



Boosting the Channel Islands workforce

How to harness the islands' untapped talent

July 2025



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Maximising our human capital in the Channel Islands

The economies of the Channel Islands are at a crossroads. Our economic analysis highlights the mounting impacts of a range of challenges including technological disruption, geopolitical instability and faltering productivity. Time and again, however, we hear of one challenge at the front and centre of business leaders' minds – pressure on the availability of talent and skills.

In 2024, during [PwC's 28th Annual Global CEO Survey](#), Channel Islands CEOs cited shortages of key skills as the biggest threat to their business prospects. Looking ahead, this talent gap could become a gulf; as our population ages and birth rates remain low and – in the absence of significant net inward migration – our workforce shrinks.

The projections in our previous [Island Index 2023](#) research also underline the extent to which economic growth in both Jersey and Guernsey could be severely constrained by the impact of demographic changes and a potential decline in the working age population.

The good news is that a big part of the answer is right here on our doorstep. Making the working environment appealing to everyone who wants to work, including women who have taken career breaks and older people who aren't currently employed or volunteering, could go a long way towards alleviating talent gaps and boosting GDP.

Being active in the workforce doesn't only mean paid employment. As we have highlighted in our [Value of the Third Sector report](#), volunteering plays a huge part in supporting our communities and economies. Evidence suggests that third sector organisations are finding it increasingly difficult to attract and retain volunteers, and this isn't unique to the Channel Islands – [similar trends have been seen in the UK](#). By encouraging civic and community engagement, both islanders participating in employment and those supported by volunteering could see significant benefits.

Achieving employment rates similar to leading jurisdictions such as New Zealand could increase the Channel Islands' workforce by an additional

7,500 employees



This research highlights important opportunities to broaden age diversity in Jersey's financial services workforce. As the report highlights and we've long recognised, individuals aged 55 and over bring valuable experience, insight and leadership that can strengthen the resilience and credibility of our industry.

Through initiatives like our Reconnect programme and our wider Future Fit Workforce and Vision 2050 strategies, we're focused on supporting more flexible, inclusive pathways into the sector. Building a workforce that reflects the full range of talent in our community is essential to the future success of our industry, and we're supportive of work that helps move this forward."

Joe Moynihan
CEO, Jersey Finance

Untapped talent on our doorstep



Boosting workforce numbers through increased employment rates within our existing population could contribute significantly to sustaining long-term prosperity and growth in our islands.

Local businesses and third sector organisations would have access to a larger talent pool from which to fill vacancies and meet skills needs, governments could generate additional tax revenue from a larger workforce, and islanders could in turn benefit from the health and wellbeing boosts associated with working longer and being active in later life.





The imperative of human capital as an economic driver

Why workforce participation has never been more critical



At Skills Jersey, our careers services engage with a growing number of older islanders who are keen to return to or remain in the workforce. We see a clear and rising demand for tailored employment support among those aged 55 and above, but more needs to be done to improve engagement and successful placements. We are committed to working more closely with employers to ensure workplaces are inclusive and adaptable to the needs of older employees. This is not just about practical support, it requires a broader cultural shift. Both employers and employees must challenge outdated assumptions about age and work, and recognise the valuable experience and skills older islanders bring to the table.”

Stuart Penn
Head of Skills, Skills Jersey

We are fortunate to call the Channel Islands our home. Jersey and Guernsey benefit from some of the highest living standards in the world. Islanders also enjoy relative stability, safety and beautiful natural environments.

As our [Island Index](#) research highlights, however, sustaining historic levels of economic growth and wellbeing across the Channel Islands could be challenging in the face of both local and global headwinds.

There is no doubt that the skills of our islanders have been a key driver in both Jersey and Guernsey’s economic success stories, but this can no longer be taken for granted. Having seen population growth in both Islands slow in recent years, it’s not surprising that in 2024 nearly two-thirds of the business leaders taking part in [PwC’s 28th Annual Global CEO Survey](#) see a lack of key skills as the greatest challenge to realising their growth ambitions.

66%

of Channel Islands CEOs see lack of access to talent and skills as the biggest threat to growth over the next 12 months.

**PwC’s Channel Islands CEO Survey
2025**

Declining birth rate and a plateauing workforce

Securing the talent businesses need to succeed can be difficult in island economies, with tight labour markets and near zero unemployment.

