Bolton throughout their lives – the education and skills on offer for young people looking to start their first jobs, the quality and availability of work for adults of working age, and the options and support for those coming towards the end of their working lives. The aim is to highlight our core strengths and weaknesses in Bolton today, and most importantly, to envision how we might be able to work together with local businesses, organisations, and people to create a healthier workforce, and by extension, a healthier community.

Mayor of Greater Manchester, Andy Burnham, said⁸:

“Here in Greater Manchester our economy is growing faster than the UK average. There are higher quality jobs here, but many people struggle to access them because they are weighed down by worries, health problems, financial barriers and insecure housing.”

“By providing wraparound support to tackling the everyday issues holding our residents back, we can transform their lives and help them enjoy the stability, dignity and sense of community that comes with a decent job.”

“Not only will this reduce the inequalities in our city region and boost life chances and wellbeing, but it will also cut the benefits bill and ease pressure on our NHS”



WORKPLACE WELL-BEING

Occupational



Mental



Physical



Relationships

2.

What we know about health and work in Bolton

Figure 2: Years lived in good health and mortality

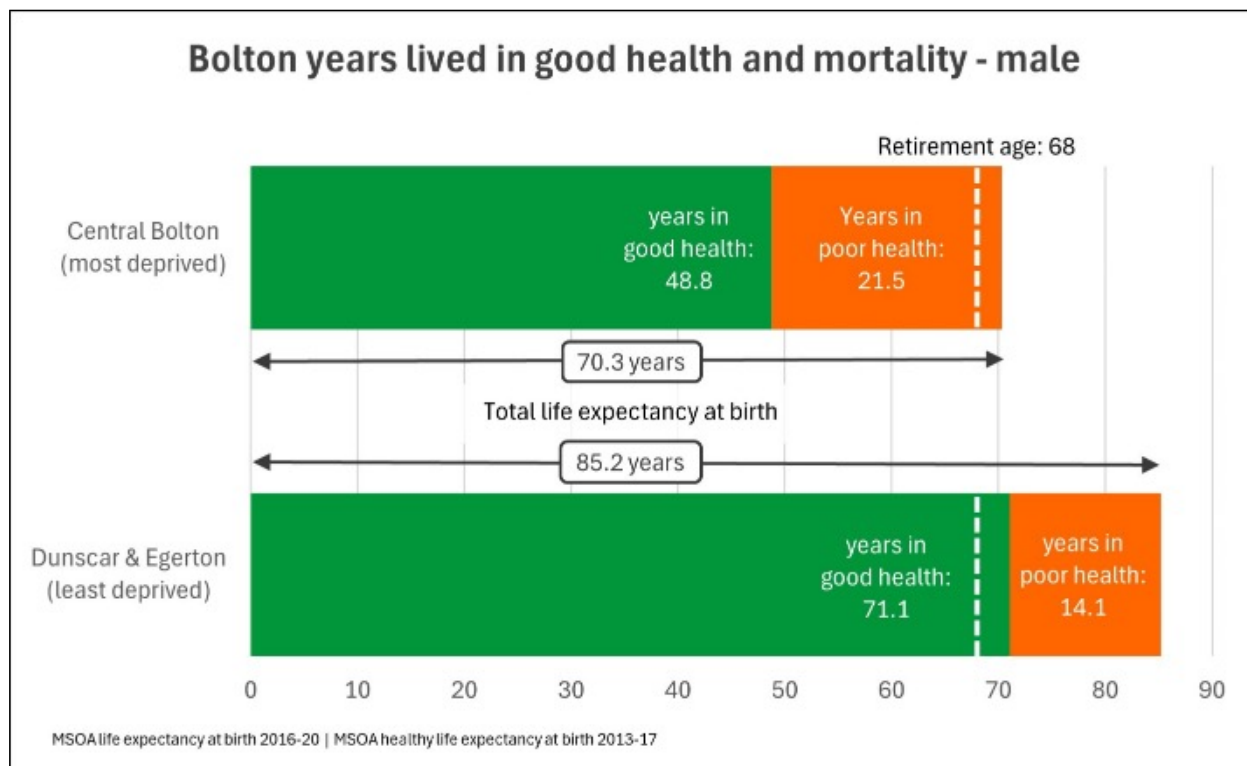
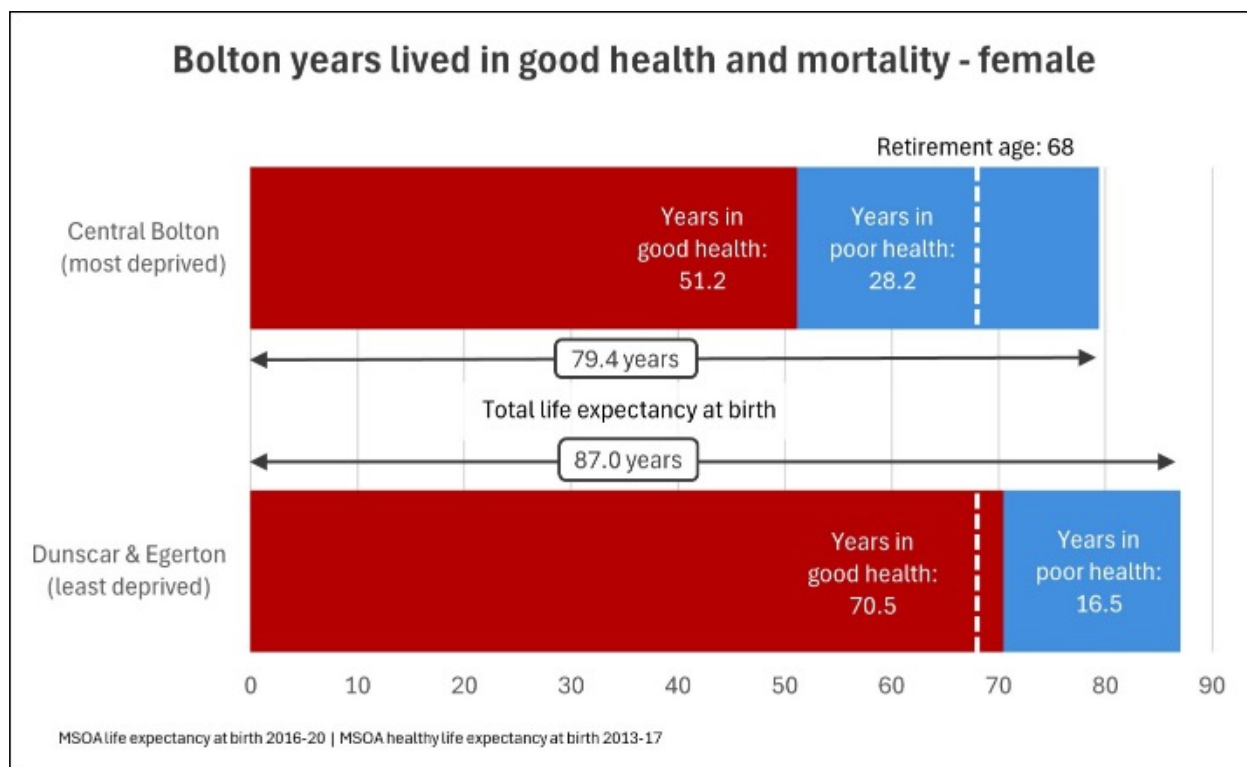


Figure 3: Economic activity in Bolton among 16-64 year olds in Bolton¹²

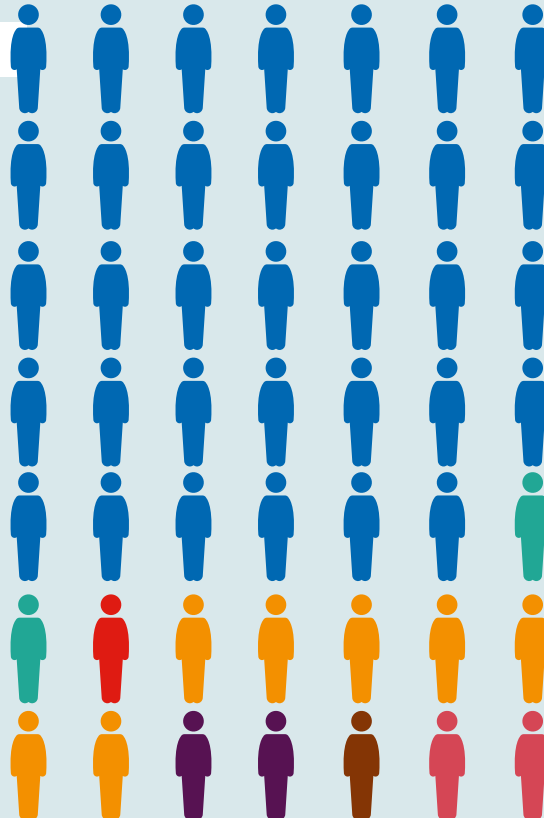
2.1 People in work/ out of work

- There are **185,000** residents aged 16-64 in Bolton; **61%** of the total population⁹
- **64%** of Bolton residents aged 16-64 are **in work**, **lower** than for the North West or England as a whole¹⁰
- More working-age Bolton **males** than females are **in employment** (70% vs 61%)
- More Bolton **females** than males are **looking after home and family** (12% vs 2%); and **more males** than females are **long term sick** (14% vs 9%)¹¹
- **More** Bolton residents from **minority ethnic groups** are **in employment** than across England or the North West (Bolton 81%; NW 66%, England 70%)

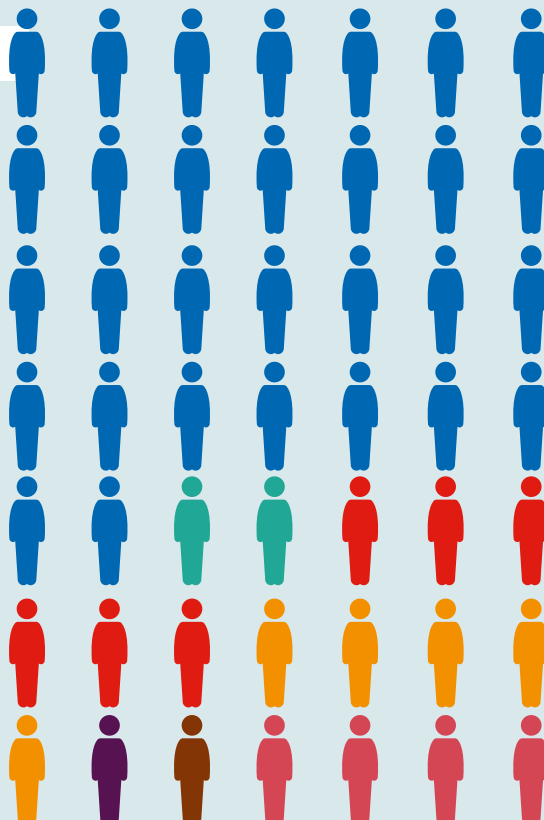
Compared to other areas which are similar to us...

