

Support for Keep Britain Working ramps up across employers and regions

31.3.2026 - | Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs

The number of employers and mayoral authorities committed to tackling one of the biggest issues facing the labour market has more than doubled since the publication of the Keep Britain Working Review in November 2025.

- 150 organisations employing around 1.5 million workers, 10 mayoral authorities and representatives from all the nations are now part of the Vanguard group of Keep Britain Working Review led by Sir Charlie Mayfield.
- A new standard for healthy working will be developed with the British Standards Institution and independent expert advisory panel established.

In all, some 150 organisations employing 1.5million people across 24 sectors, 10 mayoral and strategic authorities and all nations of the UK have signed up to be part of the Vanguard phase - doubling down on the Government's pledge to make it an employer led movement.

The Vanguard employers include household names like Transport for London and Siemens, small and mid-size employers, across public and private sectors and several providers of workplace health services.

Work is underway to develop practical, scalable solutions across several aspects of the 'healthy working lifecycle', including: improving disability inclusion; acting early to prevent deteriorating health at work; supporting employees to remain and return to work; and looking at how we can better measure key outcomes to improve data visibility across the workplace.

The work will help to reduce the number of people leaving work prematurely for reasons of ill-health each year. 2.8 million people are currently out of work due to long-term sickness. That amounts to one in five working-age adults now out of the labour force - 800,000 more than in 2019. Government and business are taking action now to build a stronger workforce and stronger economy.

Sir Charlie Mayfield, author of the Keep Britain Working Review & Co-Chair of the Keep Britain Working programme, said:

The numbers speak for themselves. This is a serious problem. But, it's also fixable. The response and engagement from employers, mayors and leaders across the whole of the UK has been extraordinary. We are moving at pace to surface, consider and solve the issues.

The Vanguards will feed into the Review's plans on developing a Standard for employers in the UK to adopt, in conjunction with the British Standards Institution (BSI).

Alongside this, a new independent advisory group made up of experienced people from a range of

backgrounds, including employers, trade unions, disability inclusion, and healthcare - will provide expert advice to Sir Charlie Mayfield and the government on how to best move the programme forward.

Work and Pensions Secretary Pat McFadden said:

I want to thank Sir Charlie Mayfield for his ongoing work spearheading this programme.

That 150 organisations have already stepped forward to be part of it, showing just how much appetite there is for an employer-led approach to supporting disabled employees and those experiencing ill-health.

Business is our partner in building a productive workforce because when businesses retain talent and reduce workplace ill-health, everyone wins.

Business Secretary Peter Kyle said:

Businesses are the backbone of our drive to get people back into work, with their success critical to economic growth.

That's why it's so great to see more and more employers stepping forward to become vanguards, demonstrating good employers recognise that when they back their workers, their workers back them.

Minister for Secondary Care Karin Smyth said:

Good health is the foundation of a productive working life, and this programme shows what's possible when government and employers work together with that shared goal in mind.

Too many people are leaving work early because of ill-health that could have been prevented or better managed. Keep Britain Working is changing that — by embedding healthy working practices across sectors and regions, we can help people stay well, stay in work, and thrive. That's something we're mirroring in both our National Cancer Plan and Men's Health Strategy, which set out how we can work with employers to make sure people are supported when they experience ill health.

I'm delighted to see so many organisations stepping up as Vanguards, and I look forward

to seeing the practical changes this programme will deliver for working people across the country.

This progress supports the government's Plan for Change commitment to help more people get a job, stay in work and progress in their careers. This is integral to our mission to tackle the ill-health inactivity crisis and raise living standards across the UK.

This progress also comes following a £3.5 billion package of employment support by the end of the decade to help more sick or disabled people into work. We are expanding WorkWell across the country, supporting up to 250,000 people to return or stay in work and backed by £259 million.

We're also providing 300,000 sick or disabled people with tailored help through Connect to Work by the end of the decade, partnering with employers to transform how disabilities are managed at work, following the Keep Britain Working Review, and have put in place the equivalent of over 1,000 full-time Pathways to Work advisers across Britain to support disabled people into work.

Louise Harry, Director of Sustainability and Environment, Health and Safety at Siemens, said:

The data shows that supporting wellbeing – both for people in work already and those looking for roles – is vital to enhance UK productivity and growth. As well as addressing mental health there is a range of work needed to help people living with disabilities so the UK can make the most of our brilliant talent pool. We're looking forward to supporting this alongside the other Vanguard employers as this initiative continues to progress.

Dr Sam Phillips, Head of Health and Wellbeing at Transport for London said:

We are proud to have been one of the first organisations to commit to being a vanguard. We take a very proactive approach in the promotion of health and wellbeing of our staff and supporting colleagues to return to work if they experience ill health. It has been a great opportunity to be a vanguard and lead the smaller group of employers developing the principles of employers' role in ill health prevention – an exciting initiative which will influence the future workplace standard.

Susan Taylor Martin, Chief Executive, BSI said:

The Keep Britain Working review rightly identified the immense challenge we are facing around workplace absence and low productivity. Supporting people to lead healthy, productive and fulfilled lives at work, and in doing so giving businesses access to the pool of talent they need, is a critical goal.

