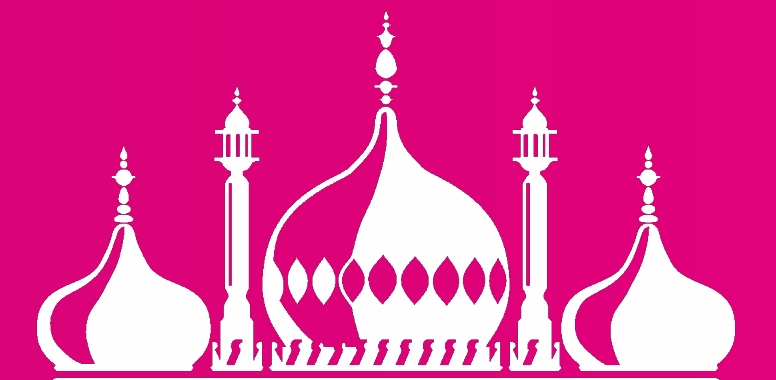


Employment, Skills & Health

Lisa Mitchell Skills & Partnership
Manager

Health & Wellbeing Board



Brighton & Hove
City Council

Policy & drivers

- Industrial Strategy & key sector plans (published 2025)
- Local Growth Plans (to be developed)
- Employment Rights Act - improving the quality and security of work
- Get Britain Working Plan - aligning skills and health to get more people into and on in work and achieve 80% employment rate
- Mayfield Review – employer’s role in prevention – government role to support employers & employees
- NHS Plan – improving and prevention of population health, community-based care
- Restructured Integrated Care Boards – role in reducing inactivity and unemployment
- Restoring control over immigration system White Paper – occupations, salary thresholds, Health and Care visa route ending
- National youth strategy – improve mental health and wellbeing

Why?

- Good work is good for health.
- Poor health is increasingly a major barrier to people finding work
- People are falling sick earlier in life and more working age adults with long-term health conditions
- Significant increase in economically inactive residents impacting growth
- Health & worklessness clustered around disadvantaged parts of the country
- People in working class occupations more likely to fall sick avoidably and need to leave work due to their illness
- Persistent unemployment, increasing for young people 19-24
- Increase in mental health challenges for young people

What is available ?

Mental Health Support

- Mental health and employment support – Mind
- Qwell online
- NHS App
- Social Prescribing

Employability Support

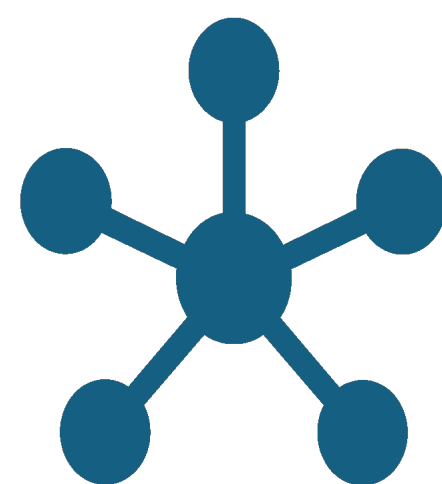
- IPS for drug & alcohol & severe mental illness – Southdown & CGL
- Connect to Work
- WorkWell (November 2026)

Five Strategic Principles: Get Britain Working Strategy



Localised

Policies tailored to local needs.
Pan Sussex with focus on each geography.



Systems approach

A holistic approach to understanding and solving challenges.



Evidence-based

Clear and effective use of evidence.



Support-focused

Move away from a compliance-focused approach to employment support tailored to the individual.



Collaborative

Coordinated approach
Working with multiple stakeholders to address challenges and create opportunities.

Get Sussex Working Plan

- Pan-Sussex plan with overriding ambition of moving people towards the Government target of 80% economically active
- Jointly developed by officers from BHCC, West & East County Councils
- Developed via consultation with stakeholders across Sussex
- Oversight from Local authorities, DWP, Sussex Chambers of Commerce, ICB
- Plan endorsed by each LA (via formal governance processes)
- Responsibility for the Plan will transfer to the SBSA and inform Strategic Skills Plan

Vision

A dynamic Sussex workforce, enabled by integrated support across employment, health, post-16 education and skills. All residents are empowered to aspire, to develop the skills they need now and for the future; to access meaningful employment that improves lives, addresses inequalities, and enables businesses to thrive.

Challenges

Unequal economic activity across Sussex – higher rates of economic inactivity (147,500 people, 14.9% of working-age population), with particularly high levels in East Sussex and coastal areas such as Adur, Worthing, Hastings and Bexhill.

