

January 2020

Title: Cross Party Group on Autism 15 January 2020 - briefing note on Disability Action Plan

Cross Party Group on Autism 15 January 2020

Disability Employment

- We want to ensure that everybody who can and wants to work has the opportunity to find fulfilling and sustainable employment, and that those facing barriers to employment, including many disabled people, can access any additional support they need.
- Agree with the Active Citizenship theme in the Scottish Strategy for Autism that autistic people should have more opportunities to work and should be supported into work and while in work
- 1 in 5 working age people in Scotland are disabled
- The difference in employment rates between disabled people and the rest of the working age population is known as the disability employment gap and in 2016 (our baseline year) stood at 37.4 percentage points
- Collective approach to achieving ambition to at least halve the disability employment gap in Scotland by 2038

A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People: Employment Action Plan

- Published December 2018
- Key actions to be delivered 2019-2021 to at least halve the disability employment gap by 2038
- We have committed to doing an annual update of Plan
- The plan identifies 3 key themes: supporting employers to recruit and retain disabled people; supporting disabled people to enter employment; and young people and transitions.

Range of actions:

- In the Scottish Government's Recruitment and Retention Plan which was published in August 2019 we set a target for the employment of disabled people within our own workforce for external recruitment so that, over the next 7 years, on average 25% of successful candidates will be disabled people
- We also recognise that the recruitment process can sometimes be off –putting to disabled people so we will deliver a set of actions to improve the recruitment experience for disabled people
- We have provided young disabled people with the highest level of Modern Apprenticeship funding through the enhanced contribution rate

- We have also removed some of the barriers that have previously prevented young disabled people entering Modern Apprenticeships through implementation of the Equalities Action Plan for Mas
- We have established a Public Social Partnership involving employers, government and disabled people's organisations to develop, test and implement solutions to barriers employers face in hiring and retaining disabled people
- We are improving the employment prospects of disabled people through our devolved Scottish employability programme Fair Start Scotland

Future Actions

- We know that action needs to be accelerated to achieve our ambition
- It requires a collective commitment and leadership across public, private and third sectors and we will work with partners and employers to deliver this
- Keen to work with partners and disabled people's organisations and to hear their views – please get in touch if you would like to discuss

February 2020

TITLE: FMQ style briefing.

ISSUES – The disability employment gap in Scotland (the difference between the employment rates of disabled and non-disabled people) is 35.5 percentage points. Our ambition is to at least halve the disability employment gap by 2038. This is based on the 2016 baseline of 37.4 percentage points and will mean reducing the gap to no larger than 18.7 percentage points. (Source: APS, Jan-Dec 2016 datasets, 16-64 year olds, ONS)

In December 2018 we published *A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People: Employment Action Plan* which outlines the initial actions Scottish Government and its agencies will take to halve the disability employment gap. We are publishing our first annual progress report this spring.

We are currently pausing the delivery of the Disabled Parents Employment Support Fund (DPESF) to: engage further with disabled people’s organisations, disabled people, local government and the Poverty and Inequality Commission; and draw on emergent learning from the Parental Employability Support Fund (PESF).

It should be noted, however, that Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) has recently highlighted the impact of poverty on households with disabled family members, and is critical of the Scottish Government’s budget allocation to PESF to support people in poverty into, and to progress within, employment – suggesting it is an insufficient level of investment.

Top Lines

- We want to ensure that everybody who can and wants to work has the opportunity to find fulfilling and sustainable employment suitable to their needs and skills, and that those facing barriers to employment - including many disabled people who also often face poverty - can access the support they need.
 - In 2016 we committed to at least halving the disability employment gap in Scotland. We have committed to achieving this by 2038, and have been making steady progress. Since then the gap has reduced by 2.1 percentage points.
 - *A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People: Employment Action Plan* was published in December 2018, and sets out how we will meet our commitment, working with partners, as well as disabled people themselves to deliver this ambition.
 - The Action plan identifies three key themes: Supporting employers to recruit and retain disabled people; Supporting disabled people to enter employment; and Young people and transitions.
 - We are publishing our first annual progress report in the coming weeks.
1. **We are taking a range of actions to reduce the disability employment gap:**

- We have previously provided young disabled people with the highest level of Modern Apprenticeship (MA) funding through the enhanced contribution rate.
- As part of our *Recruitment and Retention Plan*, which was published in August 2019, we set a target for the employment of disabled people within the Scottish Government's own workforce for external recruitment so that, over the next 7 years, on average 25% of successful candidates will be disabled people.
- We are improving the employment prospects of disabled people, through our devolved Scottish employability programmes such as Fair Start Scotland, and the development and delivery of No One Left Behind;
- £12m of Child Poverty Funding over 2020/21 and 2021/22 will be focused on supporting vulnerable parents impacted by child poverty, including disabled parents, to progress towards and into fair work, as well as to progress and upskill if in employment.
- We have established a Public Social Partnership involving employers, government and disabled people's organisations to develop, test and implement solutions to barriers employers face in hiring and retaining disabled people.
- Through Fair Work First we are developing criteria and standards for employers, including the public sector, which encourage action to develop diverse and inclusive workforces;
- We are undertaking and learning from the Health and Work pilots in Fife and Dundee;
- We will shortly be publishing a new Careers Strategy to align career information, advice and guidance services in Scotland to enable all individuals, including disabled people to receive high quality support to fulfil their potential;
- This year we intend to run an employer led campaign to ensure more employers understand the benefits of employing disabled people, and are supported to improve their recruitment and retention practice.

2. We know we can do more and are working with key partners towards a long term ambition of seeking to at least halve the disability employment gap in Scotland:

- We know that action needs to be accelerated to achieve our ambition.
- We will require collective leadership and action across public, private and third sectors to do this - however we are clear Scottish Government itself must demonstrate leadership and drive action on this agenda.
- We are ensuring we take an All Scotland Approach involving the public, private and third sector, disabled people, DPOs and other experts.

3. The Disabled Parents Employment Support fund (DPESF):

- The Scottish Government has paused the development and delivery of the Disabled Parents Employment Support fund (DPESF) which is included as a commitment in the Employment Action time and which was due to commence delivery in spring 2020.

- Before making a decision with regard to the delivery of DPESF we have decided to use the next year to work with the Poverty and Inequality Commission, Local Government, DPOs and disabled people to explore what disabled parents need and want in terms of employability / employment support in order to help them progress towards employment.
- We will learn from the Parental Employment Support Fund (PESF) (£16.1M investment over the next two years), which focusses on the six priority groups identified in the Child Poverty Delivery Plan, including disabled parents, and which has commenced delivery in some LAs.
- Further, we will learn from related programmes, No One Left Behind, Fair Start Scotland, and the forthcoming Reviews of IPS (individual placement support) and Supported Employment to test the appetite and demand for a future DPESF programme.
- We will develop DPESF with input from Disabled People's Organisations (DPO)s and disabled parents which will help us achieve the best possible outcome, ensuring that the approach taken works best to meet the needs of disabled people.
- As part of this we will be looking to make an advice request from the Poverty and Inequality Commission to conduct a short piece of engagement with DPOs in 2020 and provide advice to Ministers, about the best way to proceed.

4. JRF and Scottish Government Lines:

- It is worth noting that the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) is critical of the Scottish Government budget allocation to the Parental Employability Support Fund (PESF), which aims to support people in poverty into employment.
- They say that we need as many people as possible to be in good jobs. Further that the prospects for people in struggling places need to be prioritised, or progress will stall. In addition, employment among disabled people and carers is still low, and they should be supported to work when they can.
- JRF is also clear that low income working families' income need to improve, helping people in the lowest-paid jobs or working part-time, as too many people are stuck in low-paid, insecure jobs, with little chance of progression and too few hours of work to reach a decent living standard. JRF is clear that in-work poverty must be seen as a critical issue for our economy and given high priority by economic policy-makers.
- The Scottish Government agrees with this, and is keenly aware of and taking into consideration the well-known link between disability, poverty and fair work - as also demonstrated through the Child Poverty Delivery Plan and associated funding.
- We remain committed to supporting disabled people towards and into fair employment suitable to their skills and needs.
- As always planned, disabled parents will be supported towards and into employment, and to increase their earnings, through PESF, which is funded by £16.1 over two years. Once we have a better understanding of disabled parents' needs, we are intending to progress with DPESF, making a real difference for unemployed disabled parents based on the evidence base. This

work will also help us meeting our ambition to at least halve the disability employment gap by 2038.

March 2020

TITLE: DPO Meeting – Briefing for 25 March 2020

What	DPO Meeting
Where	VScene – see calendar invite for joining details. SG employees should join via Skype for Business or dial in.
When	Wednesday, 25 th March 2020 – 15.00-16.30
Key Message(s)	<p>The Scottish Government published A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People: Employment Action Plan, which set out the steps we as a Government will take to reduce the employment gap between disabled people and the rest of the working age population By at least half by 2038.</p> <p>We want to ensure that everybody who can and wants to work has the opportunity to find fulfilling and sustainable employment suitable to their needs and skills, and that those facing barriers to employment, including many disabled people, can access any additional support they need.</p>
Who	[REDACTED]
Why	<p>DPOs to lead a discussion on the format of the meetings held and to cover DPO participation in the Employability Stakeholder Group. The group are also likely to touch upon PSP and future plans.</p> <p>Meeting attendees have been given an advance, embargoed copy of the progress report. This meeting item will cover its contents. Disability Employment Gap stands at 35.5 p.p. for Jan – Dec 2018.</p> <p>Key progress to date will be covered under the three work streams:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting Employers to Recruit and Retain Disabled People; • Supporting Disabled People to Enter Employment; and • Young People and Transitions. <p>Information on key statistics and key lines to take can be found in Annex B</p>
Briefing contents	<p>Annex A – Agenda</p> <p>Annex B – Key Lines to take</p>

AGENDA

1. Review of meeting purpose and format (**Lead: All**)
2. SG Update on Action Plan: Progress Report (**Lead: [REDACTED]**)
 - Progress to date
 - Key Indicators
 - Forthcoming Year: Priorities
 - COVID-19 response
 - SE / IPS review
 - PSP
 - Employer-led campaign
 - DPESF
 - Transitions
 - Stakeholder Engagement
3. DPO updates / queries
 - Review of PSED (**Lead: [REDACTED]**)
4. Any other business (**Lead: All**)

STATISTICS AND KEY LINES TO TAKE

Disability Employment Gap Statistics

- Since 2016, Scotland's DEG has fallen:
 - to 35.9 p.p. in 2017; and
 - to 35.5 p.p. in 2018.
- The narrowing of the gap since 2016 has been driven by a rise in the employment rate of disabled people.
- To date, we are on track to reduce the disability employment gap by 1 percentage point each year.
- The employment rate of disabled people has increased by 2.8 percentage points over the last two years - from 42.8% in 2016 to 45.6% in 2018.
- In 2018, average pay for disabled employees in Scotland was 8.3% lower than nondisabled employees. For every £1 that a non-disabled employee earned in 2018, a disabled employee earned £0.92.
- Scotland's disability pay gap was the smallest of all UK nations and regions. However, this data is volatile for Scotland which can make it difficult to identify consistent change over time.

COVID-19 Response

- We strongly encourage all employers to apply Fair Work principles in treating their workers fairly and showing flexibility in their approach to planning for and dealing with the potential impacts of COVID-19 on workers and workplaces.
- Employment law is reserved; we call on the UK Government to do all it can to provide the support that workers need.
- Workers worried about their employment rights should visit the ACAS website or discuss with their employer.
- There is health information available about COVID-19 on the NHS Inform website and the ACAS and UK Government websites provide information on the rights of, and available support to, workers.

Supporting employers to recruit and retain disabled people

- As part of our Recruitment and Retention Plan for Disabled People, which was published in August 2019, we set a target for the employment of disabled people within the Scottish Government's own workforce for external recruitment so that, over the next 7 years, on average 25% of successful candidates will be disabled people.
- We have established a Public Social Partnership involving employers, government and disabled people's organisations to develop, test and implement solutions to barriers employers face in hiring and retaining disabled people. A timeline is in place for the next stage of the PSP but this is dependent on COVID-19.
- Disabled Parents Employment Support Fund (DPESF)
 - It's Scottish Government's aim to invest £6 million from the Tackling Child Poverty Fund to support the development, implementation and

delivery of the Disabled Parents Employment Support Fund pilot (DPESF). This fund has been set up to target primarily child poverty by the focusing on employability support targeted at disabled parents who are out of work, to identify and learn from the pilot what kinds of support works best for this group, and to consider mainstreaming.

- DPESF has been paused for 2020/21 but PESF will go ahead. However, work has taken place to collaborate with local authorities to establish the DPESF. DPESF will align with the funding model of PESF. Cosla, Local Authorities & StateAid have all been consulted.

Supporting Disabled People to Enter Employment

- Fair Start Scotland
 - 19,003 people joined FSS;
 - 51% of FSS participants have indicated they are disabled. An additional 14% of people joining the service reported a long-term health condition that did not limit their daily activities;
 - Not everyone participating in the service has yet had enough time to achieve job outcomes. However, 46% of those achieving 3 month job outcomes were disabled people.
- DWP and Access to Work (AtW)
 - AtW Still reserved to Westminster
 - Contribution to AtW staff guide
- City Regions and Regional Growth Deals - There are 6 City Deals and 6 Growth Deals either operational or in development. All deals are underpinned by a commitment by the Scottish Government and partners to Inclusive Growth.
- Improving Accessibility of Transport
 - Publication of *Accessible Travel Framework: Going Further*
- Employer Led Campaign – in development stage. Established to promote the positive business case for employing disabled people directly to employers, to highlight the talent and opportunities that disabled workers provide. Currently in development stage, with possible funding of up to £100,000 in future to support employers to recruit & retain disabled people.
- Supported Employment Review – Building on initial scoping work undertaken in 2019, we will undertake a review of supported employment, as part of implementing the employment actions agreed in *Keys to Life: Scotland's Learning Disability Strategy*
- IPS Review – Scottish Government has committed to undertake a review of the delivery of Individual Placement and Support (IPS) within Fair Start Scotland.

Young People and Transitions

- Work to improve Transitions for Young People has been undertaken by Children & Families Directorate, Disabled Children & Young People Advisory Group, and the Young Disabled People's Forum.
- GIRFEC policy is being refreshed at present.

- Work is also being undertaken with the Association for Real Change (ARC) to explore how to improve the experiences of families across Scotland and provide practitioners with a framework to measure their work on Transitions.
- *Scotland Career's Strategy: Moving Forward* was published on 18 Feb 2020. This is a high level strategy – the implementation plan will be developed over the year and will have opportunities for engagement with DPOs
- We have provided young disabled people with the highest level of Modern Apprenticeship (MA) funding through the enhanced contribution rate.
- The proportion of MA starts in 2018/19 self-identifying as disabled or having a health condition was 14.1% (3,771), which was 2.8 percentage points higher than the previous year.