- Bolton has **more residents** who are **economically inactive** (not in work or actively seeking work)
- Bolton has **more women** **looking after home and family** (12% vs average of 8%)
- Bolton has **more men** **long term sick** (14% vs average of 8%)
- Bolton has a **small proportion of students** (3% vs average of 6%)
- **Fewer** of those in Bolton who are **economically inactive** are **satisfied** with this situation (74% vs average of 84%)

Male



Female



Economically active

- In employment
- Unemployed and seeking work

Economically inactive

- Looking after home/family
- Long term sick
- Student
- Retired
- Economically inactive

2.2 Pay



Jobs in Bolton are on average **lower paid** than in Greater Manchester or England as a whole.

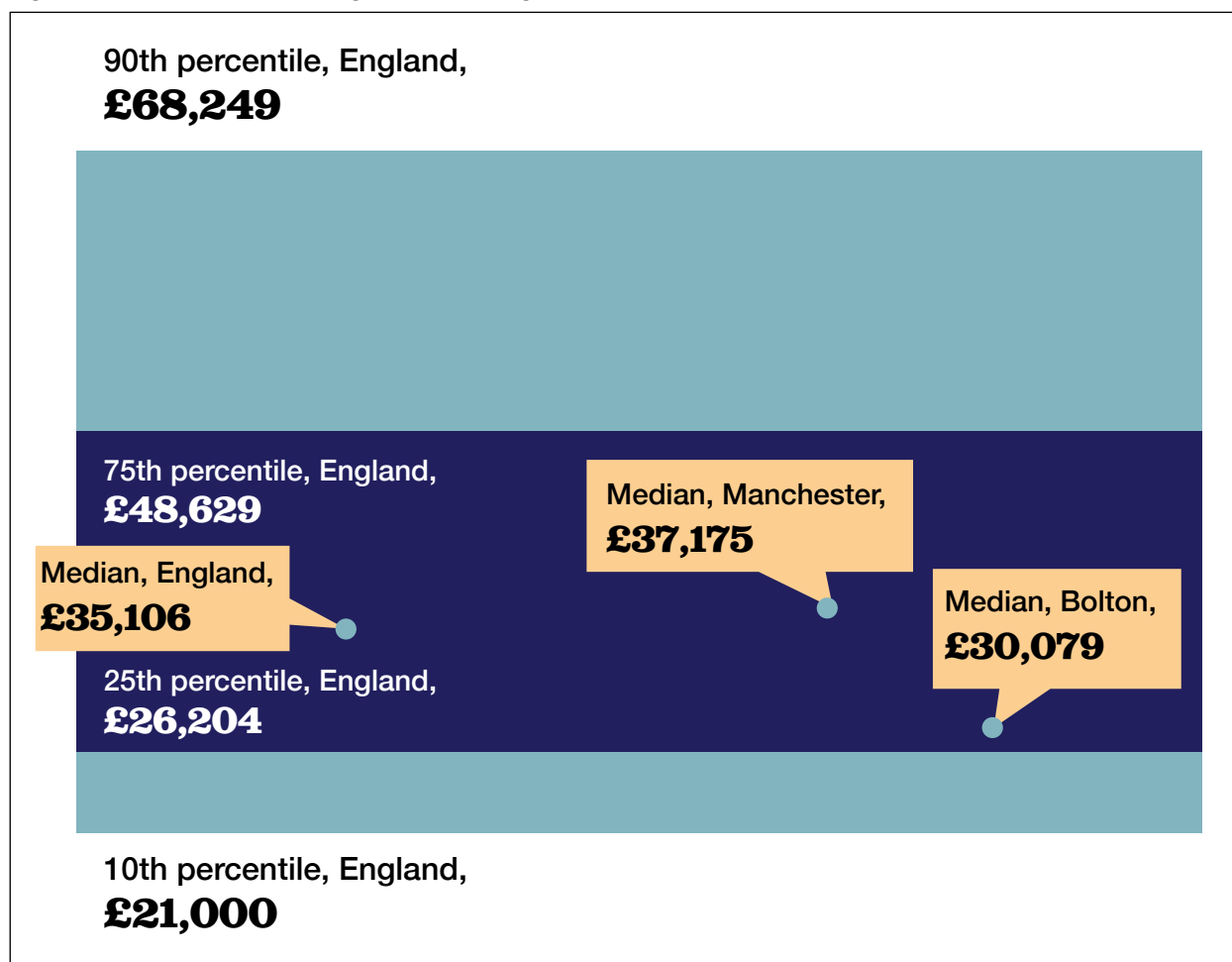


Across Greater Manchester, jobs located in **Manchester** have the **highest average salary** at £37,175; while Oldham and Tameside both have a lower average full time salary than Bolton¹³.



The **gender pay gap** for jobs in Bolton is 7.6%, **amongst the lowest in GM**, and lower than the figure of 15.5% for England as a whole¹⁴.

Figure 4: Gross full-time average salary average and spread of salaries (2023)¹³



2.3 Sector¹⁵



Bolton has a **large proportion** of jobs in ‘**Public administration, education and health**’ – a higher proportion than the region or country as a whole.

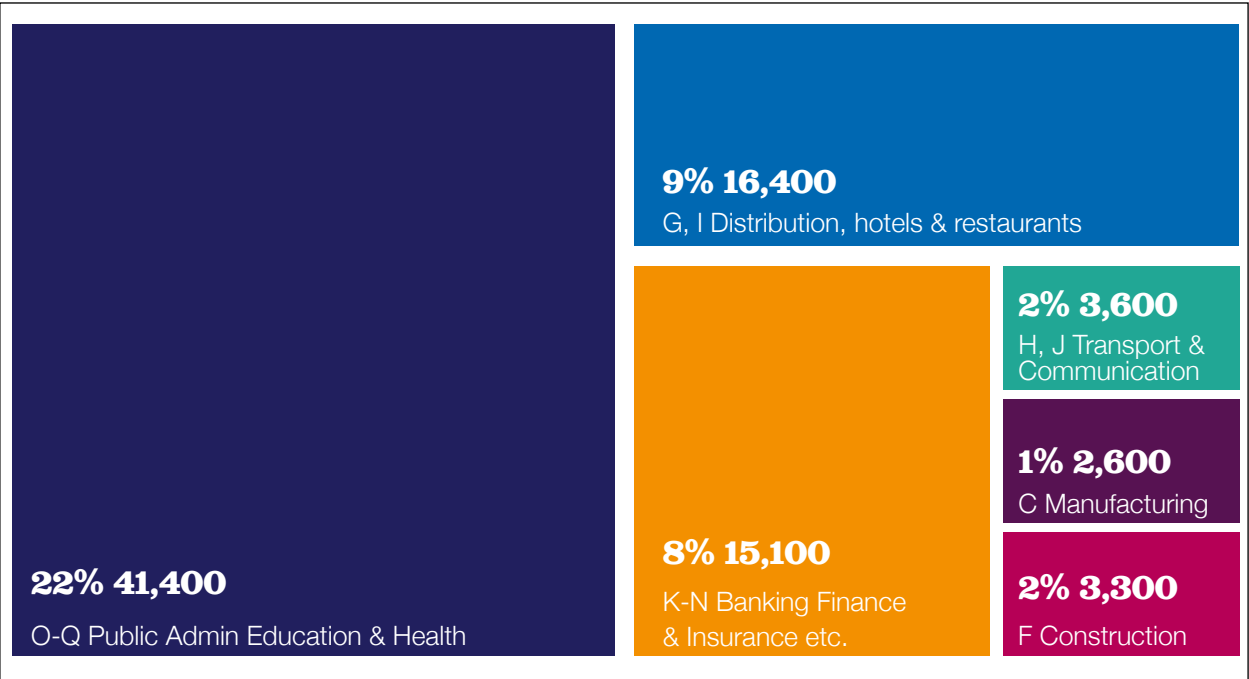


Other major sectors for the borough include: ‘**Distribution, hotels and restaurants**’, and ‘**Banking, financial and insurance**’.



Despite the borough’s manufacturing heritage, there are now **fewer manufacturing roles** than in the region or country as a whole.

Figure 5: Jobs in Bolton
(Standard Industrial Classification, Labour Force Survey July 2023 - June 2024)



2.4 Travel to work



Commuting was the **largest reason for travel** for Bolton residents at 24% or **41,344,000** trips a year¹⁶

53%

of Bolton related commutes both start and end in Bolton.¹⁶



- o Other frequent destinations for residents commuting **out** of Bolton are **Wigan** (11%), outside Greater Manchester (10%), **Manchester** (9%), **Bury** (6%)¹⁶
- o People commuting **into** Bolton from other areas are most likely to have come from **Wigan** (13%), outside Greater Manchester (13%), **Bury** (7%)¹⁶
- o From census data (2011 and 2021) the main non Greater Manchester locations for **commutes into and out of Bolton** are **Chorley**, followed by **Blackburn with Darwen**.

