

Appendices



CLAIRE WARD
MAYOR OF THE
EAST MIDLANDS



East Midlands
Combined County
Authority

Appendix A: List of Organisations Engaged

A range of stakeholders were engaged during the development of this Plan. This includes:

- Representatives from the economic development, employment and skills, and public health teams of EMCCA's constituent councils;
 - Derby City Council
 - Derbyshire County Council
 - Nottingham City Council
 - Nottinghamshire County Council
- EMCCA area's Integrated Care Board (ICBs):
 - Derby and Derbyshire (ICBs)
 - Nottingham and Nottinghamshire (ICBs)
- Department for Work and Pensions
- Federation of Small Businesses

As well as wider stakeholders, including:

- District local authorities within Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire County;
- Employment support providers;
- Skills providers and further education institutions;
- Businesses through the Federation of Small Businesses and Chambers of Commerce.
- VCSE sector representatives

Members of the Partnership continually fed into development of The Plan through bi-weekly meetings and direct one-on-one conversations. Engagement with stakeholders was conducted at least twice: information and evidence gathering and again at the report drafting stage.

Appendix B: Labour Market Analysis

This section explores key metrics connected to labour market across the East Midlands, identifying key supply and demand issues and progression challenges. This analysis is focused on a clear set of labour market metrics to track progress across EMCCA. These align directly with the national Get Britain Working framework, ensuring that the local analysis and actions support national ambitions while reflecting local needs. Eight key indicators have been identified to monitor to determine the success of the Get Britain Working agenda.¹

Two key outcome metrics are identified:

- Employment rate – for 16- to 64-year-olds.
- Real earnings amongst non-retired households (all ages) – a component of real household disposable income. Additional focus is on households in the lower 50% of the income distribution.

Intermediate outcome metrics also identified by the government include:

- Local variation in employment rates
- Health related economic inactivity rates
- Disability employment rate gap
- Proportion of 16- to 24-year-olds not in education, employment or training;
- Employment among parents:
 - employment rate gap between lone parents and parents in a couple;
 - the percentage of couples' families where at least one parent is out of work; and
- Female employment rate.

These metrics have been identified throughout this analysis of the EMCCA area labour market.

B1 Key outcome metrics

Employment Rate

EMCCA's current employment rate² is estimated at 75.8%³, exceeding the national average of 75.6% over the same period. To achieve the 80% employment rate in EMCCA, an additional 58,293 individuals are needed in work by 2035.⁴

The unemployment rate within the EMCCA area was estimated at 5.1%⁵, notably higher than the national figure of 4.0%, highlighting ongoing challenges around job accessibility and labour market resilience. Since 2022, the unemployment rate in EMCCA has risen steadily, reaching 5.1% by late 2024/early 2025, signalling recent local challenges and a weakening lab

¹ [Get Britain Working outcomes - GOV.UK](#)

² AMION estimates using ONS Annual Population Survey (2025). A rolling average of October 2023 – September 2024, January 2024–December 2024, and April 2024 to March 2025.

³ Due to reliability issues with recent ONS Annual Population Survey, figures have been estimated as an average for the period October 2023 to March 2025.

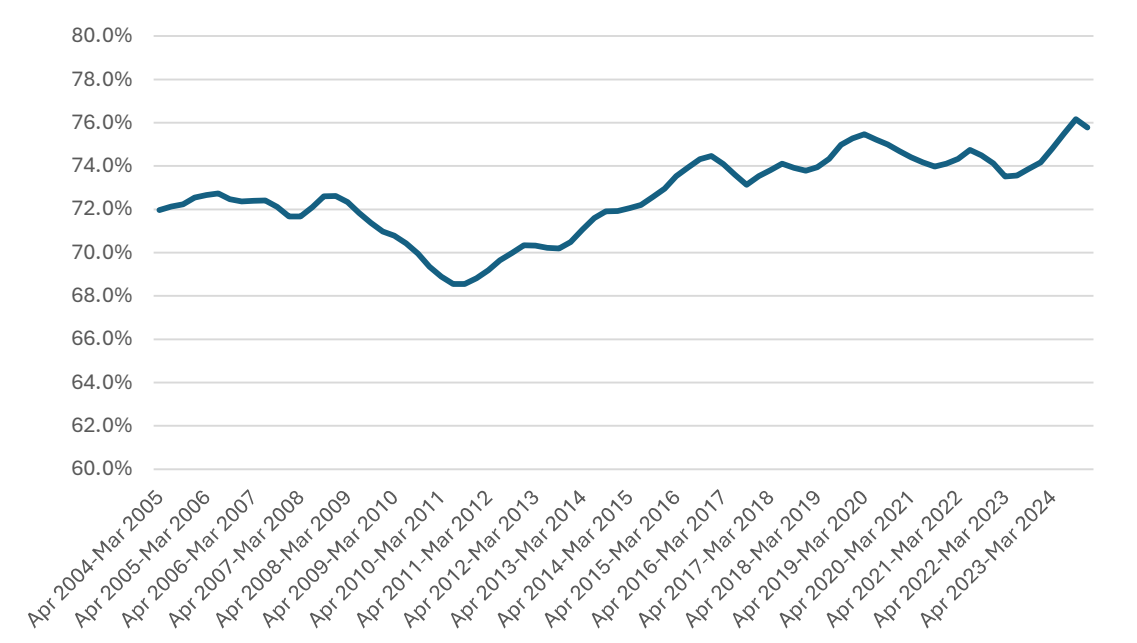
⁴ Estimated utilising work-age population projections by ONS.

⁵ AMION estimates using ONS Annual Population Survey (2025). A rolling average of October 2023 – September 2024, January 2024–December 2024, and April 2024 to March 2025.

our market. The average economic inactivity rate across EMCCA was estimated at 20.2%, slightly below the England average of 21.3%.⁶ It is estimated that there are around 56,000 unemployed people⁷ within the EMCCA geography.

Over the longer term, the employment rate within EMCCA has shown gradual improvement, as illustrated in **Figure B.1** which charts the rolling average employment rate over the past 20 years. The most notable period of decline was during the 2008 financial crisis and its aftermath. During the COVID-19 pandemic the employment rate stayed relatively stable. indicates that, while structural challenges remain, EMCCA’s labour market has proven relatively resilient with employment rates currently close to their highest level in the past two decades.

Figure B.1: EMCCA employment rate⁸, 2004-2025



Source: AMION estimates using Annual Population Survey, ONS (2025)

Economic inactivity is higher among women.

Economic inactivity across EMCCA broadly follows national trends when split by gender⁹, with higher economic inactivity among women and lower employment rates. This suggests gender-based barriers to employment are consistent across national geographies.

Table B.1: Employment rate by gender		
Sex	EMCCA	England
Female	73.0%	72.3%
Male	78.6%	78.9%

Source: AMION estimates using Annual Population Survey, ONS (2025)

⁶ AMION estimates using ONS Annual Population Survey (2025). A rolling average of October 2023 – September 2024, January 2024-December 2024, and April 2024 to March 2025.

⁷ Unemployment refers to people without a job who have been actively seeking work in the past four weeks and are available to start work in the next two weeks, or those who are out of work but have found a job and are waiting to start within the next two weeks (Office for National Statistics, ILO definition).

⁸ Rolling average employment rate estimated by AMION

⁹ AMION estimates using ONS Annual Population Survey (2025). A rolling average of October 2023 – September 2024, January 2024-December 2024, and April 2024 to March 2025.

Economic inactivity is higher among residents from ethnic minority backgrounds.

For residents from ethnic minority backgrounds, the employment rate for working-age adults was estimated at 70.7% in EMCCA, slightly above the national estimate of 69.4%, though both estimates were below the national employment rates for the whole working age population of close to 76%.

The unemployment rate for ethnic minorities (aged 16+) in EMCCA was 6.9%, similar to the 6.8% in England overall. The economic inactivity rate among ethnic minority people of working age is also slightly lower in EMCCA (24.0%) compared to the national average (25.5%). Taken together, the data suggests slightly higher levels of engagement regionally compared to the national position. However, given the overall lower level of economic activity compared to the population overall, those from ethnic minorities are potentially exposed to greater labour market risks and barriers.

Table B.2: Employment rate by ethnicity

Ethnic group	EMCCA	England
White	76.6%	77.2%
Black/Black British	76.9%	70.7%
Indians	73.4%	78.8%
Pakistanis/Bangladeshis	74.6%	59.8%
Mixed ethnic group	69.8%	65.6%
Other ethnic groups	59.7%	68.0%
Total	75.8%	75.6%

Source: AMION estimates using Annual Population Survey, ONS (2025)

There are significant disparities in the employment rate within the EMCCA area.

While the overall employment rates for EMCCA closely align with the national average, local data reveal clear disparities. Areas including Nottingham, Derby and Ashfield having higher unemployment and economic inactivity rates, falling well below the 80% employment benchmark, point to deeper labour market challenges. In contrast, places such as Chesterfield, Rushcliffe and South Derbyshire exceed 80%, indicating stronger performance. This highlights the need for place-based, targeted intervention to address uneven outcomes across the EMCCA area.

Table B.3: Local Authority employment overview					
Local authority	Employment	Employment rate	Inactivity rate	Unemployment rate¹⁰	Additional people required to reach 80% employment rate
Amber Valley	58,833	77.5%	18.7%	4.6%	1,860
Ashfield	58,100	72.0%	20.8%	9.2%	6,487
Bassetlaw	51,633	76.0%	22.4%	2.5%	2,687
Bolsover	39,933	77.0%	16.6%	7.9%	1,533
Broxtowe	56,300	81.0%	13.9%	7.9%	Over 80%
Chesterfield	54,667	84.3%	14.2%	-	Over 80%
Derby	116,767	72.0%	22.7%	6.9%	13,020
Derbyshire Dales	29,267	72.3%	25.9%	-	3,107
Erewash	60,667	84.7%	12.2%	4.5%	Over 80%
Gedling	53,867	74.0%	20.1%	7.3%	4,373
High Peak	45,233	78.4%	19.2%	-	927
Mansfield	49,800	73.8%	20.0%	7.8%	4,173
Newark and Sherwood	55,067	74.5%	22.0%	4.5%	4,027
North East Derbyshire	44,400	74.0%	24.5%	-	3,600
Nottingham	157,633	70.5%	24.9%	6.1%	21,300
Rushcliffe	59,600	80.0%	17.2%	4.0%	27
South Derbyshire	54,433	82.9%	15.4%	3.6%	Over 80%
EMCCA	1,046,267	75.8%	20.2%	5.1%	58,293
England	26,669,600	75.6%	21.3%	4.0%	1,550,347

Source: AMION estimates using Annual Population Survey, ONS (2025). Within the table, the colour coding system is as follows - Red: below EMCCA average employment rate. Amber: Between EMCCA average and 80% employment. Green: Above 80% employment rate.

Pay and productivity

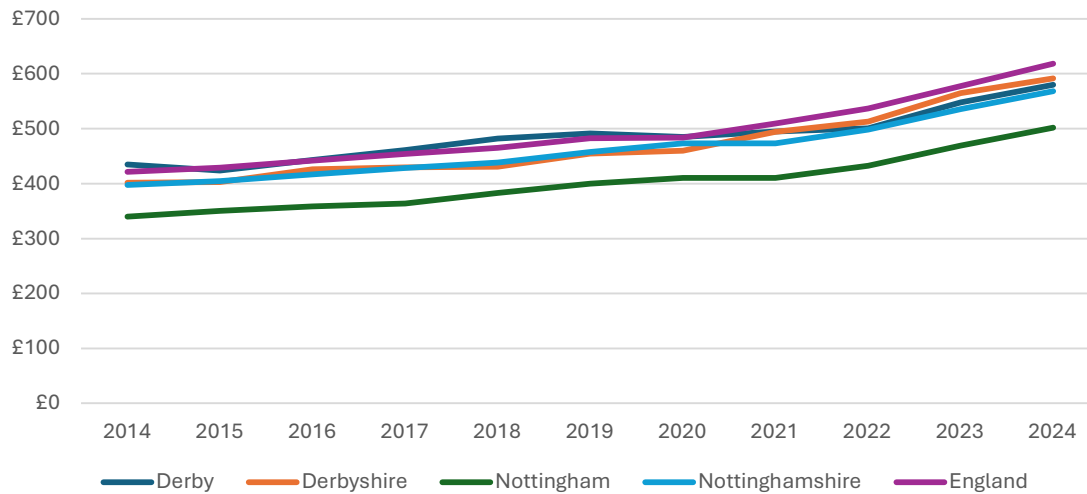
Median pay in EMCCA is below the national average.

In 2024, the median gross weekly pay¹¹ for workers across the EMCCA's constituent local authorities varied, with rates of £502 in Nottingham, £569 in Nottinghamshire, £580 in Derby and £592 in Derbyshire. These rates fall below the national median of £619 per week (£32,188 a year). Across the EMCCA geography, male workers consistently earn more than female workers, reflecting a persistent gender pay gap. For example, in Derbyshire, male workers earn a median of £713, compared with £491 for women.

¹⁰ Due to issues with the recent Annual Population Survey estimates, unemployment rates are not available for all local authorities within EMCCA.

¹¹ NOMIS Annual survey of hours and earnings - resident analysis (2025)

Figure B.2: Median Gross Weekly Pay (All employees- residence based)



Source: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (2025)

At the lower end of the earnings scale, the weekly pay for the bottom 10th percentile of workers in the area is below the national average of £218 in all EMCCA areas, except Derbyshire which matches the national figure. In Derby, the bottom 10th percentile earns £187 per week, in Nottingham they earn just £174 a week and in Nottinghamshire they earn £189 per week. This highlights the prevalence of low pay for a significant minority of workers. This suggests that while overall earnings are relatively close to the national average, many workers, particularly women and those in lower-paid roles, are likely to face financial insecurity.