Next Steps

- Stakeholder Engagement – we will establish a Scottish Access to Work Stakeholder forum and will continue contact with DPOs. We will also review the membership of the Strategic Labour Market Group to ensure it has disabled people's interests represented.
- Review of Supported Employment: Building on initial scoping work undertaken in 2019, we will undertake a review of supported employment, as part of implementing the employment actions agreed in *Keys to Life: Scotland's Learning Disability Strategy*.
- Review of Individual Placement & Support
 - The scope of the review will assess:
 - the extent to which IPS delivery as part of FSS has achieved the desired policy ambition;
 - the challenges that have arisen in realising that ambition and meeting the principles of IPS;
 - how the approach to IPS compares to models of successful delivery employed elsewhere in the UK and internationally; and
 - funding levels and models; to ascertain if there are any budgetary constraints as a result of current funding arrangements. Also assess what effect and impact embedding IPS within FSS has had on IPS delivery.
- A proposed timeline for the IPS review exists but is subject to change due to COVID-19.
- The PSP will move into operational phase, liaising with the lead partner.
- Employer Led Campaign – we are now looking at delivery models. Options include the Workplace Equality Fund; PSP; or a campaign similar to The Poverty Alliance Living Wage Campaign. DPOs will have a paper in advance discussing each option.
- DPESF – We have paused the investment planned for this year (up to £3 million in 2020-21) in order to finalise delivery options. Stakeholders are going to be involved in this review.

April 2020

Extract from: TRANSITIONS PLANNING: Input to GIRFEC – April 2020

2. Response from Employability Division – Disability Employment Team

Q1: What impact this may have in your policy area so that we can collate and try to manage this?

We recently published the first annual progress report of '[A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People: Employment Action Plan](#).' The action plan covers three key themes, one of which is Young People and Transitions. Within the young people and transitions section of the plan there are a number of different actions covering Modern Apprenticeships, Developing the Young Workforce, Learner Journey Review and more.

When this report was published, the overall Disability Employment Gap (the difference between the employment rates of disabled people and non-disabled people) had decreased from the 2016 baseline of 37.4 percentage points (p.p.) to 35.9 p.p. in 2017, and to 35.5 p.p. in 2018. ¹

In the context of the labour market, young people are defined as being aged between 16-24 years. The employment rate in 2018 of disabled 16-24 year olds was 35.8% - slightly higher than the 2016 baseline rate of 35.6%, but 7.2 percentage points lower than the rate in 2017 (43.0%). The unemployment rate for disabled 16-24 year olds has also fallen – from 20.8% in 2017, to 17.9% in 2018. This shift can be explained by a rise in inactivity – in terms of the labour market, 'inactivity' refers to people not in employment, who have not been seeking work within the last 4 weeks and/or are unable to start work within the next 2 weeks.²

Evidence from previous economic downturns, including the recession of 2007-09, suggests that the economic and labour market impacts of COVID-19 are likely to lead to a widening of existing disparities in employment outcomes for a number of priority groups, including disabled people, minority ethnic groups, and young people. Key points noted from work that the [EHRC published in 2009](#) to try to assess the impact of the last recession on different groups of workers, included the following in relation to young people:

- Demand for the labour of young people (and older people) is "hyper-cyclical" - that is, it responds more closely to the cycle than demand for middle age workers does;
- When demand is low, this shows up in inactivity as much as in unemployment (that is, people drop out of the labour market entirely);
- Young people have difficulty entering the labour market and, if they are in jobs, they are (most) likely to lose them;

¹ ONS Annual Population Survey, Jan-Dec 2016-2018

² <https://www.gov.scot/publications/fairer-scotland-disabled-people-employment-action-plan-progress-report/>

- Older and younger people can be “scarred” (i.e. the implications of failing to enter work smoothly or being obliged to leave the labour market entirely are long term and not merely short term).

The recently published State of the Economy Report estimates that the industries which have been specifically requested to cease public facing operations as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic account for around 22% of the economy in Scotland. This directly impacts around 144,000 businesses and 920,000 jobs, including ‘non-essential’ retail, leisure and hospitality, construction and education. Some of these industries have partially mitigated the impact of closure through online sales or distance learning.³

Employees aged under 25 are about 2.5 times as likely to work in a sector that is now shut down as other employees. On the eve of the crisis sectors that were shut down as a result of social distancing measures employed nearly a third (30%) of all employees under the age of 25 (25% of young men and 36% of young women).⁴

Whilst the above figures are not disaggregated to consider the effects of this on young disabled people in the labour market, it is very likely there could be a profound negative impact.

Within Scottish Government, there will be an impact on current work as policy teams are redeployed to deal with the COVID-19 Response. We expect significant impact on the implementation of work programmes including Developing the Young Workforce as a result of COVID-19, including a reduction in work-based learning opportunities in the senior phase of school, colleges and the family of apprenticeships. This in part reflects wider labour market conditions and the loss of employer engagement with education, due to businesses closing down, reducing their workforce and limiting activity to critical functions.

Q2: *What actions are being proposed or taken in your policy area to plan for and mitigate against this issue.*

Consistent with the approach across the Scottish Government, we will need to continue to reassess all planned work programmes in light of COVID-19, and may need to reprioritise activity as a result. This includes planned activity for the coming year as part of *A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People: Employment Action Plan*. However, we remain committed to addressing inequalities in the labour market and this will include taking action to try to minimise any negative impact on disabled people, including disabled young people.

Some work that is being undertaken by colleagues across the Fair Work, Employability & Skills (FWES) Directorate includes:

- **Skills delivery:** We are collaborating with Education Scotland, Skills Development Scotland and the Scottish Funding Council to prioritise skills

³ <https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/research-and-analysis/2020/04/state-economy/documents/state-economy/state-economy/govscot%3Adocument/state-economy.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.ifs.org.uk/publications/14791>

delivery during the Covid-19 pandemic. This includes early consideration of how we best support schools and colleges to engage in DYW activity in AY2020/2021.

- **Work-based learning:** We are working with schools and college colleagues to consider alternative approaches to the delivery of vocational training, such as project-based learning, in the senior phase. This includes looking at the delivery of courses at SCQF level 5 and above, and plans for future delivery of apprenticeships.
- **Modelling for 20/21:** We are working with partners to assess the impact of Covid-19, including modelling work for the 20/21 academic year and expected skills shortages/reskilling
- **Modern Apprenticeships:** We are working with Skills Development Scotland (SDS) and the Scottish Training Federation (STF) on measures to support training providers who deliver Modern Apprenticeships.
- **Maintaining and supporting employers to engage with education:** the network of DYW employer groups are also prioritising work to sustain employer engagement in education, and developing a suite of resources to support employers to engage with schools and colleges next academic year.
- **Distance learning:** We are also reviewing the delivery of distance learning and the opportunities there are within Community Learning and Development to look at alternative models for skills delivery, and exploring these with schools and SFC colleagues.
- **Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA)** – It is stated in the guidance that EMA will still be paid to students whose applications have been authorised on the system, including whilst learning centres are closed due to Covid-19. This includes students who are in self isolation because of Covid-19, and also those who have self-isolated due to their parents/carers having health issues which put them at risk. We appreciate that many doctors surgeries will not be in a position to issue medical certificates in most cases for this, and have urged local authorities to view such cases sympathetically and follow the discretion which the guidance allows. New applications can continue to be made, further information can be found here: <https://www.mygov.scot/ema/>

Planning for COVID-19 recovery is in the early stages, but we welcome the opportunity to continue to be involved in discussions to identify and respond to the impact(s) of COVID-19 on young people and transitions.

TITLE: Transitions - Briefing note - COVID Impact - 2020.04.29

TRANSITIONS PLANNING: Input to GIRFEC – April 2020

1. Background – request for input from [REDACTED] (22/04/2020)

I would like to use this opportunity to highlight the importance of thinking about transitions in the context of Covid-19 and school closures.

There will be a number of disabled children and young people who are due to leave school this summer. Over the normal course of things services would be deep in the middle of transition planning to ensure that the right supports are in place for after the summer break. Clearly the current situation is anything but normal, but we cannot wait until after the summer to think about this, and the impact the current situation might have on those disabled young people, their families and the professionals who support them.

We have raised transitions planning for disabled young people in our Learning and Children Hub ministerial core brief, available here:

<https://erdm.scotland.gov.uk:8443/documents/A28015337/details>

Transitions planning for disabled young people leaving school in the summer of 2020 and moving into adult services may have been impacted by schools closures and loss of wider support due to Covid-19.

With that in mind we have asked ARC to do some thinking with us and to work with young people, their families and local authorities to see how they can be supported to continue planning processes, keeping the child or young person at the heart (albeit virtually). Clearly transitions is an issue that will have a knock on effect on a number of policy areas so I would be grateful if you could let me know:

- 1. What impact this may have in your policy area so that we can collate and try to manage this*
- 2. What actions are being proposed or taken in your policy area to plan for and mitigate against this issue*

2. Response from Employability Division – Disability Employment Team

Q1: What impact this may have in your policy area so that we can collate and try to manage this?

We recently published the first annual progress report of '[A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People: Employment Action Plan](#).' The action plan covers three key themes, one of which is Young People and Transitions. Within the young people and transitions section of the plan there are a number of different actions covering Modern Apprenticeships, Developing the Young Workforce, Learner Journey Review and more.

When this report was published, the overall Disability Employment Gap (the difference between the employment rates of disabled people and non-disabled

people) had decreased from the 2016 baseline of 37.4 percentage points (p.p.) to 35.9 p.p. in 2017, and to 35.5 p.p. in 2018.⁵

In the context of the labour market, young people are defined as being aged between 16-24 years. The employment rate in 2018 of disabled 16-24 year olds was 35.8% - slightly higher than the 2016 baseline rate of 35.6%, but 7.2 percentage points lower than the rate in 2017 (43.0%). The unemployment rate for disabled 16-24 year olds has also fallen – from 20.8% in 2017, to 17.9% in 2018. This shift can be explained by a rise in inactivity – in terms of the labour market, ‘inactivity’ refers to people not in employment, who have not been seeking work within the last 4 weeks and/or are unable to start work within the next 2 weeks.⁶

Evidence from previous economic downturns, including the recession of 2007-09, suggests that the economic and labour market impacts of COVID-19 are likely to lead to a widening of existing disparities in employment outcomes for a number of priority groups, including disabled people, minority ethnic groups, and young people. Key points noted from work that the [EHRC published in 2009](#) to try to assess the impact of the last recession on different groups of workers, included the following in relation to young people:

- Demand for the labour of young people (and older people) is “hyper-cyclical” - that is, it responds more closely to the cycle than demand for middle age workers does;
- When demand is low, this shows up in inactivity as much as in unemployment (that is, people drop out of the labour market entirely);
- Young people have difficulty entering the labour market and, if they are in jobs, they are (most) likely to lose them;
- Older and younger people can be “scarred” (i.e. the implications of failing to enter work smoothly or being obliged to leave the labour market entirely are long term and not merely short term).

The recently published State of the Economy Report estimates that the industries which have been specifically requested to cease public facing operations as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic account for around 22% of the economy in Scotland. This directly impacts around 144,000 businesses and 920,000 jobs, including ‘non-essential’ retail, leisure and hospitality, construction and education. Some of these industries have partially mitigated the impact of closure through online sales or distance learning.⁷

Employees aged under 25 are about 2.5 times as likely to work in a sector that is now shut down as other employees. On the eve of the crisis sectors that were shut down as a result of social distancing measures employed nearly a third (30%) of all employees under the age of 25 (25% of young men and 36% of young women).⁸

⁵ ONS Annual Population Survey, Jan-Dec 2016-2018

⁶ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/fairer-scotland-disabled-people-employment-action-plan-progress-report/>

⁷ <https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/research-and-analysis/2020/04/state-economy/documents/state-economy/state-economy/govscot%3Adocument/state-economy.pdf>

⁸ <https://www.ifs.org.uk/publications/14791>

Whilst the above figures are not disaggregated to consider the effects of this on young disabled people in the labour market, it is very likely there could be a profound negative impact.

Within Scottish Government, there will be an impact on current work as policy teams are redeployed to deal with the COVID-19 Response. We expect significant impact on the implementation of work programmes including Developing the Young Workforce as a result of COVID-19, including a reduction in work-based learning opportunities in the senior phase of school, colleges and the family of apprenticeships. This in part reflects wider labour market conditions and the loss of employer engagement with education, due to businesses closing down, reducing their workforce and limiting activity to critical functions.

Q2: What actions are being proposed or taken in your policy area to plan for and mitigate against this issue.

Consistent with the approach across the Scottish Government, we will need to continue to reassess all planned work programmes in light of COVID-19, and may need to reprioritise activity as a result. This includes planned activity for the coming year as part of *A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People: Employment Action Plan*. However, we remain committed to addressing inequalities in the labour market and this will include taking action to try to minimise any negative impact on disabled people, including disabled young people.

Some work that is being undertaken by colleagues across the Fair Work, Employability & Skills (FWES) Directorate includes:

- **Skills delivery:** We are collaborating with Education Scotland, Skills Development Scotland and the Scottish Funding Council to prioritise skills delivery during the Covid-19 pandemic. This includes early consideration of how we best support schools and colleges to engage in DYW activity in AY2020/2021.
- **Work-based learning:** We are working with schools and college colleagues to consider alternative approaches to the delivery of vocational training, such as project-based learning, in the senior phase. This includes looking at the delivery of courses at SCQF level 5 and above, and plans for future delivery of apprenticeships.
- **Modelling for 20/21:** We are working with partners to assess the impact of Covid-19, including modelling work for the 20/21 academic year and expected skills shortages/reskilling
- **Modern Apprenticeships:** We are working with Skills Development Scotland (SDS) and the Scottish Training Federation (STF) on measures to support training providers who deliver Modern Apprenticeships.
- **Maintaining and supporting employers to engage with education:** the network of DYW employer groups are also prioritising work to sustain employer engagement in education, and developing a suite of resources to support employers to engage with schools and colleges next academic year.

- **Distance learning:** We are also reviewing the delivery of distance learning and the opportunities there are within Community Learning and Development to look at alternative models for skills delivery, and exploring these with schools and SFC colleagues.
- **Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA)** – It is stated in the guidance that EMA will still be paid to students whose applications have been authorised on the system, including whilst learning centres are closed due to Covid-19. This includes students who are in self isolation because of Covid-19, and also those who have self-isolated due to their parents/carers having health issues which put them at risk. We appreciate that many doctors surgeries will not be in a position to issue medical certificates in most cases for this, and have urged local authorities to view such cases sympathetically and follow the discretion which the guidance allows. New applications can continue to be made, further information can be found here: <https://www.mygov.scot/ema/>

Planning for COVID-19 recovery is in the early stages, but we welcome the opportunity to continue to be involved in discussions to identify and respond to the impact(s) of COVID-19 on young people and transitions.

May 2020

TITLE: BRIEFING - Mr Hepburn - Meeting with [redacted] EHRC - 21 May 2020
Final (A28478312)

Title: (Extract from) Briefing for Minister for Business, Fair Work and Skills ahead of meeting with [REDACTED], EHRC.

