

Employability (Economic Inactivity) Trailblazer Strategy

Reasoning & Direction of Travel					Delivering Change				
Ambition Statement	Workflow	Baseline	Voice of the Business	Vision Statement	Strategic Outcome	Recommendation	Core Functions and Features	What this Achieves (Benefits)	Horizon
Primary Objectives	SHINE Gateway	Employers find the employability landscape too complex.	We don't know where to start. We are approached by so many organisations. We want to help, but how? It needs to fit and be easy.	One point of contact for employers, co-ordinating the opportunities, funding, skills and providers.	Increased engagement between employers and economically inactive candidates - leading to an increase in job offers and successful employment.	Establish and resource the SHINE Gateway as the single, employer-facing entry point into the employability, skills and support system. The Gateway should act as a coordinating infrastructure, rather than a delivery provider, bringing together existing services into a coherent, accessible and employer-led model.	Single point of access for employers ("one front door") Candidate brokerage and pre-matching based on employer need Coordination of wraparound and in-work support Navigation of provision across the 65+ organisations in the landscape Employer account management and relationship continuity	Removes fragmentation and duplication across the system Reduces the time and administrative burden on employers Reduces the time and costs for providers in recruiting employers Improves employer confidence and participation Enables scale through a shared regional infrastructure	Now Now Now Now Soon
	Work Ready Talent Pipeline	Economically inactive candidates are perceived to lack core employability skills and understanding of how businesses operate.	We need people with a spark, with something about them and to be ready to work in the workplace - we can train skills, we can take them on a journey if they have the basic skills and understanding.	Economically inactive candidates that are ready to interview and equipped to succeed in the workplace.	Resilient candidates, successfully applying for roles and then going on to flourish in their new workplace.	Ensure that all candidates progressing through the SHINE Gateway meet a consistent, employer-informed baseline of work readiness. This should not be a generic training offer, but a regionally agreed standard shaped directly by employer expectations.	Core employability behaviours (timekeeping, communication, reliability) Confidence building and "telling your story" support Digital and application readiness Exposure to workplace expectations through tasters or simulations Access to support programmes e.g. assisted travel or specialist equipment	Addresses a primary employer concern around candidate readiness Improves interview success rates and retention outcomes Creates consistency across providers and programmes Reduces the burden on employers to prepare candidates themselves Creates community skills partnerships	Soon Soon Now Soon Near Future
	Wrap around and In-Work Support	There is a sense that existing support is challenged by a short-term, funding led strategy. This is limiting consistency and the longevity of ongoing outcomes.	Businesses cannot always meet short term asks that are unplanned or which don't fit with business-need. Conversely, it is not possible to plan-to-be-involved when the landscape changes regularly. We need certainty around schemes and consistent support and funding.	High quality, well funded and consistent regional schemes that employers and candidates alike understand. A known place, clear channels and the opportunity to establish supportive relationships that enable the long-term success of candidates in the workplace.	There is a place to go to find in-work support, coordinated through the SHINE Gateway but delivered by the provider network. Support should extend beyond induction and be responsive to both employer and employee needs.	The system should move from short-term, pre-employment interventions to ongoing, structured in-work support, coordinated through the SHINE Gateway but delivered by the provider network. Support should extend beyond induction and be responsive to both employer and employee needs.	Named support contact for both employer and employee Mentoring, buddying and regular check-ins Rapid access to specialist services (health, wellbeing, transport, childcare) Clear escalation routes for emerging issues	Improves retention and reduces early attrition De-risks recruitment for employers Supports individuals with complex or fluctuating needs Aligns with what employers already recognise as effective	Soon Soon Near Future Soon
	De-risk Recruitment	Employers feel that all of the risk of employing economically inactive people lies with them. The cost of failure, training, additional support, wellbeing and adjustments can lead to a reluctance to take EI candidates.	It's not that we don't want to take economically inactive people - we always want the best person for the job! But the reality is that if we have two similar candidates, business pressures dictate that we are more likely to go for the person who needs less support.	System-led support makes it easy to take a candidate who has been inactive or who has additional support needs - levelling the playing field across the North East.	There is a programme that helps to reduce the barriers to access for economically inactive people - supporting employers and helping to reduce the impact of failure.	Expand and systematise low-risk entry routes into employment, using the SHINE Gateway to coordinate access. These pathways should be designed to reduce perceived and actual risk for employers.	Paid work trials and temporary-to-permanent pathways Supported placements with in-work coaching Flexible apprenticeship and traineeship routes Sector-based pathways linked to real vacancies	Enables employers to "try before you hire" Builds confidence in recruiting from economically inactive groups Improves job matching and long-term outcomes Shifts recruitment from transactional to relational models	Soon Soon Soon Soon
