

# North East Economic Inactivity Trailblazer

## Provider Briefing Session (online)

Monday 2 June 2025, 1pm – 2pm



# Schedule

**1.00pm – 1.10pm**

**Introduction**

**Leigh Mills, Head of Skills and Inclusion**

**1.10pm – 1.20pm**

**Economic Inactivity Trailblazer Overview**

**Ruth Gaul, Principal Programme Manager**

**1.20pm – 1.30pm**

**Priority 2 – Open Calls Process and Timescales**

**Julie Gwilym, Programme Manager & Cherri Blissett, Fuel Research**

**1.30pm – Close**

**Questions**



# Welcome

Leigh Mills, Head of Skills and Inclusion

# The Combined Authority

The North East Combined Authority was formed on 7 May 2024, following a devolution deal for the North East being announced in December 2023.

Led by an Elected Mayor and Cabinet, covering the seven local authority areas of County Durham, Gateshead, Newcastle, North Tyneside, Northumberland, South Tyneside and Sunderland, the CA gives local people more control over the things that matter most to them.

Through devolution deals, the Government is giving areas of the country more powers to make their own decisions on issues such as transport, skills and support for business.

We work closely with organisations and people from all across the region. These range from health trusts, emergency services, voluntary organisations and local businesses.



# Our Region



**Low unemployment by historic standards** but rising levels of health-related inactivity



**3 deep-water ports,** riverside assets, and international airport providing onward connectivity via Paris, Amsterdam and Dubai.

**New CA,** with strong political leadership and already delivering and innovating

**Second largest MCA by area**



**A diverse geography** with three cities, many vibrant towns, and extensive rural and coastline communities

**An economy punching below its weight** – with skills, productivity and GVA behind national averages. Closing the gap will benefit regional residents and economy, as well as UK plc.

**Metro** – the UK's original modern light rail system – operates over 77km of track, connecting Newcastle, Gateshead, North Tyneside, South Tyneside, and Sunderland. Complemented by the successful introduction of the **Northumberland Line**.



**Excellent connectivity to rest of UK** via East Coast mainline and strategic road network including A1, A19 and A69

**2,000,000 inhabitants**

**4 universities, 9 FE colleges** and other exemplar skills provision

**54,705 businesses** providing 820,000 jobs

**Vibrant VCSE sector,** with around 30,000 employees and unparalleled expertise of communities.

**Distinctive cultural & visitor economy offer:** >500km of coastline, two UNESCO Heritage sites, Northumberland National Park, historic castles and cathedrals, leading football teams, an international cricket ground, diverse and distinctive cultural venues

**A £54bn economy** at the heart of the UK union



# Our missions

The overall aim of these five missions is to increase opportunity, create more well-paid employment, improve transport connections, build a greener North East and reduce child poverty.

Powering these missions is our commitment to devolving more powers out of Westminster wherever possible.

The North East Combined Authority believes people acting locally produces better results than having our decisions taken for us from afar.

We will continue to push for ambitious devolution deals and a single settlement with government.



1. Home of real opportunity



2. A North East we are proud to call home



3. Home to a growing and vibrant economy for all



4. Home of the green energy revolution



5. A welcoming home to global trade



The North East has the assets and ambition to deliver growth that benefits the whole of the UK. Our regional coalition can play a vital role in helping Government deliver national targets with the right deployment of regional powers and investment.

If the North East were to grow at the same projected rate as the fastest growing G7 economy today our economy will be £13.1bn larger by 2033.

1

Partners across the North East are working towards...



Creating tens of thousands of new jobs, including in the green, creative and foundational economies



Increasing residual household incomes for all our residents through better paid jobs and a better functioning housing market



Lifting tens of thousands of children out of poverty, as a first step towards its elimination



Supporting more people into work, including through a unified approach to work and health, and a more co-ordinated skills system



Supporting Government's commitment to deliver 1.5m new homes, enhancing our housing market for all our residents



Creating stronger neighbourhoods, including by reducing educational inequalities and investing in communities

\* Calculated by applying USA (the fastest growing G7 country) growth forecasts published by Congressional Budget Office to ONS estimates of current North East GDP.



# New Deal for North East Workers

A joint employment and skills strategy - a positive call to action to all organisations and employers to join in a shared regional endeavour to deliver the employment and skills improvements our residents, businesses and economy need to thrive.

This 5-year plan will play a leading role in achieving the Mayor and Cabinet's five missions, as well as delivering our Local Growth Plan ambitions and the Mayor's manifesto commitments.

Capitalising on the new freedoms and flexibilities that devolution brings, our New Deal for North East workers sets out how we will realise the human capital needed for economic success, how we will deliver an integrated, innovative regional employment and skills system and how we will deliver better outcomes for all residents and businesses.

Draft plan and will hopefully be submitted to Cabinet in July – but provides the strategic framework for our investment and programmes.