In 2023, labour productivity in EMCCA stood at £38.23 per hour worked¹² which represented 86% of the national rate of £44.35. This reflects a consistent productivity gap which has increased since 2013 when the EMCCA rate per hour worked was 88% of the national rate. This divergence has limited wage growth and investment potential in the region. While the area saw improvements during the COVID recovery, particularly in 2020, recent years show a renewed divergence from the national trend, underlining the importance of skills and innovation to close the gap.

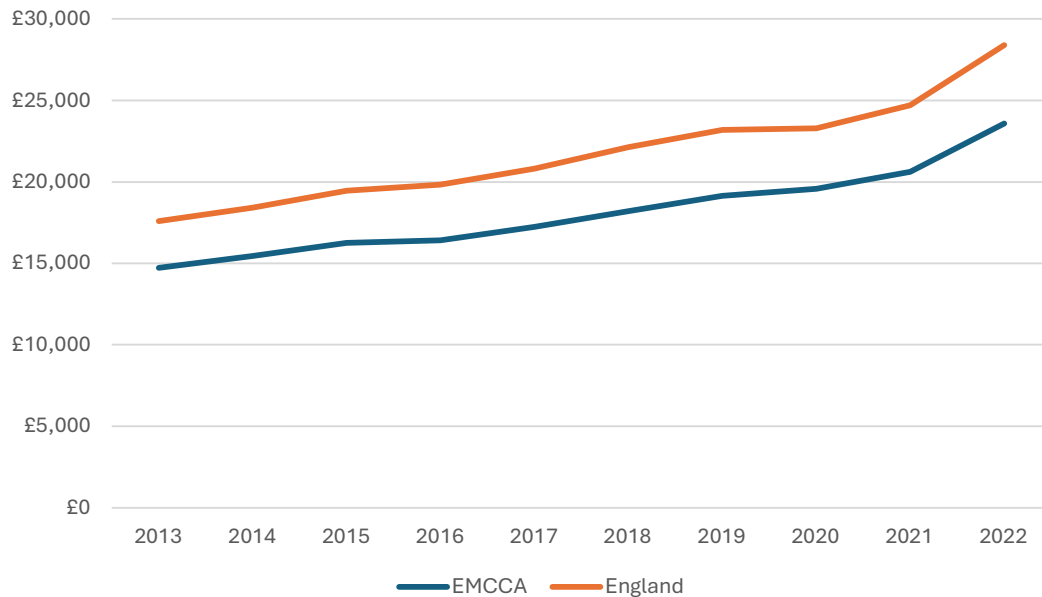
In 2022, real gross disposable household income¹³ (GDHI) in EMCCA stood at £23,584 per head (in constant 2015 prices), compared with a national average of £28,402, representing a gap of around £4,800. Over the past decade, GDHI per head has grown strongly in both EMCCA and England. In EMCCA, incomes rose from by 82% from £12,985 in 2012, broadly in line with national growth over the same period of 84%. Figure 8.3 shows that while EMCCA has kept pace with national trends, the income gap has remained persistent.

¹² ONS Subregional productivity: labour productivity indices by combined authorities and economic enterprise regions (June 2025). Available at:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/labourproductivity/datasets/subregionalproductivitylabourproductivityindicesbycombinedauthoritiesandeconomicenterpriseregions>

¹³ Estimated using ONS Regional gross disposable household income: all International Territorial Level (ITL) regions (2024); and ONS Consumer price inflation time series (2025)

Figure B.3: Real GDHI per head



Source: ONS (2025)

B2 Supply-side

The scale of economic inactivity

Nearly 300,000 people are economically inactive, with around 55,000 wanting a job.

Within the EMCCA area, there are an estimated 278,400 people aged 16 to 64 who are economically inactive. While not all of this group is available or looking for work, a significant, 19.6%, (54,467) say they would like a job, suggesting potential to increase participation with the right support.

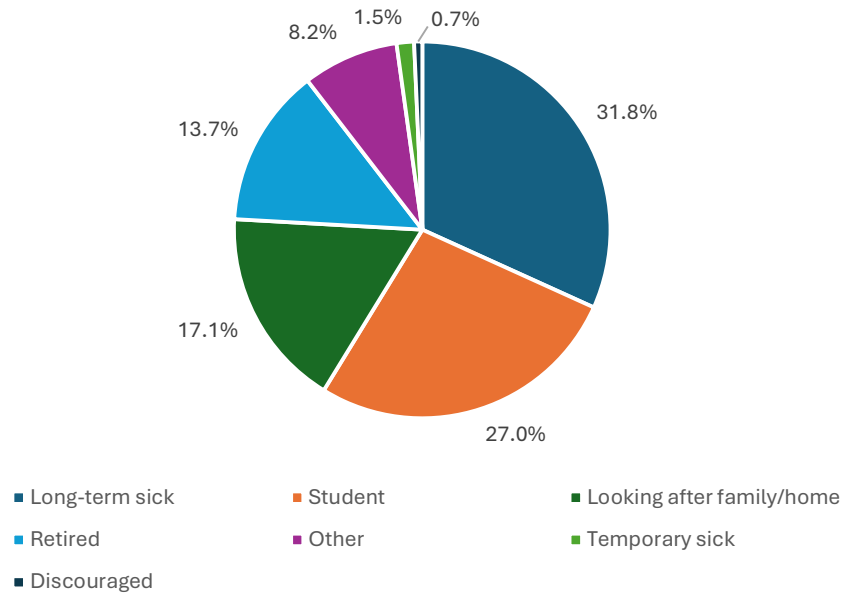
Economic inactivity due to sickness is a major challenge.

As shown in Figure B.4, around one-third of economically inactive residents in EMCCA are out of work due to long-term sickness (88,433 people or 31.8% of those economically inactive). A further 17.1% (47,733 people) are inactive due to looking after family or home. Together, these two groups account for almost half of all inactivity among working-age residents (136,167 people) - making them critical groups to focus on if EMCCA is to meet the challenge of raising the employment rate to 80%.

Other sizeable groups include students (27.0%) and retirees (13.7%). Smaller groups such as temporary sick (1.5%), discouraged workers (0.7%) and 'other' (8.2%) make up a modest share of inactivity and will not significantly affect the headline target.

Patterns also differ by gender: men are more likely to be inactive due to long-term sickness (36.2%) or early retirement (17.4%), whereas women are more likely to be caring for their family or home (24.7%).

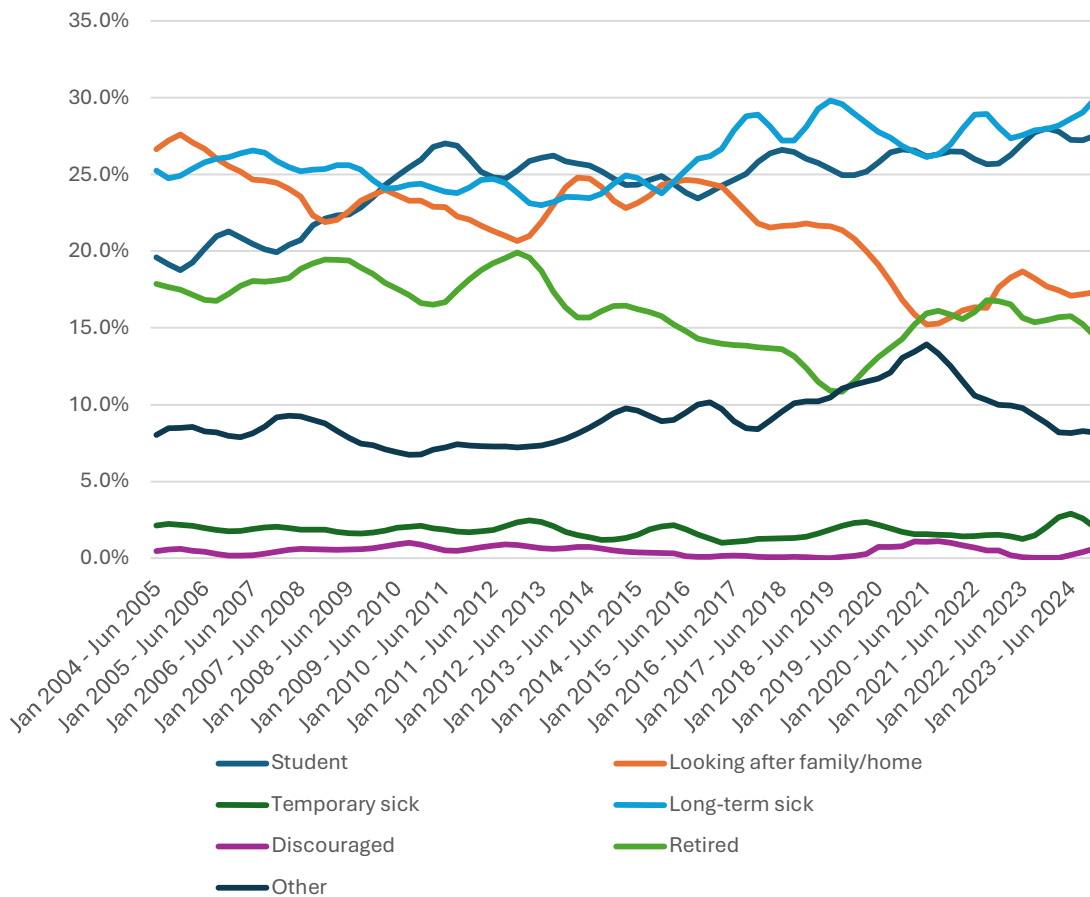
Figure B.4: Economic inactivity by reason, EMCCA residents aged 16-64 (2023 – 2025 average)



Source: Annual Population Survey, ONS (2025)

In 2023-2025, an estimated 19.6% of economically inactive people in EMCCA wanted a job (54,467) while 80.4% did not (Annual Population Survey, 2025). Although the share of 'not wanting to work' is slightly lower than the England average (81.2%), it equates to around 223,967 people locally, highlighting the scale of the challenge in engaging this group and reaching the 80% employment rate target. In addition to those economically inactive wanting a job, there are also an estimated 56,000 unemployed people estimated within EMCCA. Combining these groups gives a total of 110,467 people who would be willing to work if a suitable vacancy could be found.

Figure B.5: Economic inactivity by reason (%), EMCCA¹⁴



Source: Annual Population Survey, ONS (2025)

As of June 2025, there were 53,125 people claiming unemployment-related benefits in the EMCCA area¹⁵, representing 3.8% of the working-age population which was smaller than the proportion nationally (4.2%). While both the claimant count and claimant rate have risen slightly over the past year, the EMCCA area displays a relatively stronger labour market position compared to the national picture.

A greater share of Universal Credit claimants are not in employment in urban areas.

As of February 2025, EMCCA had 254,922 individuals claiming Universal Credit¹⁶, 165,070 (64.8%) of whom were not in employment. The cities of Derby (38,358 total claimants) and Nottingham (53,903 total claimants) had the highest share of Universal Credit claimants not in employment, with 67.5% and 67.7%, respectively. Derbyshire Dales had the lowest total number of claimants (4,221) and the lowest share of Universal Credit claimants not in employment (59.6%). This means that when residents are in contact with the current benefit and employment

¹⁴ Due to reliability issues with recent ONS Annual Population Survey, figures have been estimated as a rolling average for three periods and plotted at the mid-point of this average.

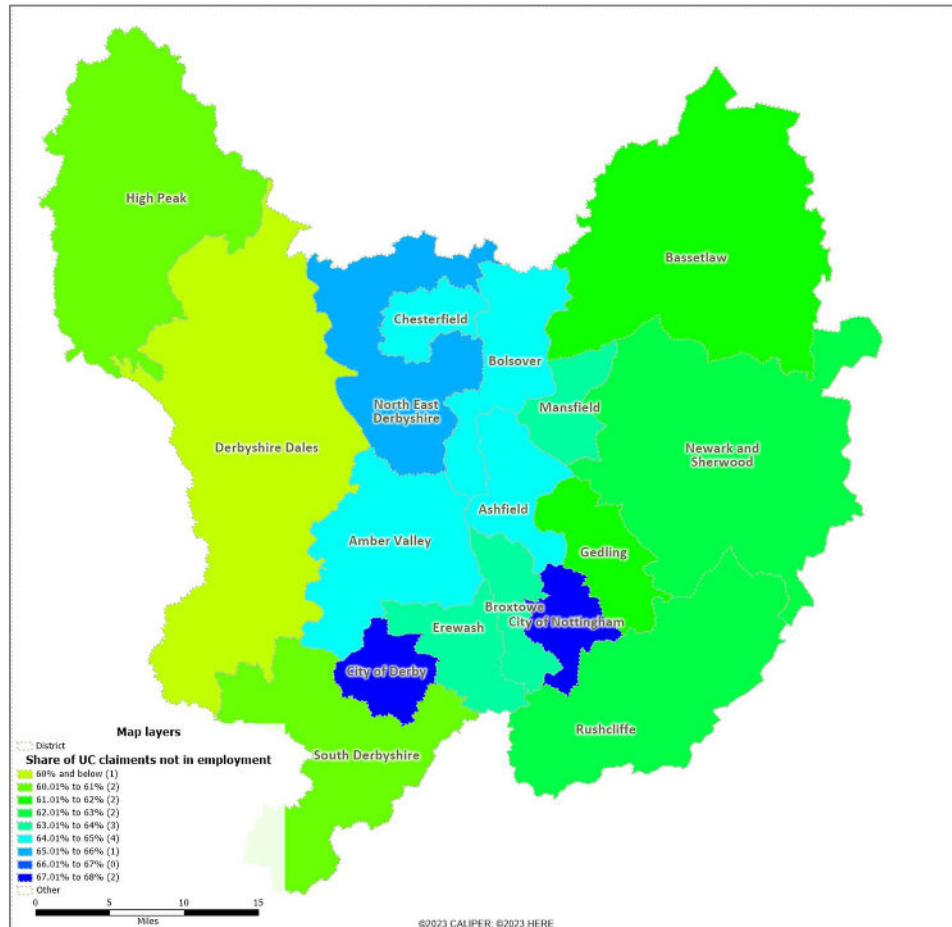
¹⁵ ONS Claimant count by sex and age (2025)

¹⁶ DWP Universal Credit statistics – Stat-Xplore (2025)

system, they are less likely to be employment in urban areas, suggesting deeper barriers to employment compared to rural settings.

