

GET OXFORDSHIRE WORKING PLAN



OXFORDSHIRE
COUNTY COUNCIL



AGENDA

1. Overview
2. Labour market analysis
3. Drivers and causes
4. Levers and systems changes



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CONTEXT



HM Government

Get Britain Working

CP 1191

- Published November 2024
- Outlines the government's proposals to address **economic inactivity and unemployment**
- Six key issues:
 1. Too many people are **excluded from the labour market**
 2. Too many young **people leave school without essential skills** or access to further learning
 3. Too many people are stuck in **insecure, poor quality and low-paying work**
 4. Too many **women who care for their families** experience challenges staying in and progressing through work
 5. Too many **employers cannot fill their vacancies** due to labour and skills shortages
 6. there is **too great a disparity in labour market outcomes** between different places and for different groups of people



OVERVIEW

- Every place in England will produce a Local Get Britain Working Plan, aimed at **tackling economic inactivity and promoting in-work progression**
 - The UK definition of economic inactivity is “people not in employment who have not been seeking work within the last 4 weeks and/or are unable to start work within the next 2 weeks”
- In Oxfordshire, this will be known as the **Get Oxfordshire Working Plan** (GOWP)
- Local areas are expected to take a **whole-system approach**, engaging with partners across government, health, education, and employers
- Two sprints:
 - Initial summary of proposals to DWP required by **27th June 2025**, signed off by the relevant ICB and Jobcentre Plus (done)
 - Initial plans covering inactivity completed and published by **October 2025** (on track)



OPPORTUNITY

- The GOWP is an opportunity to **bring together partners and key stakeholders** to understand and tackle the root causes of economic inactivity across the county
- While government's requirements are clear, given the relatively small scale of economic inactivity in the county, it is incumbent on us to **take a uniquely Oxfordshire approach**
- It is an opportunity to take a “whole systems” approach and **a single view of the individuals and communities** who are furthest from the labour market
- This will enable partners and key stakeholders to **better collaborate and deliver better outcomes** for those that need them most
- More than that, it is an opportunity to look at **the drivers of and solutions to inequality** – drawing together our work on economic development, public health, education, and our commitments to being a Marmot County and a County of Sanctuary



DEVELOPING THE GOWP

By October, we need to develop a plan – approved by partners – that sets out:

- details of the **governance processes** related to sign-off and how the partnership have and will continue to be involved
- detail of how **wider stakeholders** have and will continue to be engaged
- analysis of key **local labour market challenges** and drivers for different groups of people across the economy, ensuring collective agreement on these key local issues
- a clear plan of action for how partners will work together to **develop support and services that address local priorities**, improve local outcome indicators in line with Get Britain Working outcome metrics
- an **overview of the current landscape of support** (for individuals and employers) and the differing responsibilities and contributions of different stakeholders
- **actions for the next 12-24 months** and steps towards achieving longer-term objectives