Looking ahead, existing skills shortages could escalate if no action is taken. By 2040, it is projected that for every ten people of working age in the Channel Islands as a whole, there will be four older islanders (over 65). In Guernsey, the pressure is especially acute. It is projected that by 2040, for every two working age people there will be one older islander¹.

Low birthrates bring further cause for concern. Although many countries are seeing birth rates fall below the level needed to sustain stable population numbers (2.1 children per woman), this trend is especially pronounced in Jersey and Guernsey where birth rates both sit at around 1.3.

In Jersey, we have seen the percentage of those aged 15 and below slip from 18% of the population in 2001 to 15% in 2023, and it is expected to fall to be just below 13% in 2040.

In Guernsey, the number of people in the under-15 age group is expected to fall by the same amount, but will remain around 15% going into 2040, mainly due to the predicted declining total population.



¹ PwC Analysis

Constraints on talent from abroad

Like many islands, the cultures and economies of Jersey and Guernsey have been shaped by the ebb and flow of immigration and emigration. In recent years, both islands have benefited significantly from the skills, knowledge and entrepreneurial spirit of those who have chosen to settle there. This steady inflow of talent has been vital to the ongoing success of the Channel Islands.

However, sustained reliance on immigration to drive economic growth is becoming increasingly challenging. Historically, both Islands' population had been bolstered by migration from European economies following their accession to the EU. Yet, as unemployment has fallen in many European countries, emigration has slowed. Along with the UK's departure from the EU, and curbs on the freedom of movement for workers, it has become more difficult for the Channel Islands to attract international talent, contributing to more subdued population growth forecasts.

Businesses are now restricted to recruiting from the within the Common Travel Area (i.e., UK, Republic of Ireland, Isle of Man, and the Channel Islands).

Against this backdrop, it has become increasingly complex and costly to recruit talent internationally, which has further heightened pressures on the local labour markets and added costs to businesses.

Even if immigration, was easier to do, there is the additional pressure it can place on our infrastructure and affordable housing. We can therefore not rely on it to solve all our skills challenges. Businesses in Jersey and Guernsey must maximise the potential of the people already living on the islands, ensuring as many people as possible are economically active. This means becoming more proactive in both attracting and retaining local talent, while ensuring employment is as inclusive and dynamic as possible.



Pressure on the public purse

Having fewer people of working age as a proportion of older people (old age dependency ratio) isn't just a dent on businesses that rely on workers to drive their growth prospects. As people live longer and older people become a larger proportion of the population, the demands on health and social care are likely to increase. With a relatively static workforce size, coupled with increasing employment demands, there will be relatively fewer people to provide care and fewer people paying tax to help fund the care.

A tapering workforce size to support our ageing population
Tables 1, 2, & 3: Key statistics for Jersey and Guernsey

Jersey	2021	2040: Low, +325 net migration scenario	2040: High, +700 net migration scenario
Workforce size:	57,000	56,000	62,000
Working age size:	68,000	67,000	73,000
Percent of 15+ employed*:	66%	62%	63%
OADR**	28%	40%	36%

Guernsey	2023	2040: Central, +150 net migration scenario	2040: High, +300 net migration scenario
Workforce size:	31,000	28,000	30,000
Working age size:	42,000	38,000	40,000
Percent of 15+ employed*:	58%	53%	54%
OADR**	32%	48%	45%

Employment rates	Jersey	Guernsey	Iceland	New Zealand
15-24	56%	40%	59%	59%
25-54	89%	82%	82%	85%
55-64	72%	72%	82%	78%
65+	13%	9%	21%	23%

*The total employed population divided by the population over 15 years old

**Old Age Dependency Ratio

Averting a demographic time bomb

How can we avert this demographic time bomb and its impact on our economy and public services? Increasing employment rates among both women and older islanders could help address both these challenges.

As PwC's Women in Work Index highlights, both Jersey and Guernsey have seen an improvement in their female employment rates in recent years. However, given the nature of the responsibilities placed on many carers, islanders often find themselves working in part-time positions and taking salary cuts accordingly.

This is reflected in employment rates. In Guernsey there is consistently an employment gap of around 5% between men and women, with 55-64s experiencing the largest gap, at over 10%. Some over 55s may have caring responsibilities for elderly parents as well as grandchildren. Creating opportunities for more flexible working arrangements and boosting affordable childcare could help these carers to stay in employment and work in more full-time roles.