The average for Derbyshire County Council (78,266 total claimants) and Nottinghamshire County Council (84,395 total claimants) was 63.4% and 62.9%, respectively.

Figure B.6: Share of universal credit claimants not in employment



Source: Department for Work and Pensions, Stat-Xplore (2025)

EMCCA contains areas of deep and persistent deprivation.

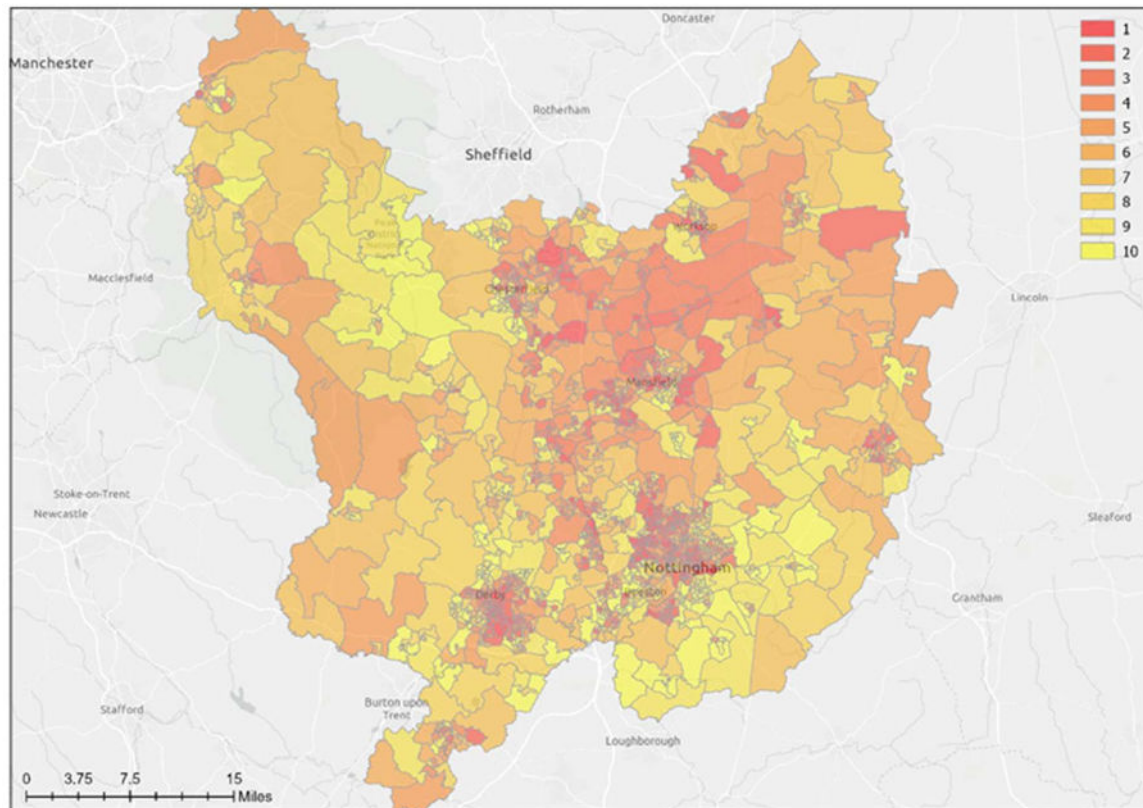
Many EMCCA residents face significant socio-economic barriers to accessing and sustaining work. According to the 2019 English Indices of Deprivation:

- Nottingham ranks as the 10th (out of 317) most deprived local authority in England, with over 30% of its neighbourhoods among the most 10% deprived nationally.
- Derby ranks 64th, reflecting high levels of inner-city deprivation.
- Derbyshire (87th) and Nottinghamshire (101st) perform better overall but contain pockets of acute deprivation, particularly in former coalfield communities.

Deprivation in EMCCA is particularly acute in income, education and health, with many areas also scoring poorly on 'Barriers to Employment'. This reflects the structural disadvantages such as limited access to well-paid jobs, skills mismatch and poor transport connectivity.

Insights from employer consultations in the Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) add further evidence. The LSIP highlights that financial constraints, particularly during the cost-of-living crisis, make essentials like food, heating and clothing unaffordable for many. Public transport limitations, especially in rural areas, restrict access to training, interviews and jobs. Digital exclusion hinders participation in online training and job search. A lack of career guidance and soft skills education leaves some individuals unprepared for the modern job market. Individuals from more privileged backgrounds have greater access to work experience and career networks, deepening inequality.

Figure B.7: Deprivation map of the East Midlands



Source: EMCCA (2025)

Key groups

Mental health and Musculoskeletal conditions are the main reasons for health-based economic inactivity in EMCCA.

As highlighted above, economic inactivity due to short- and long-term sickness is a challenge within EMCCA with an estimated 92,633 people economically inactive in the area due to temporary or long-term sickness¹⁷ (4,200 temporary sick and 88,433 long-term sick). This makes up 6.7% of EMCCA' total working age population.

¹⁷ AMION estimates using data from ONS Annual Population Survey (2025)

Between 2019 and 2024, the number of people in EMCCA who were economically inactive due to long-term sickness increased by an estimated 3.0%. This contradicts the overall trend of the total economically inactive population falling by 4.9% over the same period.

Prevalence of long-term health conditions.

The Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Joint-Strategic Needs Assessments (JSNAs) identify a high prevalence of long-term limiting health conditions, including:

- Musculoskeletal (MSK) conditions (e.g. back, joint pain)
- Cardiovascular disease.
- Chronic respiratory conditions
- Type 2 diabetes; and
- Common mental health disorders (depression anxiety, stress)

Of residents surveyed, barriers to employment were most often personal or health related. Among those out of work, 61.11% cited mental health challenges, followed by 27.78% reporting physical health conditions or disability and 16.67% noting low confidence or uncertainty about next steps. In contrast, fewer mentioned lack of qualifications (11.11%), transport barriers (11.11%), or digital skills (0%) as significant obstacles.

These conditions are significantly more prevalent in EMCCA’s more deprived communities, including areas such as Mansfield, Ashfield and Bolsover, and parts of Chesterfield, Derby City and Nottingham City. The JSNA highlight that health inequalities are strongly shaped by socio-economic factors such as employment quality, housing and transport.

Between October 2023 and September 2024, over 430,000 fitness to work notes were issued by GPs within the EMCCA area.¹⁸ Of the 9% of these which provided reasons, *mental health and behavioural disorders, diseases of the musculoskeletal system and connective tissues*, and *diseases of the respiratory system* were the most common. 91% of fitness to work notes provided no specific reason. This presents a significant data gap.

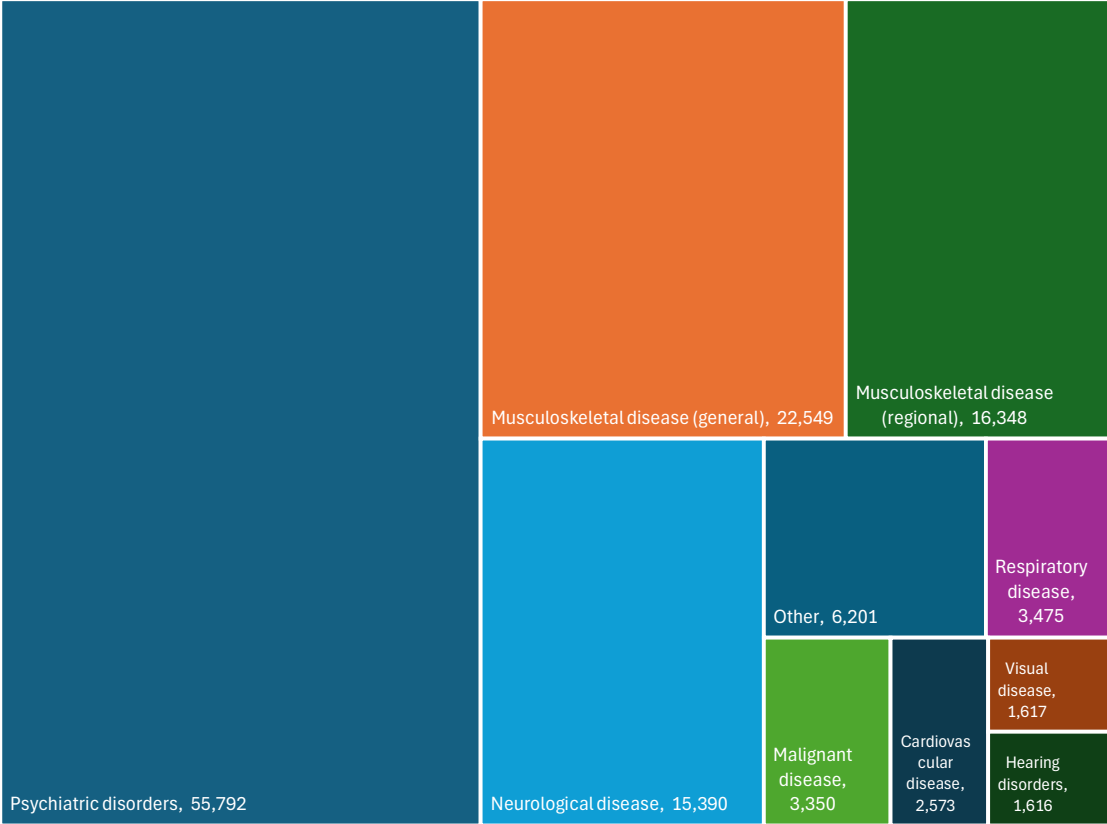
Table B.4: Fit notes issued by GPs within EMCCA in 2024			
Fit notes issued January - December 2024	Derby and Derbyshire	Nottingham and Nottinghamshire	Total
Total notes issued	207,816	226,313	434,129
No provided reason	186,951 (90.0%)	208,459 (92.1%)	395,410 (91.1%)
Mental and behavioural disorders	6,831 (3.3%)	5,554 (2.5%)	12,385 (2.9%)
Diseases of the musculoskeletal system and connective tissue	2,844 (1.4%)	3,133 (1.4%)	5,977 (1.4%)
Diseases of the respiratory system	1,302 (0.6%)	1,040 (0.5%)	2,342 (0.5%)
Other	9,888 (4.8%)	8,127 (3.6%)	18,015 (4.1%)

Source: NHS England Digital (2025)

¹⁸NHS England Digital (2025). Fit Notes Issued by GP Practices, England, December 2024. Available at: <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/fit-notes-issued-by-gp-practices/december-2024#>

Personal Independence Payment Claimants (PIP) data has been utilised as a proxy to identify more accurately the main conditions affecting working-age people and provide granular data. As of April 2025, 128,911 people aged 16 to 64 years old receive PIP support¹⁹. Among them, psychiatric conditions make up 43%. This broad category includes depression, anxiety, PTSD, mood disorders and other mental health issues. Other major groups include musculoskeletal disorders (30%), particularly conditions affecting the back, neck and joints; neurological conditions (12%) and respiratory diseases (3%). A range of other conditions, such as visual impairments, cardiovascular issues and hearing disorders also account for notable numbers.

Figure B.8: Top 10 conditions for PIP claimants among 16- to 64-year-olds in EMCCA



Source: Department for Work and Pensions, Stat-Xplore (2025)

The disability employment gap has high variation across the EMCCA area.

Between 2018 and 2022, there was a disability employment gap²⁰ of 28.4 percentage points²¹ within EMCCA, the disability employment rate of 52.1% compared to a non-disabled employment rate of 80.4%. In comparison, the gap is smaller in England overall at 26.0 percentage points. Within EMCCA, there is considerable variation in the disability employment gap across local authorities. Erewash (49.3 percentage points), North East Derbyshire (43.7),

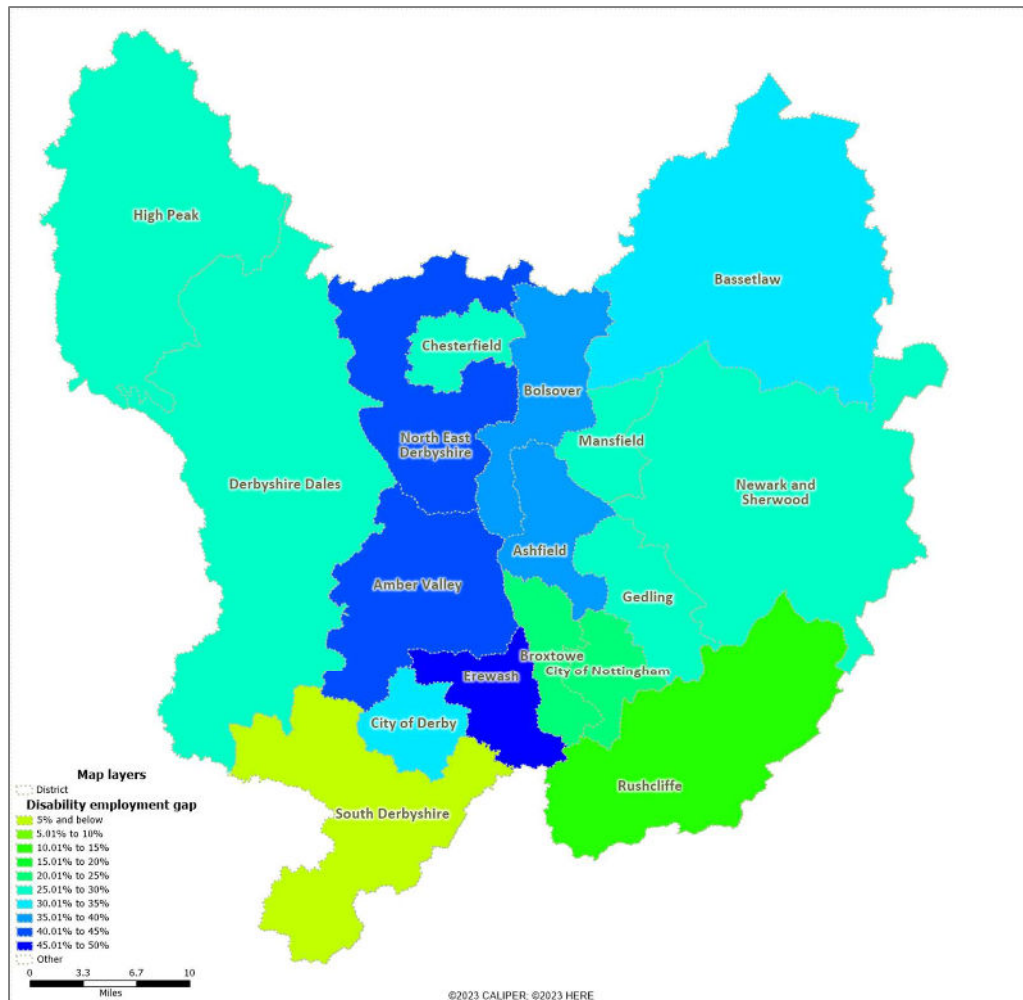
¹⁹ DWP PIP Cases with Entitlement from 2019 (2025)

²⁰ Defined as the difference between the percentage of disabled and non-disabled people in employment. The Annual Population Survey defines disability as those who have a long-term (12 month or more) health conditions that limits day to day activities. Source: DWP: The employment of disabled people. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/the-employment-of-disabled-people-2024/the-employment-of-disabled-people-2024>

²¹ DWP The Employment of Disabled People 2024 (2024)

Amber Valley (40.0) and Ashfield (39.6) record the highest gaps, suggesting deep-rooted barriers to employment for disabled residents in these areas.