People commuting into Bolton:

13% Wigan
13% Outside Gt Manchester
7% Bury

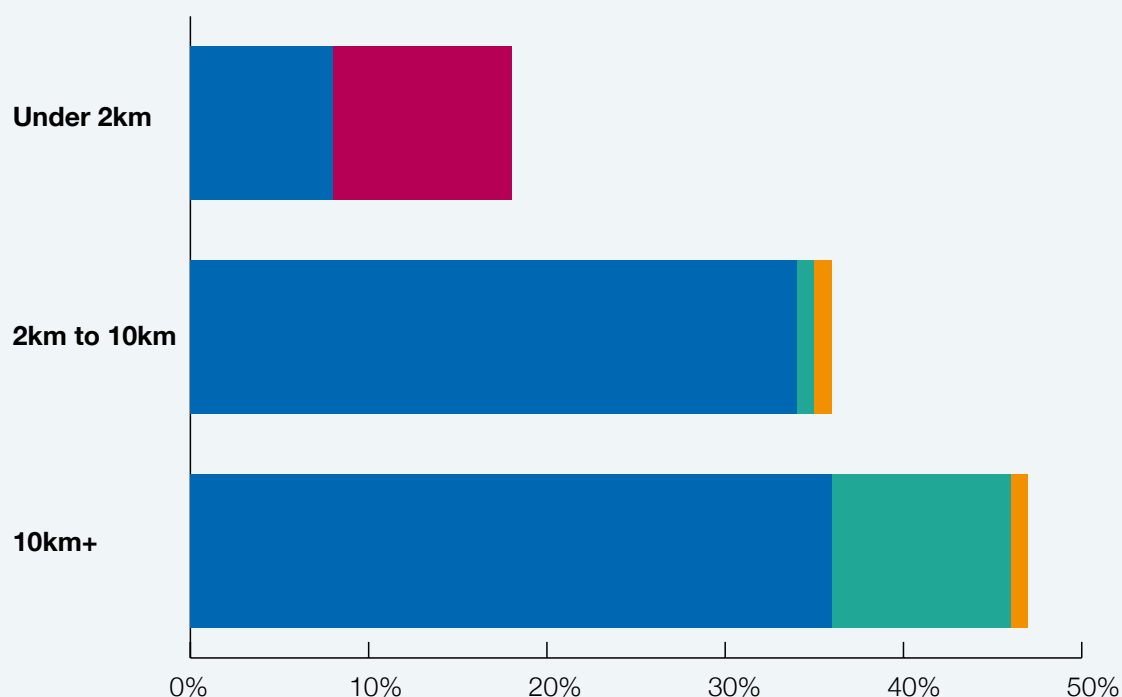


Bolton has low rates of homeworking, so access to physical workplaces is important in enabling residents to access good quality work.

- o In 2020, **25%** of Bolton workers completed **any work from home**, this put Bolton in the 15% of local authorities in Great Britain with the **lowest** rates of any homeworking. At this time, 8% mainly and 5% occasionally worked from home.¹⁷
- o At the time of the 2021 census (which was still likely to be affected by Covid restrictions, so homeworking likely higher than more recently) **24%** of Bolton residents in work worked **mainly at or from home**, this put Bolton in the **lowest quarter** of local authorities in England and Wales.¹⁸



How and how far Bolton residents commute¹⁶



Car or van (including passengers)

Walk and cycle

Bus, train, tram

Other



18% of commutes are less than 2km¹⁶



54% of commutes under 2km are made by walking or cycling



22% of commutes of 10km+¹⁶. Public transport is most likely to be used for longer commutes



7% of commutes 2-5km, are by 'other' mode. Census data suggests many may be by taxi.¹⁶





3.

Children and young people

Key data: Children and Young People

In Bolton...



37,850
households with
dependent children³¹



64% of households with
children are couple families³¹



25% of households with
children are lone parent families³¹



11% of households with
children are other household types³¹

A household is deprived in the employment domain if any member, not a full-time student, is either unemployed or economically inactive due to long-term sickness or disability.



1,531 or 16%
of lone parent households with
dependent children were deprived
in the employment domain



2,818 or 12%
of couple households with
dependent children were deprived
in the employment domain



45% of Bolton children
(33,000 individuals) **live in poverty**.
This puts Bolton 12th highest
local authority (out of 361) in the
country¹⁹.

In 2022/23 of the 2588²¹ students leaving mainstream state funded schools or colleges in Bolton, sustained destinations were:



43% in education



24% in employment



8% in an apprenticeship



19% not recorded as a
sustained destination

3.1 Early life experiences

A better start in life

How a child develops through the years can have lifelong impacts. Having the best possible start in life, including high-quality early education, enables better opportunities to gain experience, build skills, acquire knowledge, and develop confidence, laying the foundation for improved job prospects and economic stability in adulthood. Speech and language development is a vital part of this journey. Poor speech and language skills are linked to a higher risk of becoming NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) and increased likelihood of involvement with the youth criminal justice system. Prioritising strong early communication development is therefore essential for long-term educational, social, and economic outcomes²².

The Start Small Dream Big pilot programme, which includes career-related learning in primary schools, emphasises the importance of early intervention. The initiative seeks to challenge stereotypes, raise aspirations, and expose young children to diverse career paths. Insights from consultations highlight the recognition and commitment to introducing careers education from an early age²³.

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)—traumatic events that occur early in life—can have lasting impacts on an individual's mental, emotional, and physical health.

In Bolton, higher rates of ACEs are linked to challenges in securing employment, as these experiences often reduce cognitive and emotional resilience, affecting job performance and career progression. To address these challenges, local programmes like the trauma-informed schools pilot aim to train educators to recognise and support individuals who have experienced ACEs, thus improving employment outcomes within the community.

As we see, early adversity can have significant impacts on young people's wellbeing, which directly relates to their transition into employment.

Speech and language development

Strong speech and language development in childhood is directly linked to better future employment prospects. It's crucial for educational attainment, as it impacts reading, writing, and overall academic success. Well-developed communication skills also lead to better social and emotional development, making individuals more employable and successful in various work environments. Individuals with speech and language difficulties are more likely to experience educational disadvantages, which can lead to lower earning potential and a greater risk of unemployment.

A government study in 2019 found economic disadvantage, shown by 12% average lower earnings among young people with inadequate literacy skills, who are also twice as likely to be unemployed at age 34²⁴.

However, research shows that lots can be done in the early years to avoid inequalities in children's language development. The Speech, Language and Communication Framework (SLCF) is a tool used in Greater Manchester to support the development of speech, language, and communication skills in children and young people. It's a free, online professional development resource that outlines the key skills and knowledge needed by professionals working with children and young people. There is an existing programme in Bolton's Early Years Service, however an expansion of this model into schools and further education settings would be valuable.



3.2 Entry to employment

Aspirations and family influence

Parents and carers play a pivotal role in shaping young people's career choices. Positive relationships and support networks can raise aspirations, while the lack of aspirations among parents can limit a young person's career potential. For children with SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities), parents are often crucial in supporting career ambitions. Access to quality education and mental health services for both children and their families is essential to improving life outcomes. The support from families is vital, but beyond the home, there are other barriers that young people face as they strive to enter the workforce.

Barriers to employment

Many young people face barriers to employment, such as a lack of experience, low confidence and self-esteem, or an inability to navigate the job market. Research suggests that young people who face additional barriers to employment often perform better in securing jobs when provided with both on-the-job and off-the-job training. Changes in communication preferences and styles in younger generations are not yet reflected in recruitment and employment practices. When these barriers to employment are overcome, young people are better positioned to avoid being NEET, a major concern that we need to address for a more successful transition into adulthood²⁵.

The factors below increase the likelihood of a young person becoming NEET

Academic underachievement

SEND

Mental health issues

Early parenthood

Not in Employment, Education, or Training (NEET)

Multiple factors—such as academic underachievement, SEND, mental health issues, and early parenthood—increase the likelihood of a young person becoming NEET. The gender difference is notable, with 15.1% of young men compared to 11.2% of young women being NEET.

Furthermore, over half of NEET young people are neither in employment nor actively seeking work. For young people with SEND, the risk of becoming NEET is even higher due to additional barriers like limited access to suitable education and training. Next Generation Bolton, a local initiative, is specifically designed to offer support to SEND young people, ensuring they have the resources and opportunities to succeed. Understanding the challenges of NEET young people is critical when examining the broader family and social experiences that influence their outcomes. NEET young people are also significantly more vulnerable to being manipulated or coerced by adults, often into criminal activity, exploitation, or abuse, due to their increased isolation, lack of routine, and limited access to protective support systems²⁶.



15.1%
of young men



11.2%
of young women

Not in Education Employment or Training



4.4% of Bolton 16-17 year olds were **Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)** or whose activity was not known in the most recent year; this is **better** than England and follows an improving trend²⁰.

3.3 Family and social experience

Mental health, work, and young people

There is compelling evidence that employment plays a crucial role in supporting positive mental wellbeing. Young people facing mental health challenges are more likely to be out of work compared to their healthier peers. On the other hand, those with strong life satisfaction are more likely to secure employment easily. Research also shows that young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) face additional challenges in both education and employment. However, tailored support—such as mentoring and specialised training—can significantly improve their chances of finding meaningful work and enhancing their mental health. The socio-economic factors are combined by a global event like the COVID-19 pandemic, which has disrupted many of the supports available to young people and families²⁷.

Children in poverty and parental joblessness

Children living in poverty face multiple challenges in terms of their health, education, and social development. Research indicates that children from low-income families tend to perform worse in school, which impacts their future job opportunities and financial stability.²⁸ Additionally, long-term parental unemployment has significant negative effects on a child's mental health and well-being, even later in life. However, family income and supportive relationships can mitigate some of these adverse effects.²⁹

Gender inequality in the workforce, particularly the gender pay gap, continues to affect families and contribute to financial insecurity. Addressing this issue is critical for the well-being of both women and children. Access to affordable, high-quality childcare is key to allowing parents to return to work, which can help close the gender pay gap and improve children's outcomes as well as suitable working hours for parents. Studies have shown that improving access to childcare can lead to broader social benefits, including reduced poverty and better educational outcomes³⁰.

Impact of COVID-19 on young people

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly disrupted young people's education and wellbeing. Remote learning exposed gaps in digital access, while isolation increased anxiety and depression. Economic instability led to higher youth unemployment, and many children were educated at home, further limiting their social interactions and access to support. These issues have been extensively documented by organisations such as the UK Department for Education, Ofcom, King's College London, the NHS, and the Office for National Statistics (ONS).



3.4 Case studies

Case study 1

A young person who was home educated pre-16.

Quite socially isolated, low self-esteem, low confidence. No formal qualifications (GCSE's) taken, found it challenging to progress into post 16 education or training and needed a supportive environment to address barriers.

Linked to a Connexions Adviser, trusting relationship established and signed up to Next Generation Bolton for enhanced support. Identified an interest in creative industries. Barriers explored further and a placement secured at Headspace (who are commissioned under the project funding to deliver a programme of creative media in a supportive environment).

While on programme the young person has thrived, and it is evident that there has been a significant distance travelled in her wellbeing and self-confidence.



Case study 2

A young person who suffered with anxiety, and mental health challenges.

Unable to travel independently to take up any post 16 opportunities, linked with a Connexions Advisers and signed up to Next Generation Bolton (NGB).

They were interested in hair and beauty but struggled to engage in any post 16 opportunities. Referred to House of GB a commissioned provider under NGB offering qualification and experience in beauty.

The young person is attending the programme and travelling independently. Also supporting other young people on the course who are experiencing barriers. Recently took part in a visit to an elderly care home to provide treatments for residents there.