In our ambitious fibre rollout across Guernsey, we recognised the need to think creatively about talent acquisition as we knew we needed around 100 additional staff to complete the programme. We cast our net far and wide, reaching out to diverse corners of our community, engaging with the Guernsey Employment Trust, the retired community, and even engaging with the prison system. This approach underscored the importance of flexibility and understanding individual needs, like accommodating schedules for retirees, including one employee who was keen to suggest a fractional role that still allowed him to have lunch with his wife. By also investing in comprehensive training and support, both before the hiring stage, and more in depth after, we not only met our manpower requirements but also ensured very high performance levels across the board. This experience illustrates that if Guernsey embraces a more open-minded strategy in sourcing talent and commitment to nurturing skills, we can fully unleash great potential for innovation and to deliver community and technical projects alike."

Justin Bellinger

Chair, Innovate Guernsey and former Chief Executive of Sure Guernsey

The Jersey dividend

To demonstrate the dividend that could be achieved by increasing the employment rate, we've compared Jersey and Guernsey with New Zealand and Iceland. Iceland has one of the highest employment rates among women (82%) and 55-64 year-olds (80%) in the world, and New Zealand is a leader in older workforce inclusion.

Although New Zealand is much larger than the Channel Islands, it shares many similarities with us culturally, economically and demographically. New Zealand performs especially well on its rates of female and older worker employment, helping residents to lead fulfilling and meaningful lives within their communities.

In Iceland and New Zealand, it could be that a greater share of the population have a financial need to work and earn than in the Channel Islands - driving higher employment rates in those economies.

Therefore, additional efforts may be needed to incentivise islanders back into work in the Channel Islands, particularly for those who may have concluded they don't *need* to work.

Jersey

If Jersey matched New Zealand's employment rates today, the workforce could be boosted by an additional 3,100 employees and GVA could increase by £280 million a year. The corresponding tax increase could be around £65 million a year.

Table 4: Estimated employment and GVA uplift today if Jersey matched the employment rates of:

2023	Jersey	Iceland	New Zealand
Employees	57,300	60,600	60,400
Employee uplift (%)	~	5.8%	5.4%
GVA	£6,575 million	£6,900 million	£6,860 million
GVA uplift (%)	~	4.9%	4.3%

When considering a +700 net migration scenario, if Jersey matched the employment rates of New Zealand, by 2040 Jersey could increase its number of employees by almost 3,800 above its predicted increase of approximately 5,700².

Table 5: Estimated employment and GVA uplift in 2040 if Jersey matched the employment rates of:

2040	Jersey	Iceland	New Zealand
Employees	63,000	66,800	66,800
Employee uplift (%)	~	6%	6%
GVA	£7,175 million	£7,530 million	£7,510 million
GVA uplift (%)	~	5%	4.7%

² Note that projected GVA figures do not take into account productivity changes or inflation.

The Guernsey dividend

Guernsey

If Guernsey matched New Zealand’s employment rates today, the workforce could be boosted by an additional 4,500 employees and GVA could increase by £410 million a year. The corresponding tax increase could be around £89 million a year³.

Table 6: Estimated employment and GVA uplift today if Guernsey matched the employment rates of:

2023	Guernsey	Iceland	New Zealand
Employees	31,900	35,800	36,400
Employee uplift (%)	~	12%	14%
GVA	£3,490 million	£3,840 million	£3,900 million
GVA uplift (%)	~	10%	12%

When considering a +150 net migration scenario, if Guernsey matched the employment rates of Iceland or New Zealand, by 2040 Guernsey could increase its number of employees by almost 4,700, which could supplement the predicted fall of approximately 2,600 employees.

Table 7: Estimated employment and GVA uplift in 2040 if Guernsey matched the employment rates of:

2040	Guernsey	Iceland	New Zealand
Employees	29,300	33,300	34,000
Employee uplift (%)	~	14%	16%
GVA	£3,170 million	£3,530 million	£3,600 million
GVA uplift (%)	~	11%	13%

³ Guernsey’s additional potential compared to Jersey is largely due to differences in its population, which is older and has lower employment rates for older workers.



Working multiple jobs has been a transformative experience for me. While it started as a necessity, I soon realised the immense benefits. My additional roles at Brittany Ferries and Creasey's provide not only financial support but also valuable perks like discounted travel and staff discounts. More importantly, each role offers opportunities for personal growth through customer service and teamwork. At 62, continuing to work keeps me feeling youthful and fulfilled. Balancing work with a rich social life, I find great satisfaction in knowing I can maintain my independence and enjoy life on my own terms. I highly recommend working hard; it brings a profound sense of achievement and purpose."