Figure B.9: Disability employment gap by local authority district



Source: DWP The Employment of Disabled People 2024 (2024). Analysis by AMION.

High numbers of young people are not in education, employment or training (NEET), many face complex health needs.

In 2024, 14.7% of 16-24-year-olds²² in the East Midlands region²³ were not in education, employment or training (NEET), above the national rate of 13.6%. This is around 37,000 people.

In total, 1,212 young people aged 16 and 17 were classified as NEET across EMCCA in 2024²⁴, with the gender split skewed towards young men, who made up 58% of the cohort. 16-17-year-old NEET rates were highest in the city of Derby (3.9%) and lowest in rural Nottinghamshire (2.3%). While the number of NEETs aged 16-17 in EMCCA has fallen by 5.5% since 2019, England saw a sharp rise of 37.5% over the same period. In terms of overall trends, the proportion of 16-

²² Department for Education NEET statistics annual brief: 2024 (2025)

²³ NEET estimates for 16-24-year-olds only available at the East Midlands regional level, not EMCCA-level.

²⁴ Department for Education Participation in education, training and NEET: age 16 to 17 by local authority, 2023-24 (2024)

17-year-olds NEET decreased from 3.0% in EMCCA in 2019 to 2.4% in 2024. In England however, the proportion increased from 2.6% in 2019 to 3.2% in 2024.

National data suggests health needs are a growing reason for young people NEET.

- In 2024, 51.3% of 16–24-year-old NEETs reported having a health condition²⁵.
- From 2019 to 2024, the number of 16 to 24-year-old NEETs with a health condition rose by 39.3%, compared to a 6.9% growth in the overall NEET population. Breaking down reporting on health conditions:
 - Physical health conditions were reported by 32.4% of 16-24-year-old NEETs in 2024, up from 21% in 2019.
 - Mental health conditions were reported by 18.8% of 16 to 24-year-old NEETs, slightly down from a 21.3% peak in 2021.
- After health conditions, learning difficulties or autism were the second most common reported among 16 to 24-year-old NEETs. This doubled from 5.2% in 2019 to 13.6% in 2024.

These trends highlight a growing population of young people with complex or neurodiverse needs, highlighting the importance of joined-up support to increase youth engagement with work, health and education.

Age-based analysis of PIP claimants within the EMCCA reveals that among younger claimants, psychiatric conditions dominate, particularly mental health and neurodevelopmental disorders such as anxiety and depressive disorders, autism spectrum disorders and hyperkinetic disorder.

The Learning and Work Institute’s 2025 Youth Opportunity Index provides a comparative picture of how well different areas support young people to succeed in education, training and employment. It brings together a range of indicators including GCSE and Level 3 attainment, progression to higher education, apprenticeships, employment, and underemployment to produce an overall ranking for each combined authority. EMCCA ranks 8th out of 12 combined authorities in England overall (where 1st indicates strongest performance and 12th weakest), highlighting significant challenges in supporting young people. Performance is weakest in progression to higher education (12th) and GCSE attainment (9th), with middling results across most other indicators. EMCCA was ranked 5th for apprenticeship starts with 1,002 starts by people aged 16+ per 100,000 people in 2023/24²⁶.

Caring responsibilities disproportionately limit women's participation in EMCCA's labour market.

In 2024, 57,013 EMCCA residents received Carer’s Allowance, with women making up 68%. Over 70% had been receiving Carer’s Allowance for over two years, reflecting a longer-term challenge of managing care responsibilities.²⁷

38,800 women in EMCCA are economically inactive due to caring, nearly six times the number of men.

Across EMCCA, 14.2% of households are workless, compared with 13.5% nationally. This equates to just over 103,000 households locally with no adult in work. The region is also close to the national average in terms of mixed-employment households (25.8% compared with 26.8% in

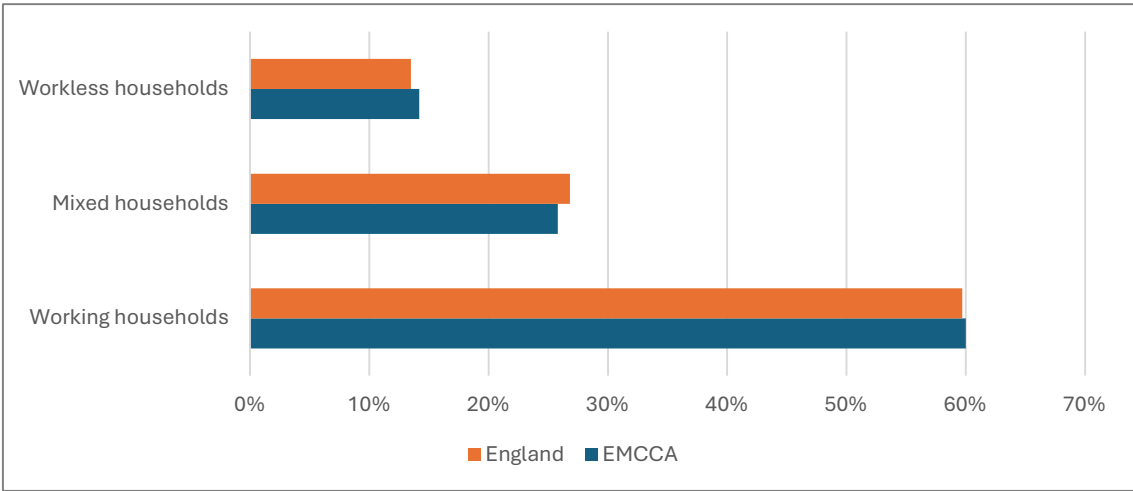
²⁵ ONS Annual Population Survey: NEET primary health condition estimates (2024)

²⁶ ONS Apprenticeship starts, England (2025)

²⁷ DWP, Cases with entitlement to Carer’s Allowance – Data from May 2018 onward, Stat-Xplore (2025)

England). This suggests that the distinctive challenge in EMCCA is not mixed work patterns, but rather the slightly higher prevalence of wholly workless households.

Figure B.10: Households by work status



Source: Annual Population Survey, ONS (2025)

There are notable differences in the rate of workless households across the EMCCA area. Nottingham has by far the highest share of workless households, at 20.7% (23,000 households), pointing to acute challenges in the city, whilst Derby records the lowest proportion, at 11.0% (9,200 households), sitting below the EMCCA-level and national proportions. Derbyshire (13.4%) and Nottinghamshire (13.2%) both fall close to the England average, although together they account for over 71,000 workless households.

Those with no qualifications are more likely to be economically inactive.

In 2024, 44.0% of working-age adults in EMCCA held a Level 4+ qualification²⁸, slightly below the national average (47.1%). Just 6.2% of residents had no formal qualifications. However, the picture looks very different among those who are economically inactive. People with no qualifications are heavily over-represented: although they make up just 6.2% of the working-age population, they account for 37.2% of those who are inactive and do not want a job. By contrast, residents with higher level qualifications (Level 4 and above) make up 44% of the population but only around one-fifth of the inactive who do not want a job. This highlights the strong link between low qualifications and economic inactivity, with those furthest from the labour market often facing the most significant skills barriers.

Table B.5: Highest qualifications of the economically inactive compared to the general working age population in EMCCA			
Highest qualification	General working age population 16 to 64 years old	Economically inactive 16 to 64 years old (excluding students): unemployed	Economically inactive 16 to 64 years old (excluding students): Do not want a job
No qualifications	6.2%	16.8%	37.2%

²⁸ ONS Annual Population Survey (2025)

Level 1 and entry-level qualifications	3.5%	16.2%	11%
Level 2	18%	18.5%	10.2%
Level 3 qualifications	23.1%	16.3%	9.8%
Level 4 qualifications or above	44%	24.9%	20%
Apprenticeships and other qualifications	4.2%	7.2%	11.9%

Source: Annual Population Survey, ONS (2025)

Some groups are small but face deep and overlapping disadvantages.

While small in number, certain groups across EMCCA face complex and compounded barriers to employment, requiring more tailored and sustained support.

- **Homeless people:** There were an estimated 146 rough sleepers²⁹ within EMCCA in autumn 2024, with a growth of 53.7% in the estimated total between 2015 and 2024 which exceeds the growth rate experienced across England (30.8%). In addition to rough sleepers, there are also homeless people within EMCCA living in temporary or insecure accommodation. Homelessness often intersects with poor mental or physical health, substance misuse, and contact with the criminal justice system, creating multiple barriers to employment.
- **People with convictions:** Between April 2023 and March 2024, 21.4% of people released from custody in the East Midlands region were in employment six months later, slightly below the national (England and Wales) average of 23.9%. The region recorded a higher unemployment rate among ex-offenders (59.0%) compared to nationally (53.0%).
- **Care leavers:** Care leavers represent a small group but face some of the steepest barriers to employment. Nationally, almost 39% of care leavers aged 19–21 are NEET, compared with 13% of all young people of that age³⁰. Lower qualification levels, housing instability and poor mental health are common barriers, and those who do enter work are more likely to be in temporary or low-paid roles³¹. These challenges are reflected locally, with stakeholders highlighting the need for tailored and intensive support to enable care leavers across EMCCA to make successful transitions into secure jobs and training.
- **Refugee and Asylum seekers:** Many refugees arrive with valuable experience and qualification but face significant employment barriers including language difficulties, non-recognition of qualifications or previous non-UK based experience, lack of familiarity with the UK job market norms or trauma-related health challenges. Key refugee groups within EMCCA highlighted within the consultation include Ukrainians and those from Hong Kong. **Table B.6** shows the available local authority level data on refugee groups.³²

²⁹ Rough sleeping snapshot in England: autumn 2024 (MHCLG, 2025)

³⁰ Children looked after in England including adoptions (Department for Education, 2024)

³¹ Care Leavers' Transition into the Labour Market in England (Rees Centre, University of Oxford, 2023)

³² Data on the location of Hong Kong immigrants utilising the British National (Overseas) visa scheme is not publicly available.

Table B.6: Refugee groups (stock), up to 31st March 2025

	Homes for Ukraine (arrivals)	Afghan Resettlement Programme (total population)	Supported Asylum (total population)	All 3 pathways (total)	Percentage of total population (%)
Derby	257	29	1,288	1,574	0.6%
Derbyshire	1,768	63	357	2,188	0.3%
Nottingham	392	196	1,533	2,121	0.6%
Nottinghamshire	1,475	200	507	2,182	0.3%
Total	3,892	488	3,685	8,065	0.4%

Source: Home Office and Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2025³³

B3 Demand-side

There are currently not enough job vacancies to achieve an 80% employment rate.

Online job adverts across the EMCCA area have fluctuated over the past four years. In May 2025, there were 39,415 postings³⁴. This represents a decline of 13.5% compared to May 2021, highlighting a modest overall decline in demand across the period. However, there has been a slight recovery over the past twelve months, with growth of 4.1% since May 2024.