	Place-Based Partnerships	Employers feel disconnected from the communities they serve and find it hard to reach local talent.	If we want to work with the people on our doorstep, we have to go and find them. This requires a lot of research and effort all time away from running the business.	Communities and employers are connected - they understand each other and the opportunities available through positive, two-way relationships.	Those who are economically inactive see and realise the employment opportunities at their local place. Employers benefit from the creation of local jobs for local people.	The SHINE Gateway should be underpinned by strong local partnerships, recognising that engagement with economically inactive residents is often place-specific.	A partnership between: - Local authorities - Community and voluntary organisations - Housing associations - Health services - Education and training providers	Improves outreach to economically inactive populations Strengthens candidate preparation and support Embeds the Gateway within local ecosystems Ensures solutions reflect local labour market conditions	Soon/Near Future
	Simplify and Integrate the Provider Landscape	There are many providers in the system. Employers find this confusing and off-putting.	We don't know where to start when we want to partner with a provider. We are approached weekly and we simply can't work with everyone. Some of the providers are very specialist and it is hard to see how their work relates to our business.	It will be easy for employers and providers to work together through a one programme, shared goal approach.	Provision is more targeted, cost effective and delivers regional results. Economic inactivity starts to fall across the North East as employers concentrate on their business and providers focus on the needs of their candidates.	Use the SHINE Gateway to align and coordinate existing provision, rather than creating new standalone programmes. This requires stronger system leadership and shared operating principles.	Map and align roles across providers to reduce duplication Introduce shared referral processes and data-sharing protocols Commission against outcomes linked to employer needs Ensure consistent standards of delivery across partners	Creates a genuinely joined-up system Improves efficiency and clarity for employers Enables better tracking of outcomes and impact Maximises the value of existing investment	Now Now Near Future Near Future
Structural Considerations	Targeted Financial Incentives for Micro-businesses and SMEs	Small businesses want to play their part but feel the risks are high with the cost of failure having a significant and direct impact on profitability.	We aren't able to work in the volumes that target businesses do and so we don't feel that the system values the opportunities we can create. If it goes wrong, the impact on us is substantial.	It will be easy for smaller businesses to take economically inactive candidates. There will be financial and practical support available, in a way that reflects the challenges of running a smaller organisation.	Smaller businesses are actively recruiting economically inactive candidates and there are stories of successful outcomes across the North East.	Introduce targeted, flexible financial support to reduce the cost and risk of inclusive recruitment, particularly for SMEs. This should be aligned to Gateway activity and focused on where it will have the greatest additionality.	Wage subsidies or tapered wage support (e.g. first 3-6 months) Funded trial periods Support for supervision and management time Nil or cost-offset incentives where feasible	Addresses one of the most consistently cited employer barriers Unlocks participation from micro and small businesses Enables employers to invest time in onboarding and support Increases the volume of available opportunities	Near Future Soon Soon Now
	Improve transport connectivity	Poor transport connections - especially in rural areas - are restricting candidate opportunity.	Whilst we can often flex entry level roles to reflect public transport challenges, the ability progress or to take on higher paid jobs is restricted where we have to follow operational rules (such as fixed shifts).	North East public transport connects people in the north east to places of work - and there is geographical equity.	There are fewer reports of candidates being restricted by transportation challenges across the region leading to greater levels of employment.	Prioritise transport interventions that directly support access to work, particularly for economically inactive residents.	Early morning and late evening services aligned to shift work Improved connectivity to industrial estates and business parks Rural-to-urban transport links Integration of transport planning with employability support	Removes a major structural barrier to participation Expands the realistic job search radius for candidates Improves reliability and retention Strengthens the overall effectiveness of the SHINE Gateway	Soon Near Future Near Future Soon
	Expand Apprenticeship Wage Support	The changes in employment law now make the employment of apprentices feel expensive and risky.	Apprenticeships lack flexibility, feel too long and are a significant investment in time, resource and effort. Recent employment changes make this effort feel too hard.	Apprenticeships re-establish themselves as positive routes to employment with which businesses are willing to engage. Funding allows those from areas of high inactivity or with specific geographical challenges to succeed.	Apprenticeship uptake in economically deprived and rural areas increases.	Introduce a wage-supported apprenticeship model, targeted at SMEs and aligned to Gateway pathways.	Partial wage subsidy in early months Flexibility for candidates requiring longer onboarding Simplified administration for employers Alignment with priority sectors and local demand	Scales a route employers already trust Supports individuals with limited or non-linear work histories Increases entry-level opportunities Complements the Gateway's matching and preparation functions	Now Soon Soon Soon