

# Equality Impact Assessment

## Pathways to Work Commission

### Stage 1 Details of the proposal

**Name of service**

Employment & Skills

**Directorate**

Growth & Sustainability

**Name of officer responsible for EIA**

Hannah Tower, Projects and Contracts Manager

**Name of senior sponsor**

Matt O'Neill, Executive Director for Growth & Sustainability

**Description / purpose of proposal**

The Pathways to Work Commission aims to understand and create solutions to the challenge of economic inactivity within Barnsley, creating better pathways to employment for all residents including those furthest from the labour market. Bringing together national experts in the field, across 8 commission sessions the project will hear from businesses, residents, examples of regional and national best practice to inform a final report. This report will include recommendations for pilots and programmes to tackle this challenge in Barnsley.

**Date EIA started**

3/7/23 ; substantially revised 31/10/23; revised again 08/04/2024; and again 08/07/2024

**Assessment Review date**

Ongoing until Commission report publication

### Stage 2 - About the proposal

**What is being proposed?**

The Pathways to Work Commission ultimately seeks to answer one key line of enquiry: how does Barnsley enable all of its working age population, particularly those currently outside of the labour market, to achieve pathways into employment?

In order to understand this, the commission proposes several aims. The first is to build understanding: to listen to people's experiences of learning and work and to gather quantitative and qualitative data on

the economically inactive in Barnsley. It then aims to gather evidence, by hearing from organisations, employers and residents to understand ‘what works’ to support those furthest from employment. The third aim is to conduct analysis, by reviewing the Barnsley offer and understand how we can build on its success and by analysing regional and national policy interventions (and their impact on Barnsley). Finally, through the publication of a final report, it aims to produce recommendations, including recommending pilots/trials and influencing regional and national policy to enable pathways to work for all.

The Commission will undergo several phases throughout the year. Summer/Autumn will focus on understanding who is out of work, and will involve refining the scope and focus of the commission.

The Autumn/Winter period will follow two parallel streams of inquiry, the first being to understand who needs help to work and the second to understand what helps people to work. The first stream will involve undertaking various qualitative and quantitative research. The first piece of qualitative research will be conducted by KADA Research. This will focus on the lived experience of those currently and formerly inactive, primarily due to health or caring responsibilities. The second piece of qualitative research will be conducted in-house and will focus on the lived experience of those currently at risk of inactivity, particularly young people and older workers. The first piece of quantitative research will be a data pilot with Palantir. This will be a pro-bono data pilot to explore whether we can provide more granular local data on economic inactivity. And the second piece of quantitative research will be to IFF Research conducting polling with residents in Barnsley and South Yorkshire, who are economically inactive.

The final phase in Spring will focus on policy and practice solutions, to understand how to build better pathways to work, in order to form the final report. Development of proposals for a proof of concept will run alongside this, produced in by PwC and ForsythClement. This will be with a view to launching a new integrated and wide-reaching employment support network across the borough, helping those that are currently economically inactive to achieve the skills required to enter sustained and good employment.

With the conclusion of the Commission in July 2024, one key recommendation in the report has been to further develop the proof of concept and in turn implement a pilot as described above across Barnsley and, eventually, South Yorkshire. The design phase of this will take place over the summer and autumn of 2024, before an expected launch in spring 2025.

### Why is the proposal required?

The proposal is required, as it will help to tackle the persistent challenge of economic inactivity in Barnsley. With rates of economic inactivity five times higher in Barnsley than national average, the borough would benefit from efforts to tackle this challenge. More residents in employment would increase earnings across the borough. Moreover, the impact of increased employment in the Barnsley would help improve wellbeing,

financial security and independence, more equal access to employment and health benefits of good work.

**What will this proposal mean for customers?**

The proposal will help Barnsley's residents who are the furthest from the labour market, to realise their potential and give them the opportunity and support to get back to work. The recommendations for pilots and trials from the report should help residents who want to work, get back into employment. The pilot, that will launch after the development phase for the proof of concept, will support those furthest from the labour market in obtaining the skills and support required to enable them to achieve better pathways to employment.

**Stage 3 - Preliminary screening process**

Use the Preliminary screening questions (found in the guidance) to decide whether a full EIA is required

- Yes - EIA required (go to next section)
- No – EIA not required (provide rationale below including name of E&I Officer consulted with)

**Stage 4 - Scoping exercise - What do we know?**

**Data: Generic demographics**

What generic data do you know?