Looking now at progression to gain further qualifications and experience in the beauty industry.

Case study 3

Miles

I started my supported internship at Asda (Farnworth) in September 2024. I have decided to do this after my journey at Lifebridge.

Skills I have learnt are deliveries, tidying, wrapping on cages, showing customers where things are and teamwork. I have tried jobs like bread and cakes, produce and the ambient section (products stored and sold at room temperature). I have also completed health and safety training.

Challenges I have faced are trying to get myself out of my comfort zone and more into a work environment by using the bus to travel independently. What I really like as a young person with a learning disability and autism that has made me proud to be part of this internship with my friends and staff who really support us.

"I WOULD GIVE EVERYBODY ADVICE TO TRY IT."



3.5 Children and young people recommendation

Strengthen early support for young people's transitions

It is recommended that the Children's Prevention Board explores skills provision and facilitates greater collaboration between partners to deliver early, targeted support for children and young people to improve young people's preparedness for further education, employment, or training, and to reduce long-term inequalities in employment outcomes.

For example, enhanced access to high-quality careers advice, improved provision of speech and language services, and increased opportunities to develop soft skills.





4.

**Working
age people**

4.1 Key data: Preparing for Work

Highest qualification achieved Bolton residents aged 16-64³¹

No qualifications

17%

Level 1 and entry level qualifications:

e.g. 1 to 4 GCSEs grade A* to C

11%

Level 2 qualifications:

e.g. 5 or more GCSEs (A* to C or 9 to 4)

16%

Level 3 qualifications:

e.g. 2 or more A levels or VCEs

19%

Level 4 qualifications or above:

e.g. degree (BA, BSc), higher degree, professional qualifications

30%

Other qualifications:

7%



Standard occupational classification – jobs in Bolton

This measure groups jobs in terms of **qualifications, training, skills and experience** they typically need, from the least for 'elementary occupations' to the greatest for 'managers and senior officials'.^{32,33}

Elementary Occupations e.g. street cleaner; bar staff; security guard



Process, Plant and Machine Operatives e.g. windscreen fitter; sewing machinist; bus driver



Sales and Customer Service Occupations e.g. retail assistant; call centre occupations; debt collector



Caring, Leisure and Other Service Occupations e.g. childminder; hairdresser; cleaning supervisor



Skilled Trades Occupations e.g. landscape gardener; chef; bricklayer



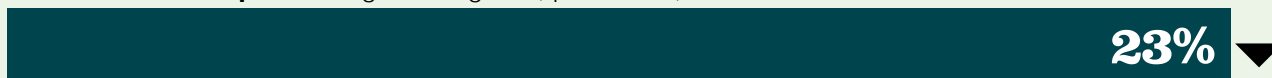
Administrative and Secretarial Occupations e.g. payroll clerk; library assistant; receptionist



Associate Professional Occupations e.g. laboratory technician; dispensing optician; teaching assistant



Professional Occupations e.g. civil engineer; paramedic; teacher



Managers, Directors and Senior Officials e.g. chief executive; senior police officer; publicans and managers of licensed premises



▲ Higher in Bolton than England/ NW

▼ Lower in Bolton than England/ NW

▶ Similar in Bolton to England/ NW

Bolton has more jobs of a lower grouping, but fewer professional and associate technical roles

'Public sector, administration and health' is the largest source of professional jobs in Bolton

'Banking finance and insurance' is a major source of professional jobs in GM (11% of such roles), but not in Bolton – we have more admin and secretarial roles in this sector

4.1.1 Working age – Preparing for work

Why skills are important

Skills programmes can reduce health inequalities for all age groups by improving individuals' confidence, building social networks, reducing isolation and promoting integration.

A lack of essential skills can have a direct impact on employment opportunities. Adults with low skills are more likely to experience unemployment or find themselves in a cycle of insecure, low-paid jobs. Over time, skills can deteriorate without regular use, meaning that unemployment or unskilled work can further contribute to declining literacy, numeracy, and digital proficiency.

English Language Skills

For adults with poor English language skills, everyday life can be significantly more challenging. This creates barriers to accessing education, securing employment, engaging with local communities, and supporting children's learning. This, in turn, reduces life opportunities, hinders community cohesion, and increases reliance on public services.

Bolton has a diverse population with a significant number of residents where English is not their first language. There is an overwhelming need for ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) skills provision in Bolton, that is currently delivered by Bolton College and other Adult Skills Fund Providers

as well as training providers and VCFSE sector organisation that deliver at venues across the town. Most of the unmet demand is at pre-entry and entry one and like other localities across Greater Manchester there are long waiting lists for provision.

The new Refugee Welcome Programme being delivered across all GM localities using a partnership model between the local authority and VCFSE (Voluntary, Community, Faith, and Social Enterprise organisations) sector organisations will offer holistic support with an emphasis on high quality tutor led English language support. This will help to support some of the demand at these levels and in particular support refugees and asylum seekers to have good wellbeing, stable housing, good employment and to integrate into life in Bolton.

VCSE (Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise) sector organisations work with our residents at the heart of our communities and have a vital role to play supporting residents to integrate and acquire first steps language acquisition to learn about the British culture and wellbeing.

Current Greater Manchester funded projects such as the UKSPF (UK Shared Prosperity Fund) Community Grants, Positive Pathways Programme and the Work and Skills Refugee and Asylum Seeker programmes are allowing Bolton to add capacity to VCSE sector organisations to deliver first steps skills provision.



Digital Skills

In today's world, literacy, numeracy, digital proficiency, financial capability, health literacy, and citizenship are essential skills for securing stable employment and actively participating in society. These skills enable individuals to engage in everyday activities such as online grocery shopping, social interactions, and virtual healthcare appointments. Health literacy empowers informed health decisions. As technology advances and economic and social structures evolve, these skills are becoming increasingly vital. They not only help secure employment but also enhance the quality of life and ensure active societal participation.

Local services such as Bolton Digital Employment and Skills team enables residents to navigate local employment, access skills support, developing and enhancing digital proficiency. The team support residents with key skills to help alleviate any barriers towards work. For example, online job searching, creating and updating CV's and filling in application forms.

The fast-paced needs and demand for digital and technical skills will continue to grow and change for many jobs and sectors. Our businesses and talent should be supported to develop and innovate within existing and new sectors across the Borough. We must capitalise on the opportunity to create more highly skilled and better paid jobs by bringing together our manufacturing employers, growing health innovation and professional services, and by attracting more investment into the Borough and revitalising the town centre.

Employment Support

For individuals who find themselves unemployed, there are a range of local programmes offering support to enhance their chances of securing employment. These initiatives include retraining opportunities, which help individuals adapt to evolving job markets, boosting their confidence and long-term career prospects. Assistance with CV writing enables individuals to effectively present their skills and experiences. Additionally, programmes that provide access to appropriate clothing ensure jobseekers can attend interviews and begin work with dignity, removing a significant barrier to employment.

By addressing these factors, such programmes not only improve individual well-being but also strengthen communities, reduce poverty, and mitigate associated health risks.

There are also opportunities through the new Economic Inactivity Grant funding to develop new innovative ways of supporting individuals prepare for employment support who require different methods of engagement.

Changing Futures and Trauma Informed Support for Adults

Changing Futures is a programme that is being supported by funding from the National Lottery across a number of areas within Greater Manchester and it is built on the MEAM (Making Every Adult Matter) approach, it is a national initiative focused on supporting individuals experiencing multiple disadvantage, which can include homelessness, mental health challenges, substance use, criminal justice system involvement and domestic abuse.

Multiple disadvantage refers to a combination of problems that individuals face, often resulting from a history of childhood adversity, trauma, and other negative experiences. People who experience multiple disadvantage may also experience systemic racism, sexism, stigma and other forms of discrimination, and they can struggle to engage in meaningful education, training or employment.

The Changing Futures programme aims to help local areas design and deliver better coordinated services for this vulnerable cohort of the population.

In Bolton there is an opportunity to develop a new approach to supporting adults with multiple disadvantages, make progress towards sustained recovery and supportive employment through a trauma informed lens that does not define a person by one or more of their experiences but aims to understand and address the root causes of their complex circumstances. Lived Experience is at the heart of these developments.

The DWP (Department for Work and Pensions) are also funding local authority areas across Greater Manchester as part of the GM Live Well programme to engage local communities to develop new support networks that link to existing employment support services and there is an opportunity for Changing Futures to help shape what this support looks like.

4.1.2 Case studies

Case study 1

Mohammedi's journey from ESOL learner to employment

Background: Mohammedi, a 27-year-old refugee, arrived in Bolton with limited English skills and no formal UK work experience. Struggling to navigate daily life, he was referred to the Positive Pathways program through the ESOL Advice Service for additional support.

Support provided: Through Positive Pathways, Mohammedi attended tailored ESOL sessions and received one-to-one employment support, including CV writing, job applications, and interview coaching. He also engaged in confidence-building workshops and workplace communication training.

Outcome: With the skills he gained, Mohammedi successfully secured a customer service role at a taxi firm, where he now thrives in a team environment.

He continues to build his English skills daily and has become an advocate for other ESOL learners, encouraging them to seek support and opportunities through Believe Achieve.



Case study 2

Zarnab's transformation through volunteering

Background: Zarnab, a 39-year-old single mother, faced social isolation, low confidence, and financial struggles. She was initially referred to Positive Pathways to develop her skills and regain her independence.

Support provided: She participated in confidence-boosting sessions, IT skills training, and employability workshops. Zarnab also engaged in volunteering opportunities at Believe Achieve CIC, where she helped with youth activities and community food distributions.

Outcome: After several months of volunteering, Zarnab said...

***"I FELT HAPPY AND READY
TO RE-ENTER THE WORKFORCE".***

She successfully secured a part-time job food catering role, which has improved her financial stability and self-esteem. Zarnab credits Positive Pathways for giving her a new sense of purpose and community.



Case study 3

Hafiza Attia Majeed's SUCCESS through Alleviating Barriers

Background: Attia attended a session that was developed through Alleviating Barriers to support residents to apply for a healthcare assistant job. Attia explained she was struggling to find work and had been doing agency work but wanted something permanent.

Support provided: Whilst supporting Attia to complete her application form for the Health Care Assistant role, it was noticed she had a strong background in education. This was something she wanted to do as she had done it in Pakistan, but every time she applied for this type of role, she never heard back. Another of these Alleviating Barriers job-specific sessions, specifically for teaching assistants, was being run, and Attia was invited to that to see if the application form completion was a barrier for her. She attended the teaching assistant session and was given details of live job vacancies. Attia completed the application form for one particular job and sent it for checking. We liaised via email to ensure her application form had the best chance of getting an interview. Attia worked really hard as she had been used to simply submitting her CV for roles without realising there was a correct process. Attia secured an interview and was then supported with interview preparation.