Amanda Eulenkamp
Guernsey Press

Living longer, healthier lives



Imagine a Jersey where the hallmark of our community is living vibrant, 100-year lives. As we embrace this vision, we shift from seeing health, education, employment, and financial independence as age-bound milestones to integral, lifelong pursuits. By cultivating good health habits, dynamic employment opportunities, and continuous learning, Jersey can lead the way as a beacon of what a future society thrives upon. To make this a reality, we need a collaborative effort across the entire community, engaging employers, government, and educational institutions to unlock the potential of our citizens and make longer, healthier lives not just a possibility, but a celebrated reality.”

Joe Dickinson

Co-founder, Jersey Island of Longevity

Healthier and more fulfilling lives

It's far more than just our economies that would benefit from increased employment rates. For older people, staying in work for longer could strengthen their financial security. Crucially, research also suggests that working into later life, be it paid or voluntary roles, could boost health and wellbeing. Specific benefits range from keeping brains sharp to fostering social connections. It is perhaps telling that countries with high old age employment rates like Iceland and New Zealand have some of the best health, life expectancy, and life satisfaction in the world.

The role of the Third Sector

As we have highlighted previously in our Value of Jersey's Third Sector report, charities, voluntary and community groups, social enterprises, and other non-profit organisations provide a huge amount of value to our islands, which often goes overlooked. While older people tend to take on more volunteering than those of working age, volunteering rates are still in decline in the UK.

When we engaged with the Third Sector, they reported similar trends, citing volunteer recruitment and retention as their second biggest challenge. In Jersey, we estimated that the third sector generated £230 million of value with just 4,000 FTEs; so engaging with and taking on community work would also boost our economy and health outcomes - even though they aren't captured by traditional statistics.

Learning best practice from other jurisdictions



Promoting longer working lives was an incredibly rewarding initiative, transforming both the perception and reality of retirement in New Zealand. Our focus on changing the culture to view extended working years as the norm involved extensive community engagement. We listened closely to identify barriers and explore incentives that would encourage individuals to either return to the workforce or delay their retirement. By ensuring that our policies, legislation, and businesses all aligned around actions and conditions conducive to high participation rates, we achieved remarkable success. We also worked with the media to reframe how older people were presented (which included providing them with new photos to use in stories). Critically, older New Zealanders reported feeling valued and recognised for who they were, where previously they had felt invisible or misrepresented.

The reality is that the right work keeps you younger, happier, healthier and wealthier, with knock-on benefits to the economy and society more broadly.”

Diane Maxwell

Consultant and Former Retirement Commissioner, New Zealand Government

Upskilling New Zealand's older workers

The New Zealand Government “wants every New Zealander who is able to be earning, learning, caring or volunteering to do so.”

Policymakers believe that boosting workforce participation among older people contributes to a well-functioning labour market, which in turn helps lift the wellbeing of all New Zealanders.

Helping older people to stay in the workforce and transition their skills as they age and their circumstances change is a key part of the Older Workers Employment Action Plan, which was launched in 2022.

The Plan focuses on training and upskilling, finding and staying in work, supporting employers to be more inclusive and planning for the effects and opportunities of an aging workforce. Supplementing older workers across the workforce has also allowed New Zealand to help address the skills mismatch which employers struggle with.

The Plan has helped New Zealand sustain one of the world's highest employment rates among older people.

Crucially, New Zealand's high employment rate among older people is rooted in more than just legislation and regulation. There is also a strong cultural underpinning in which being active in later life is promoted and prized.

Learning best practice from other jurisdictions

Iceland tackles the barriers to participation

Icelandic policymakers believe that increasing workforce participation is one of the most important ways to strengthen social inclusion and tackle poverty.

Support for older people includes measures aimed at helping them switch to jobs that are more suited to them as they age.

Recognising that some workers might still face discrimination, Iceland's Equal Treatment in the Labour Market legislation outlaws discrimination based on age, disability, and reduced working capacity.

Workforce participation in later life is supported by a culture of lifelong learning and development with over a fifth of the working age population engaged in learning activities (most of whom are doing so whilst in employment). As a country that promotes flexibility, Iceland has also led the way in moves to a shorter working week moving from a 40 to 36 hour working week as a way to enable more women to work full time.