BSI has extensive experience developing standards to help employers improve employee wellbeing, manage ill-health in the workplace, and nurture inclusive working environments. BSI is proud to support this vital mission to help individuals and organizations to thrive, contribute to economic growth and enable more people to flourish at work.

Dr Sarah Jackson, Chief Executive at EDF said:

EDF is committed to championing employee health and wellbeing at every stage of working life. National recognition of this mission creates a rare opportunity to help transform the future of work in Britain. We're proud to join the Vanguard and fully committed to helping this important initiative deliver its bold vision.

Diane Lightfoot, CEO, Business Disability Forum said:

We are pleased to be working with many of our Members to support the Vanguard scheme and to have led the workshops to help inform the disability inclusion part of this work. We hope the work will lead to solutions that will move forward the Keep Britain Working agenda and, crucially, help to close the disability employment gap.

Additional Information:

- Read the 'Story So Far' report

Organisations

3-1-5 Health Club	Google UK	Places Leisure
A&M EDM	GXO Logistics / Wincanton	Post Office
Adam Reed Hair	Haleon	PreCure ApS (Denmark)
Aquame	Health 2 Employment and OH One CIC	Psychiatry UK
Association of British Insurers	HealthHero	Pure Gym
Aviva	Health Partners Group	PwC UK
AXA Health	Health Shield	Rail Safety & Standards Board
BITC	Herriot Hospice Homecare	Renew Beauty
Barts Health NHS Trust	Holland & Barrett	Retail Trust
BP	Hospitality Action	Rethink Mental Illness
British Airways	HR Support 4 U	Rio Tinto
British Beer & Pub Association	Hussle	Road Haulage Association
BT Group	Independent Healthcare Providers Network	Rolls-Royce
BUPA	Ingeus	Seddon
Burger King	Insurance at Heart ApS (Denmark)	Serco

Organisations

ByteDance/TikTok	J Sainsbury	Severn Trent Water
Canada Life	Jaguar Land Rover	Sick in the City (SIC) Official
Canary Wharf Group	John Lewis Partnership	Siemens
Capita	Journey Enterprises	Simplyhealth Group
Career Returners	Kore Sandwell	Sky UK
Cartrefi Cymru Cooperative	Latus Health	Sopra Steria
CBI	Legal & General Group	South Warwickshire University NHS Trust
Centrica	Loughborough University	Spire Healthcare
Change Grow Live	LSN Diffusion	Square Health
Channel 4	Marks and Spencer	TELUS Health
Chrysalis	Maximus UK	Tesco
Coca-Cola Europacific Partners	Mind Matters Counselling LLP	The Anti Burnout Club
Cook Food	Moneypenny	The Busy Group
Cora Health	Motionspot	The Chartered Management Institute (CMI)
Cosy	Nando's	The Gym Group
Crown Estate	National Hair and Beauty Federation	The Human Centre
Currys	NHS Business Services Authority	The Ink Group
Dene Healthcare	NHS Cheshire and Wirral Trust	The Migraine Trust
Department for Business & Trade	NHS Greater Manchester Integrated Care Board	Thrivall
Department for Energy Security and Net Zero	Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust	Transport for London
Department for Health & Social Care	Northern Trains Limited	Transport for Wales
Department for Work and Pensions	Nuffield Health	Truro College
Disability Action (Northern Ireland)	One Medical Group	UK Hospitality
East Midlands Railway (EMR)	Onebright	University of Cambridge
EDF Energy	Optima Health	Unum
Endometriosis UK	PAM Wellness	Vercida
Enginuity	Parachute	Vitality
Epilepsy Action	Passion4Social	Vivam Health
Evenbreak	Patchwork Hub	Waltham Forest College
EY	Pathways CIC	Well Hub
Fedcap	People Partners 4 U	Wise Corp
Ford	Peppy Health	Working to Wellbeing
Future Fit	PepsiCo	WPA
Genius Within	Phoenix Group	Zurich Insurance & Corporate Risk
Goodshape		

Regions

Cornwall Council	North East Combined Mayoral Authority
East Midlands	South Yorkshire Combined Mayoral Authority
Greater London Authority	West Midlands Combined Mayoral Authority
Greater Manchester	West of England Combined Mayoral Authority
Liverpool City Region Combined Authority	West Yorkshire Combined Mayoral Authority

Advisory panel members:

Name	Organisation
Prof Iain Buchan	University of Liverpool
Joanne Cairns	Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers (USDAW)
Dr Robin Cordell	Faculty of Occupational Medicine
Joe Donnelly	UNISON
Henrietta Frater	Crown Estate
Anne Hayes	British Standards Institution (BSI)
Professor Kamila Hawthorne MBE	Swansea University; National Academy of Social Prescribing
Dr Sarah Hughes	Mind
Prof Ewan MacDonald CBE	University of Glasgow
Kate Nash OBE	PurpleSpace
Deborah Rees	LSN Diffusion Ltd
Paul Schreier	Simplyhealth
Valerie Todd CBE	Digital Catapult; Leonard Cheshire; Great British Energy
Kirsty Watt	Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (Acas)
Sara Weller CBE	BT; Lloyds Banking Group plc; United Utilities; Money and Pensions Service

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/support-for-keep-britain-working-ramps-up-across-employers-and-regions>