

## **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

### **Co-Chair of the Keep Britain Working Vanguard Phase**

#### **Terms of Reference (ToR)**

The Keep Britain Working Review set out a proposal for a ‘Vanguard Phase’ during which Government would work with Vanguard employers and regions in partnership to design and deliver changes that can help disabled people and people with health conditions to stay in work and improve workplace health support, delivering higher productivity and economic growth.

The Vanguard Phase is about action and learning. We will engage a diverse range of employers across the UK, who will voluntarily participate in sharing information and testing the practical adoption of initiatives. We will work with Vanguards over 3 years, to develop these interventions, build the evidence for what works and create a robust framework to support wider adoption. To create momentum, it is important that these changes are developed with employers and their employees and providers, not imposed on them.

The Government has committed to appointing Sir Charlie Mayfield to co-Chair the Keep Britain Working Vanguard Phase alongside Secretaries of State for Work and Pensions, Business and Trade, and Health and Social Care. This initial appointment will be for the maximum period for a Direct Ministerial Appointment of 18 months with the option of extension.

#### **Keep Britain Working leadership**

The leadership of the Keep Britain Working Vanguard Phase will be a partnership between Sir Charlie Mayfield and the Secretaries of State for Work and Pensions, Business and Trade, and Health and Social Care.

The leadership will also work with a diverse group of stakeholder to bring together relevant expertise, including from Unions, small and medium-sized employers, disabled people, business leadership, and clinicians. Effective ways of bringing in these wider perspectives to inform the delivery of the Vanguard Phase should be designed and agreed by all co-chairs in the sprint phase set out below.

The Keep Britain Working Vanguard Phase will be jointly sponsored and owned by DWP, DBT, and DHSC, with DWP functioning as the lead department due to policy ownership of economic inactivity. Co-Sponsorship means Ministerial oversight at Secretary of State level as well as ensuring workplace health is embedded as a departmental priority. The team of officials supporting the leadership will also work closely with senior officials across UK government and the devolved governments to ensure strategic alignment with wider government priorities.

**Over the period of Sir Charlie’s appointment, the Keep Britain Working leadership will provide strategic direction on two phases of work:**

1. A rapid 3 month ‘Vanguard set-up’ sprint

The first phase will be a rapid set-up of a Vanguard Phase over a three-month period (from January 2026 to March 2026). We expect this sprint to deliver three central elements to ensure the Vanguard Phase has the foundations in place to transition into delivery:

- Designing and establishing how the Vanguard Phase will be delivered, including Governance and decision-making processes, ways of working between the Co-Chairs, reporting and accountability arrangements, and resource and capability requirements.
- Establishing the principles of co-design with employers and other stakeholders. The Vanguard Phase will be a partnership between Government and employers to build the evidence for what works and create a robust framework to support wider adoption. The sprint phase should set out how to deliver this partnership. This should include initial proposals on areas for deep dives and analysis. It should also ensure the partnership includes the voice of unions and the perspectives and experiences of disabled people and people with health conditions.
- Working with Government to set up a Workplace Health Intelligence Unit (WHIU) which will provide the data and analytical engine to drive the Vanguard Phase. The sprint will need to define its function, create data sharing and collection protocols and develop the initial IT infrastructure required to ensure the WHIU can function effectively.

## 2. Overseeing the Early Vanguard Phase

Sir Charlie Mayfield will continue to set strategic direction in partnership with Ministers for the remainder of the 18-month appointment.

By the end of the appointment the work of the WHIU should have made significant progress toward these goals for the 3-year Vanguard Phase:

- Increasing the number of voluntary Vanguard employers bringing perspectives from employers of all sizes from different sectors and regions of the UK.
- Developing an early draft of a Healthy Working Lifecycle standard and a standard for Workplace Health Provision.
- Overseeing deep dives by Vanguards to identify good practice across a healthy working lifecycle, and test ways to scale these approaches.
- Testing alternative approaches to the fit note, working with GPs and health services to explore improvements and replacements.
- Testing the evidence for the return on investment for businesses of different sizes and types of adopting a Healthy Working Lifecycle standard and Workplace Health Provision.
- Developing evidence to identify employer actions that help disabled people and people with long-term health conditions to stay in work while managing their health, to support advice to Government on what Government incentives, if any, are needed to encourage wider uptake.
- Developing a proposed framework for expanding adoption of the Healthy Working Lifecycle standard and Workplace Health Provision beyond the Vanguard.

### **Externally appointed co-chair responsibilities**

The Vanguard approach set out in Keep Britain Working aims to shift the way Government works with employers, creating a partnership to co-develop solutions to shared challenges. We want to

create dynamism and momentum in delivering change. A key element of the role that Sir Charlie Mayfield will play as Co-Chair will therefore be to help and challenge Government to embrace a new approach and look at how to do things differently, learning from the business world.

The key responsibilities of the externally appointed Co-Chair are:

1. Chair the Vanguard Phase alongside the Secretaries of State, ensuring the WHIU operates as a “movement HQ” to enable the Vanguards to deliver at pace. The Keep Britain Working leadership should come together at regular intervals, with the timing and format agreed by the Co-chairs.
2. Set the strategic direction for the Vanguard Phase, working dynamically with Vanguard Employers and Organisations, to ensure the work of the Vanguard Phase delivers usable evidence and insight to inform the expansion and general adoption of better practices around health and disability in UK workplaces.
3. Lead engagement with a wide range of employers across the four nations of the UK to champion the voluntary, employer-led Vanguard approach and ensure that we are working hand-in-hand with employers to design solutions that work for them.
4. Advise Government (through the three Secretaries of State) on how to scale and expand the initiatives developed through the Vanguard Phase, including advice on embedding standards and potential incentives required to drive adoption. The decision around what policies to take forward will remain with Government Ministers.
5. Champion the Keep Britain Working Vanguard Phase as its primary public representative, working alongside the Ministerial Co-Chairs to drive visibility through media, public engagement, and Parliamentary activity.
6. Ensure that the Taskforce and the WHIU bring together perspectives and insights from business leadership, Unions, small and medium-sized employers, health experts, disabled people, and people with health conditions, that the input from all relevant stakeholders is considered throughout the Vanguard Phase, and that proposals are designed accounting for the Public Sector Equalities Duty.

### **Support for the Co-Chair**

Resource for the initial sprint will be provided by sponsoring departments. The sprint phase should be used to define a resource plan for the Vanguard Phase setting out the skills and capabilities needed.

### **Timing and Terms**

The Vanguard Phase is expected to gather data over the next three years from early 2026. The appointment will align to this, running for the maximum Direct Ministerial Appointment period of 18 months, and will typically require a commitment of 1 day per week. The appointment will be unremunerated. There is the possibility of extension to oversee further phases subject to the agreement of the relevant Secretaries of State.