

Report to CABINET

Get Britain Working Health and Wealth Trailblazer

Portfolio Holder:

Councillor Fida Hussain, Cabinet Member for Enterprise

Officer Contact: Matthew Bulmer, Director of Education, Skills and Early Years

Report Author: Amanda Youlden, Post 16 & Skills Lead

16th June 2025

Reason for Decision

Request for funding provided by GMCA to participate in and deliver the Get Britain Working Health and Wealth Trailblazer be accepted and grant funding agreement be agreed.

Agreement from Cabinet to use the funds in the schemes proposed in this report.

Recommendations

Officer recommendation is that funding is accepted along with acceptance of the associated grant agreement.

Officer recommendation is that Cabinet members agree to use funds as set out in report.

Get Britain Working Health and Wealth Trailblazer

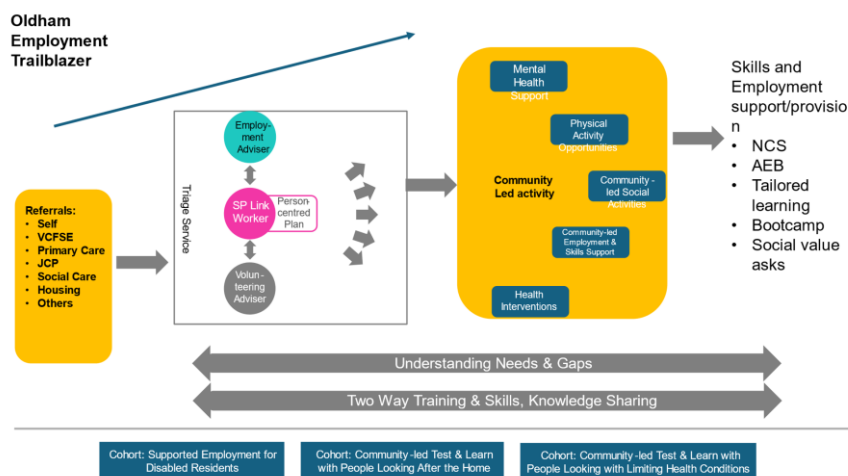
1 Background

- 1.1 On 26 November 2024, the Government published the Get Britain Working White Paper.
- 1.2 The white paper sets out the government's mission to kick-start growth and commitment to building an inclusive and thriving labour market where everyone has the opportunity of good work, and the chance to get on at work.
- 1.3 The government's proposed approach to their stated long-term ambition to achieve an 80% employment rate is based on 3 pillars;
 - a modern Industrial Strategy and Local Growth Plans – with a view to creating more good jobs in every part of the country
 - improving the quality and security of work through the Plan to Make Work Pay
 - bringing together skills and health to get more people into work and to get on in work
- 1.4 A key workstream to the Government's approach is trailblazers. GMCA, and therefore Oldham have been included in the Health and Wealth Trailblazer. A one-year projects designed to test innovative ways of supporting economically inactive residents onto a employment pathway and empowering local areas to shape an effective work, health and skills offer for local people, in line with the LiveWell model.
- 1.5 A person is economically inactive if they are out of work, not actively looking for work, not waiting to start a job, not in full time education, caring for family or retired.
- 1.6 Economic inactivity trailblazers are intended to primarily focus on supporting people who have significant health conditions and are economically inactive, but this may include people who face other disadvantages in the labour market (for example related to caring responsibilities, their age, low skills or long-term worklessness).
- 1.7 Economic inactivity trailblazers have three intended outcomes;
 1. Maximise the reach, effectiveness and impact of the range of existing services that could support people who are economically inactive to participate in the labour market, by transforming how partners and services work together locally
 2. Test new and innovative approaches to:
 - 2a. Identifying and engaging people who are economically inactive
 - 2b. Supporting people who are economically inactive to participate in the labour market
 3. Provide a platform for longer term systems reform, to deliver a coherent, joined-up local work, health and skills offer
- 1.8 GM are in a strong position to deliver the trailblazer due to the existing programmes delivered via WorkWell and the LiveWell model. The trailblazer provides us with additional opportunities to integrate employment services and VCFS sector under the LiveWell model seamlessly and with an period of test and learn to ensure interventions are supportive for Oldham residents.