The data used to support the initial rationale for the Commission is the ONS Annual Population Data (found on NOMIS) on the cohort of economically inactive people in Barnsley:

### Economic inactivity (Jan 2023-Dec 2023)

	Barnsley (Level)	Barnsley (%)	Yorkshire And The Humber (%)	Great Britain (%)
<b>All People</b>				
Total	42,300	27.1	23.2	21.2
Student	7,800	18.4	25.2	26.8
Looking After Family/Home	7,700	18.3	18.1	19.3
Temporary Sick	!	!	1.8	1.9
Long-Term Sick	17,000	40.1	29.3	27.2
Discouraged	!	!	#	0.2
Retired	6,300	14.9	14.0	13.4
Other	3,500	8.3	11.4	11.1
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Wants A Job	7,900	18.6	18.8	17.6
Does Not Want A Job	34,400	81.4	81.2	82.4

Source: ONS annual population survey

# Sample size too small for reliable estimate

! Estimate is not available since sample size is disclosive

Notes: numbers are for those aged 16-64.

% is a proportion of those economically inactive, except total, which is a proportion of those aged 16-64

The group that this commission seeks to identify, are those residents in Barnsley who are considered economically inactive. Economic inactivity refers to people not in employment, who have not been seeking work within the last 4 weeks and/or unable to start work in the next 2 weeks. The commission aims to support this group, where possible, back into employment. The economically inactive cohort in Barnsley can be separated into different demographics. The overall employment rate in Barnsley is 69.7%, and the unemployment rate is 2.9%. The economic inactivity rate is 27.1% which can be broken down into different demographics. 57% of this cohort are female and 40% are disabled. Moreover, 32% hold no qualifications. Ethnic minorities make up 6.7% of the inactive population in Barnsley. This demonstrates the significance that inequalities have in this cohort, thus it is important that this commission is careful to consider its approach towards equalities and inclusion.

### Data: Service data / feedback

What equalities knowledge do you already know about the service/location/policy/contract?

The national landscape of the economically inactive cohort is largely reflected in Barnsley. There are 9 million people classed as economically inactive nationally. 4.09 million people are inactive due to being disabled. 5.21 million women are inactive, and women are economically inactive due to caring for family or home at a significantly higher rate than men (1.47 million in 2022). In terms of ethnicity, 21% of white people are economically inactive, compared with 27% of people from all other ethnic groups combined. Of the 2.5 million people who are economically inactive due to long-term sickness, 38% said they had five or more health conditions. The significance of comorbidity on economic inactivity is huge, as it indicates a complexity to the cohort, especially in terms of health conditions.

It is important to consider the complexity and diversity of the economically inactive cohort. Often, people may be economically inactive due to several overlapping reasons. Moreover, some people may experience two or more reasons as to why they are inactive but have a preference to report only one. As such, it is integral that the complexities of this cohort are considered. It is

expected that lots of these individuals will need additional support and this should be taken into consideration when making policy or designing different services.

The Institute for Employment Studies [found](#) that less than 20% of jobseekers in the UK have contacted the public employment service to seek employment, compared to an average of over 50% across OECD countries in the comparative study. In addition, they found that when people do engage with this employment service, there is strong consensus that the support system needs to be more person-centred and individualised, particularly for those most disadvantaged when looking for work (parents, disabled people, older people, disadvantaged young people, refugees and migrants). This demonstrates that the public sector needs to think carefully about how to engage all residents, but particularly those further from the labour market, in the relevant support on a pathway towards employment.

Findings from a telephone survey conducted by IFF Research on behalf of the Commission show that 76% of the economically inactive residents interviewed suffered from either a physical or mental health condition. This was even higher for inactive residents aged 55-64 (87%). The most common conditions stated were mental health (48%), chronic / systemic (45%), and physical disability (39%). This has helped to expand the Commission's knowledge of the landscape of inactivity across the borough, therefore shaping its focus for where support is most needed. From the same research, 28% of respondents had trade or vocational qualifications, 23% GCSEs, and 22% no qualifications. 60% were female and 39% male. 90% were white, with 3% of mixed or multiple ethnicities, 2% Asian or Asian British, and 2% Black, African, Caribbean or Black British.

#### **Data: Previous / similar EIA's**

Has there already been an EIA on all or part of this before, or something related? If so, what were the main issues and actions it identified?

EIAs completed for particular projects within the overall work of the Commission, which merit their own EIA including qualitative work.

#### **Data: Formal consultation**

What information has been gathered from formal consultation?

The Pathways to Work Commission has brought together 12 expert commissioners, including national politicians, think tank leaders and health experts, to create some useful evidence-based work on economic inactivity in Barnsley. The commissioners will be brought together for 8 evidence sessions, each with a different focus, in order to hear from local employers, residents, national and regional examples of good practice, to inform a final report which will include recommendations of pilots and programmes to help tackle this challenge. Therefore, the entire Commission process is, in a sense, consultative.

As well as commissioning a piece of quantitative research to explicate data pertaining to this cohort on a much more granular scale, the commission has also included some valuable qualitative work. This part of the programme sought to understand the lived experience of the target cohort, to understand people's barriers into employment to help inform practical solutions.

The proof-of-concept work gathered data around service provision from departments in the council and other organisations who work with economically inactive residents, such as the DWP and the NHS. This included a 'design week' in April, where internal and external partners were invited to share their thoughts and experiences to shape what the future of employment support will look like in Barnsley.