Figure B.11: Online job posting vacancies within EMCCA



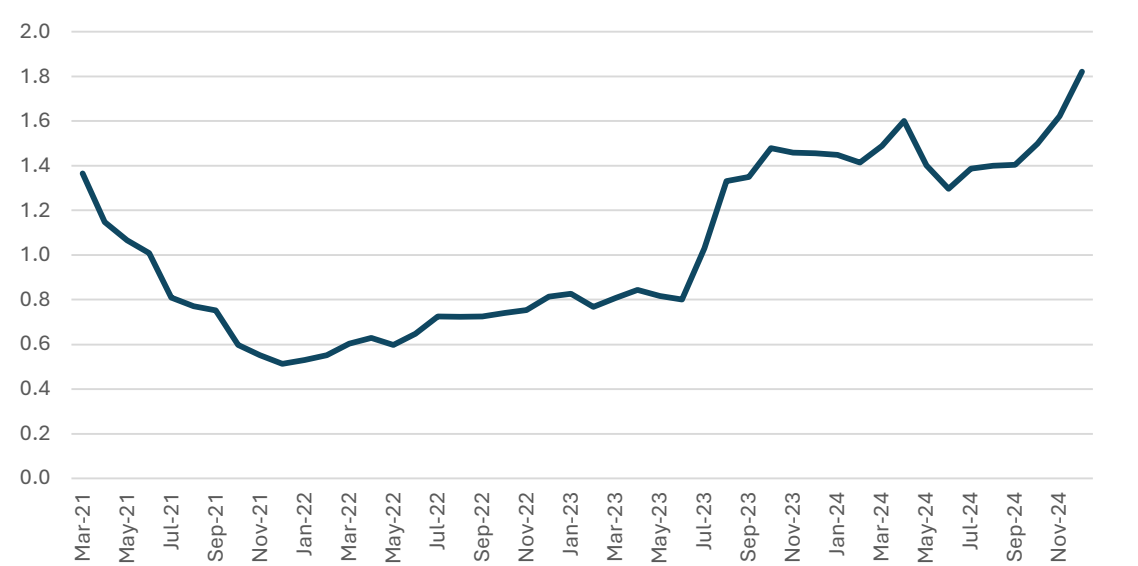
Source: Labour demand volumes by Standard Occupation Classification (SOC 2020), ONS (2025)

³³ Home Office and Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (2025). <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/immigration-system-statistics-regional-and-local-authority-data>

³⁴ ONS Labour demand volumes by Standard Occupation Classification (SOC 2020), UK (2025)

Declining vacancies have contributed to a post-pandemic peak in the number of unemployed people per vacancy, with 1.8 unemployed people per vacancy within EMCCA.

Figure B.12: The number of unemployed people per vacancy within EMCCA



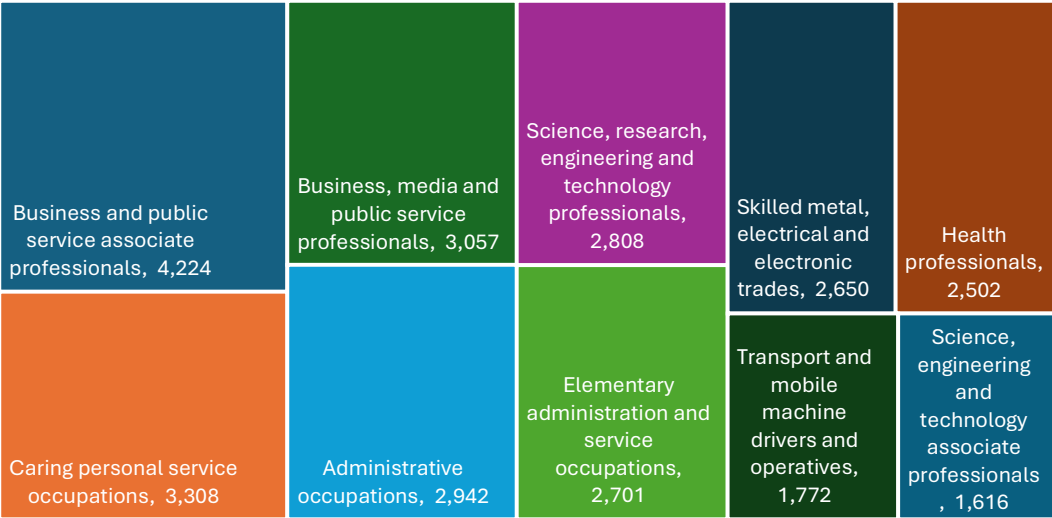
Source: Annual Population Survey (2025)

Caring and administrative occupations were the most common entry-level occupation type.

In terms of occupational groups, professional roles made up the largest share of postings (24.7%), followed by associate professional (19.4%) across business, health, public service, research and teaching. Skilled trades accounted for 10.7% of job postings, caring, leisure, and other service occupations accounted for 9.4%, with administrative roles accounting for 8.7% of jobs posted online within EMCCA.

An analysis of occupations shows caring, administrative and service occupations are the most common occupations which have jobs available. This highlights the opportunity for these roles to provide some of the opportunities for people looking for jobs or new entrants to the labour market. However, some of the job posting occupational groups (e.g. business and public service roles) typically require higher qualifications or prior experience, meaning they are not as suitable for new entrants to the labour market.

Figure B.13: Job postings by top 10 occupational groups



Source: Labour demand volumes by Standard Occupation Classification (SOC 2020), ONS (2025). Other occupational groups not included in the top 10 totalled 10,248 job postings.

The most commonly advertised job titles are low-paid and low-skilled.

Analysis of the top 20 advertised job titles in the EMCCA area reveals a labour market dominated by low-wage, entry-level opportunities. Of the 20 most common job titles, 16 roles offered a median advertised salary below the national median wage and five roles paid below £25,000 per year.

Approximately 13,000 job postings were for roles that require minimal qualifications or experience, such as care assistants, cleaning roles and warehouse operatives. These roles are typically characterised by short training periods and limited progression pathways. A further 3,000 postings were for roles that require basic vocational certification, such as forklift drivers, HGV drivers and delivery drivers.

There was notable demand for medium-skilled roles, such as healthcare assistants³⁵, administrators and Special Education Needs (SEN) teaching assistants, that often require specific skills, training or sector experience, such as digital skills, communication and knowledge of SEN. These jobs tend to offer slightly higher pay compared to low-skilled jobs.

³⁵ Care assistants work in the community, care homes or domiciliary settings, focus on supporting individuals with day to day living activities. Health care assistants are more likely to be found in a clinical environment like hospital or GP surgeries, providing direct clinical support under the supervision of a nurse or doctor.

By comparison, high-skill and professional roles, such as primary teachers, quantity surveyors and project managers, represented a smaller portion of the total postings but are offered significantly higher average salaries.

Table B.7: Top 20 job titles in EMCCA

Job Titles	Unique Postings from Jul 2024 - Jun 2025	Median Annual Advertised Salary
Support Workers	3,680	£25,408
Teaching Assistants	3,157	£24,000
Care Assistants	2,569	£26,048
Cleaners	2,563	£25,024
Warehouse Operatives	1,390	£25,408
Administrators	1,223	£25,408
Health Care Assistants	1,196	£26,176
Forklift Drivers	1,133	£27,520
Primary Teachers	1,064	£42,944
HGV Class 1 Drivers	1,037	£36,224
Production Operatives	1,034	£25,728
Cover Supervisors	968	£24,128
SEN Teaching Assistants	960	£24,512
Quantity Surveyors	949	£54,912
Early Years Teachers	936	£26,048
Team Members	904	£24,576
Receptionists	890	£23,872
Delivery Drivers	882	£26,560
Project Managers	848	£52,608
Interpreters	835	£32,128

Source: Lightcast, 2025

Core soft and digital skills dominate demand.

The most frequently requested common skill requested by job postings was communication, appearing in over 75,000 job postings. This was followed by other soft skills such as management, customer service and detail oriented. While such skills are near-universal entry requirements, their prevalence partly reflects the way employers write job adverts. Despite high demand, many of the most sought-after skills were associated with relatively low salaries, such as customer service, detail-oriented and sales with median annual advertised salaries around £26,000-£28,000. By contrast, roles requiring more technical or more leadership skills offered significantly more, such as £47,000 for project management, £41,000 for leadership, £39,000 for auditing, £35,000 for teaching and £32,000 for planning and problem solving. Upskilling in soft as well as technical skills could unlock career progression across a range of sector.

The importance and high demand of soft skills align with findings within the Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire LSIP.³⁶ However, the LSIP also highlights significant unmet demand in digital and IT skills as one of the top five skills gaps. Employers frequently cited a need for basic IT proficiency, including the use of spreadsheets, email and bespoke software systems. The LSIP identified significant demand for digital literacy across all sectors. Despite the LSIPs findings,

³⁶ Derbyshire & Nottinghamshire LSIP | FSB Local Skills Initiative

digital skills are not in the Lightcast list, suggesting a potential under-reporting of digital requirements in recruitment advertising data³⁷.

Table B.8: Top 20 skills in EMCCA

Skills	Unique Postings from Jul 2024 - Jun 2025	Median Annual Advertised Salary
Communication	75,786	£29,120
Management	42,729	£33,472
Customer Service	36,375	£26,432
Detail Oriented	27,775	£27,200
Sales	23,986	£27,968
Teaching	23,468	£35,008
Leadership	20,296	£41,152
Planning	19,963	£35,008
Problem Solving	18,129	£32,448
Operations	17,703	£30,784
Organizational Skills	14,985	£27,968
English Language	14,974	£27,072
Interpersonal Communications	14,062	£30,400
Auditing	11,159	£39,104
Time Management	10,825	£27,840
Enthusiasm	10,480	£27,456
Project Management	10,437	£47,040
Self-Motivation	10,001	£29,504
Teamwork	9,847	£29,120
Finance	9,515	£32,448

Source: Lightcast, 2025

Various sectors provide opportunities for employment

The East Midlands economy is undergoing a period of transition, balancing its historic strengths in manufacturing and goods exports with the emergence of knowledge-intensive services and high-growth industries. The Local Growth Plan highlights both opportunities and challenges.

The East Midlands export economy is heavily dominated by goods, which accounted for 82.7% of total exports in 2022 (Figure 10). This reflects the region's historic strength in manufacturing and associated supply chains. While this specialisation has underpinned regional competitiveness, it also introduces vulnerability to external shocks and geopolitical risks.

The analysis shows that between 2012 and 2022, the proportion of businesses engaged in tradeable sectors declined from 57.5% to 54.9%. Over the same period, the service economy, although smaller in scale, has demonstrated steady growth. Notably, professional, scientific, and technical services grew by 22.5%, signalling increasing opportunities in knowledge-intensive service industries.

The Local Growth Plan (2025) categorises sector activity into principal, growth, and foundational sectors, reflecting their interconnected contributions to the region's economy:

³⁷ It could also be a methodological issue with digital skills being captured across skills categories.

- **Principal Sectors:** Aggregates and minerals, manufacturing, construction, defence, and professional services. These sectors have historically driven economic strength, supported innovation, and contributed significantly to the national economy.
- **Growth Sectors:** Identified as offering the greatest opportunity for expansion are:
 - Clean Energy
 - Advanced Transport Manufacturing
 - Medtech & Life Sciences
 - Digital Creative & Cultural
 - Visitor Economy

These sectors build on existing strengths while opening pathways for nationally significant growth.

- **Foundational Sectors:** Care, health, and place-based services remain essential for inclusive growth, ensuring that economic progress translates into improved wellbeing and quality of life for communities across the region.

Figure 10: Sector Analysis (Local Growth Plan)

Sector	Factors: Quantitative				Factors: Qualitative				Sector Status
	Gross Value Added (GVA) growth rate (2012-22)	Current Gross Value Added (GVA)	Employee Count Location Quotient (LQ)	Employment Growth Rate (2015-22)	Stakeholder Priorities	UK Industrial Strategy	EMCCA Spatial Plan	EMCCA LTP	
Clean Energy	n/a	£3.9 billion (22.3% of UK)	1.6	n/a	Included	Included	Included	Included	Growth
Advanced Transport Manufacturing	n/a	£720.7 million (4.8% of UK)	0.6*	n/a	Included	Included	Included	Included	Growth
MedTech and Life Sciences	23.8%	£7.9 billion (9% of UK)	1.5	24.5%	Included	Included	Included	Included	Growth
Creative (including Digital) and Cultural	37.8%	£2.8 billion (3.9% of UK)	0.9	25%	Included	Included	Included	Not included	Growth
Visitor Economy	15%	£2.5 billion (4.1% of UK)	1.4	48.1%	Included	Not included	Included	Included	Growth
Manufacturing/Industry	10%	£9.5 billion (4.8% of UK)	1.2	-10.3%	Advanced Manufacturing Included	Advanced Manufacturing	Not included	Included	Principal
Construction	8.9%	£3.1 billion (1.1% of UK)	1.4	16.7%	Not included	Not included	Not included	Not included	Principal
Aggregates, Minerals and Agriculture	-7.4%	£4.11 billion (8.8% of UK)	1.6	-7.7%	Included	Not included	Agriculture+ Mining included	Minerals included	Principal
Defence	-0.7%	£2.1 billion (2.2% of UK)	0.9	13.5%	Not included	Defence Included	Not included	Not included	Principal
Professional Services	0.7%	£2.3 billion (1.3% of UK)	0.5	16.7%	Not included	Included	Not included	Not included	Principal

Source: Local Growth Plan 2025

The evidence suggests that while principal sectors such as manufacturing, aggregates, and construction continue to underpin regional stability, their recent performance trends (including GVA stagnation or employment decline) signal the need for diversification.

Growth sectors, particularly Clean Energy, Advanced Transport Manufacturing, MedTech & Life Sciences, Digital Creative & Cultural, and the Visitor Economy, offer pathways for nationally significant expansion and resilience. To secure long-term prosperity, the East Midlands must leverage its strengths, address gaps in strategic recognition (notably in the Visitor Economy and principal industries) and support foundational sectors like care and health to ensure economic progress translates into improved quality of life across all communities.

Too many young people are not work-ready.

Employers flagged low work readiness among school leavers as a widespread issue within the LSIP's engagement. This included concerns about communication, professional conduct, punctuality and understanding workplace expectations. Employers' surveys raised concern about a lack of real-world experience and professionalism among young entrants into the labour market. This echoes national findings that 44% of employers felt young people leaving school, college or university were not work-ready.³⁸

Not enough employers are using best practice methods for inclusive hiring.

Consultations with constituent council and providers of employment support services highlighted that local employers could be doing more in terms of inclusive recruitment and employment practices. Most employers aspire to be more inclusive but require guidance and support on developing their capacity and capability to do so.

These consultation findings are supported by national-level data from the Recruitment and Employment Confederation (REC).³⁹ The 2024 survey found:

- 55% of employers did not specifically state an interest in diverse candidates in their job adverts up from 48% in 2022.
- 44% did not use wording specifically designed to be inclusive in their job adverts, compared with 33% in 2022.
- 75% did not use name blind CV submissions, compared to 53% in 2022.
- 62% said they did not use diverse interview panels compared with 53% in 2022.