# Economic Inactivity Trailblazer – overview

Ruth Gaul, Principal Programme Manager



The UK is facing a **significant inactivity challenge** – 21.9% inactivity rate  
There are 2.8m people out of work due to long term illness



The **Get Britain Working White Paper** set out how the Government is investing £240m to trial new ways to get people back into work, this includes:



£125m to mobilise **eight trailblazer areas in England and Wales** that will bring together and streamline health, employment and skills services to improve the support available for people who are economically inactive. Focus on joining up help and support based on the needs of local people and places



In three of these areas Integrated Care Systems will be funded through **NHS Growth and Accelerators** to develop evidence of the impact of targeted action on the top health conditions driving inactivity



**Establishing eight Youth Guarantee Trailblazer areas** to test new ways of supporting young people into employment or training, by bringing together and enhancing existing programmes in partnership with local areas

# North East Economic Inactivity Trailblazer

- Brings together health, employment and skills services
- Support for those who are economically inactive due to ill health and help them return to work
- Testing new and innovative approaches
- £10 million North East investment for 2025/26
- Funding will pass to North East CA via a ring-fenced grant from DWP
- 1 of 8 Trailblazer areas





# Key objectives

- Maximise the reach, effectiveness and impact of the range of existing services that could support people who are economically inactive to participate in the labour market, by transforming how partners and services work together locally.
- Test new and innovative approaches to: Identifying and engaging people who are economically inactive and supporting people who are economically inactive to participate in the labour market; and
- Provide a platform for longer-term systems reform, to deliver a coherent, joined-up local work, health and skills offer.



# Priorities

## **Priority 1: Better pathways into employment**

This priority will develop approaches to provide an enabling environment and resources to bring together, coordinate and maximise existing service provision to enhance the coherence and impact of existing and emerging employment support interventions.

## **Priority 2: New ways of working**

We will invest in new employment provision addressing identified needs, to move residents into employment, education or training, or closer to the labour market. This priority aims to stimulate innovation and explore models which provide learning and the opportunity for future scale-up.

## **Priority 3: Systems reform – an integrated approach to health and employment**

We want to break down barriers and redesign processes to create best in-class services for residents across employment, skills and health.



# Open Calls – approach and timescales

Julie Gwilym, Programme Manager

Cherri Blissett, Fuel Research



## Priority two: New ways of working

We will invest in:

- new employment provision
- addressing identified needs
- moving residents into employment, education, training or closer to the labour market
- stimulating innovation and exploring new models
- generate evidence and learning
- the opportunity for future scale-up.



## Priority two: six strands of activity

- 2.1 Supported placements for young people (£900,000)
- 2.2 Supported placements for neurodiverse residents (£875,000)
- 2.3 Support to individuals within a disability / in primary care (£500,000)
- 2.4 Support for social housing tenants (£875,000)
- 2.5 Support for women (£925,000)
- 2.6 Support for employers (£875,000)



# Call one – launch 2 June – close 20 June

## **2.1 Supported placements for young people**

- subsidised work placement opportunities to young people, aged 18 to 24, complemented by wrap-around employment support
- test different options (work trial, placement, taster, group placements, volunteering) and understand benefits of each option

## **2.2 Supported placements for neurodiverse residents**

- subsidised work placement opportunities to neurodiverse residents of working age, complemented by wrap-around employment support
- test different options (work trial, placement, taster, group placements, volunteering) and understand benefits of each option



# Call two – launch 10 June – close 27 June

## **2.3 Support to individuals within a disability / in primary care**

- working with primary care and social prescribing providers to support residents who have a disability, mental health condition or a physical health barrier to work
- trial new models and learn what works in integration and delivery of services to this target group

## **2.4 Support for social housing tenants**

- engage with economically inactive social housing tenants, especially those over the age of 50
- develop new, and effective ways of supporting them to enter employment and maintain tenancies through an integrated approach to support
- trial new models and learn what works in integration and delivery of services to this target group



# Call three – launch 20 June – close 14 July

## **2.5 Support for women**

- innovative activities for women who are experiencing health issues and are economically inactive
- including engagement, integrated support and developing evidence of ‘what works’ in a woman’s employment journey

## **2.6 Support for employers**

- activities that aim to understand, influence, and improve employers’ recruitment and retention practices, specifically with regard to employing people facing barriers to employment
- test different options and understand benefits of each option



# Indicative minimum and maximum project sizes

Priority	Minimum	Maximum	Indicative number of Projects
2.1 Young Adults	£300,000	£950,000	Up to 3
2.2 Neurodiverse residents	£450,000	£875,000	1 or 2
2.3 Individuals within Primary Care	£100,000	£250,000	Up to 5
2.4 Social Housing Tenants	£200,000	£300,000	3 to 4
2.5 Women	£100,000	£200,000	5 to 8
2.6 Employers	£100,000	£300,000	Up to 5