What	The Minister for Business, Fair Work and Skills is meeting with [REDACTED], Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) Scotland Commissioner.
Where/ When	21 May 2020 11:00-11:30 Number – [REDACTED] Guest code – [REDACTED]
Key Message(s)	Through the suite of Fair Work action plans we are doing all we can with the powers we have to increase workforce equality and diversity in workplaces across Scotland.
Who	Prof. [redacted], EHRC Scotland Commissioner and [REDACTED], EHRC (<i>[redacted] supporting official</i>)
Why	[REDACTED] requested a meeting to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Update on EHRC’s current work, including the launch of their guidance on tackling workplace sexual harassment, as well as to discuss opportunities for collaboration on areas of mutual interest.• Update on the plans for EHRC’s next “Is Scotland Fairer?” research report which will be published in 2021; and• Be updated with anything the Minister would like to share with EHRC.
Supporting official	[REDACTED]
Media/ Social Media	N/A

Briefing contents	<p>Biographies</p> <p>Annex A – Agenda, Key Issues and Lines to Take (<i>Page 3</i>)</p> <p>Annex B – Discussion Points (<i>Page 10</i>)</p> <p>Annex C – Equalities (<i>Page 11</i>)</p> <p>Annex D – Is Scotland Fairer Progress (<i>Page 13</i>)</p> <p>Annex E – Sexual Harassment Guidance (<i>Page 17</i>)</p> <p>Annex F – Workforce Equality & Inclusive Workplaces (<i>Page 19</i>)</p> <p>Annex G – Gender Pay Gap (<i>Page 22</i>)</p> <p>Annex H – Race Equality in the Workplace (<i>Page 26</i>)</p> <p>Annex I – Disability Pay & Employment Gap (<i>Page 29</i>)</p> <p>Annex J – Labour Market Strategy and EU Exit (<i>Page 33</i>)</p> <p>Annex K – Fair Work Convention (<i>Page 36</i>)</p> <p>Annex L – Fair Work (<i>Page 38</i>)</p> <p>Annex M – Adult Social Care (<i>Page 40</i>)</p> <p>Annex N – Scottish Business Pledge (<i>Page 42</i>)</p>
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BIOGRAPHIES

[REDACTED – OUT OF SCOPE]

ANNEX A

AGENDA

1. Update Minister on EHRC business plans for year 2 - equal access to the labour market and treated fairly at work **(EHRC update)**
2. Equalities and update on next “Is Scotland Fairer?” research report (2021) **(EHRC update)**
3. **[REDACTED – OUT OF SCOPE]**
4. **[REDACTED – OUT OF SCOPE]**
5. Reporting of the disability and ethnicity pay gap **(The Minister)**
6. **[REDACTED – OUT OF SCOPE]**

KEY ISSUES AND LINES TO TAKE

1) EHRC Business Plans For Year 2 - Equal Access To The Labour Market And Being Treated Fairly At Work

Equal Access to the Labour Market

- The Labour Market Strategy, published in 2016, set out our vision for a strong labour market that drives inclusive, sustainable economic growth, characterised by growing, competitive businesses, high employment, a skilled population capable of meeting the needs of employers, and where fair work is central to improving the lives of all individuals and their families.
- The strategy recognises that the nature of work is changing and that a number of factors will influence the labour market of the future, including the UK’s departure from the EU.
- To help ensure successful delivery of the Strategy’s outcomes, we established an independent Strategic Labour Market Group to make recommendations on the Scottish Government’s approach to current and future labour market issues.
- You will be meeting with the group soon to seek their input to our response to the economic impact of COVID-19.
- The Group advises Ministers on how best to deliver our vision as new challenges emerge to create a labour market that works for everyone, navigating key labour market challenges such as:
 - inequalities across groups and places,
 - issues with wages and income distribution,

- technological change and hollowing out,
 - ageing workforce and population, and
 - fragility of the labour market resulting from Brexit.
- While there still remains complete uncertainty around the UK's future relationship with the EU, we anticipate that there will still be labour market implications under any approach. As such we are monitoring labour market activity, including identifying any particular pressure points in sectors and/or regions, which may lead to the need for government driven market interventions.

2) Equalities and COVID-19

- COVID-19 is the biggest challenge we have faced in our lifetimes and the measures we take to deal with it must reflect its magnitude.
- We recognise the importance of embedding equality and human rights in our response to COVID-19. These considerations must be intrinsic to policy development as we develop our response.
- The systems and policies we are putting in place to respond to COVID-19 must work for all of Scotland's people.
- International evidence suggests that crisis responses often inadvertently discriminate.

Is Scotland Fairer? Research Report Update

- The Scottish Government importance of taking equality and human rights into consideration in our response to COVID-19. We will work to ensure that the systems and policies we are putting in place to respond to COVID-19 work for all of Scotland's people, in a way that is founded in fairness, delivers equality and safeguards human rights.
- EHRC published its report: *Is Scotland Fairer?* on 25 October 2018 (along with separate reports on Britain and Wales). The report included 35 recommendations 23 of which were for the Scottish Government to address.
- Most of the recommendations in *Is Scotland Fairer?* relating to work are matters for the UK Government, and the Scottish Government would welcome the opportunity to work with it to tackle systemic inequalities in the workplace.
- The Scottish Government is already taking action on most of the recommendations. A short summary of work in progress against the themes of the report is attached at **Annex D**.
- The Scottish Government has also published its own *Recruitment and Retention Plan* (August 2019) setting a target for the employment of disabled

people within the Scottish Government's workforce for external recruitment so that, over the next 7 years, on average 25% of successful candidates will be disabled people.

- Together with the Hunter Foundation through our Social Innovation Partnership, we are supporting Flexibility Works with £175,000 to support and promote the development of flexible and family friendly workplaces. **This includes offering vital advice and support to business and organisations on remote working to respond to the Covid 19 crisis.**
- We funded Timewise to conduct a feasibility study for a 'What Works Centre for Flexible Work' in Scotland. This aims to design, test, scale and embed new approaches to increasing the availability of flexible working.

3) Sexual Harassment in the Workplace Guidance

[REDACTED – OUT OF SCOPE]

4) EHRC Work on Gender Pay Gap

[REDACTED – OUT OF SCOPE]

5) Reporting Of The Disability And Ethnicity Pay Gap

Reporting on the Disability Pay and Employment Gaps

- We want to ensure that everybody who can and wants to work has the opportunity to find fulfilling and sustainable fair employment, including being paid at least the Real living wage, and having opportunities to progress and upskill.
- We have reported on the disability pay gap at a national level through our annual update of *A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People: Employment Action Plan* which was published 30 March: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/fairer-scotland-disabled-people-employment-action-plan-progress-report/>
- We are committed to a review of the Scottish Specific Duties contained in the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012. The intention is that this will also strengthen public sector disability reporting, including on pay.
- We are working to ensure that fair and sustainable employment practices are applied by employers through Fair Work First, including monitoring the disability pay gap and ensuring remedial action is taken where required.
(See also Annex I below)

Reporting on the Ethnicity Pay Gap

[REDACTED – OUT OF SCOPE]

6) Fair Work Update (points the Minister may wish to make on Fair Work)

[REDACTED – OUT OF SCOPE]

FOCUS OF THE DISCUSSION

[REDACTED – OUT OF SCOPE]

EQUALITY

Is Scotland Fairer?

- EHRC published its report: *Is Scotland Fairer?* on 25 October 2018 (along with separate reports on Britain and Wales) The report included 35 recommendations 23 of which were for the Scottish Government to address.
- The Scottish Government is already taking action on most of the recommendations. A short summary of work in progress against the themes of the report is attached at **Annex D**.

Equality Legislation

- Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 places a legal duty (known as the ‘General Equality Duty’) on public authorities to: Eliminate discrimination; Advance equality of opportunity; and, foster good community relations in relation to the protected characteristics .
- Although largely reserved, Scottish Ministers supplemented the general duty by placing specific duties, designed to enable public authorities to carry out the public sector equality duty more effectively, on Scottish public authorities in the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012 (the ‘2012 Regulations’).

Review of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) – Scottish Specific Duties

- The Scottish Government is committed to a review of the Scottish Specific Duties contained in the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012. Because the Equality Act 2010, which introduced the PSED, is largely reserved, this means reviewing two things:(a) the effectiveness of the Scottish Specific Duties; and (b) the environment within which the regulatory regime operates, in terms of matters such as leadership, capacity etc.
- A programme of work was initiated Autumn 2019 to review the PSED and this work was due to have advanced significantly by Summer 2020. However, the PSED review will most likely be delayed by the current COVID-19 crisis as officials are fully focussed on the equality aspects of responding, restarting, recovery and renewal and ensuring the equality and human rights are embedded throughout this. Therefore, the Scottish Government will not proceed to a full public consultation while we are focused on the response; and while public bodies and stakeholders who would be engaging with such a consultation are likewise focused on the emergency.
- We can confirm that we will not be introducing new SSD regulations before the 2021-2025 cycle. However, we intend to use the learning from this period to inform the PSED review over the medium to longer term. This push to embed equality and human rights considerations across the Scottish Government is magnifying pre-existing areas for development and the need for a really robust equality infrastructure to underpin policy development at all times, including times of crisis. We expect that this will intensify arguments for PSED reform after the immediate crisis period is over.

- Prior to the COVID-19 crisis, officials were in the process of working through a programme of engagement with stakeholders - both duty bearers and equality groups – and met with **[REDACTED]** from EHRC in November 2019. Despite the current health crisis, the Scottish Government and EHRC are maintaining contact to keep each other informed of developments relating to the PSED.

IS SCOTLAND FAIRER? - PROGRESS

- Most of the recommendations in *Is Scotland Fairer?* relating to work are matters for the UK Government, and the Scottish Government would welcome the opportunity to work with it to tackle systemic inequalities in the workplace.
- In *A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People – Disability Delivery Plan*, published in December 2016, the Scottish Government gave a commitment to seek to reduce the disability employment gap by at least half. In December 2018 we published *A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People – Employment Action Plan* setting out how we will at least halve the disability employment gap by 2038. Currently, the disability employment gap is 35.5 percentage points, with only 45.6% of disabled people in employment compared to 81.1% of those who are non-disabled (Annual Population Survey, Jan-Dec 2018). This is a slight improvement since 2016 (our base line year) when the disability employment gap was 37.4 percentage points.
- The Scottish Government has also published its own *Recruitment and Retention Plan* (August 2019) setting a target for the employment of disabled people within the Scottish Government’s workforce for external recruitment so that, over the next 7 years, on average 25% of successful candidates will be disabled people.
- Together with the Hunter Foundation through our Social Innovation Partnership, we are supporting Flexibility Works with £175,000 to support and promote the development of flexible and family friendly workplaces. **This includes offering vital advice and support to business and organisations on remote working to respond to the Covid 19 crisis.**
- We funded Timewise to conduct a feasibility study for a ‘What Works Centre for Flexible Work’ in Scotland. This aims to design, test, scale and embed new approaches to increasing the availability of flexible working.

[REDACTED – OUT OF SCOPE]

Education

[REDACTED – OUT OF SCOPE]

Living Standards

[REDACTED – OUT OF SCOPE]

Health

[REDACTED – OUT OF SCOPE]

Justice

[REDACTED – OUT OF SCOPE]

ANNEX E

SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN THE WORKPLACE GUIDANCE

[REDACTED – OUT OF SCOPE]

WORKFORCE EQUALITY & INCLUSIVE WORKPLACES

[REDACTED – OUT OF SCOPE]

GENDER PAY GAP

[REDACTED – OUT OF SCOPE]

RACE EQUALITY IN THE WORKPLACE

[REDACTED – OUT OF SCOPE]

DISABILITY PAY GAP AND DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT GAP

- The disability **pay** gap in Scotland is **8.3 percentage points** (ONS 2018), which is lower than the UK average of 12.2 percentage points.
- The disability **employment** gap (the difference between the employment rates of disabled and non-disabled people) is **35.5% percentage points** (APS 2018). Our ambition is to at least halve the disability employment gap by 2038. This is based on the 2016 baseline of 37.4 percentage points and will mean reducing the gap to no larger than 18.7 percentage points. .

DISABILITY PAY GAP

Top Lines

- We want to ensure that everybody who can and wants to work has the opportunity to find fulfilling and sustainable fair employment, including being paid at least the Real living wage, and having opportunities to progress and upskill.
- We reported on the on the disability pay gap at a national level in our first annual update of *A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People: Employment Action Plan* which published on 30 March.
- We are committed to a review of the Scottish Specific Duties contained in the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012. The intention is that this will also strengthen public sector disability reporting, including on pay.
- We are working to ensure that fair and sustainable employment practices are applied by employers through Fair Work First, including monitoring the disability pay gap and ensuring remedial action is taken where required.

Actions to Support the Collection and Reporting on the Disability Pay Gap

- There is a lack of a current statutory instrument to collate and disseminate some information including on disability pay. Through **the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012**, public authorities are required to, among other duties, publish equality outcomes and to report progress on mainstreaming the equality duty. At this point in time, however, there is no statutory requirement for public authorities to publish the employment statistics for disabled people.
- The Scottish Government however wish to see this in the future, for example given that the requirement for companies with 250+ employees to report on gender pay gap has helped focus attention on the issue. In the mean time we will track the disability pay gap at a Scotland level via our annual progress report on ***A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People – Employment Action Plan***. We will monitor and report annually on progress and continue to work with key partners to oversee the plan and develop further action. We will measure progress on employment rates, types of occupations and pay levels of disabled people, and publish data on this annually. The [first progress report](#) was published 30 March.

- The Scottish Government is also committed to a **review of the Scottish Specific Duties** contained in the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012. A programme of work was initiated autumn 2019 to review the PSED and this work is due to have advanced significantly by summer 2020. The review of the Scottish Specific Duties provides an opportunity to consider how well the regulations are helping public authorities to better perform their public sector equality duty. It will consider matters such as sharing good practice and encouraging knowledge transfer, as well as improving national and local data availability. The review will include a public consultation to be held in 2020 (tbc).
- During recent discussion with Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs), they indicated they would also wish to see the addition of a requirement for public bodies to report on the disability pay gap as part of the review of PSED Scotland specific duties.
- The work in progress to enhance the **Fair Work First criteria standards** includes a recommendation that pay gaps, including disability pay gap, be monitored and remedial action taken where required. Fair and equal access, and the provision of appropriate support, can greatly improve disabled people's chances, enabling them to get a job, retain a job, and progress in a career.
- In addition, good practice examples will be highlighted, including: cultural diversity and disability equality training, consistent equalities monitoring, and positive action helps to improve workforce awareness and address under-representation, thereby improving gender equality and removing barriers faced by minority ethnic and disabled people and older workers.

DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT GAP

Top Lines

- We want to ensure that everybody who can and wants to work has the opportunity to find fulfilling and sustainable employment suitable to their needs and skills, and that those facing barriers to employment, including many disabled people, can access any additional support they need.
- In 2016 we committed to at least halving the disability employment gap in Scotland. We have committed to achieving this by 2038, and have been making steady progress. Since then the gap has reduced by 2.1 percentage points.
- *A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People: Employment Action Plan* was published in December 2018, and sets out how we will meet our commitment, working with partners, as well as disabled people themselves, to deliver this ambition.
- The plan identifies three key themes: supporting employers to recruit and retain disabled people; supporting disabled people to enter employment; and young people and transitions.
- We published our first annual progress report on 30 March setting out the progress made since 2018 against the three themes, as well as actions we will focus on over the next year, including the Stakeholder group on Access to Work, the review of Supported Employment and Individual Placement Support (IPS), and

commencing the work of the Public Social Partnership (PSP) under the lead of SUSE (Scottish union of supported employment).