Outcome: Attia has secured a full-time, permanent teaching assistant role at a local school.



4.1.3 Preparing for work recommendation

Further establish integrated work, health, and skills support

The Live Well Oversight Group and the Team Bolton Network should strengthen the integration of employment, health, and skills services, ensuring that residents, particularly those who are economically inactive, are supported through coordinated, person-centred approaches. Leveraging the Greater Manchester Live Well programme and the MEAM (Making Every Adult Matter) framework, partners should test innovative models of support, improve engagement, and reduce barriers to sustainable employment.



4.2 Key data: Staying well in work



0.7% of employees had **at least one day off sick** in the **previous week**, **better** than England³⁴



In the UK, the **total economic cost** of sickness absence, lost productivity through worklessness, informal care giving, and health-related productivity losses, are estimated to be **over £100 billion a year**³⁷



0.4% of working days **lost due to sickness absence** in Bolton, **better** than England³⁵



Most days off sick in 2023/24 were down to **stress, depression or anxiety and musculoskeletal disorders**³⁶



54% of Bolton residents aged 16-64 with a **physical or mental long term health condition** were in employment³⁸

Main factors reducing the average number of years people in England can expect to spend **both healthy and in work from age 50** (based on the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing).⁴⁰



Pain interference
6.5 years with,
9.8 years without,
= **3.3 years less**



Physical inactivity
8.4 years with,
9.6 years without,
= **2.0 years less**



Osteoarthritis
7.3 years with,
9.5 years without,
= **2.2 years less**



Lack of autonomy at work
7.7 years with,
9.5 years without,
= **1.8 years less**



Mental health problems
6.9 years with,
9.8 years without,
= **2.9 years less**



Inadequate support at work
7.9 years with,
9.5 years without,
= **1.7 years less**



Obesity
8.4 years with,
9.3 years without,
= **0.9 years less**

Economic activity is where someone is actively part of the labour market – through being in work or actively seeking work.

Economic inactivity is where someone is not working and not actively looking for a job, for example because they are retired, looking after home/children, studying, or long term sick.

- Overall across the UK, **economic inactivity has been decreasing** since May to July 2022, but **inactivity because of long-term sickness** has generally continued to **increase**.³⁹

- The number of people who reported having **one or more health conditions** has steadily **increased over time**, but from the start of the **covid pandemic**, this **accelerated** so that in January to March 2023, only **64% of working-age people** reported having **no health conditions** - many of these people will be in work.³⁹

- For people who are economically inactive because of long-term sickness, in 2023 38% reported having five or more health conditions. This suggests that **those who are inactive because of long-term sickness have increasingly complex health issues**.³⁹

- **23%** of those **aged 16 to 34** who are economically inactive due to long term sickness report **5+ health conditions**.³⁹

- **46%** of those **aged 50 to 64** who are economically inactive due to long term sickness report **5+ health conditions**.³⁹

- In 2023, the most common health condition reported by the working-age population was **'depression, bad nerves or anxiety'** (experienced by 12% across the country). This was also the largest health condition for those who are economically inactive because of long-term sickness, and higher than in 2019.³⁹

- Between 2019 and 2023, the number of people **inactive because of long-term sickness** who reported **'depression, bad nerves or anxiety'** rose – most of this increase was from people reporting it as a **secondary health condition** rather than as a main health condition. **Musculoskeletal** conditions were also frequent.³⁹



2023 – long term health conditions experienced by the working age population, and people economically inactive due to long term ill health⁴¹

Health group	Health condition	Working age population	Economically inactive due to long term ill health	
		Main or secondary condition	Main condition	Secondary condition
Mental health	Depression, bad nerves or anxiety	12%	13%	41%
	Mental illness or suffer from phobias, panics or other nervous disorders	5%	13%	22%
Musculoskeletal	Problems or disabilities connected with back or neck	7%	12%	28%
	Problems or disabilities connected with legs or feet	7%	8%	35%
	Problems or disabilities connected with arms or hands	6%	5%	28%
Cardiovascular and digestive health	Chest or breathing problems, asthma, bronchitis	7%	6%	21%
	Heart, blood pressure or blood circulation problems	7%	4%	27%
	Stomach, liver, kidney or digestive problems	5%	3%	22%
	Diabetes	3%	2%	13%
Other	Other health problems or disabilities	9%	16%	14%
	Severe disfigurements, skin conditions, allergies	3%	0%	12%
	Progressive illnesses not included elsewhere	2%	8%	5%
	Autism	2%	4%	4%
	Severe or specific learning difficulties	2%	2%	8%
	Difficulty in seeing	2%	2%	10%
	Difficulty in hearing	2%	0%	9%
	Epilepsy	1%	3%	4%
	Speech impediment	0%	0%	5%

4.2.1 Working Age – Staying Well in Work

Why is health important for work?

Being healthy is crucial for maintaining steady employment and performing well at work. Good physical and mental health enable individuals to focus, stay productive, and manage the demands of their job effectively. Poor health can lead to absenteeism, reduced energy levels, and difficulties in sustaining employment. Additionally, chronic health conditions may limit job opportunities and career progression. By prioritising health through proper nutrition, exercise, and access to healthcare, individuals are better equipped to work consistently, contribute to their workplace, and improve their long-term quality of life.

The nature of people's work matters for health, but also impacts other factors that influence health, such as having sufficient income and forming social connections⁴².

The COVID-19 pandemic brought mental health to the forefront, highlighting the need for robust mental health support in the workplace. Employees have faced unprecedented stress, anxiety, and burnout, making mental health support more critical than ever⁴³. A healthy workforce is a productive workforce. Studies have consistently shown that employees who are in good physical and mental health are more engaged, motivated, and efficient⁴³.

Effective workplace wellbeing programmes can deliver mutual benefit to people, organisations, economies and communities. Healthy workplaces help people to flourish and reach their full potential. This means creating an environment that actively promotes a state of contentment, benefiting both employees and the organisation⁴⁴.

Local programmes such as the GM Vanguard Workwell initiative offers an early-intervention work and health support and assessment service, providing holistic support to overcome health-related barriers to employment. Workwell successfully supports people who are at risk of falling out of work or who have already stopped working because of health conditions such as mental health and musculoskeletal. These are the most common conditions that lead to health-related labour market inactivity.

Why is work important for health?

For many of us, much of the time, work is just a job. But good work can be so much more than this. Work that can provide decent pay and security; where we have control, a voice and good relationships; and that gives us the opportunity to use our skills and to develop new ones, is good for people, the economy, local communities and places. It can be supportive of good health and wellbeing, raise incomes and reduce poverty, support stronger economies and better business, and help build more inclusive communities.

For local communities, the benefits of 'good work' will be obvious. Better work means higher levels of local employment, a stronger local economy and greater economic prosperity. Increasing levels of 'good work' also has the potential to greatly support improved health and wellbeing among a local population and reduce pressures on associated support services. However, it is also critically important to ensure that those who aren't in 'good work' – either because they are in jobs with poor conditions or aren't in employment at all – are getting access to the skills and support to move into those jobs. By doing this we can also reduce inequalities and support greater social inclusion⁴⁵.

It is also important to be mindful that low quality work can be just as bad for health as unemployment. This can be due to workplace hazards and conditions, but also the stress and anxiety that can be caused by a lack of control or autonomy, job insecurity, or insufficient income due to low pay⁴⁶.

The relationship between work and health is complex and multifaceted. While excessive work can lead to stress and burnout, engaging in meaningful work can have numerous positive effects on physical, mental, and emotional well-being.

'Good health is, to a large extent, a consequence of good jobs. Work is absolutely central to wellbeing, dignity and for communities...if work is threatened, we threaten the fundamental components of wellbeing'⁴⁷



Workplace wellbeing guidance for organisations

Workplace wellbeing guidance focuses on creating a healthy and supportive work environment by addressing physical, mental, financial, social, and digital aspects of employee wellbeing.

This involves developing policies, encouraging open communication, offering resources, and ensuring a positive work culture. The Chartered Institute for Personnel and Development (CIPD) has free factsheets to help any organisation, and the **Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter⁵⁹** sets out characteristics of good employment for GM.

There is also specific advice for supporting employees with mental health needs from MIND. Health at Work. (2025). **The workplace wellbeing charter⁶⁰** is a comprehensive assessment tool and optional professional assessors that can help large organisations comprehensive and sustainable wellbeing action plan.

Key aspects of workplace wellbeing guidance includes:

- **Developing a wellbeing policy**, a written policy outlining the organisation's commitment to employee wellbeing and how it will be supported.
- **Promoting a positive culture**, creating a workplace where employees feel valued, respected, and supported.
- **Supporting employee health**, providing access to resources like employee assistance programs (EAPs), occupational health services, and mental health support.
- **Encouraging open communications**, creating opportunities for employees to discuss their wellbeing concerns with their managers or other relevant individuals.
- **Promoting a healthy work-life balance**, encouraging employees to take breaks, utilise annual leave, and maintain a healthy work-life balance.
- **Address mental health**, providing mental health awareness training for managers, promoting mental health literacy, and encouraging peer support.
- **Consider individual needs**, recognising that employees may have unique needs and offering flexible support options.
- **Regularly review and update**, continuously evaluate the effectiveness of wellbeing initiatives and make adjustments as needed.

With a fairly self-contained labour market, Bolton has an opportunity for more people to access jobs by walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport.

The networks to enable them to do so need to be attractive for accessing jobs dispersed across the borough. Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040⁴⁸ sets out Greater Manchester's long-term ambition for transport.

The Bolton Transport Strategy⁴⁹ aligns with the GM ambition and adds local detail and plans. Travelling actively for all or part of a journey is a great way to incorporate physical activity into busy lives, with associated health benefits.⁵⁰

People who have a physically active lifestyle have a 20 to 35% lower risk of cardiovascular disease, coronary heart disease and stroke compared to those who have a sedentary lifestyle, while regular physical activity is also associated with a reduced risk of diabetes, obesity, osteoporosis, colon and breast cancer, and with improved mental health⁵⁰.