2 Current Position

- 2.1 GMCA have confirmed Oldham will receive 6.6% of the £10 million allocated to GM for the Trailblazer. Following management and evaluation costs allocated to GMCA, funding of £566,475.

- 2.2 The trailblazer has set criteria for working with residents who are economically inactive and those further away from the labour market. Our aim is to prioritise residents who are economically inactive due to a long-term health condition or learning difficulties and disabilities and those who are looking after the home. These represent two of the most significant groups within our population who are economically inactive, and for whom there is not currently a comprehensive employment support offer.
- 2.3 Therefore, as part of this pilot, we will not be focusing on other groups of residents that are “economically inactive” as per the definition, for example, students or those residents who are retired.
- 2.4 The trailblazer provides us with an opportunity to build on our existing assets, knowledge, relationships with the VCFSE, and experience to test approaches to supporting these residents to progress towards employment.
- 2.5 Officers have developed a working group of key critical partners to develop the Oldham trailblazer offer. The small working group consists of LA officers, Public Health and Action Together colleagues, to maximise the expertise across the Borough the trailblazer covers.
- 2.6 We have designed the following five projects that we feel would be beneficial to Oldham residents:
- Community Led Employment Support – small grants to VCSF groups that are able to engage residents in activities that will prepare them for a pathway towards employment.
 - One Front Door – expansion of the WorkWell Vanguard model of co-locating social prescribers and employment advisors to encourage pathways to employment.
 - Volunteering into Employment – expansion of the project currently being undertaken by Action Together and Job Centre Plus
 - Making Employment Accessible – an intervention or supported employment for disabled residents that provides the time and high level of support that adults with learning and physical disabilities need to enter the workforce and maintain employment including employer support.
 - Get Oldham Healthy – funding to organisations that can provide activities that will reduce pressure on wider health services, promoting preventative measures to encourage better health outcomes. Targeting mental health, MSK and respiratory health outcomes.
- 2.7 We also have a proposed delivery model, but due to the nature of the trailblazer and limited implementation time, this model is subject to change if proposed way of working doesn't suit resident outcomes.



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- 2.8 The funding will be provided to Oldham Council via a grant from GMCA. The projects will require a number of actions to enable us to passport the funding to the appropriate bodies. Current thinking is as follows;
- Community Led Employment Support – funding is passported to Action Together who will arrange an allocation process to be confirmed. This will require Oldham Council to prepare a grant agreement between the Council and Action Together.
 - One Front Door – a modification to Public Health’s Social Prescribing Contract will be required to reflect the recruitment of two social prescribers to take part in the trailblazer. Get Oldham Working will provide the Employment Advisors, therefore the funding will be transferred to the Get Oldham Working budget.
 - Making Employment Accessible – funding is passported to Action Together who will arrange an allocation process to be confirmed. This will require Oldham Council to prepare a grant agreement between the Council and Action Together.
 - Get Oldham Healthy – a grant agreement will be arranged for the organisation chosen to deliver preventative health activity. Get Oldham Working will expand their GOW Therapy, therefore funding for this will be transferred to Get Oldham Working for this purpose.
- 2.9 As DWP are still working up the trailblazers, there are still some unknowns that need to be clarified. These are as follows:
- Monitoring arrangements
 - Data sharing
 - Evidence required for outputs and outcomes
 - Timeframe for LA grant agreements
- 2.10 The original timeframes for trailblazer’s were 1 April 2025 until 31 March 2026. There are delays to grant agreements from DWP to GMCA and therefore from GMCA to Oldham Council, therefore activity has not yet commenced. DWP and GMCA have confirmed there will be a hard stop to trailblazer activity on 31 March 2026.
- 2.11 GMCA have confirmed that funding is paid in arrears. This poses a risk to all involved in the Council as our intention to use the VCSF sector will require at least some of the allocated funding to be paid in advance. Please see finance comments for further details at 6.1 onwards.
- 2.12 The governance of the trailblazer will be set up and sit as part of the wider LiveWell model, to create synergy and ensure LiveWell principles are embedded.

