

Almost 10 million people in the UK are classed as economically inactive, where they are of working age but are not seeking employment. This may be due to one or several reasons, and business and government must come together to make work more attractive, addressing skills and chronic labour shortages across different sectors.

Despite no longer seeking work, polls suggest that a large quantity of economically inactive members of the labour market would consider a return to work if barriers were not in the way. The 10-Point Plan will result in **over 920,000** more economically inactive people return to the labour market, addressing obstacles that make it harder for people to obtain employment.

The 10-Point Plan is aimed at maximising the available UK talent. The Better Hiring Institute, working with over 6,000 UK employers, have identified solutions to barriers that are achievable with government and industry working together. The Better Hiring Institute advocated for a joint industry, cross-government taskforce to deliver the necessary change.

1. The Urgent Need for Standardisation and Transparency in Job Adverts

The importance of transparency when looking to make a career move is something reflected in collected data, internationally. Data shows that most groups would be more likely to apply for a job with a clear and informed job advert, for example including salary information. This can be seen much more clearly with work-seekers who are neuroatypical and/or have disabilities. To combat drop-outs and promote proactive recruitment, organisations should follow a standardised job advert process that makes clear the requirements and scope of a role.

2. Work Anywhere

Organisations should build on the benefits of flexible working by offering communities with local talent the option to remain in their hometowns and cities. Employers should consider all location options, including co-working spaces and home working, to access talent in the regions where the jobs may not necessarily be.

3. Work Anytime

A large proportion of the economically inactive workforce would benefit from flexible models of employment. This would allow employers to re-engage members of the workforce such as those who have retired, those who have caring responsibilities, and those who are long-term sick. Notably, a survey conducted by the Department for Education revealed that around 670,000 parents would return to work if it was more accessible. Employers should emphasise “work anytime” on job adverts, promoting flexible models of employment.

4. Supporting Those in Digital Poverty

Reports suggest that around **20%** of people in the UK are without the digital skills needed for everyday life. It is estimated that the digital skills gap costs the UK economy as much as **£63 billion** per year in potential GDP. Employers should consider where they advertise their roles, allowing for a manual, “offline” application route, as well as removing requirements for basic digital skills, which could be taught as part of continuous professional development.

5. Hiring for Potential

Certain groups, such as neurodiverse applicants, find traditional recruitment methods difficult to navigate, unable to market their skills in comparison to their counterparts. This

ultimately compounds a lack of diversity in the workplace, overlooking suitable applicants in favour of experience. Organisations should identify the skills critical for success in role, and prompt applicants to demonstrate how they have met the requirements in previous roles, albeit in different sectors. This will allow organisations to tap into a richer pool of applicants, proven to improve longevity of employment.

6. Breaking Free from Recruitment Red Tape

Lots of recruitment rules are based on legacy requirements. In many sectors, such as healthcare, supply chains are bogged down with unnecessary red tape. This slows the hiring process down considerably and results in organisations, such as hospitals, going “off framework” to use recruitment agencies not in the formal supply chains at a much higher cost and with greater safeguarding risks. In all sectors, employers should use the Better Hiring Toolkits for Industry as a standard requirement for hiring or come together to form best practice where this does not exist.

7. Ensuring That Tech in the Hiring Process is Inclusive

Outdated digital standards are hindering the accessibility of employment to work-seekers with disabilities. With around 1 in 5 people in the UK having a disability, ensuring that the technology is in place for workers to be able to compete on a level playing field is vital. Employers should be mindful of the accessibility of their company websites and hiring software, ensuring that alternative formats are offered where necessary, such as being compatible with assistive devices.

8. Transition Support for Skilled Refugees

Refugees in the UK are four times more likely to be unemployed, even with technical experience and being educated to degree level. Despite having degrees in sectors with labour shortages in the UK, the current system means that the employment on offer tends to be entry level roles. Employers should engage with the Home Office’s Refugee Employability Programme, helping address the specific needs of refugees and remove barriers to employment.

9. Upskilling the UK Labour Market

A reformed apprenticeship levy would allow industries with skills shortages to upskill their own workforces more effectively. A growth and skills levy that focuses on the development of workers would reduce barriers for existing staff by investing in wider skills training in areas of the economy where there is market growth.

10. Improved Mental Health Provision in the Workplace

Recent figures show that workers absent from the labour market owing to long-term sickness has reached a record of **2.55 million**. Data further shows that around six in ten workers classed as ‘long-term sick’ live with mental health problems, costing the UK economy billions. Employers of all sizes should create and promote a mental health at work policy that promotes good mental health and outlines available resources for all employees.