These findings suggest that inclusive recruitment findings are not yet embedded in many workplaces. While acute labour and skills shortages are concentrated in specific sectors, there is still a strong case for employers across the economy to adopt more inclusive approaches, both to widen their talent pool and to reflect best practice. The Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire LSIP also highlights this need, recommending targeted resources and short courses to support small businesses to improve recruitment practices. Further research is required to test the extent of this challenge among employers within EMCCA.

B4 Barriers to progression and employment

This section examines the underlying factors influencing both the availability of jobs and people's ability to access them. Data analysis, consultation with stakeholders and a survey of residents have highlighted a wide range of barriers to employment faced by residents within the EMCCA area. These barriers are driven by a mixture of overlapping supply side and demand side challenges that prevent individuals from gaining, sustaining and progressing in meaningful, well-paid employment.

These barriers can be grouped using the following core themes and are set out below.

3.4.1 Personal

- **Self-motivation:** An individual needs to have the ambition and drive to find and sustain employment, or the determination to find support that can help them. A resident panel

³⁸ CBI (2019) Getting young people 'work ready': [cbi_work-readiness.pdf](#)

³⁹ Recruitment and Employment Confederation (2024): [Employers losing focus on inclusive hiring, suggests annual survey of employers :: The REC](#)

survey found that nearly 40% of unemployed residents rated their motivation to work as 5 out of 10 or less. Local authorities have developed schemes, such as the Derby Promise, to boost self-motivation of economically inactive customers.

- **Lack of confidence or self-esteem:** An individual may not feel confident in their ability to apply for or retain a job. In a panel survey of EMCCA residents, this barrier was cited by 17% of currently unemployed responders. Confidence is likely to play a larger role among young people with less experience in applying for jobs. The annual Youth Voice Census in 2024 found that over 40% of young people do not think they have the skills and knowledge to write a good CV or application form.⁴⁰
- **Managing care responsibilities:** 45,000 working-age adults in EMCCA are economically inactive due to caring responsibilities, 38,000 of which are women.
- **Language barriers:** In 2021 an estimated 30,000 people do not speak English or speak English well within the EMCCA⁴¹. This is a particular challenge for immigrant and refugee communities.
- **Financial constraints:** Inability to afford the childcare, transport, clothing or training required to access available jobs creates further barriers to employment, as highlighted in the LSIP.

3.4.2 Health

- **Mental health challenges:** Mental and behavioural disorders are the most commonly named reason provided on Fit Notes issued by GPs in the EMCCA area⁴², with over 12,000 registered in 2024.
- **Physical health and disability challenges:** Musculoskeletal disorders, cardiovascular disease, and chronic respiratory diseases were all highlighted as concerns within the Joint Strategic Need Assessments and make up over 50% of all PIP claimants within EMCCA⁴³, highlighting the additional support required to live and work with these conditions.
- **Interviews highlighted that there is not full knowledge of employment services from GPs and health professionals which could** limit their ability to refer or advocate for work as part of recovery.
- **Lack of suitable job pathways for those with fluctuating or long-term health conditions:** Many advertised vacancies (e.g. in care, warehouses) are physically or mentally demanding and not suitable for individuals with long-term or fluctuating conditions.

3.4.3 Employment system shortfalls

- **Rigid benefits system:** Fear of sanctions or losing entitlements discourages engagement with training or job search. The threat or experience of benefits sanctions created unmitigated distress and anxiety that any minor slip-up or misunderstanding could lead the individual to have life-altering negative consequences due to the pausing or removal of benefit payments.⁴⁴ Local authorities are working with DWP to create skill

⁴⁰ [2024-Youth-Voice-Census-Report-1-1.pdf](#)

⁴¹ Census 2021; Population of 2,229,600 times 1.3% of the population who report not being able to speak English or English well.

⁴² NHS England Digital (2025). Fit Notes Issued by GP Practices, England, December 2024. Available at: <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/fit-notes-issued-by-gp-practices/december-2024#>

⁴³ DWP PIP Cases with Entitlement from 2019 (2025)

⁴⁴ Why benefit sanction are both ineffective and harmful (2018): [Why benefit sanctions are both ineffective and harmful - British Politics and Policy at LSE](#)

and experience building opportunities that do not impact benefits, such as the Derby City Journey to Work programme.

- **Difficulty accessing support:** Individuals often do not know what employment help is available or how to access it. Research from the charity Sense found that this barrier is particularly felt by disabled people.⁴⁵
- **Lack of knowledge of local career opportunities and how to access them:** An Individual may not be aware of local career opportunities or perceive them to be unattainable.
- **Missed early interventions:** Limited coordination between services means people often fall through the cracks, particularly those with emerging health or financial challenges.

3.4.4 Skills-based barriers

- **Low qualifications:** 37% of EMCCA's economically inactive adults have no qualifications, limiting their access to most employment.
- **Lack of digital skills:** Individuals lack the foundational digital skills required by employers for a range of job levels, including entry. The East Midlands region was found to have the highest share of residents who can't compete foundation-level digital skills (21%)⁴⁶
- **Skills-mismatch:** The jobs available are not aligned with the individual's skill set.
- **Lack of work experience:** Individuals, in particular young people, lack a basic understanding of employment practices. This is highlighted in the concerns raised within the LSIP that school-leavers are not work-ready.
- **Difficulty understanding the skills landscape:** Both residents and employers find it difficult to navigate the current skills provision landscape.⁴⁷

3.4.5 Employer Practices

- **Limited inclusive practice:** Employers vary in their knowledge, confidence and resources to offer inclusive hiring and support. This particularly affects groups such as people with disabilities or caring responsibilities. Local Authorities have begun to tackle this challenge, such as using short term funding such as UKSPF and Youth Guarantee funds to work with employers to improve inclusive employment practices.
- **Lack of job flexibility:** Many jobs lack the hours, working conditions, or location flexibility required by those with caring duties or health needs. According to Carers UK, 53% of employed carers said flexible work helps them balance paid employment and care giving, and 21% have left work due to lack of employer support.⁴⁸
- **Inaccessible recruitment processes:** Online-only systems, inflexible interview formats, or jargon-heavy job adverts can exclude capable applicants.
- **Lack of progression pathways:** There are limited pathways to higher-skilled or better-paid work from the available entry-level roles.
- **Shortage of 'high-quality' jobs:** The Inclusive Growth Commission's residents' survey found that only 22% of people said it is easy to find a good quality job in their local area,

⁴⁵ [Research on the employment support available to people with complex disabilities - Sense](#)

⁴⁶ [Which UK regions are the best and worst for basic digital skills?](#)

⁴⁷ Inclusive Growth Commission (2025) Interim Report: [Inclusive-Growth-Commission-Interim-Report.pdf](#)

⁴⁸ Carers UK (2023) Carers' employment rights today, tomorrow and in the future: [Carers' employment rights today, tomorrow and in the future | Carers UK](#)

with particular challenges outside of cities.⁴⁹ This corresponds with the earlier analysis on the lack of high-salary job roles in the top 20 advertised titles.

- **AI has the potential to make many administrative entry-level roles redundant:** Entry-level administrative roles, often stepping stones in employment, can be eroded through the increased use of AI to automate and simplify procedures. Early research indicates a trend of declining entry-level roles since 2022.⁵⁰ This requires monitoring as to the scale of impact.

3.4.6 Infrastructure and systemic barriers

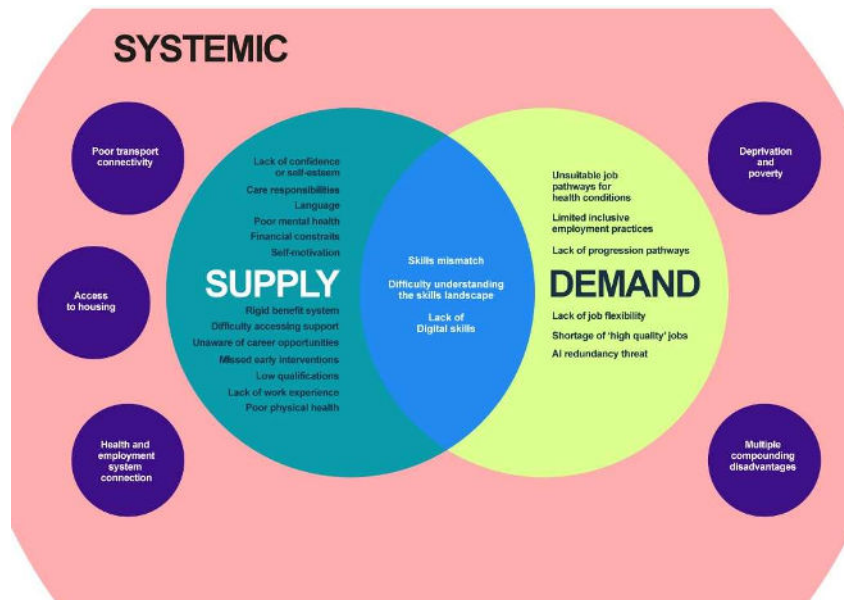
- **Poor transport connectivity:** Limited public transport and last-mile connections restrict access to jobs, especially outside of urban centres. Local Government Association research suggests a 1% improvement in public transport journey times could support a 0.91% reduction in employment deprivation among those either looking for work or who would look for work with the right support.⁵¹ This has the greatest impact on rural communities in Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire. Overall, around 20% of residents surveyed found it somewhat or very difficult to travel to employment or training opportunities. Highlighting significant barriers for some.
- **Deprivation and poverty:** High levels of deprivation in parts of Derby, Nottingham and Mansfield correlate with worse health, housing and employment outcomes.
- **Access to housing:** Cost, insecurity or poor housing conditions can affect job-seeking capacity and reliability.
- **Multiple compounding disadvantages:** Often, these barriers overlap, creating multiple systemic hurdles. This phenomenon was highlighted in the Pathways to Work Commission findings. Our EMCCA resident survey finds that unemployed responders on average are affected by 2.1 barriers.

⁴⁹Inclusive Growth Commission (2025) Interim Report: [Inclusive-Growth-Commission-Interim-Report.pdf](#)

⁵⁰McKinsey and Company (2025) [Not yet productive, already disruptive: AI's uneven effects on UK jobs and talent | McKinsey & Company](#)

⁵¹Local Government Association (2024) [How local transport infrastructure influences economic inclusion | Local Government Association](#)

Figure B.14: Barriers to a fully functioning labour market



Source: AMION (2025)

Taken together, these factors show that many residents face not just one but several overlapping barriers, combining transport, housing, health and skills challenges. Addressing them will require joined-up action across local services and employers, since no single intervention will be sufficient to unlock participation in the labour market.

Appendix C: Provision Mapping

National

In addition to support provided by Job Centre Plus staff (including specialist staff such as Disability Employment Advisors and Family Community Work Coaches) to job seekers, there are several strands of support provided by JCP which includes.

RESTART

Restart was launched in 2021 under the previous Governments Back to Work plan following the Covid 19 Pandemic. The programme aimed to help long term unemployed Universal Credit claimants into sustainable employment by assisting them to gain the skills and confidence needed to re-enter the workforce successfully. Up to 12 months of support can be provided.

Contract Package Areas (CPAs) for delivery were commissioned, with the East Midlands sitting in Contract Package area 2b which includes South and West Yorkshire and Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire. The contract is held by Maximus UK Services Limited and either delivered direct by them or subcontracted to Reed in Partnership or the Growth Company.

Latest data for CPA 2b shows that from July 2021 to April 2025 there were 110,000 referrals to Restart which converted to 92,000 starts. This is a conversion rate of 84% which was one of the lowest across all CPA. Actual job outcomes stand at 20,000 against an agreed tender performance level of 25,000.

Access to Work

Access to Work is a publicly funded employment support programme which provides financial support to help individuals (and employers) to start working, stay in work or move into self-employment. The fund can pay for a range of practical changes and support they may help an individual enter the labour market for the first time or stay there if they develop a condition. For example, it can pay for specialist equipment, extra travel costs if they are unable to use public transport, a job coach or sign language interpreter. The waiting list for Access to Work is currently a significant barrier with employability support providers looking for alternative ways of funding individuals so that they can access employment. The Pathways to Work Green Paper is currently consulting on the future role of Access to Work.

Flexible Support Fund

The Flexible Support Fund is a discretionary fund used by JCP to further support job seekers into employment. Approx £70m was spent nationally through this fund in 2023/24⁵² In some cases this can be used to fund items that job seekers maybe struggling with financially (childcare, travel etc.) but it can also fund specialised training such as Fork Lift Truck Training or specialist support for specific cohorts.

Regional

Adult Skills Fund (ASF)

As of 1st August 2025, EMCCA receives c£50m in devolved Adult Skills Fund (ASF) for delivery across the 2025/26 academic year. ASF, previously known as the Adult Education Budget (AEB),

⁵² [DWP confirms Flexible Support Fund expenditure of almost £70 million for 2023/2024 – Advice Network](#)

primarily funds legal entitlements for residents aged 19+, regulated qualifications and tailored learning. Legal entitlements are ‘benchmark’ qualifications individuals often need to progress into further education or employment, for example maths and English qualifications and first full Level 2 and 3 qualifications.

ASF provides a stable, local fund for the delivery of skills and employment provision designed to support residents to progress into, or within work; or equip them for an apprenticeship or other learning. An example of this is the Pre Employment Training element of a Sector Based Work Academy Programme (SWAP) which is delivered in conjunction with JCP and prepares individuals for a guaranteed interview for a real live vacancy with a local employer (on completion of the pre-employment training and work placement).

The East Midlands Combined County Authority ASF Strategic Skills Plan⁵³, outlines the ambitions for the fund moving forward which include:

- Increasing productivity for the East Midlands through the delivery of high-quality skills provision which enables residents to enter the labour market or secure in-work progression.
- Reducing inequality, promoting social mobility and allowing people to achieve their potential.
- Working in alignment with other public funding sources to offer coherent routes to upskilling and greater prosperity across the region

For the 2025/25 academic year (the first year ASF will be devolved to EMCCA) commissioning activity has focused on getting to know and understand the provider base and maintain stability with very little policy changes to what can be delivered. Commissioning will be a split of ‘grant’ contracts to ‘in region’ FE Colleges and Local Authorities and commercially procured ‘contract for services’ from other learning providers.