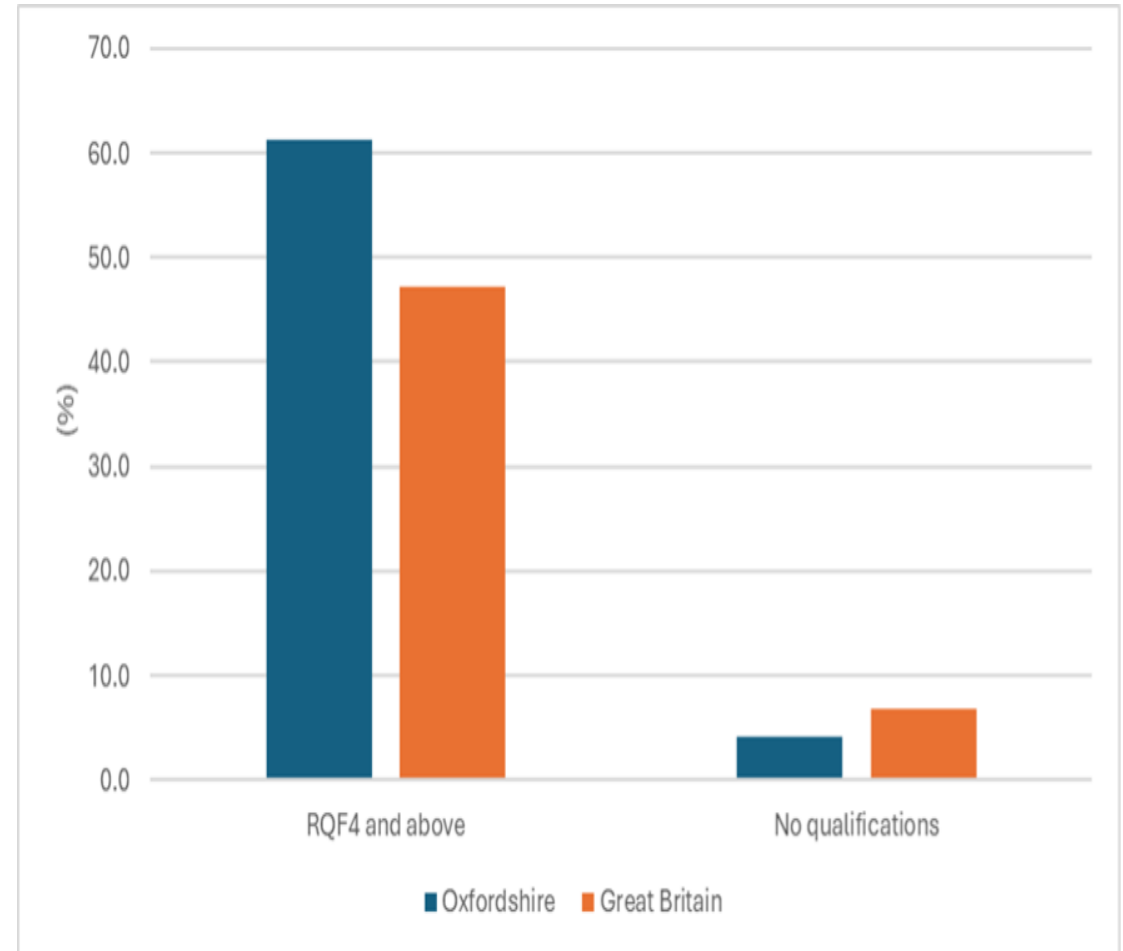
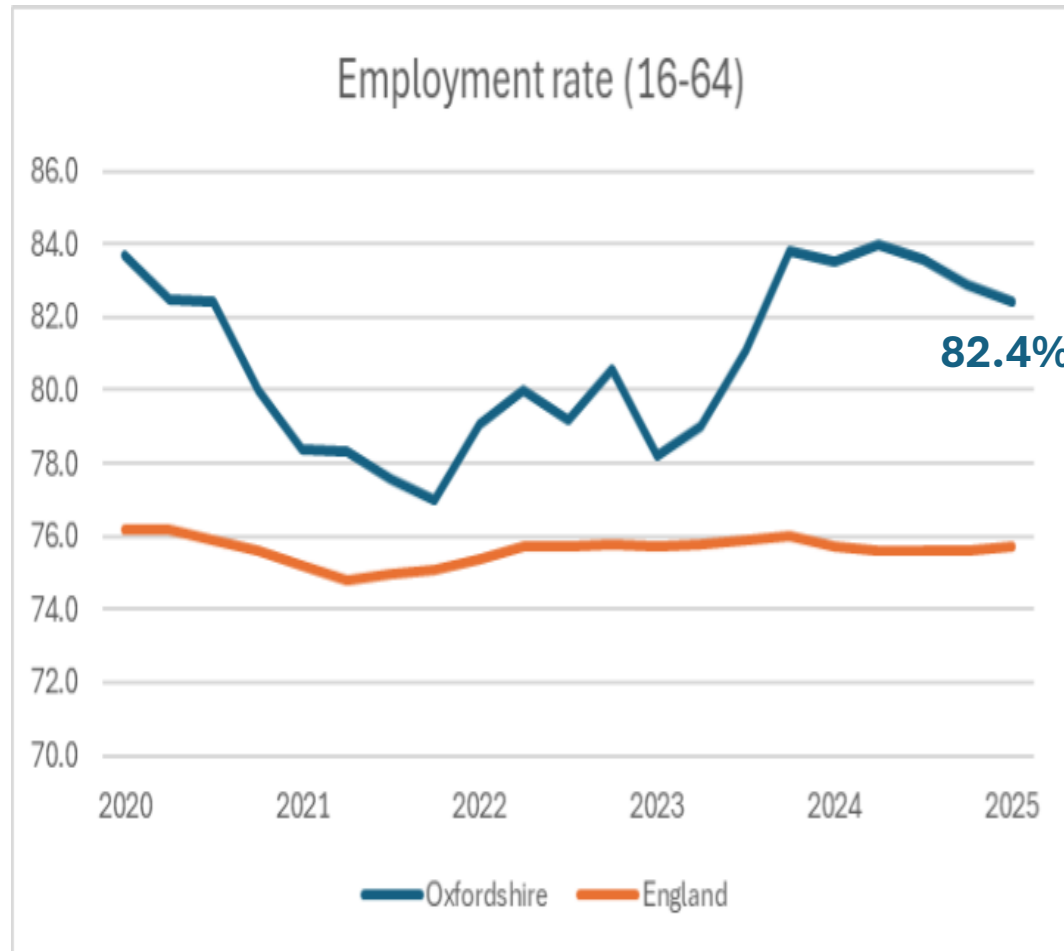