At ASL, we have the privilege of working with a wealth of talented candidates over the age of 50, each bringing unique skills and rich experience. While Jersey employers are increasingly recognising the value of this demographic, there's a tremendous opportunity to unlock even more potential by offering flexible roles. Many older workers seek flexibility, and by being open to accommodating these preferences, businesses can tap into a substantial and valuable pool of talent."

Tina Palmer

Director, ASL Recruitment

Singapore's success could inspire Jersey

How Jersey is adopting Singapore's partnership focused approach to increasing workforce participation

In Singapore, 32% of the population is aged over 55. In 2012, the country embarked on concerted moves to maximise employment in this older age group, centred on:

1. Enable seniors who wish to work to do so longer, with acts like the Retirement and Re-employment Act.
2. Build retirement savings by supplementing workforce earnings via Workfare Income Supplement.
3. Allows for increased workforce flexibility under the recently introduced Tripartite model (process for requesting and reviewing flexible working).

Close collaboration between employee representatives, businesses and policymakers was at the heart of a series of steps that have successfully increased the elderly employment rates for residents over 10 years (60-64 from 63% to 68%, 65+ from 27% to 33%).

This cross industry, community and Government approach is reflective of efforts by the Government of Jersey and Jersey Finance. Specifically, through the Financial Services Policy Framework, the Government is seeking to broaden the skills and expertise of the workforce, and aims for a “collaborative programme between Government, the regulator and industry that identifies the skills needed, and seeks to attract, retain and develop the professionals required”. The policy has a priority to “deepen and broaden the skills and expertise of Jersey’s workforce”.

Similarly, Jersey’s ‘Vision 2050, led by Jersey Finance, is proactively working to “envisage the role our industry can play not just in the next year or two, but in decades to come”.

Through this programme of work, Jersey Finance would like the sector to become a talent magnet, attracting skills from outside and within skilled future generations. This includes harnessing the value which alternative talent pools, such as individuals aged 55 and above, can bring through their deep and broad sectoral knowledge, life experience, leadership skills, and fresh perspectives - skills which are increasingly needed in a complex business environment. Jersey Finance has identified flexibility as key to these efforts, and is urging firms to continue evolving their approach to flexible working, not only as a retention tool, but as a core element of inclusive recruitment.

Jersey Finance has emphasised the importance of putting people at the heart of any strategy, building a resilient, skilled workforce. They have made significant headways through the Future-Fit Workforce workstream, which is fostering an environment for talent to thrive, including stronger engagement with schools and supporting upskilling and reskilling efforts across the island.





What's holding back participation

What's holding back participation



We often meet skilled, experienced people, especially more mature workers or those needing flexibility, who are overlooked because roles are full-time only. The workplace needs a rethink. Flexibility isn't a perk, it's key to companies unlocking real potential across our islands."

Fiona Wright

Associate Director, Leapfrog Limited

Are employers in Jersey and Guernsey capitalising on the talent and skills already on islands? The employment rates among women with young children and workers aged over 55 would suggest that the potential isn't being fully tapped.

The employment rates reflect high rates of early retirement and the extent to which women either delay returning or go back to work part-time after having children.

Clearly there are a number of reasons why people leave the workforce or limit their participation. They include finances, personal preference and even cultural and societal expectations. However, there are also some clear barriers to entry and return including:



Sector-specific forces

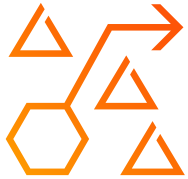
The financial services sector has a tradition of early retirement. For example in Jersey, only 18% of workers in financial services are over 55, compared to 26% of the population being over 55. And many professional services firms in a partnership structure have mandatory retirement ages at 55 or 60. This is to allow for younger partners to come through the business. There are well known cases where senior leaders from across the island's professional industries move into NED roles and other similarly demanding positions later in life - however this is the exception and not the norm.



Employer perceptions and unconscious bias

We spoke to a number of recruitment firms who highlighted the challenges they face in placing older workers. Many of the employers the recruitment firms work with have a preference for younger talent, seeing them as more tech savvy and likely to remain with the company for longer. In fact, recruiters say the reverse is often true, with younger workers being less likely to stay with an employer than an older colleague. And that given the same level of training and access to tools there is no evidence to suggest older workers are less digitally able.

What's holding back participation (continued)



Lack of flexibility

Women continue to shoulder the bulk of family child caring responsibilities and school pick-ups, underlining the need for more flexible working. In Jersey, women spend 71% more time on unpaid work than men in an average full week; and spend 23% less time on paid work in an average week. This indicates the foundations are not in place to facilitate maximum employment participation, and this leaves us sub-optimal.

