



Department
for Work &
Pensions



Department
of Health &
Social Care

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To: Chief Executives of Integrated Care Boards and Local Authorities

Dear colleague,

I am delighted to write to you today to inform you of an exciting opportunity to become a WorkWell pilot site. WorkWell is a new, forward-thinking health and disability support service, backed by £64 million in funding available across approximately 15 local areas, to support the fourth pillar of the Integrated Care Services (ICS). This letter is to advise you of the forthcoming WorkWell prospectus.

WorkWell is one key part of government's series of ambitious measures to better join up employment and health support and we are excited to work with local partners across that wider agenda. Pilot areas may have the opportunity to take part in testing future government work and health initiatives should they wish to be involved. We are particularly interested in how we can integrate WorkWell pilot services with wider testing on reform of the fit note process in a small number of trailblazer sites.

Over the coming weeks we will publish a WorkWell prospectus, which will set out exact details on how to apply. Further to the discussions we have had with several local systems about WorkWell, I am writing to you in advance to outline the key details and share why the scheme is so important to our mission of helping as many people start, stay or succeed in work as possible. This also gives local partners the opportunity to engage with each other ahead of submitting their formal expressions of interest.

Announced at [Spring Budget 2023](#), WorkWell is a pilot service which aims to better integrate local employment and health support for disabled people and people with health conditions to start, stay and succeed in work. It will follow a place-based approach in line with the ICS's strategic aims.

We know that good quality work is critical to the economic, mental and physical health and wellbeing of all communities. We see the need for an integrated, whole-system approach to address health-related barriers to work that individuals face. This is why WorkWell will be locally led and designed, responding to your area's population needs.

Commenting on behalf of the NHS Confederation, Chief Executive Matthew Taylor said:

"ICS leaders will welcome government rooting the WorkWell service in local leadership; leveraging our potential to provide services that help build better health and wellbeing amongst the population that meet the needs of local communities."

“We know that with the right support, people living with poor health and long-term conditions can find that good quality work helps prevent them from becoming more unwell, and live fuller lives, in turn reducing pressure on health services.

“With the fourth core purpose of ICS being to support the NHS in driving broader economic and social development, our members working across the 42 ICS are already driving this work and will welcome the opportunity to spur it on.”

In keeping with a locally led provision, there is no pre-determined geography for WorkWell pilot areas – we will welcome bids from anywhere across England. Applications will be accepted from local partnerships of Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) and local authorities alongside the local Jobcentre network.

Importantly, each area will be asked how many people they expect to help within their chosen area to contribute to our overall aim of 59,000 participants over the life of the whole WorkWell pilot.

There are two principal components of WorkWell’s total funding:

1. Funding for new Work and Health Integration leadership posts within all Integrated Care Boards.

In 2023/24, c.£3.5 million is available across England to boost work and health leadership capacity. This funding is available to all interested ICBs to fund leadership roles to work across local partners to mobilise work and health integration. We will be writing imminently to ICB Chief Executives to describe this offer in more detail.

2. Funding for Integrated Care Boards, in partnership with local authorities and local Jobcentre networks, to apply to design and deliver WorkWell pilot services.

Across 2024/25 and 2025/26, around £57 million will be made available through a grants competition for approximately 15 areas to become vanguard (pilot) WorkWell services.

This is in addition to funding for a National Support Offer which will be managed centrally to support shared learning and provide expert support to local WorkWell services.

Previous programmes have demonstrated the need for greater integration of health services into work and health provision. Our WorkWell service will improve this by driving an approach that is both place-based and health-led.

Funding to the successful areas will be routed via their named ICB. This means grant applications should be submitted by ICBs, rather than local authorities or other local partnership organisations. However, ICBs, local authorities, and local jobcentre networks will all play a central role in vanguards, coming together to co-produce WorkWell strategy and services. They will convene partnerships across a wider group

of organisations such as employment services, primary care, and the community sector in order to design and deliver the pilot WorkWell service.

There are three clear objectives for vanguard areas:

Objective one: Deliver a holistic work and health service

Vanguard areas will design and deliver a new early-intervention assessment and support service. It will provide participants with light-touch holistic support for their health-related barriers to employment through return to/thrive in work plans, and a single, joined-up view and gateway into the services that are available locally to manage their specific needs.

The service will be available to anyone with a disability or health condition who needs support to start, stay, or succeed in work, regardless of whether or not they are claiming benefits for this.

Objective two: Take forward an integrated local work and health strategy

A key objective of the WorkWell service is to support and drive a joined-up approach to integrating the range of work and health services at local level, including ICBs, local authorities and Jobcentre Plus, which will make it easier for people to access the support they need, when they need it.

Objective three: Be part of a national learning programme

There will be a national support offer available to all vanguard areas to share learning across vanguard and non-vanguard areas. Shared learning will also help vanguards to plan and deliver their WorkWell services.

Next Steps

The WorkWell prospectus will be published over the coming weeks along with full details of how to apply. Areas will be invited to express their interest in becoming a vanguard area and bids will be evaluated against pre-set criteria (outlined fully in the prospectus).

Applicants will be informed whether they have been selected as vanguard sites by April 2024. Chosen vanguard sites will then be required to develop fully costed delivery and workforce plans and begin to prepare implementation of WorkWell services from April to September 2024. Subject to approval, vanguards will then go-live with local services from October 2024.

Please note that the details in this letter may be subject to change and that any decision related to the proposed grant funding will be subject to DWP governance.

I am looking forward to partnering with you in delivering this exciting offer for our communities.

Yours faithfully,

Alex Fitzpatrick

WorkWell Deputy Director – Joint Work and Health Directorate, Department for Work and Pensions and Department of Health and Social Care

1 Participant

Approximately 15 sites, England only

Person **in work** with health condition or disability: struggling with health barriers OR on sick absence AND at risk of falling out.

Person **out of work** with health condition or disability: likely with low level needs and/or recently out of work.

2 Referred by

GP/Primary care settings (inc. social prescribing)

Local Authority (e.g. social workers)

Voluntary/ community sector

Local health services

Local employer

JobCentre Plus

Self-referral

3 Support offer

Initial assessment with work and health coach of barriers to employment, experienced through physical health, mental health and social situation. Return to Work Plan/Thrive in Work Plan agreed. May recommend:

Multi-disciplinary in-house support

May include:

- Employer liaison
- Work and health coaching
- Advice on workplace adjustments
- Regular low-intensity follow up on Return to Work Plan/Thrive in Work Plan with Work and Health Coach

Triage, signposting and referral

May include:

- GP/healthcare professional – for further medical treatment
- Community services
- Council services
- Health promotion programmes
- Debt advice/financial health support
- JobCentre Plus services
- Educational training
- Ongoing referral to more intensive support, e.g. Universal Support, Access to Work, IPSPC, Restart.

Participants draw on both components, and move between WorkWell service and external services

4 Completion

Support ends when participant achieves goals set in individualised Return to Work Plan/Thrive in Work Plan. Example outcomes may include return to work, remain in work, reduced health barriers to working or looking for work.