



Framework
For your future



Embedding Employability in Supported Accommodation and Housing-Related Services

Year One Evaluation Summary (July 2026)

Introduction

For people experiencing homelessness and multiple disadvantage, access to employment, training, education, and volunteering can play an important role in recovery, wellbeing, and long-term resettlement. Employment provides more than income; it can contribute to confidence, routine, purpose, social connection, and independence. These factors are closely linked to positive housing and wellbeing outcomes.

Despite this, employability support has often been delivered separately from housing-related support services, with conversations about work frequently delayed or viewed as outside the remit of frontline practitioners. It Pays to Work Year One Evaluation identifies an opportunity to integrate employability more effectively into everyday support, ensuring that aspirations around work, training, and meaningful activity are explored alongside wider support needs.

Launched in April 2025, It Pays to Work (IPTW) is Framework's approach to embedding employability within housing-related services, through workforce development, practice change, and organisational integration. Rather than creating a separate employment programme, the approach focuses on building staff confidence and skills, so employability becomes a routine element of person-centred support.

IPTW Approach

The IPTW approach is underpinned by strengths-based, trauma-informed, and person-centred principles, recognising that employability pathways are rarely linear and should be tailored to individual circumstances. IPTW is designed around three interconnected objectives:

1. Building Workforce Capability

Supporting frontline staff and managers to develop the knowledge, skills, and confidence required to discuss employability, provide basic employment-related guidance, and respond effectively to common barriers.

2. Increasing Engagement

Creating more opportunities for service users to engage in conversations about work, training, education, volunteering, and future aspirations as part of routine support.

3. Supporting Positive Outcomes

Increasing participation in employment-related activity, recognising that progression can include paid work, training, education, volunteering, and other meaningful steps towards independence.

Overview of Year One

During its first year, IPTW was implemented across 12 supported accommodation and housing-related services, engaging 124 staff who collectively supported approximately 630 service users.

Evaluation findings indicate strong engagement from both staff and service users:

- 91% of staff completed the introductory programme
- 82% completed employability skills development training
- Service user consultation found that 76% were open to receiving employment-related support, and 64% had not accessed any in the previous six months.

As a new approach, the Year One developmental evaluation focused primarily on implementation, engagement, and practice change rather than solely measuring employment outcomes. This reflects an understanding that sustainable outcomes are built on strong foundations of workforce capability and consistent practice.

Key Themes and Findings

1. Employability Is Becoming Part of Everyday Support

One of the most significant findings is the shift in how employability is viewed across participating services. Staff increasingly reported seeing employability as an integral part of their role rather than a specialist function delivered by external providers. This has led to more frequent conversations about aspirations, skills, strengths, work history, education, and volunteering opportunities. Importantly, these discussions are taking place earlier and more routinely within support relationships. The evaluation found that employability is most effective when embedded within trusting relationships and linked to wider recovery and resettlement goals, rather than treated as a standalone intervention.

2. Staff Confidence Drives Engagement

Staff confidence was found to be a critical factor in successful delivery. Training, reflective practice opportunities, and specialist support from a dedicated IPTW Implementation Lead, contributed to increased confidence in initiating conversations about work and responding to concerns around benefits, affordability, and readiness. The evaluation found that engagement with employability tends to develop gradually. Progress is supported when staff feel equipped to explore aspirations, revisit conversations over time, and respond flexibly to individual needs and circumstances.

3. Early Outcomes Are Emerging

There is encouraging evidence of movement into employment, training, education, and volunteering amongst service users engaging with employability support. The evaluation identified examples of individuals progressing into paid work, formal learning opportunities, volunteering roles, and other meaningful activities. However, findings suggest Year One success is best understood through a combination of:

- Increased staff capability
- Increased employability engagement
- Improved identification of goals and aspirations
- Emerging employment-related outcomes.

These changes create the conditions necessary for sustainable longer-term impact.

4. Organisational Context Matters

Implementation varied across services depending on local context, staffing capacity, operational pressures, and service models. Increased engagement with employability and employment-related outcomes were observed in services where the initiative was fully supported by managers, and staff participated in regular group supervision, training and individual caseload reviews. This highlights the importance of embedding employability within wider systems and process rather than relying solely on individual staff enthusiasm.

Next Steps: Priorities for Ongoing Development

Year One demonstrates that embedding employability within supported accommodation is both practical and beneficial. The next phase is focused on strengthening practice across existing IPTW services, with continued onboarding of new services. Future priorities therefore include:

- **Strengthening Consistency:** Ensuring employability is routinely considered across the service user journey and embedded within core support processes
- **Continuing Workforce Development:** Maintaining investment in staff confidence, skills development, and reflective practice to ensure employability remains part of everyday support delivery
- **Enhancing Evidence and Learning:** Improving visibility of employability activity and outcomes to strengthen organisational learning and demonstrate impact
- **Supporting Long-Term Progression:** Expanding focus beyond initial engagement to include move-on, sustainability, and longer-term pathways towards independence and economic inclusion
- **Building Strategic Partnerships:** Working collaboratively with commissioners, partners, and stakeholders to ensure employability is recognised as an important component of housing-related support and resettlement services.

Conclusion

In its first year, It Pays to Work has established a strong foundation for embedding employability within Framework's housing-related services. The evaluation demonstrates that workforce development, relational practice, and organisational commitment can increase engagement with employability and create pathways towards positive outcomes.

Most importantly, the approach has shown that conversations about work, skills, and future aspirations can form a valuable and natural part of support for people experiencing homelessness and related disadvantage. By integrating employability into everyday practice, services can strengthen recovery, promote inclusion, and support individuals to move towards greater independence and longer-term stability.