Older workers may have ageing dependents who need caring for, and may also need flexibility. Recruiters we spoke to confirmed that many employers find it difficult to offer the flexibility candidates are looking for.



Skills and confidence

For people who have been out of the workforce for a period of time, the prospect of returning to work can feel daunting. With the pace of technology change and AI adoption, recruiters report that many in this position feel 'left behind' and potentially lacking the skills businesses are looking for. Even women returning from maternity leave for 12 months or less, are reporting challenges with getting up to speed with new technologies introduced in their absence. There is a clear opportunity for education providers in partnership with employers to step in to offer the relevant upskilling required to meet the needs of today's business environment.



Financial pressures

Jersey and Guernsey have some of the highest childcare costs in the OECD. Families may therefore conclude that it isn't financially viable for a mother to return to work after having a child.

As a sector, childcare providers have a challenging set of obstacles, not least the supply of well trained childcare professionals. Lack of work permits for overseas childcare staff compounds the difficulties of attracting and retaining people. This culminates in a deficit of wraparound care provision which further leads to women opting to work in part time roles.



After almost 35 years working in further and higher education I remain a strong advocate for the life-changing impact of learning. In today's fast-moving world, it is vital we empower all who are willing and ready to embrace life long learning. The opportunity for adults to improve their skills and learn new ones is central to The Guernsey Institute's mission. In Guernsey, we share a collective duty to ensure no one is left behind by changing workforce demands and technological progress, including the rise of artificial intelligence. By helping our workforce stay relevant and employable for longer, we not only nurture individual potential but also safeguard our community's social and economic future."

Jacki Hughes

Executive Principal, The Guernsey Institute

3

Nine actions to drive workforce participation

A charter for boosting employment participation

Priorities for...

Policymakers	Employers	Islanders
Establish a Lifelong Employment Commissioner	Ease the return to work	Adopt a mindset of lifelong learning
Make participation pay and childcare affordable	Embrace an older workforce culture	Challenge stereotypes
Enhance the adult upskilling and reskilling provision across the education system	Make work more appealing and flexible	Stay engaged



“

Empowering women and older workers to play a full part in our islands’ economies calls for both a cultural shift and bold new policies. Our charter for employment participation looks at how policymakers, businesses and local communities can come together to make this empowerment possible. We believe a ‘Lifelong Employment Commissioner’ working closely with community, education and business groups could lead the drive on making this a reality. Overcoming skills shortages in this way, would sharpen our competitive edge in a fast-shifting global economy, while improving our quality of life and ability to fund growing welfare needs. ”

Leyla Yildirim
Chief Strategy Officer, PwC Channel Islands

01

Establish a Lifelong Employment Commissioner

What: Create a Lifelong Employment Commissioner whose role is to provide hands-on support to industry and islanders through insights, guidance and materials to help employers build a better workplace for older employees. The Commissioner would also safeguard against discrimination, particularly against women and those aged over 55.

Why: The Governments of Jersey and Guernsey are beginning to act; both are looking to strengthen safeguards against age discrimination, Jersey workers now have the right to request a change towards hybrid working hours, and Jersey has established a Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning. By having a dedicated and independent Lifelong Employment Commissioner, policymakers and employers can use these developments as an opportunity to work together and harness a rich seam of knowledge and experience, while ensuring that the age range within their workforce reflects the make-up of their customer base.

This should extend to bridging the gender gap in employment rates - particularly for those aged over 55 where there is a significant gap in the employment rate, with women having a lower rate.

02

Make participation pay and childcare affordable

What: Increase the financial incentive to work by improving the accessibility and affordability of childcare, and create financial and tax incentives to encourage people to work for longer.

Why: Right now, the ‘motherhood penalty’ means that many women in the Channel Islands either can’t take up employment or work fewer hours than they would like to if they do. Increasing the accessibility and affordability of childcare would not only widen the opportunities to work, but also help make it pay. Possible steps include extra government subsidies and more sustainable funding models and support for the childcare sector.

Similarly, many older islanders who may have retired early, may not feel a pressing financial need to return to work. Further steps could be considered such as tax breaks, and other financial incentives linked to pensions for people re-entering the workforce and the businesses that hire them.