. As part of the commissioning process grant providers and perspective ‘contract for services’ providers were asked to complete an ‘outcome agreement’ detailing how their provision meets the priorities of the Strategic Skills Plan and what and where they plan to deliver. These will give the CA a better understanding of ‘what’ is being delivered and ‘where, but it is likely that the full impact of ASF won’t be known for several years as the CA gets to grips with the fund, introduces outcome and destination tracking and looks at policy changes. It does however represent a significant funding vehicle for the CA and partners to support residents’ progression into and closer to the labour market.

Skills Bootcamps & Free Courses for Jobs

In addition to ASF and as part of the delegated legacy from the D2N2 LEP, EMCCA now also has control of spend in relation to Skills Bootcamps and Free Courses for Jobs. Skills Bootcamps are short (max 16 weeks) interventions to allow individuals (both employed and unemployed) to develop technical skills linked to an occupation to either move into work, change career or take on additional responsibilities. Previously the delivery of these was managed by the D2N2 LEP. Since moving over to EMCCA, the focus is on aligning these with key sectors in the area to support growth and progression.

⁵³ [EMCCA-ASF-STRATEGIC-SKILLS-PLAN_FINAL.pdf](#)

Free Course for Jobs (FCFJ) are a list of Level 3 courses selected by Government that support national priorities on up-skilling and re-skilling, there is also now a local list of qualifications that support EMCCA priorities but only 50% of the FCFJ allocation can be spent on these qualifications. Access to these courses is free for residents aged 19+ who earn less than £25,000 or who are unemployed. In EMCCA the CA have increased this earning thresholds to allow more residents to access the fund and support up-skilling.

UKSPF

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) replaced EU Structural Funds that the UK was no longer entitled too after it left the EU. UKSPF is a commitment from Government to level up all parts of the UK and consists of both capital and revenue funds to be spent on several key themes which includes People and Skills.

UKSPF was due to close in March 2025 but a transitional year was introduced for 2025/26 ahead of a new model of funding from 2026/27. EMCCA's allocation of this fund for 2025/26 is £25.17m (which is lower than the previous year when £38.96m was allocated to the region). As the fund holder EMCCA has allocated UKSPF to each individual authority in the East Midlands (2 cities and 15 districts and boroughs) to allow for local, placed based decisions in terms of what it should be spent on.

In total £4.45m was allocated to People and Skills across the authorities with a focus on funding activities that:

- support pathways to and access the benefits of economic participation and reduce barriers to work.
- support adults to acquire the necessary skills they need to adapt to changing employer needs, from those newly entering employment through to retraining more skilled workers in their careers.
- support young people leaving education and training to be ready to succeed in the labour market.
- promote and build the skills base needed to support the clean energy economy.
- Specific projects include a Skills Festival in the Amber Valley, a Skills Audit in Bassetlaw, a Future Skills Development Fund in Chesterfield, an Essential Skills Grant Scheme in Nottingham and an Alternative Education Programme in Newark and Sherwood. The Development of the Derby Promise which includes Derby Dream Fest and Journey 2 Work Programmes.

There are several outcome indicators projects are required to report against, which includes outputs related to receiving support, gaining new skills and moving towards employment. The table below summaries the collective output target

Output	Collective Target
Number of economically inactive people engaging with keyworker support services	2,814
Number of people participating in adult numeracy provision	519
Number of adults participating in maths qualifications and courses up to, and including, Level 2 equivalent (numerical value)	111
Number of people reached	822,759
Number of people receiving support to gain employment	1,937
Number of people receiving support to sustain employment	492

Number of people retraining	303
Number of people supported to access basic skills courses	1,602
Number of people supported to participate in education	749
Number of people in employment, including self-employment, following support	649
Number of people sustaining employment for 6 months	211
Number of people in education/training following support	589
Number of people with basic skills following support	1,339
People gaining a qualification or completing a course following support	1,043
Number of adults achieving maths qualifications up to, and including, Level 2 equivalent	68
No. of people reporting increased employability through development of interpersonal skills funded by UKSPF	1,820

UKSPF reporting cycles as stipulated by MHCLG are at 6- and 12-months intervals. April-September 2025 data will be requested in October 2025 in advance of EMCAA submitting to MHCLG at the end of Oct.

All UKSPF monies must be spent by 31st March 2026. A new fund is set to replace it but there have been no details from Government on what this will look like and if funding allocations will remain.

Youth Guarantee Trailblazer

EMCCA was selected by Government as one of the eight areas to trailblaze the new Youth Guarantee. The Youth Guarantee was a pledge by Labour that they would 'establish a youth guarantee of access to training, an apprenticeship or support to find work for all young people aged 18-24'.

As part of the trailblazer, EMCCA were awarded approx. £4.9m for delivery from April 2025- March 2026 to test new ways of supporting young people into training by bringing together and enhancing existing programmes. The focus is on young people aged 18-21 but some elements of the programme may also support young people aged 16-17 at risk of becoming NEET at 18.

Projects were clustered around three key themes of

1. Transition Support

- a. Objective: Improve the transition from FE College based education to employment (900-1,200 young people to be provided with support)
 - i. FE Empowering Futures Programme, focused on underrepresented and disadvantaged groups where ill health is a key reason for being NEET. Support will include mentors, careers advice and tailored support
 - ii. FE Flexible Learning Programmes, 8–10-week intensive programme with support from a key worker, building confidence providing careers advice etc.

2. Tailored Support

- a. Objective: Address the barriers faced by marginalised young people through tailored interventions with a targeted approach in different parts of the region (approx. 1200 young people provided with support and 300 teaching and support staff accessing mental health training)

-
- i. Personal Development Programme (Nottingham City and Derby) wellbeing and employability support for young people from workless households
 - ii. Supporting young people with mental health needs (Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire) specialist mental health training for teaching and support staff, peer workers for young people and individual transition meetings
 - iii. Supporting leavers and young people with SEND (Derby) targeted engagement and wraparound support with structured employment pathways for young people in deprived areas

3. Employer Participation

- a. Objective: Strengthen employer engagement and create inclusive recruitment pathways for young job seekers
 - i. Opportunities online platform, expand existing digital resources in Nottinghamshire to link young people to job listings, training and support
 - ii. Piloting the Good Employment Charter (Nottingham City), support SMEs implement inclusive hiring practices and boost workplace diversity

Approval and contracts from Government for delivery of this programme have been delayed and as such EMCCA and delivery partners have only just entered the mobilisation period (reducing delivery by 3 months). Funding post March 2026 is still uncertain however proposals for year 2 funding are being requested for consideration.

Connected Futures

Connected Futures is an in-depth research project seeking to identify the system and issues around employment for young people with Learning Disabilities (LD) and/or Autism Spectrum Conditions (ASC). It considers preparation for work, as well as securing employment and career progression. Funded by The Youth Futures Foundation it is a partnership between EMCCA, Nottinghamshire County Council, Derbyshire County Council and DEBP.

Following Phase 1 of Connected Futures, EMCCA have now secured funds for Phase 2 which will see the development of a system where young people with Learning Difficulties/ and or Autism Spectrum Disorders actively participate in and inform the decision-making process, enabling improvements to regional processes and increasing their ability to secure and progress in employment.

Connect to Work

Connect to Work forms a key part of the Governments Get Britain Working Strategy. It replaces what was previously known as Universal Support and will support residents across England and Wales who are disabled, have a health condition and people with complex barriers to employment to find sustainable employment.

Connect to Work will be a voluntary, high fidelity Supported Employment Programme which connects work, health and skills support. The service will use both models of Supported Employment, Individual Placement and Support (IPS) and Supported Employment Quality Framework (SEQF) focused on the 'place, train, maintain' model used in both Primary and Secondary health.

Funding for Connect to Work is to be distributed to 43 Accountable Bodies, in the East Midlands this is EMCCA. Once fully rolled out, it is expected that in the East Midlands up to 4,000 residents annually will access the service and a budget allocation of £13m per year has been given.

Accountable Bodies are required to submit a delivery plan for the service in their local area, EMMCAs is currently in the final stages of approval and initial market engagement has commenced for a planned procurement in September 2025.

Local

In addition to national and regional programmes, there are several bespoke programmes that have been commissioned at a local level by a range of commissioners, including DWP, DHSC, Local Authorities, the ICB and NHS, to respond to identified local need. Examples of this are given below.

Working Well East Midlands

The Individuals Placement and Support in Primary Care (IPSPC), also known locally as Working Well East Midlands was commissioned by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC). It supports residents in Nottingham City, Nottinghamshire County and Derby City Broxtowe, Gedling and Rushcliffe who are either in employment or unemployed, aged 18+, have a mental and/or physical health condition or disability (this can be self-diagnosed) and are registered with a GP surgery, either move into work or stay in employment.

Dedicated employment specialists offer one to one support to help them move into employment or stay in work, providing guidance on managing debt, accessing benefits and maintaining their wellbeing. Support continues once in work. Unemployed residents can access up to 12 months of support and those in work 4 months. Employers can also receive access free training health advice and employee benefits to support them to keep their workforce healthy.

Community Connectors

Community Connectors is run by Derbyshire County Council and is a team of experienced and highly trained staff who support residents who have a learning disability and/or autism to access opportunities in their local community, including employment.

Support is available for up to 12 weeks and is focused on the development of employability skills and work experience tasters, but Connectors can also support individuals to access college and adult education courses as well as supported employment opportunities within Derbyshire County Council.

The Connectors also support individuals to develop social networks, linking them into groups and clubs and helping them to form friendships.

Individuals aged 14+ who are in transition or those aged 16+ who have a diagnosed learning disability and/or autism and live in Derbyshire are eligible for support.

New Path to Employment- Individualised Placement Support (IPS)

The New Path to Employment, IPS programme is fully integrated within the Nottingham Recovery Network and Clean Slate to deliver IPS to individuals accessing structured drug and alcohol treatment in Nottingham City.

Delivered by Framework and Double Impact, a team of employment specialists deliver a 'work first' intervention that focuses on securing competitive paid employment that is preference led by the individual.

Evidence suggests that employment can support recover and reduce the severity and frequency of impact. Once in work, ongoing support is limitless.

Employer engagement is vital, and staff work hard to build relationships with employers with the aim of generating employment opportunities. IPS can also break down stigma around working with people who are accessing drug and alcohol treatment.

Youth Hubs

The Youth Employment Support Derbyshire (YES) project is a joint initiative between Derbyshire County Council (DCC) and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to provide a gateway for young people across Derbyshire to access a range of support services and move into employment or training.

The Youth Hub provides a one stop shop for young people aged 16-24 to access training, careers advice and guidance that is an alternative space away from JCP.

Derby Promise

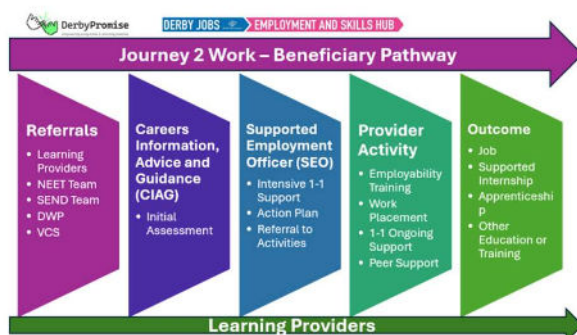
Through the Derby Promise established as part of the City Partnership and Derby City Anchor group, employers in Derby have coalesced to establish a bridge between the industrial growth in Derby and the surrounding areas to residents of all ages.

The strategy looks to open opportunities through innovative schemes such as Journey 2 Work programme, with a particular focus on young people with SEND, care experienced young people and residents across Derby particularly those in receipt of benefits and in deprived areas.,

Through direct engagement with employers, Derby City Council have built a package of innovative sector led engagement events, reaching across the age ranges from early years through to retirement; specialist careers guidance; job fairs; pathways into work including apprenticeships, the Journey 2 Work and supported internships.

The Local Authority Employment and Skills team work with employers, the DWP, and beneficiaries to ensure that beneficiaries secure work and can sustain their employment.

The “into work” programmes are delivered in partnership with local learning providers, developing specialist skills across a range of industries, and underpin the Youth Guarantee and NEET 16-18 initiatives. See below diagram showing beneficiary pathway.



Case Study

17-year-old Oliver from Matlock, Derbyshire was referred to the Youth Hub by Employment and Education Officer Yvonne Cano-Flatt in June 2023 as he needed support in finding a suitable apprenticeship.

Hub Worker Sandra liaised with Oliver over the phone to establish what qualifications Oliver had achieved at school and college and what work experience he had gained, and she also established what his career goals were.

Oliver had participated in part time work for Pro Paving in Matlock to gain some relevant employability skills and this work experience confirmed that he would like to work in a practical role, in either construction or groundwork.

In July, Sandra helped Oliver to complete his CV and then signposted him to a temporary construction job via Coyle Recruitment Agency and helped him to register his interest and upload his CV together with a covering letter. Sandra also advised Oliver about the 10 day 'Step into Construction' course with DBC Training, and this course enabled him to gain the necessary knowledge to gain his CSCS card, a L1 Health and Safety in Construction, the L1 Employability Skills qualification, the L2 Understanding Retrofit qualification, and he gained an understanding of the skills needed to succeed at interview and how to step into employment.

Sandra then signposted Oliver to a Landscape Maintenance apprenticeship opportunity with Vertas in August on the National Apprenticeship website and offered to help him with the application process, and after a successful interview, where he could put all his recent training into practice, his mum Michelle contacted Sandra to let her know that he had been offered the position!

