

JobsPlus: A Place-Based Model for Inclusive Employment Support

JobsPlus is a voluntary hyper-local, community-led employment programme delivered by Housing Associations across ten pilot sites. Adapted from an evidence-based US model, it embeds tailored support directly into social housing communities offering a place-based solution to tackling persistent labour market exclusion among underserved communities.

Features of the model:



On-site employment support: personalised support from employment advisors delivered in a community hub within or near to housing estates.



Community support for work: residents help shape the provision of support, local outreach and engagement to promote JobsPlus, through community champions.



Financial incentives: £400 Into Work Bonus for those who secure and maintain employment for two months.



Place-based saturation: open to all working-age residents in a defined geographical area.

This summary highlights findings from interviews, surveys and management data collected between July 2024 and March 2025. It reflects the early outcomes and implementation insights.

A focus on community



JobsPlus sites were selected to include: a mix of urban and rural areas; between 300 and 1000 households; most of the accommodation owned by housing associations;

and a relatively high proportion of households likely to have no-one in work. The pilot targets communities in most need of support, those with significant disadvantages and where residents are facing complex barriers to employment.

A focus on social housing



A substantial proportion of economically inactive adults in social housing are not engaged with employment support, despite residents being more likely to be disabled, lone

parents, or have low or no qualifications. This highlights a gap in how services reach and respond to these communities. Using social housing providers to pilot JobsPlus means that support can be targeted to the needs and opportunities of the local area and its residents.

Community Hubs: accessible integrated support embedded in local communities



Community hubs offer welcoming, local spaces where residents can engage with support services at their own pace, with the flexibility to drop in without a formal appointment, helping to remove common barriers like travel, childcare or accessibility needs.

As well as being a physical space where participants can meet their caseworker, the hubs provide a range of support, such as:

- Personal finance support, including help with budgeting and debt advice
- Mental health and wellbeing support
- Support with housing problems
- Job clubs
- Access to the internet for job searching
- As well as other services tailored to local needs

Participants describe hubs as:

“Friendly, informal and comfortable.”

“A lifeline. Somewhere to come, talk, and feel valued.”

Trust and dignity are central to this person-first approach.

Inclusive outreach: engagement that reflects the community

JobsPlus teams use culturally relevant, person-centred outreach to engage residents. Sites gave less prominence to “jobs” in their marketing, focusing on wellbeing, housing and voluntary support with no pressure to participate.



Community events:

Coffee mornings, craft sessions, and wellbeing fairs to introduce JobsPlus in a non-threatening way.



Zumba and boxing as a gateway:

Fitness and wellbeing sessions attract residents, starting conversations informally rather than promoting traditional job workshops.

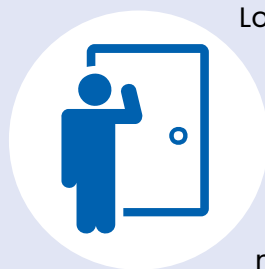
Hyper-local visibility:

Door knocking, eye-catching mailouts and newsletters to reach residents directly and build awareness.

“We don’t say ‘come to a CV workshop’, we say ‘come to Zumba’ and start a conversation.”

(Housing association staff)

Community champions: peer-led engagement that builds trust



Local residents are recruited as Community Champions to promote JobsPlus, build trust, and offer peer support. Having residents share their positive experience of engaging with the support makes the programme relatable and credible:

“Once you start explaining your story, where you come from, you resonate with people more than someone who’s always worked in an office.” (Community champion)

Champions lead door-knocking efforts, host informal activities, and share personal stories to help build a culture of work where employment feels achievable and valued, while building their own skills and confidence, amongst other activities.

Tailored, holistic support that builds confidence and readiness



JobsPlus caseworkers offer flexible, one-to-one support that goes beyond employment, some examples include:

- Job searching, CV writing, job applications, interview skills
- GP registration and access to health services
- Help obtaining ID and bank accounts
- Coaching techniques to build confidence and aspirations, helping participants see beyond immediate job needs

“She reminds me I’m good at what I do. She’s invested in my future, not just what she can do for me now.” (Participant)

“I didn’t think I’d ever do teacher training. I wouldn’t have contemplated it without her support.” (Participant)

Reaching groups typically underserved by mainstream employment services

JobsPlus engages residents often excluded from traditional employment programmes:



Out of work at registration: 81%

81%

Low qualifications: 28% had no or low qualifications



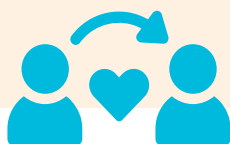
28%



Below average wellbeing: 48%

48%

Caring responsibilities: 36% had parental or caring duties



36%



Long-term health conditions: 28% with condition lasting 12+ months that reduced daily activity

28%

Young people: 25% were aged 16-24



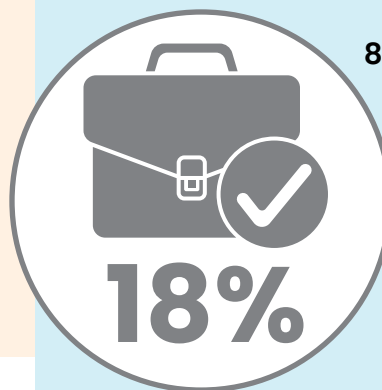
25%



Black ethnic minority background 27%

27%

Early Outcomes (July 2024 to March 2025)



83 (18%) participants moved into employment, of which 69 (15% of the total) were out of work at registration.

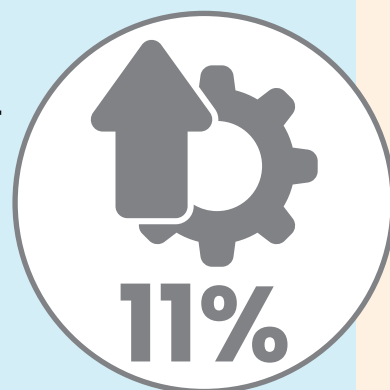
Over 50% of those who found work secured permanent contracts.



23%

23% undertook voluntary work to gain work experience, improve their skills and develop confidence.

11% improved their skills through undertaking a qualification.



Participants reported improved:

- mental health
- confidence
- social inclusion
- job readiness