03

Enhance adult upskilling and reskilling provision across the education system

What: Governments in both islands should convene discussions between employers, education providers and workers with the aim to increase the availability of targeted training around upskilling and skills matching. The focus should include both new business tools, systems and processes and future-ready capabilities in areas such as AI. The challenge will be in how to reach into the community in each island to target potential returnees. Working closely with community groups to access potential candidates and promote the benefits of upskilling will be key. And this effort must be supported by business working collaboratively with educators on content design and delivery.

Why: Local people are eager to learn and stay relevant at a time when skills demands are changing fast. Time away from work can leave people at risk of falling behind, dent their confidence, and deter them from applying for particular jobs.

04

Ease the return to work

What: Offer dedicated returner programmes and promote your sector to those looking to return to work. Businesses and industry bodies need to do more in actively promoting the variety of roles available within their companies.

Why: Some people are put off working in certain sectors because they believe they wouldn't fit in or they lack the necessary skills. In turn many returners report difficulties in convincing employers to take them on however well qualified and experienced they are. In particular, some may feel financial services remains a less inclusive industry. The realities have changed, but businesses and industry bodies may need to do more to challenge preconceptions and misconceptions.

Returners programmes offer a vital foot in the door. Typically, they include training on industry developments and technical skills to bring returners up to speed. Those enrolled tend to be hired by the company offering the placement. Even if not, their job prospects will have been bolstered by the acquisition of fresh skills, credentials to add to their CV and confidence from being back in the world of work.

05

Embrace an older workforce culture

What: Create an inclusive working environment by opening up training, assignment, and career development opportunities for older workers as well as younger workers.

Why: Experience in Iceland and New Zealand highlights the importance of helping older workers to use and develop their skills to adapt to today's changing working environment. By embracing an older workforce, we can access strengths which may otherwise be overlooked. For example an older worker may have strong project management, soft skills, coaching and mentoring, and problem solving abilities. These are skills honed and developed over a long career, and are hard to learn quickly; attributes that younger workers may fall short on and need more support. Conversely, a new older recruit could need more support with technology they are less familiar with. Mutual mentoring can be a highly impactful way for younger and older workers to learn from each other.

Employers that have a comprehensive development strategy that works across generations and different demographics will ultimately have the edge when it comes to the race for talent in the islands.

06

Make work more appealing and flexible

What: Greater flexibility in where, when and how people work would help them to balance professional and personal responsibilities more effectively. This might include flexibility around caring for young children or older family members.

Why: Regulatory developments are likely to require a rethink of recruitment practices and flexible working within many organisations. Yet this is also an opportunity to embrace flexibility as a way to attract talent and boost satisfaction, motivation and performance within the workforce. Menopause policies, health insurance and ability to purchase additional holidays are all potential measures which could make your work environment more appealing. Job sharing and shorter term project-based roles for fixed periods could also attract more talent.

Technology is often presented as a threat to jobs, with older workers at most risk. In reality, digital transformation can help take a lot of the routine drudgery out of work and help workers to focus on what they really enjoy. It could thus encourage many people to carry on working rather than retiring.

07

Adopt a mindset of lifelong learning

What: Adopt a mindset of lifelong learning and reconsider the societal notion of retirement being fixed at a certain age. Boost your employability and financial security by taking ownership of your own upskilling and staying active for longer. Ask yourself, have you got something to contribute to this new era of work?

Why: As our health outcomes improve in advanced economies and we live for longer, we need to question the framing of retirement when citizens still have the health, energy and desire to continue contributing. The working environment has developed rapidly in the past few years. AI is re-shaping the way we work, yet it is not too late to learn how to use and master these exciting emerging technologies.

All islanders need to think about how they sustain their financial independence, their health and wellbeing into their later years. Working for longer has a critical role to play in this and to reinforce a sense of purpose.

08

Challenge stereotypes

What: Islanders should lead the charge against ageism by living the proof. Offer to mentor or buddy with younger colleagues, highlighting the two-way productivity gains of mixed-age teams. Call out age-biased jokes, adverts or hiring language in workplaces, clubs and online forums, replacing them with evidence. Model active, flexible work patterns - from project contracts to part-time consulting - so employers see output, not age.

Why: Studies show older employees are at least as productive — and often more reliable — than younger peers, dismantling myths about performance, absenteeism and openness to ideas. Continuing in paid or voluntary work also correlates with better physical and mental health, extending healthy life expectancy and reducing pressure on health services.

09

Stay engaged

What: Stay engaged and connected with the community or employment as you become older.