Employers

Although limited there are some established programmes aimed at supporting employers to either support their current workforce or adopt more inclusive, flexible ways of working to accommodate individuals who may require some additional support in the workplace. This includes

Disability Employer Engagement Derbyshire (DEED)

Delivered by Derbyshire County Council this programme offers support to businesses and organisations across Derbyshire empowering them to employ people with disabilities or long-term health conditions.

This includes advice around best practice of employing or re-training a person with a disability, supporting employers to access funding for reasonable adjustments, providing guidance on modifying working arrangements and networking opportunities to share best practice with other employers

Local Skills Improvement Plan Recruitment & Retention Packs

As part of the work developed through the Local Skills Improvement Plan, the Federation for Small Businesses (FSB) has commissioned the development of a Recruitment and Retention pack aimed at addressing challenges faced by employers in broadening out their candidate

search and highlighting barriers faced to employment by marginalised groups and those furthest from the labour market.

These packs will be available in the Autumn of 2025.

Derbyshire All Age Carers Support Service (DAACSS)

DAACSS works with organisations of all sizes from across Derbyshire to help them retain staff who are at risk of leaving due to their caring responsibilities.

Employers can access free training, resources and ongoing support to understand that a 'one size fits all' approach isn't always practical, supporting them to embed support for carers into existing policies and develop a supportive approach that works for their business.

Appendix D: Methodological Approach

AMION Consulting was commissioned by the East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA) to support the development of the *Get East Midlands Working* plan. The aim was to create a locally grounded, evidence-informed, and action-oriented strategy to tackle economic inactivity and improve labour market outcomes across the region.

The Plan was developed using a multi-stage, mixed-method approach combining strategic review, qualitative insight gathering, community and stakeholder engagement, and the synthesis of emerging research. The key stages of the methodology are outlined below:

Strategic and document review

A comprehensive review of national and regional strategy documents, including devolution agreements was taken. This includes local and EMCCA strategies and plans as well as the Get Britain Working White Paper, existing employment support offers, and key policies relating to skills, health, and inclusive growth. This ensured alignment with wider policy objectives.

Information proforma

A structured pro forma was issued to delivery partners to gather consistent information on current employment, skills, and health-related provision. This included details on target groups, delivery models, funding, and referral routes. Completed submissions were followed by one-to-one conversations with selected partners to clarify responses and explore delivery in more depth. This process helped map the existing system, identify gaps and overlaps, and ensure The Plan's recommendations were grounded in operational reality.

Stakeholder Interviews

Over 30 one-to-one interviews were conducted with a broad range of stakeholders including local authority leads, Integrated Care Board (ICB) representatives, Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) leads, education and training providers, and business representatives. This phase was critical to understanding current delivery challenges, identifying gaps, and capturing diverse local perspectives.

Resident survey

A panel survey of over 250 residents across the East Midlands was conducted to gather insight into lived experience, perceptions of employment support, and barriers to work. While not fully representative, it marked an important step toward embedding resident voice into planning.

Workshops and partnership engagement

A series of in-person and virtual workshops were held with the Partnership and key stakeholders, including a cross-sector in-person session to explore potential actions and priorities. Separate webinars and workshops were convened for employer groups and VCSE (Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise) organisations to capture sector-specific insight and strengthen alignment.

Integration of ongoing research

The Plan drew upon ongoing and recent research across the region, including the Nottingham JSNA on Employment and Health, the Bassetlaw Skills Audit, the Local Growth Plan, and findings emerging from the East Midlands Inclusive Growth Commission.

Governance and refinement

The Plan was shaped through regular discussions with EMCCA's Partnership and governance forums, with iterative drafts refined based on stakeholder feedback.

This collaborative and iterative approach ensured The Plan reflects both local intelligence and strategic priorities, with a strong foundation for delivery, accountability, and future evolution.

Appendix E: Strategic Alignment

Table E.1: Strategic Alignment	
Strategy/ Policy	Relevance
National	
Invest 2035: The UK's Modern Industrial Strategy.	Focuses on long-term, infrastructure, innovation and productivity growth in eight high-potential sectors. In particular, it aligns with EMCCA's ambitions to transform the East Midlands into a high-growth, low-carbon region. It is crucial to create high-quality, high-paid jobs.
Plan to Make Work Pay	This policy improves work incentives through higher minimum wages, welfare reforms and childcare support. These measures underpin The Plan's aim to tackle economic inactivity.
Pathways to Work (Green Paper)	Benefit system reform to support long-term sick and disabled into work.
10-Year Health Plan for England	Embed illness prevention, workforce health and community care into health service provision.
Local	
EMCCA Corporate Plan	Sets ten objectives to improve residents' lives and regional development. Key overlaps with GEMWP include healthier lives, fairer opportunities, better transport, economic growth, better jobs, and skills for success.
Local Growth Plan	Aims for inclusive growth that benefits all residents. Focuses on workforce skills, high-growth sectors, place-based access (transport/digital), and reducing pay gaps while increasing the availability of secure, good-quality employment to residents.
Inclusive Growth Commission (ICG) (2025)	Sets ten objectives to accelerate growth, improve skills alignment, create better jobs, and progress toward net zero. Emphasises housing, connectivity, reducing inequality, and building an "opportunity escalator" for local talent.
East Midlands Investment Zone Strategy (2025)	Targets advanced manufacturing and green industries, boosting investment, jobs, and skills in key growth sectors.
Derby & Derbyshire Integrated Care Strategy (2023)	Built around "Start Well, Stay Well, Age/Die Well." Prioritises illness prevention, reducing health inequalities, and supporting working-age health to sustain employment.
Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Integrated Care Strategy (2023-2027)	Centred on prevention, equity, and integration, supporting social and economic development alongside health improvement.
East Midlands Local Skills Employment Plan (2023)	Strengthens the local skills system with a focus on digital, net-zero, transferable skills, system navigation, and addressing socio-economic conditions.
Mayor Claire's pledges (2024)	Commitments to back high streets, support local business investment, create jobs, and expand apprenticeships and skills opportunities.

Appendix F: Full Case Studies

Case Study 1: Working Well East Midlands

The Individuals Placement and Support in Primary Care (IPSPC), also known locally as Working Well East Midlands was commissioned Nottingham City Council and funded by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC). It supports residents in Derby, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire who are either in employment or unemployed, aged 18+, have a mental and/or physical health condition or disability (this can be self-diagnosed) and are registered with a GP surgery.



Dedicated employment specialists offer one to one support to help them move into employment or stay in work, providing guidance on managing debt, accessing benefits and maintaining their wellbeing. Support continues once in work. Unemployed residents can access up to 12 months of support and those in work 4 months. Employers can also access free training health advice and employee benefits to support them to keep their workforce healthy.

Case Study 2: Youth Hubs

The Youth Employment Support Derbyshire (YES) project is a partnership between Derbyshire County Council and the Department for Work and Pensions, offering young people aged 16–24 access to careers advice, training, and support through a dedicated Youth Hub. Designed as a friendly alternative to Jobcentre Plus, the Hub helps young people move into employment or further education.



In June 2023, 17-year-old Oliver from Matlock, Derbyshire was referred to the Youth Hub by Employment and Education Officer Yvonne Cano-Flatt as he needed support in finding a suitable apprenticeship. Hub Worker Sandra liaised with Oliver over the phone to establish what qualifications Oliver had achieved at school and college and what work experience he had gained, and she also established what his career goals were.

Oliver had participated in part time work for Pro Paving in Matlock to gain some relevant employability skills and this work experience confirmed that he would like to work in a practical role, in either construction or groundwork. In July, Sandra helped Oliver to complete his CV and then signposted him to a temporary construction job via Coyle Recruitment Agency and helped him to register his interest and upload his CV together with a covering letter. Sandra also advised Oliver about the 10 day 'Step into Construction' course with DBC Training, and this course enabled him to gain the necessary knowledge to gain his CSCS card, a L1 Health and Safety in Construction, the L1 Employability Skills qualification, the L2 Understanding Retrofit qualification, and he gained an understanding of the skills needed to succeed at interview and how to step into employment.

Sandra then signposted Oliver to a Landscape Maintenance apprenticeship opportunity with Vertas in August on the National Apprenticeship website and offered to help him with the application process, and after a successful interview, where he could put all his recent training into practice, his mum Michelle contacted Sandra to let her know that he had been offered the position.

Case Study 3: The Journey to Work (J2W) and Harry

The Journey to Work (J2W) Programme is designed to give young people a strong start to their careers through five weeks of meaningful work placements, 1-2-1 tailored support, and confidence building. In early 2025, Harry, a 20-year-old with autism, was referred to the programme by his DWP Work Coach.

Initially reserved and hesitant to engage, Harry gradually built trust and began opening up about his aspirations to Tuybia, the SEND Supported Employment Officer

Harry shared that he wanted to pursue an apprenticeship in Early Years education. To help him prepare, Tuybia referred him to Derby Business College (DBC), where he successfully completed a Level 1 qualification in Communication in Health and Social Care, Early Years, and Childcare. While this gave Harry a valuable foundation, he still lacked the practical experience needed to secure an apprenticeship. That's when Tuybia introduced him to the Derby City Council Journey to Work Programme, which offered two placements in Early Years settings. With support from both Tuybia and Hana, the J2W Business Engagement Manager, Harry applied, prepared for interview, and was offered a place at Little Angels Nursery St Andrews.

To ease the transition, Hana accompanied Harry to visit the nursery before his start date, helping him feel comfortable in his new environment. When the placement began in May 2025, Harry quickly thrived. Tuybia observed how engaged he was with the children, who responded warmly to him. The nursery manager praised Harry's contribution, saying: "If I had the budget, I would offer Harry a job." This validation was an important step in building Harry's confidence and proving his potential in a real workplace.

Following his success on J2W, Harry continued working with Tuybia and went on to secure a Level 1 Apprenticeship in Early Years at The Old Forge Nursery in Findern, where he is now employed. Reflecting on his journey, Harry said: "I am really pleased Tuybia spoke to me about the Journey to Work Programme and grateful for all her support. The Journey to Work gave me the skills and experience to get to where I wanted to be." His story demonstrates how coordinated, personalised support can transform aspirations into real employment outcomes.

Case Study 4: Greggs

As part of their commitment to inclusive hiring and community impact, Greggs has been working in partnership with New Path to Employment, Nottingham Recovery Network, and Clean Slate since early 2022 through their dedicated employability support programme, Fresh Start.

A recruitment advisor for community placements at Greggs reflected on the collaboration:

"I was invited to visit the Wellbeing Hub in Nottingham city centre, where I had the opportunity to meet individuals receiving support through various recovery and employment programmes. I was genuinely inspired; not only by the dedication and compassion of the support teams, but also by the determination and optimism of those in recovery. Their positivity about rebuilding their lives was incredibly moving."

The visit helped strengthen the relationship between Greggs and its community partners, reinforcing a shared vision of providing meaningful opportunities for those overcoming complex life challenges, including addiction and long-term unemployment.

"More recently, we've been referred a fantastic candidate who is currently in recovery. It's still early days, but we're excited about the potential. Through partnership working, we're able to offer a real fresh start not just a job, but a pathway to stability and self-worth."

This collaboration illustrates how businesses like Greggs can play a pivotal role in inclusive employment, offering hope and practical opportunities to individuals seeking to rebuild their lives, while also benefiting from a motivated and resilient workforce.



Appendix G: Inclusive Growth Commission Alignment

The Inclusive Growth Commission (IGC) aligns closely with the priorities articulated in the Get East Midlands Working Plan, reinforcing the shared ambition to create a labour market that is both accessible and progressive. Central to this alignment is the Opportunity Escalator concept, which mirrors the Plan's objective to enable people not only to step in to employment but also to step up into better-paid, higher-value roles. This approach recognises that meaningful, sustainable growth depends on long-term progression pathways and the development of skills that match the demands of a changing economy.

Both the IGC and the Get East Midlands Working Plan highlight the importance of economic growth from emerging and strategically significant sectors and sites. Their shared emphasis signals the need for coordinated investment, workforce development, and employer engagement to unlock these opportunities and build a resilient, future-facing economy.

The IGC stresses the foundational importance of care, health, and place, underscoring that improved wellbeing, robust infrastructure, and community resilience are essential for economic success. This perspective complements the Plan's call for integrated action on transport links, employer practices and integration of the system acknowledging that structural barriers (e.g. transport access) can prevent people from accessing opportunities even where jobs are available.

The Commission sets out several recommendations and observations on employment support, which align with the Get East Midlands Working Plan.

- **Pre-Employment Training.** The IGC emphasises scaling up pre-employment training through programmes like Skills Bootcamps and Sector-Based Work Academies, co-designed with employers to match local labour market needs. These are seen as essential for equipping individuals with sector-specific skills and improving employability, particularly for those with low or no qualifications. **The Plan notes the importance of education and training and looks to the future around employer co-design and impact.**
- **Integration.** It also supports delivering Youth Guarantee and Connect to Work programmes, integrating them with wraparound services such as health, financial, and transport support. This approach is intended to reduce youth unemployment and economic inactivity while complementing the East Midlands Youth Ambition initiative. **The Plan commits to delivering several current and future programmes alongside more integrated wraparound support (connected to health, financial, and transport assistance).**
- **Employer Practices and Good Work.** The IGC recommends promoting good employment standards through a regional Good Employment Charter, inspired by successful models like Greater Manchester's. This would define secure work, fair pay, inclusive recruitment, and effective people management as core principles, encouraging employers to adopt practices that improve retention, progression, and productivity. The IGC also highlights leveraging schemes such as Disability Confident to widen access for people with long-term health conditions or disabilities, embedding such standards into procurement and regional funding criteria to normalise inclusive hiring practices. **The Plan recognises the importance of inclusive recruitment and identifies a Good**

Employment Charter as one work stream to encourage fair pay, secure work, and inclusive recruitment.

- **Broader Employment Ecosystem.** The IGC stresses the importance of supported employment pathways, using data and drawing upon social finance, community-based enterprises and social enterprises. **The Plan identifies more evidence-based programme design, better data sharing and more engagement with VCSE and community groups.**