High unemployment and Universal Credit claims – unemployment rose by 11.7% between 2024–2025, with West Sussex and Brighton & Hove seeing the sharpest rises. UC claimant rates are above regional averages, with coastal towns worst affected.

Health-related barriers to work – long-term conditions and disabilities are the main cause of inactivity (25.8%), with mental and physical health issues hindering access to and sustainability of employment.

Barriers for young people – high NEET rates (up to 40% among vulnerable groups in Brighton & Hove), limited post-16 provision, poor careers advice, and lack of entry-level opportunities.

Low skills and qualifications – below-average attainment at Levels 1–3, particularly among 19-year-olds, restricting progression into higher-quality work.

Caring responsibilities and early retirement – especially among women, with caring cited as a major reason for inactivity; early retirement affects up to 20% of working-age residents in parts of Sussex.

Fragmented support systems – residents often “bounce” between services without coordinated plans; rural and coastal geography creates extra barriers in transport, digital access and infrastructure.

Employer challenges – small and micro businesses dominate the economy, with limited HR capacity, training provision and inclusive recruitment practices.

Funding and governance uncertainty – key programmes and funds (e.g. UK Shared Prosperity Fund) ended, new structures emerging SSBA, ICB, national jobs and careers

Opportunities

Growing and diverse economy

– strengths in sectors such as creative industries, digital, health and life sciences, green economy, engineering, advanced manufacturing, horticulture and viticulture.

Economic hubs and clusters

– Gatwick/Crawley as a growth driver (aviation, logistics, advanced manufacturing), Brighton & Hove as a creative/digital hub, and sector clusters across Worthing, Hastings, Eastbourne, Horsham, Burgess Hill.

Anchor institutions – local authorities, universities, colleges, hospitals and large employers are embedded in communities and can drive inclusive workforce development.

Devolution and governance reform – Sussex and Brighton Strategic Authority with devolved powers on horizon over employment and skills funding (e.g. Adult Skills Fund, Skills Bootcamps).

Social value and procurement levers

– embedding social value requirements in commissioning to stimulate local jobs, apprenticeships and training.

Youth-focused opportunities

– *Youth Guarantee* offering advice, skills, work experience and entry-level pathways.

Health and work integration – initiatives like Connect to Work, WorkWell and Individual Placement & Support (IPS) can tackle health-related worklessness and promote inclusive employment.

Skills and training pathways

– Skills Bootcamps, lifelong learning entitlements, apprenticeship levy transfers and co-designed sector programmes to meet employer demand.

Place-based approaches – tailored interventions in coastal, rural and deprived areas to address specific challenges and harness local assets.

Older workforce engagement – potential to re-engage over-50s through retraining, flexible/hybrid work, digital upskilling, and mentoring younger workers.

Inclusive recruitment and diversity – expanding ESOL provision, supporting global majority communities, migrants and refugees, and promoting neurodiverse-friendly recruitment practices

Ambitions

1. Build an education, skills and employment infrastructure to achieve the Get Sussex Working Plan
2. Address needs of diverse resident groups to increase economic activity
3. Develop a joined-up approach with employers to inclusive workforce
4. Respond to diverse place-based needs to increase economic activity health and wellbeing outcomes
5. Embed careers, employment and skills at the heart of decision-making to facilitate a systems-wide approach
6. Develop and upskill our workforce to boost employment and growth

Policy & Partnerships

Get Sussex Working Plan - Get Sussex Working Plan Priority Groups

- Young people (including those who are NEET, with SEND, vulnerable, or with experience of the care system)
- Residents aged 50 and over
- Disabled and neurodivergent individuals (including adults with learning disabilities)
- Global majority communities, particularly migrants and refugees
- Parents and unpaid carers
- Adults with low skills levels and low incomes
- Economically inactive and unemployed adults, including those with health conditions and disabilities

Get Sussex Working – Stakeholder Report

Employability Programmes

Connect to Work Connect to Work

- Support for people who are finding it hard to start or stay in work due to health conditions, a disability, or other barriers. (1478 residents to be supported to March 2030)

WorkWell (coming November 2026)

- Support for people in work – on sickness absence or facing health barriers and people recently out of work with low-level or recent health-related needs (1300 residents to be supported to March 2029)

Implementation

Pan Sussex and city implementation plans assigned to ambitions Short-term 2027, long term 2030

- Get Sussex Working Plan
- Get Sussex Working (Brighton)

Alignment with health

- ICB representation on Get Sussex Working Partnership board
- Skills & Employment representation at ICT
- Public Health and Skills & Employment share directorate
- Job centre working closely with NHS to support people into work
- New ICT accelerator role to support integration
- WorkWell programme facilitates primary care and MDT engagement