## Start dates for delivery

Call one	2.1 Supported placement programmes Young Adults	July
	2.2 Supported placement programmes Neurodiverse	July
Call two	2.3 Support to individuals within primary care	August
	2.4 Support for social housing tenants	August
Call three	2.5 Support for women	September
	2.6 Support for employers from key sectors	September

- **Mobilisation is required immediately after offer is confirmed**
- **All projects must be completed by 31 March 2026**



# Outputs

- 2.1 – 250 young people
- 2.2 – 200 neurodiverse residents
- 2.3 – 100 individuals within a disability / in primary care
- 2.4 – 190 social housing tenants
- 2.5 – 125 women
- 2.6 - 175 residents and 175 employers



## Next Steps

- Publish Briefing Note & Circulation of slides
- Launch of calls – [Funding opportunities](#)
  - Call 1
  - Call 2
  - Call 3
- Q&A published
  - Refresh of Q&A log – weekly
- Assessments
  - Call 1
  - Call 2
  - Call 3

2<sup>nd</sup> June

2<sup>nd</sup> June

10<sup>th</sup> June

20<sup>th</sup> June

4<sup>th</sup> June

w/c 23<sup>rd</sup> June

w/c 30<sup>th</sup> June

w/c 16<sup>th</sup> July

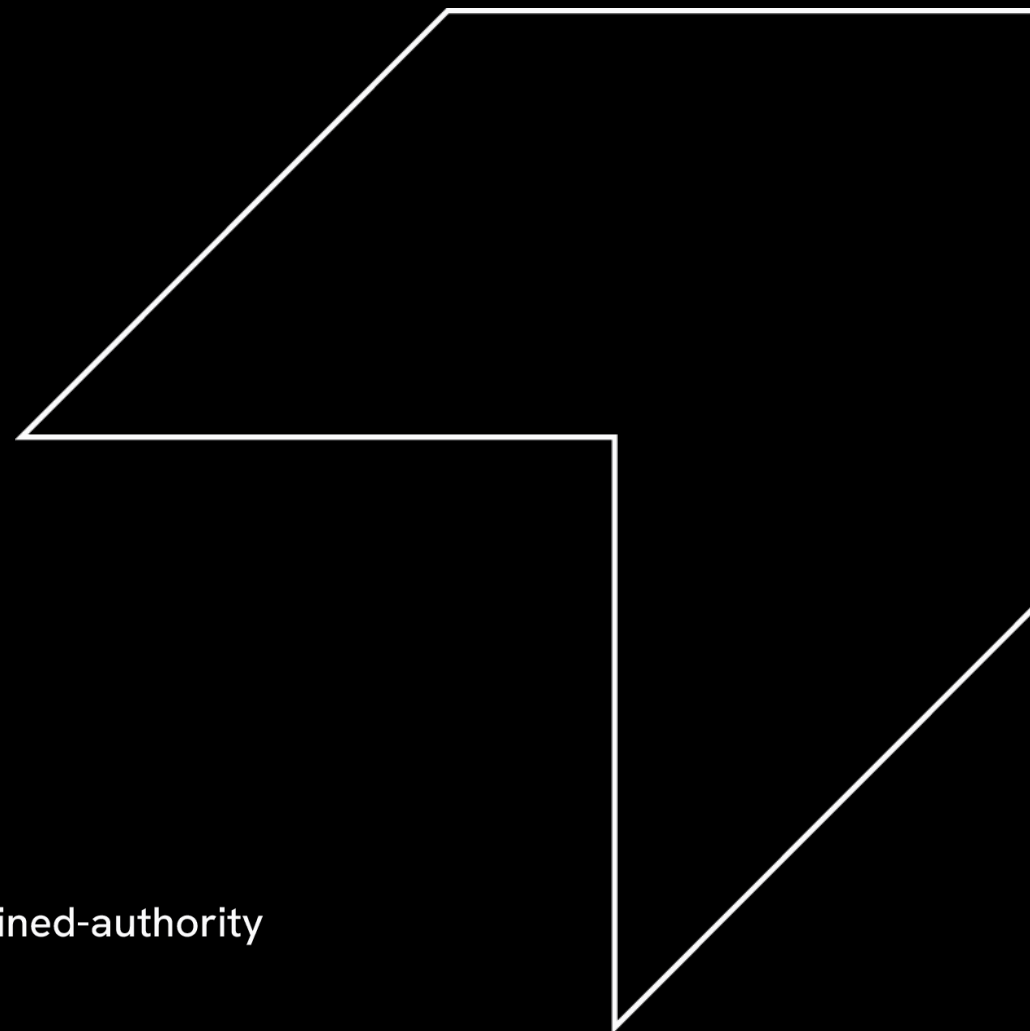


# Questions



# Contact us

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# Thank you

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