4.2.2 Case studies

Case study 1

Workplace mini health checks supporting employee well-being in Bolton

As part of a commitment to employee health and well-being, Sunning Hill Primary School has partnered with Health Improvement Practitioners (HIPs) to offer Mini Health Checks in the workplace, making it easier for staff to gain a snapshot of their overall health without needing to visit a GP. These checks assess key health indicators such as blood pressure, BMI, and lifestyle factors, helping employees identify potential health risks and make positive changes.

For those aged 40 and over, with their consent, details are passed to a HIP based at their registered GP practice to determine if they are eligible for a full NHS Health Check, where further assessments, including blood tests, can be conducted.

The initiative has been well received, providing employees with accessible health information and signposting them to further support if needed. By integrating Mini Health Checks into the workplace, Sunning Hill is promoting a proactive approach to health, encouraging a healthier and more engaged workforce in Bolton.

Case study 2

Ingeus work and health team

Prior to starting on the work and health programme, Marie had 20 years of retail experience. However, she found herself in a difficult position, as she had spent the last 10 years raising her family, including a SEN child with complex behavioural issues, which was made much more difficult by the pandemic. In addition to this she dealt with depression, undiagnosed PTSD, unresolved trauma and had generalised anxiety, which made routine things feel overwhelming.

During Marie's time, she has been keen to access a wide range of services to support with her return to work. She attended various workshops, improved her interview skills", and accessed financial advice and support.

In addition to accessing this support, Marie is completing her Level 1 and 2 education qualifications. She has set herself a goal of being a SENDCo (Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities Coordinator) in the next five years so that she can provide support to families who are experiencing what she has done. In addition, Marie has managed to secure herself a role as a shop assistant at a charity shop in Salford.

Marie continued to receive support from Ingeus and within the next seven months had secured herself a full time role as Store Manager of a charity shop.

When asked for feedback Marie said...

"THE SUCCESS I HAVE FOUND HAS BEEN DOWN TO THE INGEUS TEAM, BOLTON AT HOME'S WORKING WARDROBE, AND FARNWORTH'S UCAN CENTRE" and a lot of

hard work herself. What she has achieved is nothing short of incredible, and we are truly proud of the progress that Marie has made.



Case study 3

‘One day a week’ encouraging active travel at Logistics North Business Park in Bolton

The ‘One day a week’ campaign at Logistics North Business Park is transforming the way employees think about their commute by encouraging them to leave the car at home just one day a week.

Led by Mosodi, the site’s travel plan coordinators, the initiative promotes travel options which include moving under your own steam for all or part of the journey, such as walking, cycling, and public transport. This aims to reduce congestion, lower carbon emissions, and improve health and well-being. To boost engagement, employees are incentivised to take part through a monthly prize draw those who share a picture of their active commute are entered for a chance to win rewards.

By making small changes to their travel habits, workers at Logistics North are contributing to a more sustainable and vibrant business park while reaping personal benefits such as improved fitness and reduced travel costs.

The campaign has already gained momentum, encouraging a positive shift in workplace culture and encouraging long-term behavioural change.



Case study 4

Workwell Vanguard

Background: Self-referred to WorkWell, employed as a cleaner for 10 years, facing redundancy, uncertainty impacted on his mental health. Working in an empty centre for eight hours a day affected his morale and confidence. Didn’t want to do cleaning work because he didn’t like the job.

Support: WorkWell coach met Josh to get to know him. He said he wanted to be a bus driver, so we encouraged him to apply. Participant got an interview; we arranged for interview prep and guidance. Gave him a list of possible interview questions and next appointment he had written the answers out.

Outcome: Participant was successful, started work and avoided unemployment and benefits. Now far more confident and a much happier person in his new job.

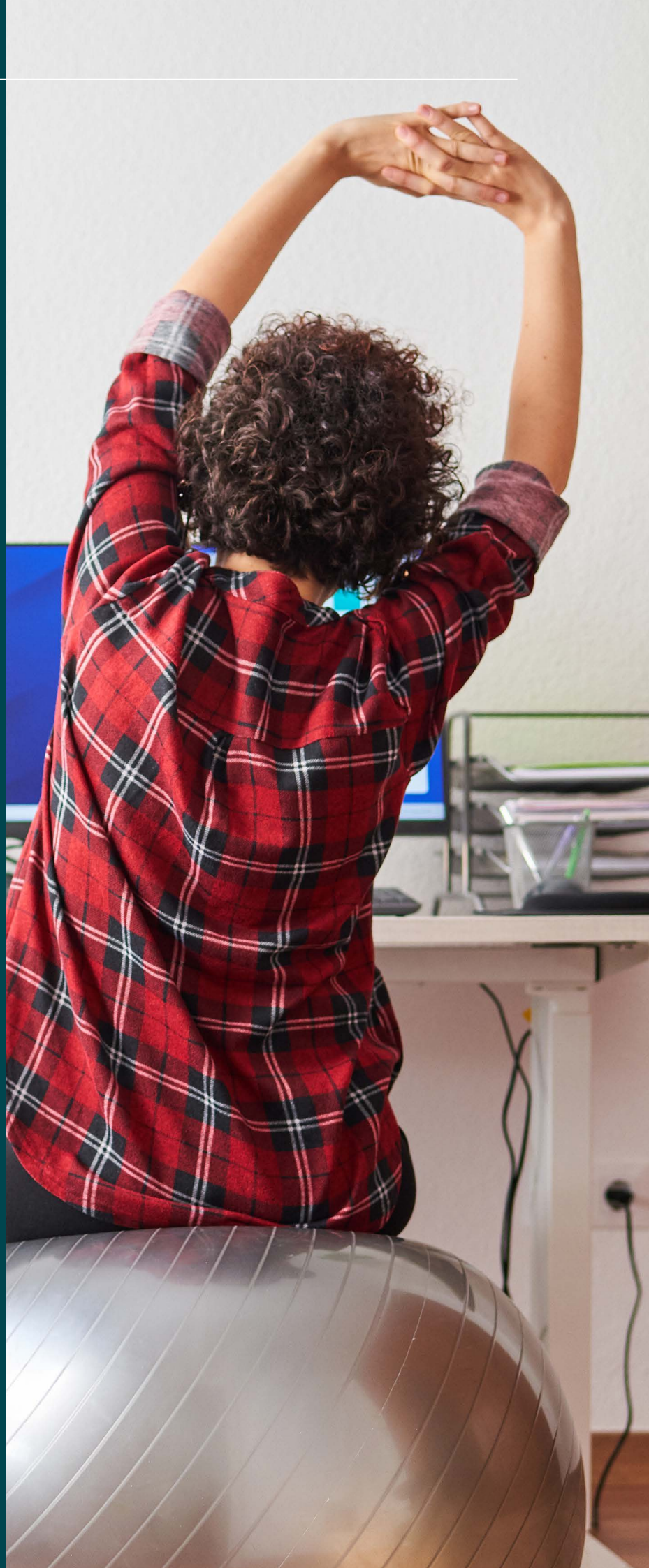
He said... ***"WORKWELL HELPED ME FOCUS IN ON THE NEXT JOB I WANTED TO DO, WHILE HELPING ME BRUSH UP ON MY INTERVIEW SKILLS, AND WENT BEYOND. COULDN'T RECOMMEND THEM MORE".***

4.2.3

Staying well in work recommendation

Promote workplace wellbeing

It is recommended that the Team Bolton Network encourages a broader coalition of local employers to embed robust workplace wellbeing practices. Key actions may include offering flexible working arrangements, fostering inclusive workplace cultures, and improving access to staff health and professional development opportunities.



4.3 Working Age – supporting the most vulnerable

Vulnerable groups and employment challenges

When it comes to supporting people into work, there is no one size fits all approach. However, for vulnerable communities including individuals with mental health conditions, addictions, ex-offenders and those who are homeless accessing and maintaining employment can be a significant challenge. These groups often face systemic barriers, discrimination, and a lack of appropriate support, leaving them marginalised in the labour market.

When someone experiencing multiple disadvantage is in crisis and systems of support are failing them, finding or maintaining employment is rarely a first focus for intervention, with the immediate need being stabilisation and service co-ordination.

Some individuals will need long-term support outside the labour market. However, for many others, well-paid and meaningful employment is an important goal. Good quality and fulfilling work can form part of someone's recovery journey and offer a route out of poverty.

Employment also brings a sense of identity, purpose and a wider network of social connections.

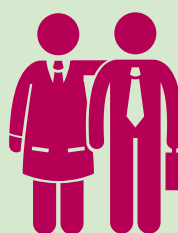
Homelessness

Homelessness is often the result of multiple, interconnected challenges, including mental illness, substance use, family breakdown, and economic hardship. Without a fixed address, stable employment becomes nearly impossible, perpetuating the cycle of poverty and exclusion.

Employment is a crucial step toward regaining stability, but homeless individuals face barriers such as lack of identification documents, poor health, and employer prejudice. IPS (Individual Placement and Support) programmes integrated with housing services can play a key role in helping people move from homelessness to employment, breaking the cycle of exclusion.



5% of supported adults with a **learning disability** aged 18-64 in Bolton are in paid employment, **similar** to the England rate⁵¹.



11% of the population aged 18-69 who are in contact with **secondary mental health services** are in paid employment, **better** than the England rate⁵².

IPS Model (Individual Placement and Support)

Integrated employment support schemes, such as the Individual Placement and Support (IPS) model, have proven effective in helping people with complex needs gain and sustain meaningful employment. IPS is a person-centred, evidence-based approach that integrates employment services within health and social care, breaking down traditional barriers between work and well-being.

It is based on the principle that everyone, regardless of their circumstances, has the right to work and can succeed with the right support.

Addiction - Drug and Alcohol

Following a study between 2019 and 2021, IPS for adults in treatment for alcohol and drug dependence was expanded across England. Bolton joined this programme in 2023 with Intuitive Thinking Skills (ITS) delivering the programme in partnership with Achieve Bolton, our adult alcohol and drug treatment service. The IPS Drug and Alcohol programme is one of three IPS programme in Bolton (IPS Primary Care and IPS in Secondary Care).

In December 2024 the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) published an evaluation report on the outcomes of the expansion of IPS. OHID (2024). IPS for alcohol and drug dependence: data linkage outcomes⁵⁹.

The report found that half of IPS participants successfully obtained employment during a follow-up period of up to 18 months and IPS achieved positive results regardless of their primary drug use.

Moreover, four out of five participants who achieved employment sustained their employment for 13 weeks or more and there was a clear association between positive alcohol and drug treatment outcomes and successful employment.

People struggling with alcohol and drug dependency can recover by finding a purpose, along with getting support like suitable housing and therapy to understand why they use substances. Dependency can harm physical and mental health, leading to isolation and complex problems.