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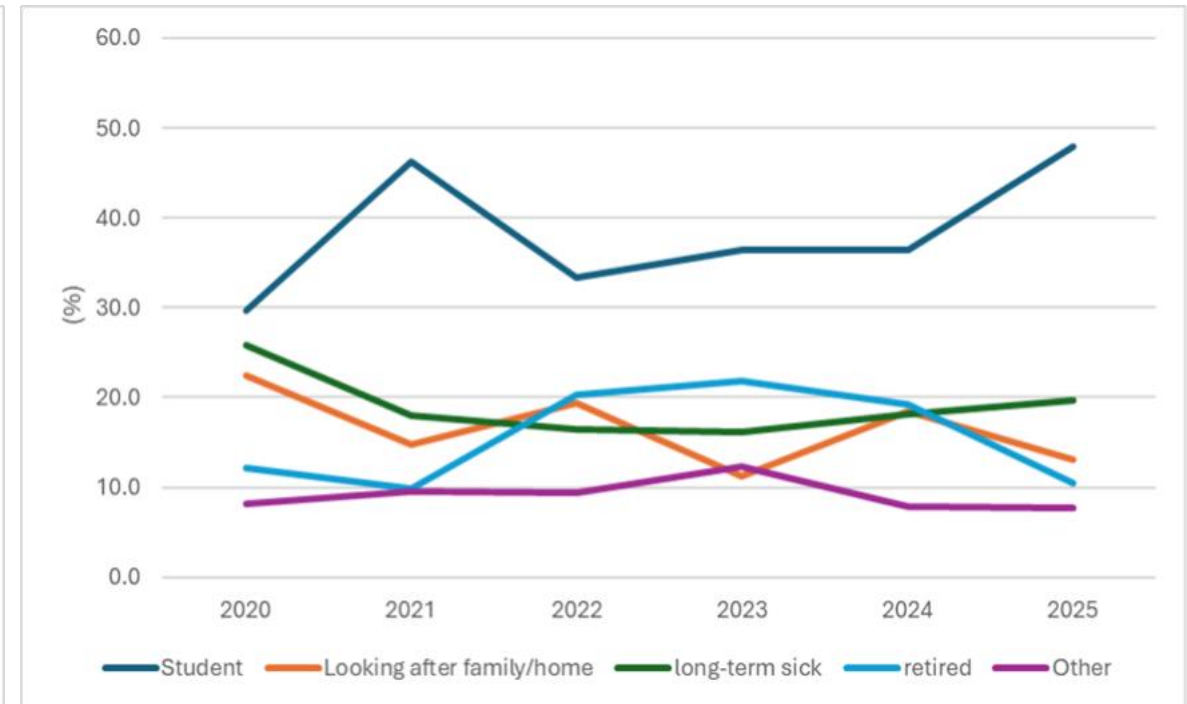
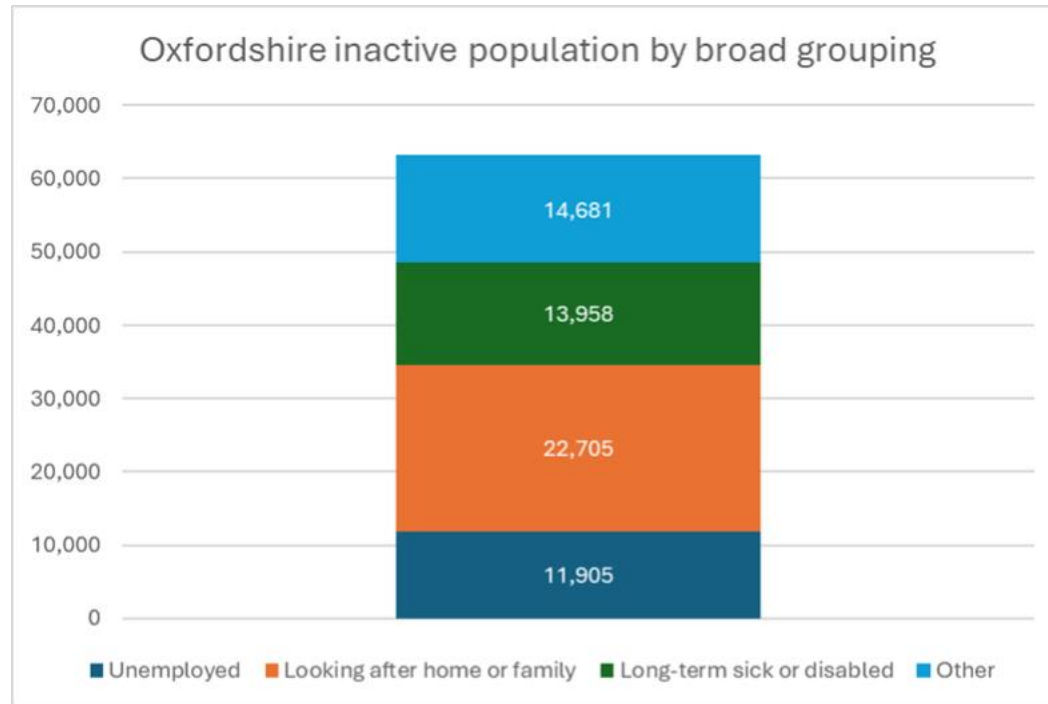


