

Economic Inactivity Trailblazer– Healthy Working Life Community Grants Programme

1. Programme Overview

The Kirklees Employment and Skills “Healthy Working Life Community Grants Programme” is funded by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) via the West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) Economic Inactivity Trailblazer. The programme forms part of the wider Get Britain Working initiative, which aims to reduce economic inactivity by integrating local health, employment, and skills support.

Employment Kirklees and The Kirklees Trailblazer (Healthy Working Life) programmes are a key part of the place-based infrastructure linking health and employment services. Strengthening this system is essential for designing and delivering innovative, integrated support that meets the needs of residents with complex barriers.

The HWL Community Grants Programme will support VCSE organisations, grassroots groups and local delivery providers to pilot innovative, community-based interventions that help economically inactive residents begin their journey towards improved wellbeing, skills development, and employment.

The HWL community grants model will support individuals to remove barriers to progressing towards employment with delivery aligned with an Employment Kirklees service reaching those disengaged with mainstream services or who may need a more innovative approach to engagement.

2. Strategic Context: The Economic Inactivity Trailblazer

The Trailblazer focuses on reducing the number of working-age people who are economically inactive, particularly those reporting health conditions.

The aim of this fund is to support residents who are currently ‘**economically inactive**’ to make a clear and sustained transition to become ‘**economically active**’ during the timescales of this fund. This includes helping individuals move into employment or begin actively seeking work by providing the tailored support, skills development, and guidance they need to progress confidently from inactivity into active participation in the labour market.

Kirklees Council across Kirklees has developed place-specific plans that:

- Respond to local labour market needs
- Strengthen peer networks across VCSE organisations, employers, and people with lived experience
- Improve integration between health, employment, and skills services
- Ensure Employment programmes are accessible to all, including those not economically inactive

3. Target Cohorts

Trailblazer funding must specifically support people who are economically inactive (people who are not currently working or looking for work).

Primary Trailblazer Cohort

Economically inactive residents, particularly those with health conditions or disabilities, including:

- Young people (18+), especially those in deprived wards
- Older workers with low skills or in physically demanding roles (e.g., caring, machine operatives, elementary occupations)
- People with caring responsibilities
- Ex-offenders
- People experiencing homelessness
- Residents who are “seldom heard”, including those classed as long-term sick
- People from ethnically diverse communities disproportionately affected by ill health

Additional Priority Groups

- Women
- People with physical, mental, or learning disabilities
- People aged 50+

4. Rationale for VCSE Involvement

The longer someone is out of paid work, the more barriers they face and the more their wellbeing and quality of life can deteriorate. For some individuals, paid employment may be several years away—or may not be possible—but improving wellbeing is essential to reducing inequalities in healthy life expectancy.

VCSE organisations are often best placed to:

- Build trust and long-term relationships
- Engage residents who are furthest from the labour market
- Provide holistic, person-centred support
- Deliver hyperlocal, culturally competent interventions
- Join up health, wellbeing, skills, and employment support
- The Trailblazer VCSE element aims to strengthen this role and ensure the sector is embedded within the wider employment and health ecosystem.

5. What the Programme Will Fund

The programme will support pre-employment and wellbeing-focused activities that help residents take early steps towards improved health, confidence, skills, and employability. We encourage such organisations working in health and wellbeing and those working in employment support to collaborate to deliver more joined up schemes. Activities may include:

- Engagement activities focused on improving quality of life
- Intensive wraparound support
- Creative health pathways
- Integration with other Trailblazer and Accelerator activities
- Co-location of health services in VCSE settings
- Tailored learning, volunteering, and community-based skills development

Activities should take place in non-pressurised learning contexts where people understand participants needs and treat participants equally, thereby increasing their confidence and self-esteem and inspiring them to take the first steps into accessing support in safe and trusted environments.

It should motivate and progress participants to grow in confidence, ambition, resilience and skills. Activities should also connect residents with supportive community networks as they progress towards and into other skills development activities, further learning, volunteering and employment.

Interested applicants must also demonstrate a clear willingness to work collaboratively with Employment and Skills services within Kirklees, including inviting service representatives to appropriate sessions to discuss participant next steps and, where relevant, to deliver employability support, enabling direct engagement with participant groups.

6. Funding Available

- Grants available: £3,000 to £10,000 for single organisations.
- Grants up to £20,000 for joint applications / partnerships.
- Funding decisions will be made by a panel including Kirklees Employment & Skills Officers, Council officers from other services and voluntary sector representatives.

The fund is expected to be oversubscribed. Not all eligible applications will be funded. Projects already funded through other sources cannot be supported, to avoid double funding. We also cannot fund projects which are already supported under an existing agreement either with Kirklees Council or another funding body unless the proposal can clearly demonstrate upscaling of an existing successful project.

7. Required Outputs and Outcomes

Projects must contribute to the VCSE Trailblazer High-Level Outcomes

- Improved health and wellbeing
- Progression into adult education, skills training, employment support, or work
- Improved integration of work and health services at neighbourhood level

Projects must contribute to at least **one** of the VCSE Trailblazer high-level outcomes and **preferably** demonstrate impact across two or more.

It is envisaged:

- each participant will complete the registration and EQ5D 5L questionnaire.

- 25% of participants will complete a 2nd EQ5D 5L questionnaire.
- participants will make progress towards further study, health, skills or employment programmes

Standardised paperwork and support will be provided. *Please see **appendix 1** in the FAQ's for the registration form, EQ5D 5L questionnaire and where applicable exit forms that will need to be completed.* This is a **minimum requirement** of the funding. Any organisations interested in applying must complete these forms with participants and submit to the Council.

Applicants will be required to keep participant journey / learning plans / progress records. These records must be made available to the Council and/or the funding body for audit and compliance checks.

Applicants will be required to submit completed claim form(s) to the Council, which will include progress report, evidence of financial spend, output and outcomes evidence, case studies and qualitative feedback to the Council.

8. Assessment Criteria & Award

Applications are reviewed by Panels made up of representatives from Kirklees Employment and Skills partnership, Council Officers alongside Third Sector Leaders.

Applications will be assessed and awarded on:

- Alignment with programme priorities and eligibility
- Clarity of project design
- Demonstrated need
- Ability to deliver outputs and outcomes
- Value for money and appropriate costing including any match funding
- Evidence of organisational capacity
- Clear outline of progression including any alignment with Employment Kirklees provision

Please note: Not all eligible bids will be successful as this Fund is expected to be over-subscribed.

Eligibility checks take place when a bid arrives, and some may be declined at this stage if they do not meet the criteria for the fund or all the questions are not completed.

9. Application Process

All organisations must be registered on the Kirklees Grant Access Point (GAP) and must have a valid GAP score. TSL Kirklees can support any organisations who are not yet GAP registered.

All interested applicants must complete the application form and return to: Trailblazer@kirklees.gov.uk by the closing date below.

10. Key Dates

- Applications close: **17:00 Hours, Friday 31st July 2026**
- Panel Meet August 2026
- Decisions communicated: W/C 7th September
- Project implementation meetings: W/C 14th September
- Project **latest** start deadline: 1st October 2026
- First payment (up to 50%) released upon confirmation of project start
- Mid-project update: December 2026*
- Final report: March 2027*
- Second payment released subject to satisfactory performance
- At least one monitoring visit will take place during delivery

**Dates for reporting will be negotiated with projects subject to commencement date and duration of project*

11. Further Information

- Please review the FAQ for additional guidance
- Contact: Trailblazer@kirklees.gov.uk