The IPS programme helps by offering paid jobs, which boost confidence, create friendships, and build self-esteem. IPS connects with many employers in Bolton to help participants find the employment and purpose they need.

The Path Forward

For vulnerable communities, employment is not just about earning a wage, it is about dignity, self-sufficiency, and belonging. However, without targeted interventions like IPS, these groups will continue to face barriers that exclude them from the workforce.

With the right support systems in place, vulnerable individuals can not only find work but also build sustainable, fulfilling careers, benefiting not just themselves but society as a whole.

Clearly, greater involvement of business within these conversations and support for businesses to employ people experiencing multiple disadvantage will bring overall benefit. People experiencing multiple disadvantage bring positive new perspectives, skills and experience into workplaces, but they need to be supported appropriately.



4.3.1 Case studies

Case study 1

Job trial supported by Working Wardrobe

A participant had been in and out of prison their entire adult life and used substances since the age of 15. They were open about their frustration of feeling passed around to various services and not being previously listened to or supported. They sent the following message to the IPS team:

"THANK YOU FOR TODAY IT WAS GOOD TALKING TO U I FEEL I CAN OPEN UP TO U MORE THEN ANYONE ELSE BECAUSE I DON'T REALLY OPEN UP TO PEOPLE" (sic)

A participant who was bedbound for several years obtained a provisional driving license, proactively making steps via reasonable adjustments to become a full-time driver and attending face-to-face appointments in the community.

Another participant had been actively applying for administrative positions and feeling discouraged due to a lack of responses. However, they persevered and secured a job trial, so their ITS Employment Specialist promptly arranged for them to visit Working Wardrobe to get professional attire the same day.

Case study 2

Battling addiction and using those skills to secure employment

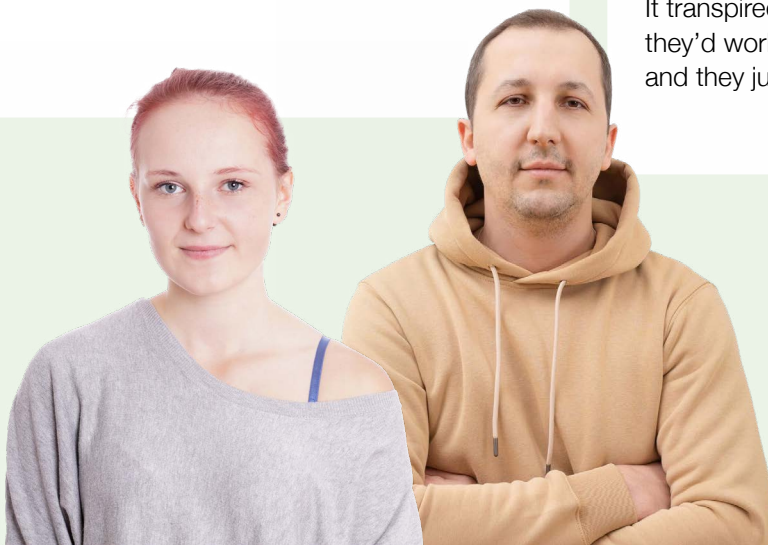
A participant had battled addiction for over 15 years. With a nine year employment gap on their CV, they started questioning themselves about what they could offer a company; they'd been out of work for quite a while and felt they were lacking both the skills and experience to work in their first choice of industry, the alcohol and drug treatment sector.

Having lived experience and knowing how it felt to have struggled with addiction, they worked closely with their ITS Employment Specialist to explore different roles within alcohol and drug treatment services and identified skills that they didn't realise they possessed.

After persevering with job applications, they secured an interview for an Alcohol and Drugs Client Advisor role with a nationally recognised company.

The day before the interview they reviewed the job description and considered possible interview questions, and together creatively thought about possible questions, scenarios, and potential answers.

It transpired that most of the questions they'd worked on were asked at interview and they just secured a second interview!



Case study 3

Becoming a chef

A prison release, on life licence, was housed in an approved premises for a planned 12 weeks, post release.

The client was prescribed by Achieve and was under Probation Supervision with strict licence conditions and restrictions. They engaged with IPS and wrote a disclosure letter. They were proactive in CV creation and took advice and started applying for jobs straight away.

They were moved to a CAS3 (Community Accommodation Service Tier 3) property (temporary housing units for people who are leaving prison or moving on from other forms of accommodation) and secured employment. IPS collaborated with Probation to ensure the role was appropriate. They engaged in the follow-up support and IPS paid for a chef's uniform.

On paper this person looked unlikely to be able to secure themselves employment at the outset, but sheer determination and collaboration with IPS, has resulted in a very happy client and a success story.



Case study 4

Sapphire

Sapphire Partnership works to support young adults with neuro diverse needs and disabilities to gain the confidence to be able to develop the life skills and abilities they need, to function more independently in adulthood.

They provide opportunities for the young adults to learn about themselves, teach them skills that are needed for life and support to identify the possibilities of entering the world of work. Volunteering placements are an important part of this journey and Sapphire work hard to ensure their young adults experience volunteer opportunities.

It is important to work with services so that employers don't see their disability as a barrier rather than an opportunity.

4.3.2 Supporting the most vulnerable recommendation

Develop inclusive employment for residents with additional needs

The Live Well Strategic Oversight Group should lead the development of a sustainable employment support model, drawing on effective approaches such as Individual Placement and Support (IPS) and include consideration of Bolton employment support team. This model should include strong employer engagement to co-create tailored job roles for individuals with additional support needs and a focus on long-term, strength-based employment outcomes that extend beyond time-limited funding.





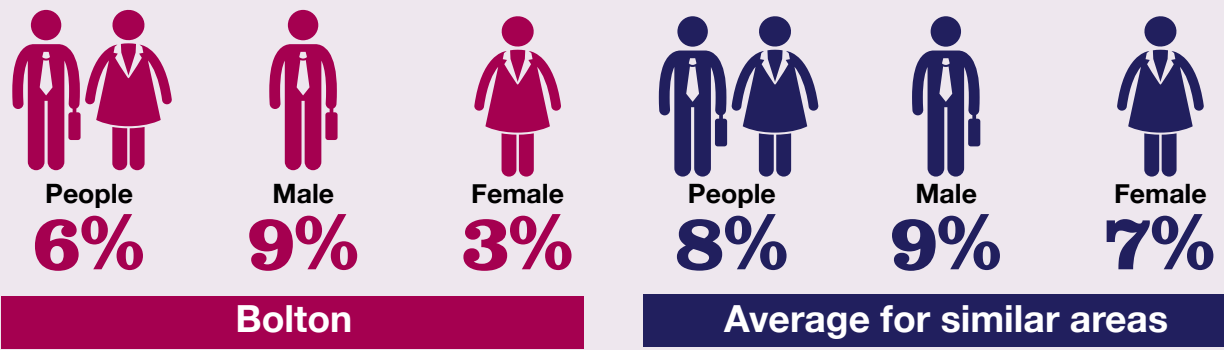



5.

Older people


Key data: Older People

Age 65+ in employment¹²





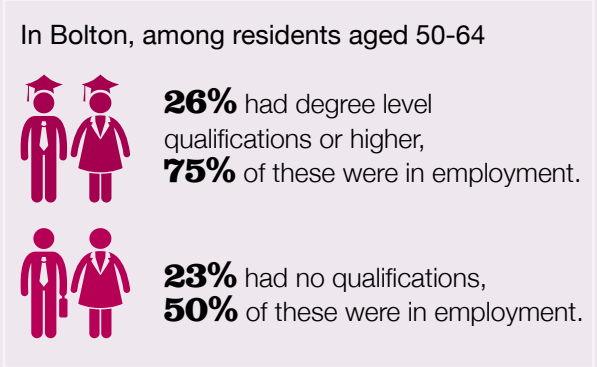
Among those with **bad or very bad health**: **38%** of those **aged 16-24 did not work** due to long term ill health; **64%** of those **aged 50-64**.⁵³



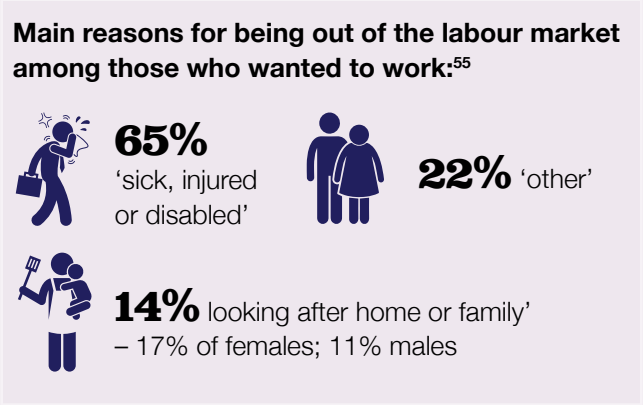
People aged **50-64** were **most likely to be providing unpaid care** overall, but those aged **65+** were most likely to be providing **the most intense care** at 50+ hours a week.⁵³

Nationally, the **higher the qualifications** of people aged 50-64, the **more likely they are to be in work**.

Among 50-64 year olds in the country as a whole, the **biggest gap** in employment rate was between those holding **some qualification** and those holding **none**⁵⁴.



Nationally, in 2024, there were around 510,000 people aged 50 to 64 years who were economically inactive but were willing to, or would like to, work.



5.1 Older people

Benefits of good work

Good work refers to employment that provides not only financial rewards but also a sense of purpose, wellbeing and work life balance.

Evidence shows that good work benefits an individual's health and wellbeing by providing routine and structure, social interaction, sense of purpose and meaning, respect and inclusion, opportunity for growth, development and lifelong learning, increased confidence, being part of a team and community. As people age good work remains important for their wellbeing, financial stability and sense of purpose. Older workers bring valuable skills, knowledge and experience, but they also have unique needs that work should support.

Challenges to accessing paid work

The State of Ageing Report⁵⁶ highlights that the proportion of people economically inactive due to long-term sickness has increased since the pandemic, especially among the 50–64 age group. Taking this further to explain that “once out of the labour market, it can be harder for older workers to get back in”. The report suggests that employment support services tend to achieve much worse outcomes for people aged 55 and over compared to younger age groups, with the gap widening as age increases.

Between 2019 and 2022 in Greater Manchester, the number of working age people that were economically inactive increased by 10,200, however, those aged between 50-64 were disproportionately affected⁵⁷.