EMPLOYMENT RATE



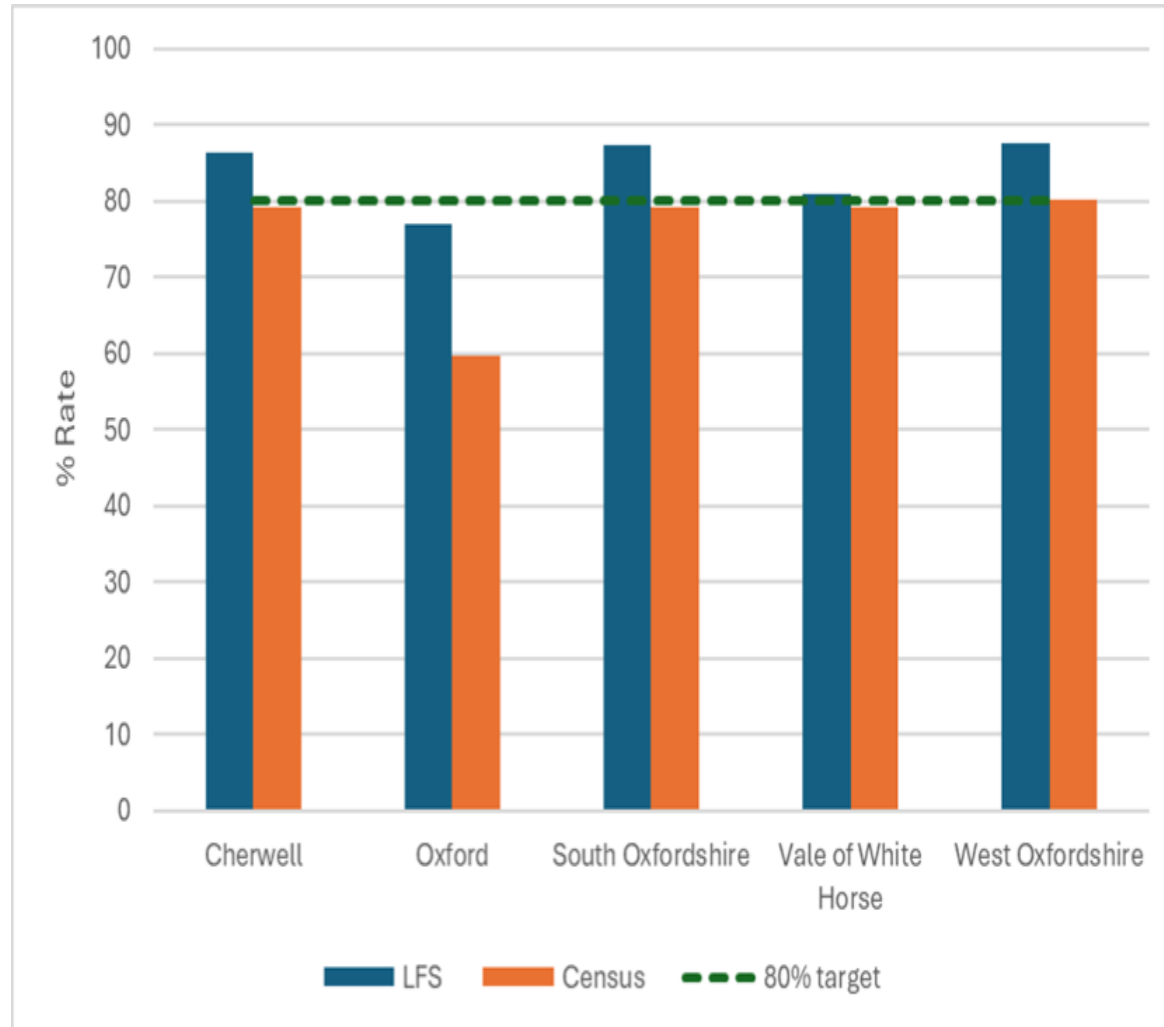


INACTIVITY RATE





DISPARITIES



- Banbury: relatively high chronic illness and low life expectancy
- Oxford: deprived wards face unemployment, poor housing, mental health issues
- Rural areas: lack of public transport and high cost of car ownership create social isolation and limit job access



COHORT ANALYSIS



Young people

Poor transport and high cost of housing near to economic opportunity. Disparities in school readiness and educational attainment, compounded by limited vocational pathways



Carers and disabled people

Health-related inactivity is compounded by the lack of support



Homeless, care leavers and substance misuse

Overlapping barriers requiring integrated support across partners



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RECRUITMENT & RETENTION

Sector-specific shortages

Critical shortages exist in health care, life sciences, ICT, construction, logistics, and hospitality sectors

Skills mismatch and barriers

High qualification requirements and lack of workplace adaptations contribute to a structural skills mismatch

Geographic and economic constraints

Housing affordability and poor transport connectivity hinder recruitment in hospitality and logistics sectors

Workforce retention issues

Health and social care face retention challenges due to workload pressures and competition from other sectors



EDUCATION AND WORK READINESS

Educational disparities

Disadvantaged groups in Oxfordshire face lower school readiness, impacting long-term employment prospects and life chances

Vocational and technical gaps

Post-16 vocational pathways in construction, logistics, and care show gaps, affecting work readiness and skills alignment

Structural barriers in rural areas

Poor transport in rural areas restricts access to education, apprenticeships and flexible work, increasing youth inactivity

Lack of support for SEND youth

Young people with autism or ADHD could succeed with modest changes in education, training, and employment support



HEALTH

Health barriers to employment

Over 80% of Universal Credit claimants face health-related barriers, including long-term conditions and disabilities

Mental health challenges

Long waiting times and limited early interventions worsen mental health, impacting labour market engagement

Work and mental health cycle

Unemployment causes financial stress and depression, which further reduces job prospects and work stability