3 **Options/Alternatives**

- 3.1 Option 1: We accept the funding and proposed projects up to 31 March 2026 and deliver the Economic Inactivity Trailblazer for Oldham residents. This option secures additional support for economically inactive residents and community organisations in Oldham that would not normally be available.
- 3.2 Option 2: We decline the funding and proposed projects up to 31 March 2026. This option effectively removes provision, resource and support for residents who are economically inactive, provides capacity to the VCSF sector and supports the Oldham Partnership to embed LiveWell.

4 **Preferred Option**

- 4.1 Option 1 is Officer’s preferred option.

5 **Consultation**

5.1 Consultation has taken place with Public Health teams and GMCA as required in order to design and progress the programme in line with the Live Well programme. There are no declared interests.

6 **Financial Implications**

6.1 This report is seeking approval to accept the Health and Wealth Trailblazer Grant via GMCA to deliver the proposed projects detailed in para 2.6.

6.2 The amount agreed for Oldham Council is up to £566,475 and will run from the date the agreement is signed until the 'hard stop' as at 31st March 2026.

6.3 The grant funding will be passported to appropriate bodies and Council departments as detailed in para 2.8 although the grant will be paid in arrears so would require the Council to provide the initial funding upfront.

6.4 In the absence of confirmed monitoring arrangements and the evidence required for outcomes and outputs there is a risk in proceeding with claims being processed in arrears, this will be mitigated by close financial monitoring in conjunction with the service once the requirements are clear

Catherine Dunkerley - Accountant

7 **Legal Implications**

7.1 It is important that the terms of the grant agreement supplied by the GMCA is complied with in order to avoid any potential clawback and therefore there should be sufficient supervision with the providers to OMBC to make sure that they are compliant with the terms of the Grant agreements between OMBC and them. For example, the agreement between the Council and Action together. There needs to be clarity as soon as possible in relation to the unknowns from the DWP, i.e Data sharing, monitoring arrangements, evidence required for outcomes and outputs, timeframe of LA grant agreements. This information needs to be established before grant agreements can be finalised.

Is the recruitment of two social prescribers contingent on the grant funding, will they be permanent recruitment, what happens when the grant funding ends as there is a hard stop date of 31st march 2026, could this potentially have an impact on the recruitment of the social prescribers. Any recruitment undertaken needs to be done so in conjunction with HR colleagues to make sure all policies and procedures are complied with.

(Alex Bougatef Interim Borough Solicitor)

8 **Equality Impact, including implications for Children and Young People**

8.1 Yes

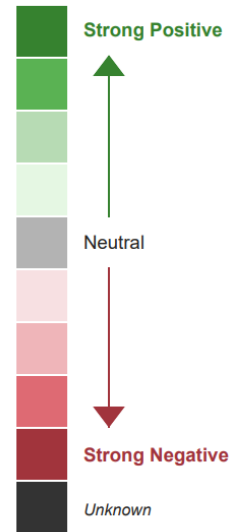
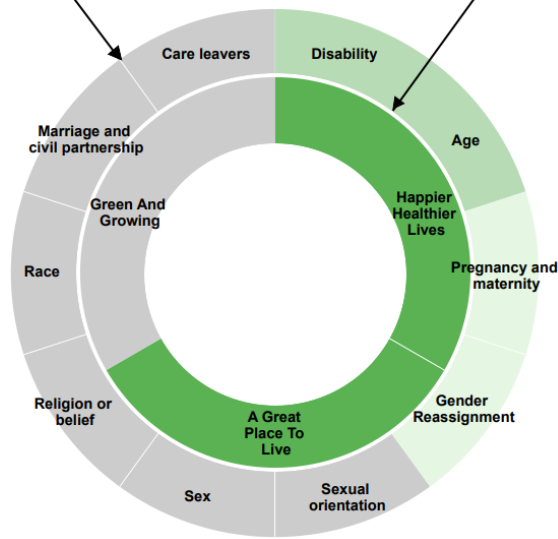
Economic Inactivity Trailblazer

completed/last updated by Amanda Youlden on 10/04/2025

Portfolio
Education and Skills
Directorate
People
Service/Team
Education, Skills and Early Years
Is this IA related to a Budget Reduction proposal? <input type="checkbox"/> No

Equality Characteristics

Our Mission



9 Key Decision

9.1 Yes

10 Key Decision Reference

11.1 N/A

12 Background Papers

12.1 N/A

13 Appendices

13.1 N/A