We are taking a range of actions to reduce the disability employment gap

- As part of our ***Recruitment and Retention Plan***, which was published in August 2019, we set a target for the employment of disabled people within the Scottish Government's own workforce for external recruitment so that, over the next 7 years, on **average 25%** of successful candidates will be disabled people.
- We have provided young disabled people with the highest level of Modern Apprenticeship (MA) funding through the enhanced contribution rate.
- We have established a Public Social Partnership involving employers, government and disabled people's organisations to develop, test and implement solutions to barriers employers face in hiring and retaining disabled people
- We are improving the employment prospects of disabled people, through our devolved Scottish employability programmes such as Fair Start Scotland;
- £12m of Child Poverty Funding which will be focused on supporting vulnerable parents impacted by child poverty, including disabled parents, to progress towards and into fair work, as well as to progress and upskill if in employment.
- We are setting up an Access to Work Stakeholder group and will work with DWP and partners to ensure disabled people in Scotland are aware of, have access to, and are able to shape this support.
- We have committed to work with employers, disabled people and their representative organisations to develop a campaign from 2020/21 to promote the positive benefits for employing disabled people. It is our intention that this should focus on practical solutions and proactive engagement, not simply passive awareness raising. We will undertake initial scoping to ensure that any further investment adds value to the work already being driven through initiatives such as Workplace Equalities Fund, Fair Work First, and the Autism Innovation and Development Fund, which all include work to support employers. In addition, we will be informed by the priorities identified through the Public Social Partnership.

We know we can do more and are working with key partners towards a long term ambition of seeking to at least halve the disability employment gap in Scotland:

- We know that action needs to be accelerated to achieve our ambition.
- We will require collective leadership and action across public, private and third sectors to do this – particularly during and following the Covid 19 crisis.
- We have published new Careers Strategy to align career information, advice and guidance services in Scotland to enable all individuals, including disabled people to receive high quality support to fulfil their potential.
- We are working to ensure that fair and sustainable employment practices are applied by employers through Fair Work First.

[REDACTED]

Disability Employability Team

LABOUR MARKET STRATEGY AND EU EXIT

[REDACTED – OUT OF SCOPE]

FAIR WORK CONVENTION

[REDACTED – OUT OF SCOPE]

FAIR WORK

[REDACTED – OUT OF SCOPE]

ADULT SOCIAL CARE

[REDACTED – OUT OF SCOPE]

SCOTTISH BUSINESS PLEDGE

[REDACTED – OUT OF SCOPE]

TITLE: BACKGROUND NOTE PQ S5O-04264

“To ask the Scottish Government what steps it is taking to reduce the disability employment gap.”

1. James Dornan is an SNP MSP for Glasgow Cathcart constituency, he is a member of the following (relevant) Committees:
 - Local Government and Communities Committee (Convener)
 - Social Security Committee (Substitute Member)

James Dornan MSP is a member of the following (relevant) Cross-Party Groups:

- Cross-Party Group in the Scottish Parliament on Diabetes (Member)
- Cross-Party Group in the Scottish Parliament on Mental Health (Co-Convener)

James lodged a Motion on 3rd October 2019 relating to disabled people and employment:

“That the Parliament recognises Glasgow Clyde College’s ongoing commitment to inclusivity by providing BSL courses, acknowledges that this is the latest in a series of initiatives by the college to promote BSL; recognises its partnership with Specsavers to provide employees free access to the course, An Introduction to Sign Language; acknowledges the commitment and intention of the lecturing staff to roll the programme out to all Specsavers employees, and notes what it sees as the college’s dedication to providing relevant and innovative courses that reflect the changing requirements of the workforce.”

This was supported by: Emma Harper, Stuart McMillan, Kenneth Gibson, David Torrance, Bill Kidd, Richard Lyle, Alasdair Allan, Jackie Baillie, Stewart Stevenson, Joan McAlpine, Fulton MacGregor, Sandra White, Tom Arthur, Gil Paterson, Angela Constance, Gillian Martin, Clare Adamson, Ruth Maguire

The Motion was Fallen on 23rd January 2020.

2. The Disability Employment Gap (DEG) is the difference between the employment rates of disabled people and non-disabled people.
3. The Annual Population Survey (APS) January – December datasets between 2016-2018 held the following data on the Disability Employment

Gap:

- The employment rate of disabled people in Scotland has increased by 2.8 percentage points since 2016 - from 42.8% in 2016 to 45.6% in 2018.
- The unemployment rate of disabled people in Scotland has fallen by 0.3 percentage points since 2016 – from 9.7% in 2016 to 9.4% in 2018.

As well as data on disability and inactivity rates:

- The inactivity rate of disabled people in Scotland has fallen by 2.9 percentage points since 2016 – from 52.6% in 2016 to 49.7% in 2018.
- Inactive disabled people are more likely than inactive non-disabled people to want to work. In 2018, 26.3% of economically inactive disabled people wanted to work compared to 16.9% of non-disabled people.
- Between 2016 and 2018, the inactivity rate of disabled people in Scotland fell by more than the inactivity rate of non-disabled people (2.9 percentage points vs 0.4 percentage points).
- Disabled people in Scotland are more likely than non-disabled people to be economically inactive (49.7% vs 15.9% in 2018) but the inactivity gap (the difference between the inactivity rates of disabled and non-disabled people), reduced by 2.5 percentage points between 2016 and 2018.

Please note, in the PQ data has been given for Oct 2018 - Sept 2019 data, for the most recent update on progress of the Disability Employment Gap. However we cannot use this to measure comparatively against the 2016 baseline, as this is based on January – December data. We need to use January to December data only for consistent measurement - the latest version of this is Jan-Dec 2018 and this is what will be included in the annual progress report.

4. The Scottish Government will be publishing the first Annual Progress Report for A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People: Employment Action Plan within the next month.
5. The progress report highlights include:

- SG Recruitment and Retention Plan for Disabled People (published August 2019), which includes a target for external recruitment that, over the next 7 years until 2025, on average 25% of successful candidates will be disabled people. The Plan sets out how we will become an employer of choice with strong representation of disabled people at all levels of the workforce, foster an inclusive and supportive culture where people can be themselves at work. (Learning and development measures will be key), and ensure our corporate policies and practices work well, and work well together.
- Scotland's Careers Strategy: Moving Forward was published in February 2020, setting out our vision for a world-class, professionally-led, aligned and flexible system of career information, advice and guidance services which delivers for every citizen, regardless of where they live in Scotland, their age or circumstance, which includes those who have a disability.
- The number of Modern Apprenticeship starts identifying as disabled has increased year on year in line with our ambitions. In 2018/19 Quarter 4 Modern Apprenticeship statistics published in June 2019 showed that 14.1 % of all starts self-identified an impairment, health condition or learning difficulty, which was up from 3.7% in 2015/16.
- Our ten year Accessible Travel Framework is about more disabled people making successful door to door journeys whilst working to remove barriers which prevent them from travelling. We have worked with partners and stakeholders to progress the Framework more quickly and moved to annual Delivery Model – the first of which was published in June 2019 which focussed on 8 priorities. One of which is that disabled travellers and those with mobility issues in Scotland can book Passenger Assistance with 2 hours' notice further reducing to 1 hour in 2021. This compares with many other UK train operators still requiring up to 24 hours notice.

6. Next steps following publishing the report include:

- Through the Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Fund, we will be investing £16.1 million in a package of support to tackle child poverty by increasing parents - including disabled parents - earned income. This includes introducing a new £12 million Parental Employability Support Fund (PESF), addressing barriers for parents entering work and supporting those in-work to increase their earnings; boosted by a further £4.1 million to ensure alignment with Early Learning and Childcare.
- Following publication of Scotland's Careers Strategy: Moving Forward, we will aim to publish our implementation plan by the end

of 2020. In developing the implementation plan, we will consult with equality groups and service users to ensure appropriate consideration is given to how delivery of the services will also address issues around fair opportunities for all, health and well-being, inequality, gender stereotyping.

- Our newly established Public Social Partnership, involving employers, government and disabled people's organisations, which will design, develop and implement solutions to the barriers employers face in hiring and retaining disabled people has been established and will be moving to the activation stage.
- Undertaking a review of Supported Employment delivery, as part of implementing the employment actions agreed in *Keys to Life: Scotland's Learning Disability Strategy*. Linked to this, we will fulfil the committed to review the provision of Individual and Placement Support within Fair Start Scotland, considering wider delivery approaches in order to understand how best IPS can be delivered in partnership with key agencies

7. COVID-19:

- We strongly encourage all employers to apply Fair Work principles in treating their workers fairly and showing flexibility in their approach to planning for and dealing with the potential impacts of COVID-19 on workers and workplaces.
- Employment law is reserved: we call on the UK Government to do all it can to provide the support that workers need.
- Workers worried about their employment rights should visit the ACAS website or discuss with their employer.
- There is health information available about COVID-19 on the NHS Inform website and the ACAS and UK Government websites provide information on the rights of, and available support to, workers.

Supplementary questions

Supporting Disabled People

Q: How does Fair Work provide opportunities for disabled people?

A: Disabled people experience discrimination and a lack of access to opportunity. Fair and equal access, and the provision of appropriate support,

can greatly improve disabled people's chances, enabling them to get and retain a job, and progress in their career.

We launched our £800,000 Workplace Equality Fund, to deliver employer-led innovative solutions to overcome workforce & workplace inequality. In 2019/20, a total of 23 projects will receive funding to help address labour market inequalities and help overcome long standing and systemic issues with recruitment practices and progression in the workplace, with a continued focus on supporting disabled people, as well as older workers, women, and those from a minority ethnic background.

Supporting Employers

Q: How can businesses find talented disabled employees?

A: Employment advisors from Fair Start Scotland work directly with disabled people to help them find employment which is commensurate with their skills, experience, and qualifications. Employers can contact Fair Start Scotland providers in their own areas. Also, many Disabled People's Organisations offer employment support advice, internship opportunities, and placement opportunities to disabled people and are well placed to link committed employers and disabled people looking for work.

Q: What help is there for employers to better support disabled employees?

A: Fair Start Scotland, the Scottish Government's employability programme, offers in-work support tailored to meet disabled participants' needs. Disabled employees work with a dedicated adviser to ensure that they can receive the support they need, in-work, to succeed in their role.

Employers can also get help with meeting the costs of providing reasonable adjustments in the workplace by working with Access to Work. Access to Work can help with full or partial funding for support such as: technology, equipment, adaptations, support workers, and transport costs.

The Scottish Government has also established a Public Social Partnership, bringing together the third sector with Government and employers to develop solutions to address gaps in employer knowledge and expertise in recruiting and retaining disabled people. The Partnership will develop its work programme from Spring 2020, and we will provide updates on progress to employer networks.

Q. What is the Scottish Government doing to support employers to adopt flexible working practices?

A: We are providing £159,000 for 2019-20 to the Family Friendly Working Scotland Partnership to support and promote the development of flexible and family friendly workplaces. Through this Partnership, we work with Working Families, Parenting Across Scotland and Fathers Network Scotland to support and promote the development of family-friendly workplaces across Scotland.

We are also funding Timewise to conduct a feasibility study for a 'What Works Centre for Flexible Work' in Scotland. This aims to design, test, scale and embed new approaches to increasing the availability of flexible working.

Although the legal powers governing flexible working are currently reserved to Westminster, we are committed to working with employers directly and through their representative bodies to explore ways of promoting and supporting flexible working.

Modern Apprenticeships

Q: How have Modern Apprenticeships helped reduce the disability employment gap?

A: Skills Development Scotland (SDS) first published its Apprenticeship Equality Action Plan (EAP) in 2015, which set out a range of actions to support disabled and care experienced individuals and those from different ethnic backgrounds into apprenticeships.

The Scottish Government has consistently supported those with a self-identified disability to undertake a MA. The number of Modern Apprenticeship starts identifying as disabled has increased year on year in line with our ambitions. In 2018/19 Quarter 4 Modern Apprenticeship statistics published in June 2019 showed that 14.1 % of all starts self-identified an impairment, health condition or learning difficulty which was up from 3.7% in 2015/16. SDS will continue to support disabled people to access and achieve modern apprenticeships, with a focus on those with more complex needs.

Q: What actions are Scottish Government undertaking to encourage those with a self-identified an impairment, health condition or learning difficulty access Scotland's Apprenticeship family?

A: To directly tackle inequality in employment, Skills Development Scotland (SDS) works to achieve change through local and national partnerships. Through this approach, SDS has a focus on improving service delivery to equality groups by combining strengths and expertise with those of others to achieve the best possible outcomes.

SDS collaborates with training providers to challenge the under-representation of individuals with a self-identified disability undertaking an Apprenticeship. This includes training sessions to help training providers understand the needs of different customer groups and “Good Practice” events across Scotland, which link training providers with equality experts to share best practice in supporting underrepresented groups, including individuals with a self-identified disability.

Scottish Apprenticeship Week 2020 had the theme “Talent Without Limits”.

Q: What actions are Scottish Government and SDS undertaking to support Apprenticeship Training Providers support those with a self-identified an impairment, health condition or learning difficulty?

A: As part of the contract monitoring process, all SDS contracted MA training providers are asked to identify actions they will take to address under-representation. MA training providers are required to complete a Quality Action Plan, which includes equality actions to show steps taken to address under-representation. In addition, training providers must evaluate their performance in supporting under-represented groups in relation to the SDS Quality Assurance and Improvement Framework. They are required to develop improvement actions for each contracting year relating to how they support recruitment and retention onto their programmes from under-represented groups, including those with a self-identified disability.

Q: Are there additional funds available for those who self-identify an impairment, health condition or learning difficulty undertaking a Modern Apprenticeship?

A: Access to additional funding can provide important support to learning providers and employers and encourage them to take action to improve equality outcomes. Recognising this I introduced in April 2017, Enhanced Modern Apprenticeship contribution rates for disabled people and those with experience of care up to the age of 29.

Fair Work

Q: Why is Fair Work important?

A: Fair Work sits at the heart of our ambition to move towards a wellbeing economy. It is key to supporting people and business flourish and is critical to achieving a modern, high value, inclusive economy – today and in the future. We live in an era of technological change, automation and disruption: a ‘fourth industrial revolution’.

Enabling a more inclusive, people-centred culture of work that supports, employees and employers to shape their organisations together, and to develop the skills needed for a successful future, is likely to be key.

The benefits to employers include an enhanced reputation – with the workforce and in the wider community - where the employer is likely to be regarded as fair and an employer of choice.

Q: How does Fair Work support future skills development?

A: We know that businesses who invest in the skills of their workforce can expect their workers to add more value, provide a better service, achieve higher levels of productivity and be more resilient and responsive to change. An organisation with a strong culture of continuous learning and development will provide appropriate opportunities for all workers at all levels to engage in lifelong learning.

Q: What does Fair Work First expect from employers?

A: In the absence of power over employment law, the Scottish Government is using its financial powers to drive forward Fair work.

Fair Work First is about rewarding and encouraging employers to adopt fairer work practices – focusing on particular challenges in the labour market that can be improved to make a real difference to people, businesses and the economy.

We are asking employers accessing grants, funding and contracts awarded by and across the public sector to commit to:

- Investment in workforce development
- No inappropriate use of zero hours contracts
- Action to tackle the gender pay gap and create a more diverse and inclusive workplace
- Appropriate channels for effective voice, such as trade union recognition.
- Payment of the real Living Wage.

We will be providing guidance to help employers understand the practices and standards we will expect to be delivered through Fair Work First.

Mental Health

Q: What is the Scottish Government doing to support people with mental health conditions to secure and remain in employment?

A: The Scottish Government's Mental Health Strategy (2017 - 2020) recognises that fair work can be good for mental health. In the last year, NHS Health Scotland's Health and Work Directorate delivered training around resilience, well-being and mentally healthy workplaces for over 900 people.

Fair Start Scotland

Q: Your approach to Employability services is not working.

A: The latest statistics published on 26th February 2020 show that Fair Start Scotland is getting people into jobs. Since its launch in April 2018, over 19,000 people have joined the service with over 5,000 of these Participants going into work. In quarter one, most people who started a job did sustain it: 69% of people starting jobs went on to sustain employment for 3 months, and 77% of the people who sustained employment for 3 months went on to reach 6 months.