Flexible working is one of the most important factors in choosing a new job for those 50-64 year olds who left work during the pandemic and have not yet returned.⁵⁶

Challenges to staying in paid work

There are additional barriers to work for people aged 50+ who often take on significant caring responsibilities. People under the age of 65 who are unpaid carers are less likely to be in employment, particularly so for those who provide 50 or more hours of care⁵⁸.

Evidence shows increasing numbers of people 50+ are withdrawing from the workforce because of ill health, care giving and lack of suitable employment. In every age group, the proportion of people who are economically inactive due to long-term sickness has increased since the pandemic, with a particularly pronounced increase among the 50-64 age group. Despite this, many with long-term illnesses in this age group still work. Employee support programmes remain vital support.

Retirement and volunteering

Retirement is a major life transition, and many retirees seek meaningful ways to stay active, engaged and connected. Volunteering is a great way to do this, offering benefits for both individuals and communities.

Volunteering can benefit both physical and mental health, through connection with individuals and communities, preventing loneliness and isolation whilst building a support network. Sharing skills and learning new ones, re-engage with old interests, increase physical activity, can bridge the generation gap and gives a sense of purpose.

Learning new digital skills can help older people to stay connected, maintain independence and access essential information and services.

In Bolton we have a growing number of Ageing Well Community Champions who play a crucial role within our communities, sharing knowledge, raising awareness, being an advocate and supporting vulnerable people, informing strategy and policy development, changing the way we think about ageing.

5.2 Case studies

Case study 1

Restart Scheme


Pat from Horwich in Bolton is no stranger to physical activity. Working tirelessly in groundworks for a large construction company before a neck operation in 2016 left him unable to continue, he was convinced he would never work again as he hit 60 and a frustrating wall of job rejections. Being unemployed for seven years took its toll on Pat, now 63. He became depressed, withdrew from his friends and family, and felt any attempt to find work or retrain at his age were pointless.

Pat was referred by Jobcentre Plus to the Restart Scheme, delivered on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions in Greater Manchester by Ingeus and its partners. It provides all-round motivation, employability guidance, practical support, and access to local vacancies for unemployed people.

They arranged practical support that Pat needed: a revised CV, digital skills training to apply for roles online, identification documentation, and travel expenses. He was encouraged to attend weekly job clubs, and job fairs to build his interaction and confidence around other people.

Pat started to see more success with his applications and, although still hesitant about his prospects, attended an interview with Bolton-based Stateside Foods. Pat quickly became one of almost 30 Restart Scheme participants recruited at Stateside, and said he sat in disbelief when he was offered the job.

Please see the full story via link below:

Pat, 63 

Case study 2

Work and Health Programme Greater Manchester


64 year old unemployed Clive had lost his home and was living out of a suitcase. After being jobless for two years he sought help from the Working Well (Work and Health Programme) which provides tailored support to individuals with disabilities and health conditions who are seeking employment.

Clive was referred by Jobcentre Plus in Bolton to Working Well, an employment support scheme delivered in Greater Manchester by Ingeus. It is an initiative commissioned by the Greater Manchester Combined Authority and receives support from the European Social Fund.

After meeting with his personal advisor at Working Well, Clive engaged with a series of motivational sessions and was advised on how to improve his mental wellbeing. He also attended IT workshops to improve his computer skills. Clive was at his lowest ebb and had been diagnosed with a sleep disorder, the Working Well team helped him to regain his self-worth and encouraged him with his business venture.

Clive is now promoting his business 'Graves Taylored' on Facebook, **"IT'S WONDERFUL TO BE ABLE TO PROVIDE A SERVICE AND KNOW THAT MY EFFORTS ARE APPRECIATED,"** ended Clive.

Please see full story via the link below:

Clive 





5.3 Older people recommendation

Strengthen the Age-Friendly employment landscape

It is recommended that all of Bolton's Anchor Institutions sign the Age Friendly Employers Pledge and commit to implementing at least one measurable action annually to support the recruitment, retention, or development of workers aged 50 and over. Bolton's Age Friendly Partnership is ideally placed to facilitate sharing of progress and good practice, contributing to a multigenerational and inclusive local workforce that values the contribution of older adults and supports healthy ageing through employment.



6.

**Local skills and
employment
programmes**

including Appendices 1-3

Local skills and employment programmes

The Greater Manchester Live Well Programme offers an important opportunity to consider employment as an integral determinant of health, wellbeing and economic prosperity.

The Work Well Programme forms part of this, but there are also wider opportunities to draw together the spectrum of employment programmes available in Bolton in order to achieve the overall GM Live Well ambition within neighbourhoods.

Employment programmes play a critical role in improving population health. This section highlights several of our local employment programmes which are designed to support individuals facing barriers to employment.

By developing partnerships between employment services, health and social care providers, and community organisations, we can create a more coordinate, inclusive and supportive pathways to work, ultimately improving both individual and population health outcomes.



Appendix 1: Bolton Employment Offer

Employment Provision	Brief description	Delivery Partner and website
Digital Employment and Skills	Supports individuals to access information that will help enable you to gain or work towards new employment, locate new opportunities for learning or to develop and expand your current skills.	Library Service, Bolton Council boltondes.org.uk
Workwell	Help local residents who are struggling with a health condition and it is affecting their ability to work.	The Workshop, Bolton Council WorkWell Bolton
Working Wardrobe	Working Wardrobe has been set up by Bolton at Home to tackle another barrier into employment that so many men and women face today: the lack of suitable clothing to wear in order to make a good first impression during job interviews.	Bolton at Home working-wardrobe
Job Centre Plus	Jobcentre Plus provides resources to enable job-searchers to find work, through Jobpoints, Jobseeker Direct and the Jobcentre Plus website. They offer benefits advice, support for specialist groups e.g health, over 50's	Bolton Jobs Centre bolton-jobcentre
DWP Restart	The Restart Scheme will break down employment barriers that could be holding claimants back from finding work. Providers will work with employers, local government and other partners to deliver tailored support for individuals.	The Workshop, Bolton Council and Ingeus theworkshopbolton
Working Well: Support to Succeed	Support to help Bolton residents that want to work and have multiple barriers to help individuals with different well-being, confidence building interventions to move them nearer towards work.	Athena, Manchester First and Alphabet Training theworkshopbolton
Working Well: Community Grants	Is a GMCA-funded programme to allow voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector groups and housing associations to launch local community projects to help disadvantaged, including unemployed, economically inactive people to take the next steps towards further education and inclusive employment through support with digital skills, literacy, raising confidence, self-esteem, key skills and mental and physical health.	WEA (Workers Education Association) in partnership with local VCSE sector organisations) UKSPF Funding Opportunities - GMCA
UKSPF NGB	Next Generation Bolton (2023 – 2026) is a programme to help raise aspiration, increase motivation, build confidence and self-esteem and equip young people who are NEET or At Risk of becoming NEET with the resilience to address barriers and gain and sustain Education, Employment or Training.	Connexions, Bolton Council Connexions

Employment Provision	Brief description	Delivery Partner and website
Bolton College Community and Adult Learning	Skills for Work and Further Learning Programmes help individuals gain employment, get ahead at work or move on to further learning.	Bolton College Community Learning Centres - Bolton College
Refugee Welcome Programme	The Bolton programme is funded by GMCA to deliver The Refugee Integration Programme. The aim of the programme is to support refugees and asylum seekers to integrate support with british culture, have good wellbeing, have stable housing and move towards suatinable employment.	Bolton VCSE sector organisations Refugee Integration Programme Proposals – Bolton Digital, Employment and Skills
IPS Drug and Alcohol	Intuitive Thinking Skills operate IPS services designed to improve the employment prospects of some of the most disadvantaged people. Working at the heart of our partner agencies, IPS offers highly personalised career support which dovetails with their wider support needs.	Intuitive Thinking Solutions (ITS)
Resettlement scheme - Employment Support Programme (10 week)	In partnership with the Council's Workshop, ESP is a multi-step programme providing tailored employment support for individuals on government-funded resettlement schemes - prioritising those facing serious threats to life. It will also extend to other refugees, settling in Bolton. The programme aims to help secure long-term employment and achieve sustainable outcomes in affordable housing, integration, and community contribution.	Bolton Council Afghan Resettlement Programme - GOV.UK
Economic Inactivity Trailblazer	Local place based work and skills funding to offer a number of interventions to engage residents that aren't enaging with services to help them alleviate barriers towards further skills and work.	Bolton EMPloyment HUB theworkshopbolton
IPS Primary Care	Working in partnership with primary care providers, IPSPC offers residents with physical or mental health disabilities individualised support including job coaching, benefits advice and other necessary support services to help them access or retain employment.	Growth Company
IPS Secondary Care	Individual Placement and Support (IPS) offers intensive, individually tailored support to help people who are recovering from mental health conditions to find the right job or will help them if their job is at risk.	Pure Innovations Individual Placement and Support - Pure Innovations

Appendix 2:

Social Housing Employment Support

Programme	Brief description
Working Wardrobe	Working Wardrobe has been set up by Bolton at Home to tackle another barrier into employment that so many men and women face today: the lack of suitable clothing to wear in order to make a good first impression during job interviews.
Bolton at Home	All employment support services provided in their UCAN Centres; Working Wardrobe provides interview clothes and prep, work experience and in-work support.
Clarion	(Clarion Futures charitable arm of the company) help with finding a job, apprenticeships, grants for work and business, digital courses.
Great Places	Community Investment Team help tenants with employment and skills support, independence and wellbeing. Employ Specialist Employability coaches delivering one to one support, or signposting to a trusted service or partner.
Irwell Valley	Offer carer opportunities for customers and work in partnership with other organisations to help residents into training and employment support
Mosscares St Vincent's	Customer Involvement Team provides employment support and skills service. Help with CV development, self-employment advice, confidence building, skills and training, one to one support, skills matching, apprenticeships.
Onward	Social Investment Team offer advice and a wide range of training, work placements, self-employment, and volunteering opportunities. CV development, job searches and interview practice.



Appendix 3:

Update of recommendations from 2023 Public Health Annual Report – Community Matters

Bolton Council is developing a corporate policy on community engagement and co-production. The policy will set out a guide on consistent, strengths-based approaches to use when involving and working alongside local people and communities.

The principles considered in this report will form part of a suite of evidence-based tools and resources to underpin our community-centred focus across all our strategies, services and decision making.

The guiding principles for co-production have also been considered in Bolton's All Age Prevention and Inequalities Framework. This sets out our collective vision and ways of working to deliver prevention activities which reduce health inequalities across borough. The principles are included in the tools and evidence that people can use when applying the framework.



Thank you to partners...



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