## Stage 5 - Potential impact on different groups

Considering the evidence above, state the likely impact the proposal will have on people with different protected characteristics

(state if negative impact is substantial and highlight with **red text**)

Negative (and potentially positive) impacts identified will need to form part of your action plan.

Protected characteristic	Negative '-'	Positive '+'	No impact	Don't know	Details
Sex		X			The commission will have a positive impact on this protected characteristic, on the ability to access work. Sex will be considered in the research process, and recommendations will be produced concerning how access to work may differ based on sex.
Age		X			The commission will have a positive impact on this protected characteristic, on the ability to access work. The age of different cohorts is particularly relevant to the commission and will be considered in the research and recommendations.
Disabled <i>Learning disability, Physical disability, Sensory Impairment, Deaf People, invisible illness, Mental Health etc</i>		X			The commission will have a positive impact on this protected characteristic, on the ability to access work. The needs and support that disabled people may need when accessing work will be relevant and considered throughout this commission.
Race				X	The commission recognises that ethnic minorities are represented in inactivity figures, however we are not aware of how prominent an issue this is in the Borough. Data analysis, and equality monitoring in any qualitative research will be implemented to see if there is a connection between economic inactivity and ethnic minorities on Barnsley.
Religion & Belief			X		This protected characteristic will not have a specific impact that this commission will explore.
Sexual orientation			X		This protected characteristic will not have a specific impact that this commission will explore.
Gender Reassignment			X		This protected characteristic will not have a specific impact that this commission will explore.
Marriage / civil partnership			X		This protected characteristic will not have a specific impact that this commission will explore.
Pregnancy / maternity		X			The commission will have a positive impact on this protected characteristic, on the ability to

					access work. The impact that pregnancy/maternity has on access to work is relevant and will be considered throughout the commission.
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Other groups you may want to consider					
	Negative	Positive	No impact	Don't know	Details
Ex services				X	The commission recognises that ex services may be represented in inactivity figures, however we are not currently aware of the prominence of this in the Borough. This will be explored throughout the Commission.
Lower socio-economic		X			The commission will have a positive impact on this group, on the ability to access work.
Other ...					

**Stage 6 - BMBC Minimum access standards**

If the proposal relates to the delivery of a new service, please refer to the Customer minimum access standards self-assessment (found at )

If not, move to Stage 7.

Please use the action plan to be taken to ensure the new service complies with the minimum access standards and reasonable adjustments for disabled people.

Not yet live

The proposal will meet the minimum access standards.

The proposal will not meet the minimum access standards. –provide rationale below.

**Stage 7 – Action plan**

**To improve your knowledge about the equality impact . . .**

Actions could include: community engagement with affected groups, analysis of performance data, service equality monitoring, stakeholder focus group etc.

Action we will take:	Lead Officer	Completion date
Detailed Research (throughout, informing our understanding of the impacts and needs of being in work and out of work on each relevant group).	Hannah Tower	March 2024

Analysis (throughout, shaping the recommendations)	Hannah Tower	May 2024
Consultation (separate EIAs to be produced for this qualitative research)	Hannah Tower	February 2024

**To improve or mitigate the equality impact . . .**

Actions could include: altering the policy to protect affected group, limiting scope of proposed change, reviewing actual impact in future, phasing-in changes over period of time, monitor service provider performance indicators, etc.

Action we will take:	Lead Officer	Completion date
The aim of the Commission is to produce a final report which tackles the inequalities identified to create better pathways to work for all.	Hannah Tower	July 2024

**To meet the minimum access standards . . .(if relevant)**

Actions could include: running focus group with disability forum, amend tender specification, amend business plan to request extra ‘accessibility’ funding, produce separate MAS action plan, etc.

Action we will take:	Completion date
<b>Not yet live</b>	

**Stage 8 – Assessment findings**

Please summarise how different protected groups are likely to be affected

<b>Summary of equality impact</b>	The commission will work to create better pathways into employment for inactive individuals in the borough. In many cases, individuals who are
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economically inactive may be part of a (or multiple) protected groups and so it is vital that the commission considers this in its approach. The most relevant protected characteristics to the commission include: disability, sex, pregnancy/maternity and age. It is important that these protected groups are considered, and it is noted that some inactive individuals may have multiple, overlapping protected characteristics, and this complexity should also be considered.

**Summary of next steps**

In each phase of the commission (research, analysis, consultation, and report-shaping), equality impact will be considered. The most relevant protected characteristics will be of focus throughout each phase of the commission and the final report and recommendations will be influenced by the needs of different protected groups.

**Signature (officer responsible for EIA) Date**

Hannah Tower, Elise Davis-Tormey, Joseph Belbin  
08/07/2024

**\*\* EIA now complete \*\***

**Stage 9 – Assessment Review**

**(This is the post implementation review of the EIA based on date in Stage 1 if applicable)**

**What information did you obtain and what does that tell us about equality of outcomes for different groups?**