A recent evaluation report also showed that 92% of Participants felt they have been treated with dignity and respect, and 80% that they had a choice about the type of support received. These figures support the different approach The Scottish Government is taking to employability services. We are clear that our services should be based on the principles of dignity and respect. And that our services should be tailored to the needs of individuals.

Q: Beyond Fair Start Scotland, what else is the Scottish Government doing to support people back into work?

A: Through our No One Left Behind approach we are working with local government and the third and private sectors to develop an employability system that improves alignment and integration and is designed and delivered around the needs of those using services. This collaborative approach is needed to support those individuals furthest away from the job market.

A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People: Employment Action Plan also sets out how we will meet our commitment, to at least halve the disability employment gap by 2038. We have already achieved some good initial progress across its three themes: Supporting employers to recruit and retain disabled people; supporting disabled people to enter employment; and young people and transitions.

Transport

Q: What is the Scottish Government doing to improve accessible transport for disabled people?

A: Scottish Government's vision is that all disabled people can travel with the same freedom, choice, dignity and opportunity as all other citizens. Our ten year Accessible Travel Framework is about more disabled people making successful door to door journeys whilst working to remove barriers which prevent them from travelling. We have worked with partners and stakeholders to progress the Framework more quickly and moved to annual Delivery Model – the first of which was published in June 2019 which focussed on 8 priorities. One of which is that disabled travellers and those with mobility issues in Scotland can book Passenger Assistance with 2 hours' notice further reducing to 1 hour in 2021. This compares with many other UK train operators still requiring up to 24 hours' notice.

Social Security

Q: What benefits is the delivery of social security bringing to the wider economy.

A: The total budget allocation for the Social Security and Older People portfolio is £3.8 billion. This includes £3.4 billion in forecast benefit expenditure, money that will go directly to approximately 800,000 people of Scotland and will make a real difference to the lives of those who need it most.

Our Social Security Programme is delivering the infrastructure necessary for a brand new public service for Scotland, co-designed with our clients, ensuring the service meets the needs of the people of Scotland now and in future. It is the largest and most complex exercise in devolution undertaken since the Scottish Parliament was reconvened twenty years ago.

We are clear that Social security is an investment in the people of Scotland, is a human right and is essential to the realisation of other human rights.

Social Security will contribute to reducing poverty in Scotland by putting the needs of those who require assistance first.

Q. What is the progress of the Job Grant for young people

A. Social Security Scotland will from spring this year deliver Job Start Payment to help support 5,000 eligible young people, including young disabled people, into work. This is an investment of up to £2 million per year.

Job Start Payment is simply one of a range of ambitious reforms across the education skills and employment sectors to help tackle youth unemployment in Scotland.

Job Start Payment will provide young people aged 16-24 years (or 25 years if they are a care leaver) who are on low income benefits at the time of a job offer with a payment towards the cost transitioning into work, e.g. transport and clothes etc. This new benefit is intended to help reduce the risk of young people being unemployed later in life. The payment is £250 (or £400 if the young person has children).

Health and Work Support

Q: (Only if Specifically Asked). To ask the Scottish Government about the status of the Health & Work Support Pilot.

A: The pilot was funded as a two year project and will end on its intended finish date in June 2020. The core of the funding was provided by the UK Government which has indicated that there will be no additional investment to extend or continue the pilot.

Although it generated significant learning regarding the integration of health and work services, the emerging evidence suggests that the pilot may not be supporting people who would benefit most from it.

The Scottish Government will work with national and local partners to share the learning from the pilot to inform a future strategic response to the important policy area of health and work. An implementation evaluation is due to be published shortly. The final evaluation will be available in spring 2021.

June 2020

TITLE: BACKGROUND NOTE PQ S5W-30248

“To ask the Scottish Government what the employment rate for disabled people has been in each of the last five years.”

1. **Jeremy Balfour** is a Scottish Conservative MSP for the Lothian region and the Shadow Minister for Housing, Communities and Social Security. Mr Balfour is also Deputy Party Spokesperson on Communities for the Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party, the Deputy Party Spokesperson on Housing for the Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party, and the Deputy Party Spokesperson on Welfare Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party.
2. He is a member of the following (relevant) Committees:
 - Local Government and Communities Committee
 - Social Security Committee
3. Mr Balfour MSP is a member of the following (relevant) Cross-Party Groups:
 - Cross-Party Group in the Scottish Parliament on Autism (Member)
 - Cross-Party Group in the Scottish Parliament on Children and Young People (Member)
 - Cross-Party Group in the Scottish Parliament on Colleges and Universities (Member)
 - Cross-Party Group in the Scottish Parliament on Disability (Convener)
 - Cross-Party Group in the Scottish Parliament on Epilepsy (Member)
 - Cross-Party Group in the Scottish Parliament on Heart Disease and Stroke (Member)
 - Cross-Party Group in the Scottish Parliament on Learning Disability (Member)
 - Cross-Party Group in the Scottish Parliament on Racial Equality (Member)
 - Cross-Party Group in the Scottish Parliament on Volunteering (Deputy Convener)
4. The Disability Employment Gap (DEG) is the difference between the employment rates of disabled people and non-disabled people of working age. In 2016, when the Scottish Government outlined its aim to at least halve the DEG, the gap stood at 37.4 percentage points (p.p.). Since 2015, Scotland’s DEG has fallen: to 35.9 p.p. in 2017; to 35.5 p.p. in 2018, and to 32.6 percentage points in 2019. The narrowing of the gap since 2016 has been driven by a rise in the employment rate of disabled people. (ONS Annual Population Survey Jan-Dec 2016-2019)
5. In 2016, we made a commitment within *A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People* to reduce the disability employment gap in Scotland by at least half. At the time, it was estimated that at the current rate of change, it could take 200 years to halve the UK disability employment gap. In December 2018, we published *A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People: Employment Action Plan* (the Plan), outlining the steps we as a Government will take to meet this commitment, and setting a target for doing so by 2038. The plan covers three key themes as identified by stakeholders: Supporting

employers to recruit and retain disabled people; Supporting disabled people to enter employment; and Young people and transitions.

6. The Scottish Government published the first Annual Progress Report on the Plan in March of this year (2020).
7. The progress report highlights include:
 - Development of the Scottish Government Recruitment and Retention Plan for Disabled People (published August 2019);
 - An overview of work undertaken to improve alignment of health and work agendas;
 - Development of support for Business and Enterprise to promote the business benefits of the employment of disabled workers, and the relaunch of the Scottish Business Pledge;
 - Publication of Scotland's Careers Strategy: Moving Forward (Published February 2020);
 - The establishment of the Public Social Partnership, which will design, develop and implement solutions to the barriers employers face in hiring and retaining disabled people;
 - Improvements in the accessibility of public transport networks.
8. Proposed Disabled Children and Young People (Transitions) (Scotland) Bill

Labour MSP Johann Lamont lodged the final proposal for the Disabled Children and Young People (Transitions) (Scotland) Bill on June 18th, with cross party support. The proposed Bill would require Scottish Ministers to introduce, and to implement, a National Transitions Strategy to improve outcomes for children and young people with a disability in the transition to adulthood, and to require local authorities to introduce a transitions plan to ensure each child and young person with a disability receives appropriate care and support before, and during, the transition to adulthood; and for connected purposes.

Young disabled people are more than twice as likely to be unemployed than non-disabled 16-24 year olds, and the ongoing COVID-19 outbreak is having a negative impact on many of the industries that employ a higher share of the disabled workforce compared with the non-disabled workforce. We have been told during engagement events with disabled young people, parents and disabled people's organisations that the quality of guidance and support for young disabled people going through transitions is not always consistent, and this experience can prevent some young people from fulfilling their potential. To tackle this, the Getting it Right for Every Child Unit is funding Association for Real Change (ARC) Scotland to trial the 'Principles into Practice' - based on ARC's existing Seven Principles of Good Transitions - with Scottish Government support. An objective of this project is to better understand the barriers to good practice in Transitions and, in doing so, help develop pragmatic solutions to overcome them. The Supporting Disabled Children, Young People and Families website has also been updated to highlight specific support in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

9. COVID-19

We understand the ongoing Covid-19 outbreak could have a considerable impact on employment opportunities for disabled people, and are committed to including disabled people and other equality groups in all economic responses to the pandemic:

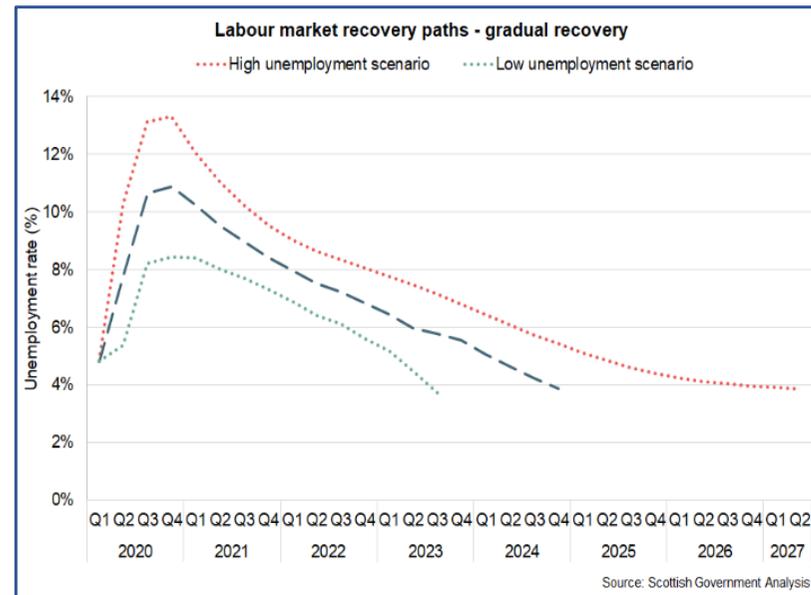
- Our investment in workforce development will provide more opportunities for the current workforce to upskill and reskill.
- Our Fair Work approach encourages all employers to adopt fair and flexible work practices, supported by our Fair Work Action Plan, as well as related action to tackle the disability employment gap, gender pay gap, and race equality within the labour market.
- We are working with stakeholders to support disabled parents move closer to the labour market, with a view to them eventually securing employment.
- We aim to deliver a campaign that will provide more hands-on support for employers to recruit, retain and support disabled people in employment.
- We will be undertaking a review of Supported Employment provision across Scotland, and will consider the need to build on the existing service offer through local authorities and promotion of Fair Start Scotland (the devolved employment service which provides a tailored and personalised employment support service for people who want help to find and remain in work).
- We are working with third sector partners to understand the impact of COVID-19 on disabled people in relation to the labour market, and identify what actions would help mitigate the emerging impact.
- We are also liaising with the Office of the Chief Economic Advisor (OCEA) to produce analysis of labour market statistics that will allow us to monitor changes to priority groups' position in the labour market, including: disabled people; women; young people; and people from minority ethnic groups.

Contact Name: **[REDACTED]**

Ext: **[REDACTED]**

The outlook for the labour market remains uncertain, and will depend on how long the effects of the pandemic persist.

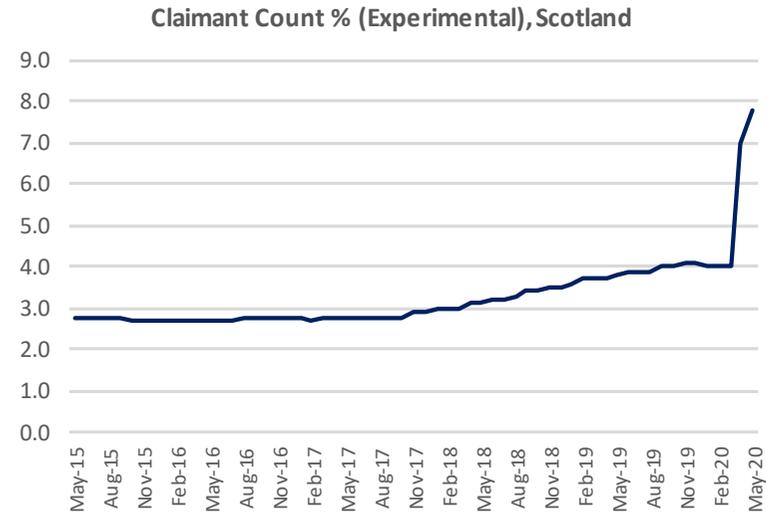
- SG illustrative scenarios suggest the unemployment rate could rise to between 8-13% this year.
- The impact will be felt differently across households, groups and regions depending on circumstances.



Source: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/monthly-economic-brief-2/>

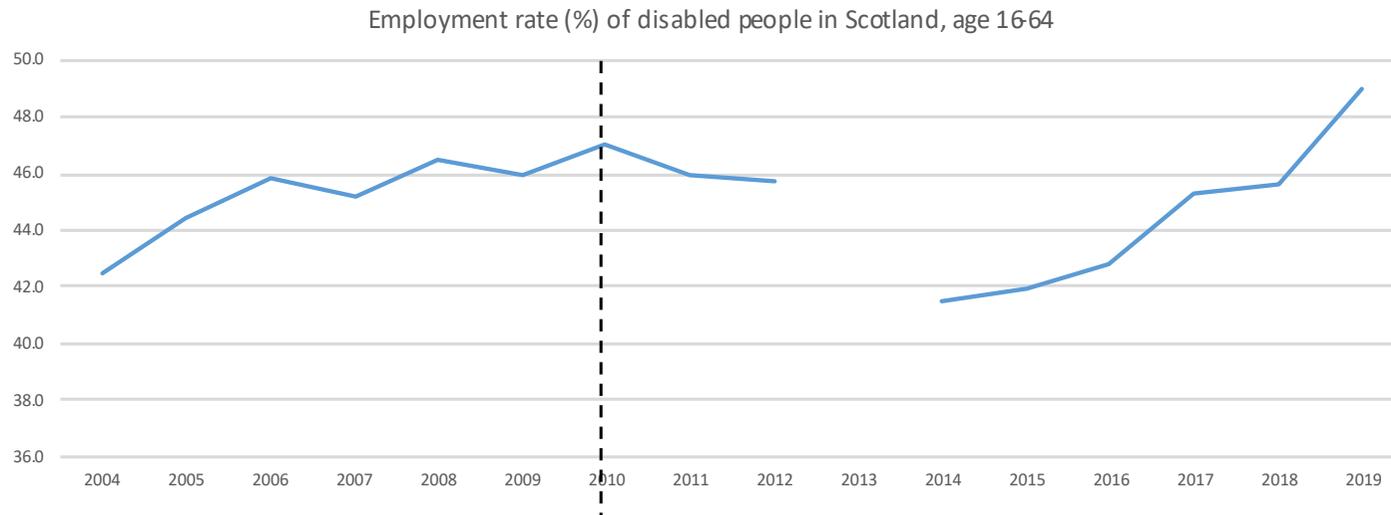
There has already been a sharp rise in out-of-work benefit claims in Scotland

- Scotland's claimant count (reflecting Job Seekers Allowance and Universal Credit 'searching for work' conditionality claims) increased by 10% between April and May 2020 and has doubled since March.
- This is equivalent to more than 100,000 additional people in Scotland claiming out-of-work support since March.
- The number of claims is expected to rise further when the Job Retention Scheme and support for the self-employed are wound down.



