

JobsPlus: A Place-Based Model for Inclusive Employment Support

Findings from 18 months of delivery (July 2024–January 2026)

JobsPlus is a voluntary, hyper-local employment programme delivered by Housing Associations across ten neighbourhoods. Adapted from an evidence-based US model, it embeds support directly into communities with a high proportion of social housing, offering a practical, community-led response to persistent labour market exclusion.

Features of the model:



On-site employment support:

Personalised, one-to-one support from employment advisors delivered in community hubs within or near 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:

A £400 Into Work Bonus for residents who secure and sustain employment for two months.



Place-based saturation:

Open to all working-age residents within a defined area, reducing stigma, widening access and fostering a culture of work.

This summary highlights findings from interviews, surveys and management data collected between July 2024 and January 2026.

A focus on community



JobsPlus sites were selected to provide a mix of local contexts with, between 300 and 1,000 households, high levels of housing association stock, and a relatively large proportion of

households likely to have no one in work. The programme targets communities facing significant disadvantage, where residents encounter complex barriers to employment.

A focus on social housing



A substantial proportion of economically inactive adults in social housing are not engaged with mainstream employment support, despite being more likely to have

disabilities, caring responsibilities or low or no qualifications. This highlights a gap in how services reach and respond to these communities. Using social landlords to deliver JobsPlus means that support can be targeted to the needs and opportunities of the local area and its residents.

Community hubs, accessible, integrated support



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. This removes barriers such as travel costs, childcare and access needs.

“I think the venue is nice. It’s well structured and it’s easy to get to... I love the environment and the people there. They are very lovely and really accommodating.” Participant

Hubs provide access to a range of support, both delivered by the JobsPlus team and in partnership with other local providers: such as education and skills providers, childcare and transport providers, and other social services and health providers.

Common support includes personal finance support, such as budgeting and debt advice; mental health and wellbeing support; help with housing issues; job clubs; and digital access for job searches.

Trust and dignity underpin this person-first approach.

Community champions: peer-led engagement that builds trust



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

“I saw how it helped me on my journey, and I wanted to pass that on and help them on that journey.” Community champion

Champions promote engagement by door-knocking, outreach, hosting activities, sharing personal stories, and fostering a culture where work feels attainable and valued. They also participate in governance, ensuring community voices influence decisions. For many champions, this role offers a valuable development opportunity, often serving as a stepping stone to paid employment by boosting confidence, gaining experience, and developing transferable skills.

Inclusive outreach that reflects the community



JobsPlus teams use culturally relevant, person-centred outreach to engage residents.

Many sites emphasise wellbeing, housing and voluntary support rather than leading with support for finding a job, helping to strengthen community cohesion.

Outreach is intentionally informal to start conversations, including coffee mornings, craft sessions, communal meals and fitness activities such as yoga, Zumba and boxing.

Hyper-local visibility is achieved through door-knocking, newsletters, mailouts, and a consistent presence in community spaces like food banks, schools, and faith settings. These methods help normalise JobsPlus as an integral part of daily community life and foster trust gradually.

“It’s not always about immediate referrals – it’s about being present, being known, and becoming part of everyday community life.”
Housing association staff

Tailored, holistic support that builds confidence and readiness



Caseworkers offer flexible, one-to-one support that extends well beyond job search activity, including support with:

- CVs and applications, career guidance
- access to health and wellbeing services
- practical support with finance, housing, or transport

Continuity with one caseworker builds trust, confidence, and motivation. Teams also work to join up support with local health services, including wellbeing programmes and, in some cases, bringing in private services such as counselling. Partnership working with GPs has been more mixed, reflecting wider system pressures, but remains an important area for development.

“The Jobcentre is very limited time – it’s very rushed. At least here I’ve got time and I’m able to really talk about what I actually need.”
Participant

Reaching residents underserved by mainstream programmes

JobsPlus engages groups often considered harder to reach including those who are economically inactive:



Out of work at registration: 81%

81%

No or low qualifications: 25%



25%



Claiming Universal Credit: 63%

63%

Low or very low wellbeing: 33%



33%



Parental or caring responsibilities: 39%

39%

Long-term health conditions affecting daily life: 33%



33%



Young people aged 16-24: 31%

31%

Black ethnic minority backgrounds: 24%



24%

Employment outcomes (July 2024 – December 2025)



27% of all participants have moved into employment or changed an existing role.

23% of those who achieved an employment outcome did so within one month of registering.

58% moved into permanent work, 30% entered non-permanent roles (including rolling/temporary, casual, and fixed-term positions), 2% became self-employed, and 9% had no employment type recorded.

Common sectors: retail/hospitality/creative (32%), health/education/social care (20%).

61% sustained employment for three months; 55% for six months.



45% qualified for the Into Work Bonus while 55% entered work but did not receive it. They either did not meet employment or earnings criteria, or the payment date was missing, leaving the cause uncertain.



Non-employment outcomes

Progress towards work was often non-linear, with participants gaining **confidence and wellbeing, volunteering and qualifications**, even during health or caring setbacks. Personalised support enabled them to manage fluctuations and keep moving forward.

"Some people come in completely demoralised. They might not be ready for work at all – but over time, you see confidence grow, routines build, they start to believe that work could be possible."

Housing association staff

Success factors

Strong outcomes were supported by **high quality, personalised one to one support** that addressed multiple barriers towards work.

"The support has to be individual, that's what makes it work."

Caseworker

Accessible community

hubs provided welcoming local spaces that reduced practical barriers and supported sustained engagement.

Flexible financial support, including discretionary assistance and the Into Work Bonus, helped remove practical barriers to employment and supported progression and job sustainability.

Community-led outreach, including community champions, local organisations, and informal networks, strengthened trust and reach among residents who are less likely to engage with mainstream services.

Joined up partnership working with local organisations, Jobcentre Plus and employers enabled flexible, holistic delivery and suitable progression routes.

Scalability

The pilot has promising potential to scale, with the core model showing transferability across different site contexts. Successful scaling into new areas would require:



Sustained investment:

Longer-term funding for time to build trust in communities, partnerships and continuous capability building.

Strong governance and partnerships:

Improve consistency in steering groups, partner roles, shared referral pathways and co-design, ensuring community insight and experience meaningfully inform the model.



Locally adapted community champion roles:

Tailoring to local contexts and existing community capacity.

Tailored, flexible resident support:

Personalised, holistic support for residents facing multiple or complex barriers.



Consistent delivery quality:

Manageable caseloads, skilled staff, strong community connections (trusted local relationships and partnerships), and employer engagement to sustain effective brokerage to ensure alignment with local labour market needs.