Geographic health inequalities

Areas like Banbury face higher chronic illness rates and shorter healthy life expectancy than county averages.



DEMOGRAPHICS

Migrants

Migrants face difficulties due to language barriers, lack of recognition for overseas qualifications, and limited training access

Training and support needs

Oversubscribed ESOL programs and the need for targeted support for groups like Afghan families limit employment opportunities.

Older worker challenges

Older workers face health issues, low digital skills, age discrimination, and transportation barriers restricting workforce participation



STRUCTURAL BARRIERS

Housing costs

High housing costs in Oxfordshire limit recruitment for lower-paid jobs and make commuting impractical

Transport limitations

Limited transport options in rural and suburban areas restrict access to key employment sectors like logistics and hospitality

Caregiving responsibilities

Childcare and eldercare duties reduce workforce participation when flexible work options are not available locally

Social and economic factors

Social isolation and high living costs contribute to job seeking withdrawal despite available roles



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LEVERS



Marmot Place



Potential of
OIEP



Place of Sanctuary



Oxford Growth
Commission



VCSE strength



OxRail and East-
West Rail



Local Government
Reorganisation and
Devolution



Utilise joint
commissioning
potential



Public health
funding for
inclusion



Extend place-based
working



Joining up with
Connect to Work



SYSTEMS CHANGES

- Encourage **more engagement with local anchors** to make the most of employment opportunities, social value and local spending power.
- Develop **provision and additional pathways** in a way which reduces disadvantage and barriers for local communities, e.g. expanding ESOL provision.
- Improve and better coordinate **outreach across multi-agencies** to target individual groups ie those with long-term health issues, neuro-diverse, refugees etc.
- Drive a **whole system approach** to reducing disadvantage and disparities in life outcomes such as housing, environment and transport access.
- Evaluate what **data** is available at a local level to ensure individual cohorts with particular challenges are supported into sustainable employment.
- Embrace changes in national and regional policy and delivery in a way which brings together support to **drive devolution and better outcomes** locally