Source: ONS Claimant Count

The 2008 recession interrupted improvements to the employment rate of disabled people – but there has been a recent recovery

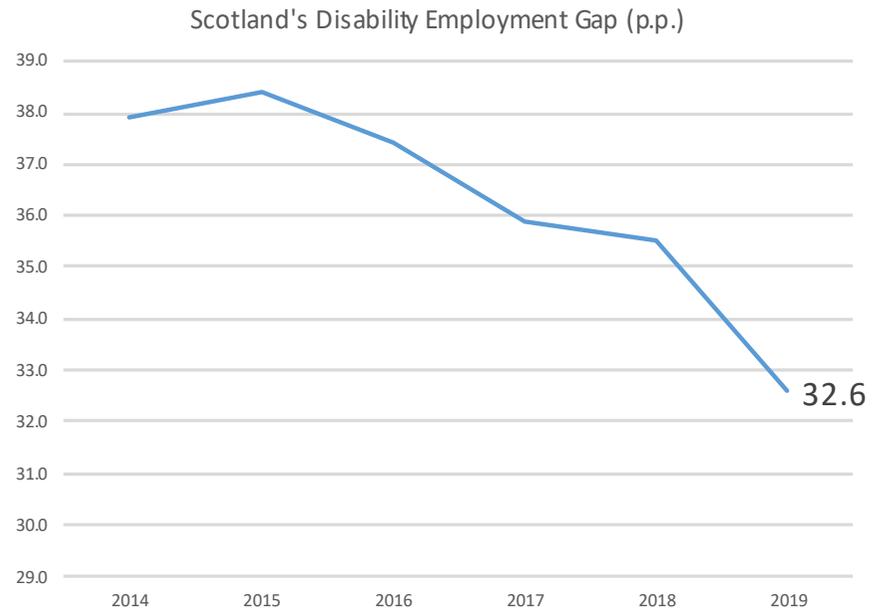


Source: Annual Population Survey, 2004-2019

‡ - In January-March 2010 there was a change in the reporting behaviour of survey respondents, mainly reflecting a change in the wording of the survey questionnaire, which is believed to result in more accurate estimates. Consequently data pre and post JanMar 2010 are not directly comparable.

** - In Apr-Jun 2013 there were significant changes to the questions relating to disability and long-term limiting health conditions. This has led to a discontinuity in the series and no data is currently available for 2013 due to the change midyear.

The gap between the employment rates of disabled and non-disabled people stood at 32.6 percentage points in 2019- the narrowest gap in recent years.



Sources: Statistics from the ONS Annual Population Survey, Jan-Dec 2014-19

Disabled people are likely to be particularly impacted by COVID-19

- Families with disabled members are more likely to be in poverty and disabled people earn less on average than non-disabled people, meaning any reduction in income is likely to be particularly harmful.
- There are slightly higher proportions of disabled people working in some of the areas currently experiencing damaging impacts from COVID-19-related restrictions.
- For example, a higher share of the disabled workforce are employed in the distribution, hotels and restaurants industry compared to the share of the non-disabled workforce (21.2% vs 18.6%) [ONS Annual Population Survey, Jan-Dec 18]
- For some occupations, the place of work is or was closed due to lockdown restrictions and working from home is not possible due to the nature of work tasks. Disabled workers are more likely than non-disabled workers to be working in some of these occupations.
- Compared to the non-disabled workforce, a higher share of disabled workers are employed in Sales/Customer Service Occupations (10.5% vs 8.1%), Elementary Occupations (12.7% vs 10.8%), and Caring, Leisure or Other Service Occupations (13.0% vs 9.4%). Disabled workers may therefore be more exposed to job losses, reduced hours and reduced pay.

Sources: SG, [Economic Impact of Coronavirus Led Labour Market Effects on Individuals and Households](#)
Statistics from the ONS Annual Population Survey Jan-Dec 2018

Many disabled people are having to wait longer to participate in activities outside the home or to return to work safely.

- Measures to control the virus have presented distinct challenges for disabled people (including those who are physically disabled and those with mental health conditions) associated with increased need for physical distancing, shielding, loss of normal health and care arrangements and the impacts of isolation.
- Specific medical conditions have been identified as placing someone at greatest risk of severe illness from COVID-19. People with these health conditions are strongly advised to stay at home and avoid any face-to-face contact ('shielding'). Disabled people are more likely to fall into this shielding category.
- At present, The Scottish Government advice is for those shielding to continue to do so until at least 31st July. It's not yet known when guidance for the shielded population will be changed or relaxed.

Emerging Evidence

- There's limited evidence on the labour market impacts of the pandemic on equalities groups at this stage but we continue to monitor the emerging evidence.
- Recent Resolution Foundation analysis (see: [The Full Monty](#)) found that the impacts of this crisis on the jobs market so far have been fairly even-handed across most demographic groups, in some cases, surprisingly so.
- Employees with a long-standing health condition were just as likely as employees with no health condition to have been furloughed or to have lost their job. Employees with long-standing health conditions were slightly more likely to have lost hours (and pay) than those with no health condition perhaps due to shielding.

July 2020

TITLE:Transitions - Briefing - Meeting with GIRFEC Team 17.07.2020

What	Transitions Meeting
Where	Skype – details in calendar invite
When	Friday, 17 th July 2020 – 14.00-15.00
Key Message(s)	<p>In December 2018 we published A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People: Employment Action Plan, which set out the actions we as a Government will take to reduce the disability employment gap by at least half by 2038. One of the key themes within this plan (as identified by stakeholders) is Young People and Transitions.</p> <p>Our annual progress report, published in March 2020, showed that the employment rate for disabled young people (defined as aged between 16-24) has declined over the latest year, as has the unemployment rate for disabled 16-24 year olds has also fallen – from 20.8% in 2017, to 17.9% in 2018. This shift has been towards inactivity – in terms of the labour market, 'inactivity' refers to people not in employment, who have not been seeking work within the last 4 weeks and/or are unable to start work within the next 2 weeks.</p> <p>Recent Labour Market statistics suggest that young people and disabled people are likely to disproportionately impacted by the ongoing COVID-19 crisis. We are working to mitigate this impact, and want to ensure that our work ties in with wider transitions work.</p>
Who	[REDACTED]
Why	<p>Transitions has been an area of concern for some time, and this has been exacerbated to some extent by the ongoing COVID-19 crisis.</p> <p>The purpose of this meeting is to gain understanding of the current work being undertaken on by the Getting it Right for Every Child Team who lead on transitions, and where some of the commitments within our Action Plan can complement and enhance this work to improve young disabled people's transitions into further or higher education, training or work. This includes our commitment to – in partnership with disabled young people, the Disabled Children and Young People Advisory Group, and Disabled People's Organisations - develop employability</p>

	specific recommendations setting out how better learning, training and work outcomes can be achieved by disabled people.
<i>Briefing contents</i>	Annex A - Agenda Annex B – Background information Annex C - Key Lines to take

AGENDA

5. Welcome and purpose of meeting (*Lead: [REDACTED]*)
6. Update on Disability Employment team work (Lead [REDACTED])
7. Update on Transitions ([REDACTED])
8. Discussion on partnership working going forward (*Lead: [REDACTED]*)
9. Any other business (*Lead: [REDACTED]*)

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

[REDACTED – OUT OF SCOPE]

STATISTICS AND KEY LINES TO TAKE

Disability Employment Gap Statistics

- Scotland's DEG has decreased from the 2016 baseline of 37.4 percentage points (p.p) to 32.6 p.p
- The narrowing of the gap since 2016 has been driven by a rise in the employment rate of disabled people.
- In 2018, average pay for disabled employees in Scotland was 8.3% lower than nondisabled employees. For every £1 that a non-disabled employee earned in 2018, a disabled employee earned £0.92.
- Scotland's disability pay gap was the smallest of all UK nations and regions. However, this data is volatile for Scotland which can make it difficult to identify consistent change over time.

Current work of Disability Employment Team

- We announced SUSE as the lead partner for our newly established Public Social Partnership involving employers, government and disabled people's organisations to develop, test and implement solutions to barriers employers face in hiring and retaining disabled people. A timeline is in place for the next stage of the PSP as it moves into the operational phase but this is dependent on COVID-19.
- As part of our Recruitment and Retention Plan for Disabled People, which was published in August 2019, we set a target for the employment of disabled people within the Scottish Government's own workforce for external recruitment so that, over the next 7 years, on average 25% of successful candidates will be disabled people. Again, this work is dependent on COVID-19
- Scotland Career's Strategy: Moving Forward was published on 18 Feb 2020. This is a high level strategy – the implementation plan will be developed over the year and will have opportunities for engagement with DPOs
- Employer Led Campaign – in development stage. Established to promote the positive business case for employing disabled people directly to employers, to highlight the talent and opportunities that disabled workers provide. Currently in development stage, with possible funding of up to £100,000 in future to support employers to recruit & retain disabled people.
- Work is underway for the Supported Employment Review and IPS Review, building on initial scoping work undertaken last year by the team and by Fair Start Scotland. These reviews will look at the extent to which these have achieved the desired policy ambition; the challenges that have arisen, how the approach compares to models of successful delivery employed elsewhere in the UK and internationally; and funding levels and models;
- We announced we would establish Scotland's first Access to Work Stakeholder forum in our Annual Progress Report. We are due to attend the English version of this to learn best practice as we develop this.

- The Employer Led Campaign promoting the positive business case for hiring disabled people in development stage. Established to promote the positive business case for employing disabled people directly to employers, to highlight the talent and opportunities that disabled workers provide. Currently in development stage, with possible funding of up to £100,000 in future to support employers to recruit & retain disabled people.
- In our plan we committed to invest £6 million from the Tackling Child Poverty Fund to support the development, implementation and delivery of the Disabled Parents Employment Support Fund pilot (DPESF). This fund has been set up to target primarily child poverty by the focusing on employability support targeted at disabled parents who are out of work, to identify and learn from the pilot what kinds of support works best for this group, and to consider mainstreaming. DPESF has been paused for 2020/21 but PESF, which supports a variety of priority groups including BAME communities and lone parents will go ahead. However, work has taken place to collaborate with local authorities to establish the DPESF. DPESF will align with the funding model of PESF. Cosla, Local Authorities & StateAid have all been consulted.

COVID-19 Response

- We strongly encourage all employers to apply Fair Work principles in treating their workers fairly and showing flexibility in their approach to planning for and dealing with the potential impacts of COVID-19 on workers and workplaces.
- We are working with third sector partners and disabled peoples organisations to understand the impact of COVID-19 on the disabled workforce, and what actions would help mitigate this impact.
- We are also continuing to produce routine statistics which will allow us to monitor any changes to equality groups' position in the labour market, including women, young people, disabled people and people from minority ethnic groups.

Next Steps

- We have been doing some initial scoping and completed an EQIA on developing Employability Specific Recommendations in partnership with disabled young people, the Disabled Children and Young People Advisory Group, and Disabled People's Organisations. These recommendations will set out how better learning, training and work outcomes can be achieved by disabled people.
- The Cabinet Secretary yesterday that the £100m new funding for employability and training includes plans to invest £50 m to support youth employment, including a new Scottish Youth Guarantee
- At a recent Ministerial Meeting with STUC, the proposal of a Reasonable Adjustment passport was suggested. We have agreed to have a meeting with the STUC colleague leading on this to learn more and to consider its implication in some of our work

August 2020

(Extract from): **TITLE:** Impact of COVID-19 on equality - Ministerial submission and slides - Saved 13 Aug 2020

Disabled people: have faced disruptions to health and social care through lockdown and the recruitment crisis in the NHS and social care sector predicted to result from Brexit will also particularly affect them. People with a long-term condition were significantly more likely to experience loneliness and social isolation before the pandemic, and many disabled people have been worried about becoming acutely isolated at this time. Concerns have been raised about the impact of school closures on families with a disabled child, and that these might contribute to widening the disability attainment gap. It is anticipated that COVID-19 could impact disabled people's employment due to their higher share of employment in some shutdown sectors (e.g. distribution, hotels and restaurants); previous recessions have had a disproportionate negative impact on their labour market outcomes. Disabled people are more likely to experience poverty, and may be disproportionately impacted by the loss of social security coordination across EU countries after Brexit.

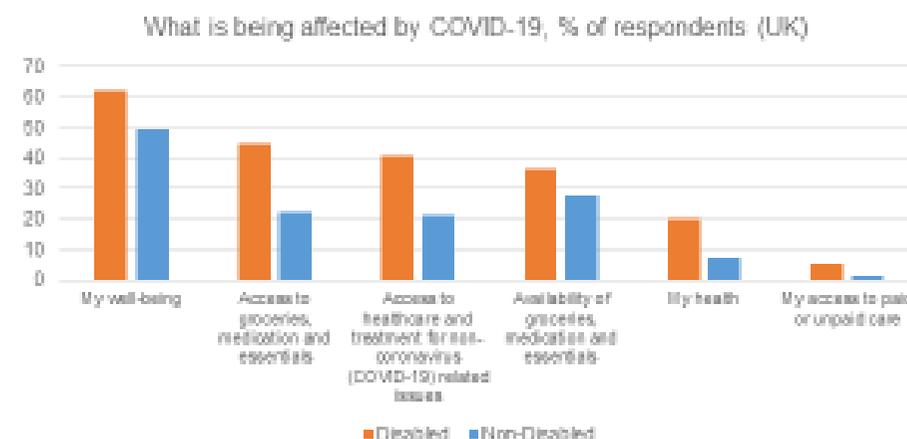
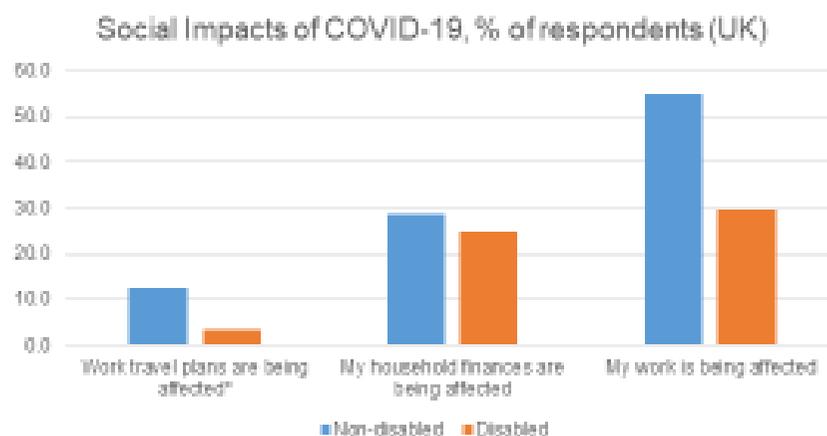
Disabled People Early evidence suggests no employment impact for Scotland

- Anticipated that COVID-19 could particularly impact disabled people due to traditional disproportionately high negative impact on LM outcomes during previous recessions and higher share of employment in some shutdown sectors (e.g. distribution, hotels and restaurants).
- The data so far does not show this. The employment rate of disabled people increased over the year to Apr-Jun '20 and also increased over the quarter (Jan-Mar '20 to Apr-Jun '20). In contrast, the employment rate of non-disabled people declined over the year and quarter to Apr-Jun '20.
- The employment rate of disabled people has increased by 3 percentage points over the year to Apr-Jun '20 whereas the employment rate of non-disabled people has decreased by 1.7 percentage points. The Disability Employment Gap has narrowed by 4.8 percentage points compared to Apr-Jun '19.
- These estimates are from the Labour Force Survey (LFS). The LFS is more timely, but the Annual Population Survey (APS) is based on a larger sample size and therefore has a higher degree of reliability. The APS does not yet reflect the impact of COVID-19.
- **DWP data of new Universal Credit claimants suggests new claimants post COVID-19 are less likely to have a fit note (a restricted ability to work) than pre-COVID-19.**

Employment Rates (16-64), Disabled & Non-Disabled – Scotland				
Period	Jan-Mar '19	Jan-Mar '20	Apr-Jun '19	Apr-Jun '20
Disabled	45.5%	47.7%	48.6%	51.7%
Non-Disabled	82.1%	81.9%	82.7%	81.0%

Source: ONS, Labour Force Survey, not seasonally adjusted

Disabled People UK survey data highlights greater social impact



- ONS data on social impacts of COVID-19 highlights that answers to work related questions in the ONS COVID-19 social impacts survey suggest less impact of COVID-19 for disabled than non-disabled people.
- A lower proportion of disabled people than non-disabled people were worried about aspects of work, travel and education. This may be because disabled people are [less likely to be in employment](#), are [less likely to travel under normal circumstances](#) and [tend to be older](#).