Why: Remaining active and engaged, either through volunteering or paid employment, can help to promote happiness and health, especially when moving into retirement. Staying connected can also help to foster a sense of companionship and belonging during a time when so many in our community are facing loneliness.

Throughout your working life, you have built up decades of skills, experience and connections. You are also likely to have a strong network and reputation within your sector and beyond. All this accumulated ‘capital’ could provide the springboard for a new and rewarding stage of your career, with greater freedom over both when and where you work.

As islands, we need people to engage in both a healthy working environment and community. Could this be you?

Methodology

Employment and GVA projections assume:

- Constant employment rates per age bracket in 2040.
- Constant productivity levels.
- Constant hours worked per age bracket.
- Where Jersey and Guernsey employment rates are higher, we have used the Jersey and Guernsey figure for employment. E.g. Jersey employment rates are higher for 25-50 year olds, so we have projected no change.
- Headline statistics use official population projection scenarios of +150 net migration scenario for Guernsey and +700 net migration scenario for Jersey.
- Potential tax increase is illustrated by using the respective tax to GVA ratios of Jersey and Guernsey.
- Productivity rates per hour worked was calculated by dividing GVA by estimated total hours worked in the economy.





Sources

All Jersey and Guernsey data used for employment and GVA projections are from Governmental publications. This includes but is not limited to: official population figures and projections, GVA estimates, and employment statistics.

As hours worked by age data is not available in either Jersey or Guernsey, we have used OECD gathered UK actual hours worked and average hours worked as a proxy. All Iceland and New Zealand data for employment and GVA projections are from OECD datasets. The OECD has gathered and standardised their data from the following sources:

Iceland	New Zealand	United Kingdom
Labour Force Survey (Economically Active Population Survey)/ Statistics Iceland. Annual averages of the quarterly LFS since 2003.	Household Labour Force Survey/ Statistics New Zealand. The annual data are averages of quarterly estimates.	Annual Population Survey (APS) as of 2004.

All Singapore data is gathered from Singapore Government Agencies. For simplicity and comparison, we have only considered Singapore resident data.

Limitations:

For Jersey, we used 2021 census data for the most accurate picture, given limitations with the 2023 experimental employment data. Potential tax increase figures have not been adjusted for personal vs corporate tax contributions, and does not capture any potential spending savings to government.

Notes:

“~” denotes less than 100 or zero uplift.

Figures may not sum up due to rounding.

References

Title	Jurisdiction	Source
<u>Guernsey Population Projections 2024-2099 and employment bulletin</u>	Guernsey	Guernsey Data and Analysis
<u>Annual Guernsey Population Projection Bulletin</u>	Guernsey	Guernsey Data and Analysis
<u>Guernsey Historic Population</u>	Guernsey	Guernsey Data and Analysis
<u>Guernsey Tax Revenue</u>	Guernsey	Guernsey Data and Analysis
<u>Guernsey GDP and GVA</u>	Guernsey	Guernsey Data and Analysis
<u>Jersey Population Projections 2023 to 2080</u>	Jersey	Statistics Jersey
<u>Jersey Labour Market Report</u>	Jersey	Statistics Jersey
<u>Jersey population and migration statistics 2023</u>	Jersey	Statistics Jersey
<u>Total population, annual change, natural growth, net migration per year.</u>	Jersey	Statistics Jersey
<u>Jersey GVA</u>	Jersey	Statistics Jersey
<u>Economic Status by Age</u>	Jersey	Statistics Jersey
<u>Jersey Historic and Projected Population by age</u>	Jersey	Statistics Jersey
<u>Jersey 2001 Census Report</u>	Jersey	Statistics Jersey
<u>Jersey Tax per GDP</u>	Jersey	Statistics Jersey
<u>OECD actual hours worked</u>	OECD	OECD
<u>OECD average hours worked</u>	OECD	OECD
<u>Life expectancy and healthy life expectancy at age 65</u>	OECD	OECD
<u>Employed population by age groups</u>	OECD	OECD
<u>Historical population data</u>	OECD	OECD
<u>Singapore Resident Labour Force</u>	Singapore	Singapore Ministry of Manpower
<u>Singapore Resident Population</u>	Singapore	SingStat
<u>Employment rates by sex</u>	Europe	EuroStat

PwC Channel Islands contacts

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We very much welcome the opportunity to continue the discussion, so please do get in touch with any member of our team.



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