- However, disabled people are more worried than non-disabled people about the effect of COVID-19 on their well-being, health, and access to essentials and health care, and this is likely to have knock-on effects on employment.

September 2020

TITLE: FMQ style briefing - DPESF Disabled parents employment support fund - September 2020 (A27423938)

ISSUES – In December 2018 we published *A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People: Employment Action Plan* which outlines the initial actions Scottish Government and its agencies will take to halve the disability employment gap by 2038 – currently 32.6 percentage points. This is based on the 2016 baseline of 37.4 percentage points and will mean reducing the gap to no larger than 18.7 percentage points. The Action Plan recognises the strong links between poverty and disabilities, and included a commitment to fund support for unemployed disabled parents towards and into work.

We paused the delivery of the Disabled Parents Employment Support Fund (DPESF) to allow further engagement with disabled people's organisations (DPOs) and disabled parents in order to identify the key areas of support required and a suitable delivery model.

(Source: APS, Jan-Dec 2016 - 2019 datasets, 16-64 year olds, ONS)

Top Lines

- We want to ensure that everybody who can and wants to work has the opportunity to find fulfilling and sustainable employment suitable to their needs and skills, and that those facing barriers to employment - including many disabled people who also often face poverty - can access the support they need.
- In December 2016 when we published our Employment Action Plan we committed to at least halving the disability employment gap in Scotland. We have committed to achieving this by 2038, and have been making steady progress. Since then the gap has reduced by 4.8 percentage points.
- Our Employment Action Plan included the *original* commitment to support invest **up to** £6 million from the Child Poverty Delivery Fund to support disabled parents in targeted areas to enter and progress within employment.
- In Aug 2020 Cabinet Secretary for Local Communities, Aileen Campbell announced the news as part of a statement to Parliament on the Child Poverty Second Year Progress Report where she also confirmed that a further £2.35 million will be made available to the Parental Employability Support Fund this financial year to boost the £5 million already allocated.
- £1 million of this additional funding will be targeted at supporting disabled parents to progress toward employment and to compete for suitable jobs through DPESF.
- We are committed to working together with local authorities, Disabled People's Organisations and individuals themselves to identify an approach which delivers the additional support needed to help disabled people to access and sustain employment.
- To develop support that will have real impact for disabled parents the Scottish Government paused the development and delivery of the DPESF early 2020.

We have used the time to work DPOs, disabled parents, other key experts and local government to explore what disabled parents need and want in terms of employability / employment support in order to help them progress towards employment.

- The boost will ensure alignment with our No One Left Behind ambitions, demonstrating our commitment to integration and alignment, as well as lessening the reporting burden on local government.

5. Developments of DPESF:

- We have been developing DPESF with input from Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs) and disabled parents which will help us achieve the best possible outcome, ensuring that the approach taken works best to meet the needs of disabled people.
- We have undertaken focus group discussions with Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs) disabled people with lived experience of disability, and other key experts such as JRF and the Poverty Alliance. This has fed into advice to Ministers, about the best way to proceed as a boost to PESF.
- As noted above investment in DPES was paused to allow further engagement with disabled people's organisations (DPOs) and disabled parents in order to identify the key areas of support required and a suitable delivery model. Following engagement over spring/ summer 2020 we are confident that PESF offers an appropriate delivery model for support.
- The key issues and concerns highlighted by disabled parents relate primarily to the need for: increased awareness and ease of access to the support available amongst disabled parents themselves; greater understanding of disability equality issues amongst both employability service providers and employers; greater coordination across complementary support services; and improved assistance to access wrap around support (e.g. childcare, accessible transport).

6. We understand the ongoing Covid-19 outbreak could have a considerable impact on employment opportunities for disabled people, and will work to help mitigate any negative impacts

- We recognise that COVID-19 is already having a huge public health and economic impact in Scotland, and that the longer term impact on employment opportunities of disabled people in particular is not yet known.
- The Scottish Government continues to reassess all planned work programmes in light of COVID-19, and is reprioritising activity where necessary.
- We remain committed to addressing inequalities in the labour market and this will include taking action to try to minimise any negative impact of COVID-19 on disabled people in economic responses to the pandemic.
- We are working with third sector partners to understand the impact of COVID-19 on disabled people, and what actions would help mitigate this impact for those seeking to enter or sustain employment.

- We are working with the Office for the Chief Economic Advisor (OCEA) to analyse labour market statistics which will allow us to monitor any changes to priority groups' position in the labour market, including: disabled people; women; young people; and people from minority ethnic groups.

7. D/PESF - Additional information if needed - JRF and Scottish Government Lines:

To note that Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF), in early 2020, highlighted the impact of poverty on households with disabled family members, and was then critical of the Scottish Government's budget allocation to PESF to support people in poverty into, and to progress within, employment – suggesting it is an insufficient level of investment.

The Disabled Parents Employment Support Fund, DPESF, boost to PESF is focussed on unemployed disabled parents in poverty. Following further engagements with key stakeholders including disabled parents and DPOs we have identified need and gaps, and have allocated additional funding of £1M as a boost to PESF.

DPESF will help us to meet our ambition to at least halve the disability employment gap by 2038.

We remain committed to supporting disabled people towards and into fair employment suitable to their skills and needs. This was highlighted in a pod cast by JRF on 30th June - Jim McCormick, JRF, highlighted disability as one of the key challenges for Scottish Government in the next few years, in relation to economic recovery following the COVID-19 pandemic as well as in our work to support people, including parents, out of poverty. Further key JRF points include:

- We need as many people as possible to be in good jobs. Further that the prospects for people in struggling places need to be prioritised, or progress will stall. In addition, employment among disabled people and carers is still low, and they should be supported to work when they can.
- JRF is also clear that low income working families' income need to improve, helping people in the lowest-paid jobs or working part-time, as too many people are stuck in low-paid, insecure jobs, with little chance of progression and too few hours of work to reach a decent living standard. JRF is clear that in-work poverty must be seen as a critical issue for our economy and given high priority by economic policy-makers.
- The Scottish Government agrees with this, and is keenly aware of and taking into consideration the well-known link between disability, poverty and fair work - as also demonstrated through the Child Poverty Delivery Plan and associated funding.
- We remain committed to supporting disabled people towards and into fair employment suitable to their skills and needs.
- As always planned, disabled parents will be supported towards and into employment, and to increase their earnings, through PESF, which is funded over two years.

- We are adding DPES funding as a boost to PESF, making a real difference for unemployed disabled parents based on what they and DPOs have told us they need. This work will also help us meeting our ambition to at least halve the disability employment gap by 2038.
- In 2020-21 we have made a further £5 million available to local authorities to deliver the new PESF service in 2020-21.
- This is in addition to our investment in Fair Start Scotland , in order to support parents to enter and progress with employment.

ANNEX A – Employment Rates of Disabled People in UK 2015 - 2019 (Source: Annual Population Survey, Jan-Dec datasets. Figures extracted from Nomis on 2nd July 2020).

Disability Employment Gap (Percentage Points - p.p.)

	England	NI	Scotland	UK	Wales
2015	30.6	45.5	38.4	32.0	35.3
2016	29.4	44.8	37.4	30.8	34.6
2017	28.0	41.4	35.9	29.5	34.1
2018	28.4	43.1	35.5	29.8	33.2
2019	26.9	43.7	32.6	28.2	31.6

Change (p.p.) in DEG since 2015	-3.6	-1.8	-5.7	-3.7	-3.7
Change (p.p.) in DEG since 2018	-1.5	0.6	-2.9	-1.6	-1.6

Employment Rates (%) of Disabled People

	England	NI	Scotland	UK	Wales
2015	48.7	32.2	41.9	47.3	42.6
2016	50.2	33.3	42.8	48.7	44.0
2017	52.2	36.1	45.3	50.7	45.6
2018	52.3	35.7	45.6	50.9	47.3
2019	54.4	37.3	49.0	53.1	48.9

Employment Rates (%) of Non-Disabled People

	England	NI	Scotland	UK	Wales
2015	79.3	77.7	80.3	79.3	77.9
2016	79.6	78.1	80.2	79.5	78.6
2017	80.2	77.5	81.2	80.2	79.7
2018	80.7	78.8	81.1	80.7	80.5
2019	81.3	81.0	81.6	81.3	80.5

Age and Disability Circle

Supporting information for meeting on Thursday 15th October – background on Employment

1. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic is having a considerable impact on many areas of society – in particular health, but also on the economy and the labour market.
2. The full scale of impact of COVID-19 on Scotland's labour market is only emerging, but analysis by the Office of the Chief Economic Adviser estimates unemployment could reach around 10% in Scotland towards the end of 2020.
3. Based on the experience of the previous recession, we anticipate young people, disabled people and wider equality groups are more likely to be disproportionately impacted by the consequences of the COVID-19 outbreak.
4. The role of Employability services is pivotal in supporting those who are most likely to be adversely impacted by the COVID-19 crisis, and will be essential in supporting Scotland's economic recovery.
5. Employability support is provided by a mixed economy of public, third and private sector providers, including to those who face multiple barriers to accessing the labour market.

The emerging impact of COVID-19 on the labour market

6. There is no evidence to suggest that disabled people have been disproportionately impacted in the labour market due to COVID-19 so far. However, looking back at the 2008 recession, we did see disabled people fare better initially – between 2008 and 2009 the disability employment gap narrowed – it wasn't until the 2010-12 period that the gap widened again. It is possible we could see a similar occurrence this time round, with disproportionate impacts felt down the line.
7. We must also be mindful of the **wider impacts of COVID-19 on disabled people**. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) recently published survey results which showed disabled people were more

worried than non-disabled people about the **effect of COVID-19 on their well-being, health, and access to essentials and health care** – all of which can have knock-on effects on employment.

8. The ONS labour market statistics show that COVID-19 is **disproportionally impacting young people (16-24)** in Scotland’s labour market.
9. The Annual Population Survey is more robust for age breakdowns, but the more timely Labour Force Survey (LFS) shows that the **employment rate of 16-24 year olds has deteriorated by more over the year than the overall employment rate (16-64 years)** in the last four sets of LFS results (Table 1).

Table 1

	Feb-Apr 2020	Mar-May 2020	Apr-Jun 2020	May-Jul 2020
Annual change (percentage points) in 16-24 employment rate	-5.8	-6.3	-6.9	-4.4
Annual change (percentage points) in 16-64 employment rate	-1.5	-1.5	-1.1	-0.6

Source: Labour Force Survey, ONS. Official Statistics – not seasonally adjusted.

10. Over the year to May-Jul 2020, the employment rate of 16-24 year olds fell by 4.4 percentage points (p.p.) compared to a fall of 0.6 p.p. in the overall employment rate.
11. **Before COVID-19** impacts, statistics for April 2019 to March 2020 showed that the employment rate for those **50-64 years was 70.9 per cent**, the highest on record for this age group. Similarly for the population age 65 years and above the level of employment (91,300) was the highest on record and almost double from ten years earlier.
12. There’s currently **no evidence for Scotland that older workers have been particularly negatively impacted by COVID-19**. Quarterly changes in 50-64 and 65+ employment rates in the last four sets of Labour Force Survey (LFS) results have been better than for 16-64 year olds.
13. However research findings from the Resolution Foundation for the UK do suggest that **earnings for older workers are being**

impacted more significantly than for those between the ages of 25 to 49.⁹

14. Scotland's Labour Market Strategy recognises that the nature of work is changing and that a number of factors will influence the labour market of the future, including an ageing workforce.

What has been done over the COVID-19 period?

15. The Scottish Government is working closely with partners across sectors to protect provision and ensure continuity of support for those individuals who use employability services across the country.

16. We will hold true to the principles and values outlined in our approach to **No One Left Behind** to ensure our immediate and longer term response is reflective of those most at risk of challenging labour market conditions.

17. We remain committed to meeting the ambition to at least halve the disability employment gap (DEG) in Scotland by 2038 (the gap stood at 37.4 percentage points in 2016, our baseline year). We have seen some good initial progress in narrowing the gap, with Scotland's DEG having fallen to 32.6 percentage points in 2019.

18. The narrowing of the disability employment gap since 2016 has been driven by a rise in the employment rate of disabled people. However, we recognise that in light of COVID-19 we are now faced with a very different labour market, and that we may need to refocus activity in order to help prevent a reversal of this progress.

19. Building on the £33 million we are already investing in employability support this year, a further £100 million package will help those who have lost jobs, are at risk of unemployment, and young people entering the labour market can benefit from more and better job opportunities. This includes:

- £60 million to deliver a **Young Person's Guarantee** - every person aged between 16 and 24 will have the opportunity, depending on their circumstances, to: study; take up an apprenticeship, job or work experience; or participate in volunteering. Implementing the Guarantee will be a collective

⁹ <https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/publications/young-workers-in-the-coronavirus-crisis/>

endeavour involving collaboration across partners. An Implementation Group has now been established and is made up of partners from the public sector, third sector, and private sector. Advancing equality of opportunity and inclusion will also be central to the Guarantee.

- We are maximising PACE services, our partnership support for those facing redundancy. This an initial £25 million **National Training Transition Fund** to provide retraining opportunities for people who have lost their jobs or are at risk of doing so.
- An additional £2.35 million for the **Parental Employability Support Fund** which will increase the support available for both disabled and young parents, with £1M specifically focussed on unemployed disabled parents in poverty.

20. In addition, Fair Start Scotland, our employment support service, has been extended by a further two years to March 2023. This extension will provide stability and continuity to those furthest from the labour market and/or who face additional barriers, to help them progress into work.

Relevant preparatory reading:

[A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People: Employment Action Plan – Progress Report \(March, 2019\)](#)

[A Fairer Scotland for Older People – A Framework for Action](#)

Youth Guarantee - No-one Left Behind: Initial Report by Sandy Begbie - <https://www.gov.scot/publications/youth-guarantee-no-one-left-behind-initial-report/>

OCTOBER 2020

TITLE: Briefing on Disability Employment Action Plan - Fair Work MWG

1. A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People: Employment Action Plan – General Overview

- Year 1 progress report published at the end of March of this year, with steady initial progress having been made towards our commitment to at least halve the disability employment gap by 2038.
- Meeting this commitment would mean reducing the gap to 18.7 percentage points (p.p.) by 2038 – requiring approximately 1 percentage point reduction per year from 2016 baseline of 37.4 p.p.
- The disability employment gap in Scotland (the difference between the employment rates of disabled and non-disabled people) is currently 32.6 percentage points (APS Jan-Dec 2019) – the lowest recorded in recent years.

Change in Scotland's disability employment gaps since baseline year of 2016

YEAR	Scotland's Disability Employment Gap (percentage points)
2016	37.4
2017	35.9
2018	35.5
2019	32.6

Impact of COVID-19

However, it is anticipated this **steady progress in reducing the gap may be negatively impacted by COVID-19**. We need to do all we can to ensure progress to date is not reversed.

- Little evidence to date to suggest that disabled people have been disproportionately impacted in the labour market due to COVID-19 (in terms of employment rates).
- However, if we look back at the 2008 recession, we saw disabled people fare better initially – between 2008 and 2009 the disability employment gap narrowed – it wasn't until the 2010-12 period that the gap widened again. It is possible we could see a similar occurrence this time round, with disproportionate impacts felt further down the line.
- We must also be mindful of the wider impacts of COVID-19 on disabled people
 - Recent survey results from ONS showed disabled people were more worried than non-disabled people about the effect of COVID-19 on their well-being,

health, and access to essentials and health & social care – all of which can have knock-on effects on employment;

- We also know that families with disabled members are more likely to be living in poverty and that disabled people earn less on average than non-disabled people, meaning any reduction in income is likely to be particularly harmful.
- Consequently, current activity in implementing the action plan has been reviewed to ensure action is prioritised where it contributes to recovery efforts – but we are mindful we may need to continue to refocus efforts going forward.

2. Current priority activity

2.1 Disabled Parents Employability Support Fund (DPESF) / Parental Employment Support Fund (PESF)-boost

Context

- Our Employment Action Plan included the commitment to invest Child Poverty Delivery Funding to support disabled parents in poverty to enter and progress within employment.

Progress thus far

- In Aug 2020 Cabinet Secretary for Local Communities, Aileen Campbell announced - as part of a statement to Parliament on the Child Poverty Second Year Progress Report - that a further £2.35 million will be made available to the Parental Employability Support Fund (PESF) this financial year to boost the £5 million already allocated.
- £1 million of this additional funding will be targeted at supporting disabled parents to progress toward employment and to compete for suitable jobs – DPES.

Next steps

- The boost will ensure alignment with our No One Left Behind ambitions, demonstrating our commitment to integration and alignment, as well as lessening the reporting burden on local government.

2.2 Public Social Partnership (PSP)

Context

- Our Employment Action Plan included the commitment to invest up to £1 million in a Public Social Partnership in order to ensure that employers are best able to attract, recruit and retain disabled people.

Progress thus far

- The PSP has been established, and we have entered into a grant arrangement with the Scottish Union for Supported Enterprise to lead the PSP.
- Workstreams have been established and groups are working now to identify and develop projects to be delivered over the next year. These workstreams

include: public sector; attraction and recruitment; retention; under-represented groups; and transitions.

- A project manager has been recruited, and will be on-boarded in the next few weeks.

Next steps

- The PSP continues to meet regularly, and is working rapidly to identify the correct projects to pilot. We anticipate that in January the steering group will make the decision on which projects to green light.
- Over the next few months we will develop sign off on: communication plan; Memorandum of understanding; a marketing strategy for the PSP.
- Workstreams will continue with the development phase of projects.

2.3 Individual Placement and Support (IPS) review

Context

- Individual Placement and Support (IPS) is an employment support service aimed at supporting people who experience severe mental health conditions. A key principle of IPS is that employment specialists and clinical teams work together to support people to gain employment.
- Our Employment Action Plan included a commitment to review the delivery and quality of Individual Placement and Support in Fair Start Scotland to ensure that participants are receiving the right support to enter work. The findings of this will feed into the forthcoming overall review of supported employment, with a view to making recommendations to support current and future delivery

Progress thus far

- We have contracted with an external consultant (Social Finance) to deliver our review of IPS. This will give an independent and objective perspective to the review, the consultant is responsible for:
 - interviewing members of the Community Mental Health Teams (CMHTs) IPS Specialists, clients, members of the NHS executive team and other relevant stakeholders.
 - produce an assessment of the extent to which IPS delivery as part of FSS has achieved the desired Scottish Government policy ambition of offering a flexible employment support service tailored to meet individual needs to bridge the gap between any health issues and securing a job;
 - assess the IPS delivery staff's professional and registration credentials in both FSS and non-FSS IPS services.
- Interim report was presented to IPS Steering Group on 23 September

Next steps

- Draft final report presented to IPS Review Steering Group on 15/10/20.
- DD liaison to secure input from SG Mental Health team to report ahead of finalisation of report by end October

2.4 Forthcoming Supported Employment (SE) review

Context

- Supported Employment is based on the model of "place and train" where participants learn on the job with support from work colleagues. This is backed up by the skills of a job coach who provides well-structured flexible support to both the service user and potential employer.
- It is a form of support that has been shown to be particularly effective when working with people with learning disabilities.
- Scottish Government has committed to undertake a review of Supported Employment provision across Scotland, as part of implementing the employment actions agreed in Scotland's Learning Disability Strategy: *The keys to life* and the subsequent implementation framework.
- The purpose of the review is to establish whether there is sufficient provision of supported employment across Scotland; what outcomes are being achieved; and any gaps and areas for further development to best develop the workforce to ensure the highest quality of support is available.

Progress thus far

- Initial scoping of the review
- Preparation of draft specification
- Identification of potential steering group members
- Draft ToR for review steering group

Next steps

- Submission to Minister w/c 19 Oct
- Establishment of a time-limited steering group to:
 - Provide input to development of the review specification;
 - Provide advice and information to the successful contractor during the review process;
 - Consider interim and final findings of the review and provide feedback on these;
 - Consider recommendations of the IPS review and provide a synthesis report;
 - Develop recommendations to Scottish Ministers for the future delivery of Supported Employment within Scotland based on the synthesis report.

November 2020

TITLE: Factual Briefing Note for Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Fair Work and Culture.

Background

The disability employment gap in Scotland (the difference between the employment rates of disabled and non-disabled people) is 32.6% (APS 2019).

The Scottish Government's ambition is to at least halve the disability employment gap by 2038. This is based on the 2016 baseline of 37.4 percentage points and will mean reducing the gap to no larger than 18.7 percentage points.

On 11 December 2018 we **published A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People: Employment Action Plan** which outlines the initial actions we will take to halve the disability employment gap.

The gap between the employment rate for disabled and non-disabled people has decreased by 2.9 percentage points over the year and by 4.7 percentage points since 2016.

The employment rate for disabled people **increased** from 45.6 per cent in 2018 to 49.0 per cent in 2019, and was the primary reason for the reduction in the employment gap as the employment rate for non-disabled people increased only slightly from 81.1 to 81.6 per cent over the same period.

The disability employment gap was lower for women (27.5 percentage points) than men (38.2 percentage points) for ages 16 to 64 and across all other age bands.

The disability employment gap was lower for young people and increased with age with the gap being highest for those aged 50 to 64 years, for both women and men.

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic is having a considerable impact on many areas of society – in particular health, but also on the economy and the labour market. This may cause more difficulty for those already facing barriers within the labour market, including disabled people.

Top line

- We want to ensure that everybody who can and wants to work has the opportunity to find fulfilling and sustainable employment suitable to their needs and skills, and that those facing barriers to employment, including many disabled people, can access any additional support they need.
- A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People: Employment Action Plan was published in December 2018, and sets out the initial actions, working with partners – including disabled people themselves – **to deliver the ambition to at least halve the disability employment gap in Scotland by 2038.**

- Our [Annual Progress Report](#) published in March 2020 highlights the work undertaken to date in support of delivering our ambition, as well as outlining work we propose to take forward in 2020/21. **It is recognised some of this work may need to be reprioritised in light of COVID-19.**
- Latest figures show that the disability employment gap in 2019 (i.e. 32.6 percentage points) was the lowest recorded in recent years. However, recent figures suggest that the **steady progress in reducing the gap may be starting to be negatively impacted by COVID-19**, with a reduction in the employment rate for disabled people and an increase in the disability employment gap.
- We are undertaking the review of Individual Placement and Support (IPS), an employment model available to those with severe/enduring mental health challenges to find sustainable, competitive jobs that fit their needs and interests.
- We are working on an ongoing basis with third sector partners to understand the impact of COVID-19 on disabled people, and what actions would help mitigate this impact for those seeking to enter or sustain employment.
- We are working with the Office for the Chief Economic Advisor (OCEA) to analyse labour market statistics which will allow us to monitor any changes to protected groups' position in the labour market, including: disabled people; women; young people; and people from minority ethnic groups.

TITLE: BACKGROUND NOTE PQ [S5W-33238](#)

“To ask the Scottish Government whether it has undertaken an assessment of the impact of undiagnosed dyslexia in workplaces.”

10. Rachael Hamilton is a Scottish Conservative MSP for Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire in the South Scotland region and the Shadow Cabinet Secretary for Social Security and Older People.

11. She is a member of the following Committees:

- Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Affairs Committee (Substitute Member)
- Social Security Committee (Member)

12. Ms Hamilton MSP is a member of the following (relevant) Cross-Party Groups:

- Cross-Party Group in the Scottish Parliament on Children and Young People (Member)
- Cross-Party Group in the Scottish Parliament on Culture (Member)
- Cross-Party Group in the Scottish Parliament on Heart Disease and Stroke (Member)
- Cross-Party Group in the Scottish Parliament on Lung Health (Member)
- Cross-Party Group in the Scottish Parliament on Social Enterprise (Deputy Convener)

13. Ms Hamilton MSP has raised several PQs on Dyslexia to be answered on 30th November. These are:

- [S5W-33237](#) **Rachael Hamilton:** To ask the Scottish Government what financial assistance is available for testing adults for dyslexia, and whether it will consider introducing free assessments to enable people in employment to receive support.
- [S5W-33238](#) **Rachael Hamilton:** To ask the Scottish Government whether it has undertaken an assessment of the impact of undiagnosed dyslexia in workplaces.
- [S5W-33239](#) **Rachael Hamilton:** To ask the Scottish Government how many people currently in receipt of Universal Credit have been diagnosed with dyslexia, and what specific support is offered to people with the condition to help them return to employment.
- [S5W-33240](#) **Rachael Hamilton:** To ask the Scottish Government whether it will provide an update on Skills Development Scotland’s five-year MA Equality Action Plan, which was published in December 2015, in relation to people with dyslexia.
- [S5W-33241](#) **Rachael Hamilton:** To ask the Scottish Government what progress it has made on identifying where funding can be allocated to facilitate free dyslexia tests for adults.

14. Ms Hamilton also recently wrote a letter to Claire Haughey, Minister for Mental Health on the subject of Dyslexia Assessments on 15th October (Micase Ref 202000103951)
15. Dyslexia is a learning difficulty that impacts on various facets of people's lives, and requires a formal diagnosis with a cost attached – this is not currently provided by the NHS.
16. Dyslexia is included in the Equality Act 2010, and employers have a duty to take this into account and make reasonable adjustments to accommodate an individual's circumstances. This does not necessarily require an assessment for this to happen.
17. Independent dyslexia assessors charge for private assessments for all age groups, however free provision and access to support is available for children and young people in education settings.
18. The Scottish Government are not currently able to offer support in the funding of adult Dyslexia assessments, however we do continue to work on other policy developments which impact upon Dyslexic people.
19. Dyslexia Scotland are also involved in key areas of work in Disability Employment Policy, including the Scottish Access to Work Stakeholder Forum, and in other ongoing projects to improve employment opportunities for disabled people across Scotland.
20. Officials have spoken to Dyslexia Scotland to understand the issues surrounding barriers to adult assessment. Dyslexia Scotland met Mr Hepburn in November 2019 to discuss this matter, including putting forward a model for SG-funded adult assessments. This model could not be supported as Mr Hepburn felt it did not demonstrate a strong enough link within the proposal to employability and progression within the workplace, and further input from Dyslexia Scotland was sought. This was not forthcoming.
21. Dyslexia Scotland did not provide insight into the potential number of undiagnosed adults with dyslexia in Scotland, however it should be noted that the Employability Division has stated it is not able to fund a pilot to test the proposed model. While there are other options available to provide additional support at work, for example, Access to Work, we understand from DWP that this does not currently fund dyslexia assessments.
22. The Strategic Planning and Clinical Priorities team will work with officials in the Employability Division to follow up the missing information from DS in order to provide updated advice to Ministers.
23. The Support and Wellbeing Unit fund Dyslexia Scotland (DS) £200k pa for their work with children and young people.
24. The Children, Young People and Families Early Intervention & Adult Learning and Empowering Communities (CYPFEI & ALEC) fund supports the Third Sector

to use early intervention and prevention to improve outcomes for children, young people, adults, families and communities. Dyslexia Scotland has received/is receiving £50,000 in each of the 5 years 2016/17 – 2020/21 to enable it to:

- provide information, advice and support to people with dyslexia and those who support them
- raise awareness about dyslexia and to increase the knowledge and confidence of parents, tutors, volunteers and professionals working with people with dyslexia
- give people with dyslexia an individual and collective voice by encouraging people to share their stories and participate in consultations affecting their lives.

25. The Scottish Government Recruitment and Retention Plan 2019 also outlines our responsibility as an employer to ensure that all staff are supported to stay and progress in their work, and feel comfortable and confident to disclose any disability.

26. The Disability Employment Gap (DEG) is the difference between the employment rates of disabled people and non-disabled people of working age. In 2016, when the Scottish Government outlined its aim to at least halve the DEG, the gap stood at 37.4 percentage points (p.p.). Since 2015, Scotland's DEG has fallen: to 35.9 p.p. in 2017; to 35.5 p.p. in 2018, and to 32.6 percentage points in 2019. (ONS Annual Population Survey Jan-Dec 2016-2019)

27. In December 2018, we published *A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People: Employment Action Plan*, outlining the steps we as a Government will take to meet this commitment, and setting a target for doing so by 2038. The first annual progress report was published in March 2020, with the next report due in Spring 2021.

28. COVID-19

We understand the ongoing Covid-19 outbreak continues to have a considerable impact on employment opportunities for disabled people, and are committed to including disabled people and other equality groups in all economic responses to the pandemic:

- We are clear that no one should be left behind as a result of Covid-19, and we will take every opportunity we can to create and protect jobs.
- We published our responses to the Advisory Group on Economic Recovery report and the Enterprise and Skills Strategic Board report which outlines key actions to generate significant economic growth, combined with a focus on supporting jobs, skills and training.
- We have worked with the DWP to establish the first Access to Work Stakeholder Forum in Scotland. The forum will represent the views of service users and offer advice to DWP on how Access to Work could be enhanced to improve customer experience in Scotland; and consider ideas and suggestions to enhance policy development.

- Our Fair Work approach encourages all employers to adopt fair and flexible work practices, supported by our Fair Work Action Plan, as well as related action to tackle the disability employment gap, gender pay gap, and race equality within the labour market.
- We are working on an ongoing basis with third sector partners to understand the impact of COVID-19 on disabled people, and what actions would help mitigate this impact for those seeking to enter or sustain employment.
- We are also liaising with the Office of the Chief Economic Advisor (OCEA) to produce analysis of labour market statistics that will allow us to monitor changes to priority groups' position in the labour market, including: disabled people; women; young people; and people from minority ethnic groups.

Contact Name: **[REDACTED]**
Ext: **[REDACTED]**

Disability and Employment Analysis

[REDACTED]

Labour Market Economics branch of
Office of the Chief Economic Adviser, Scottish Government

Employment Action Plan for Disabled People

- Published on 11th December 2018

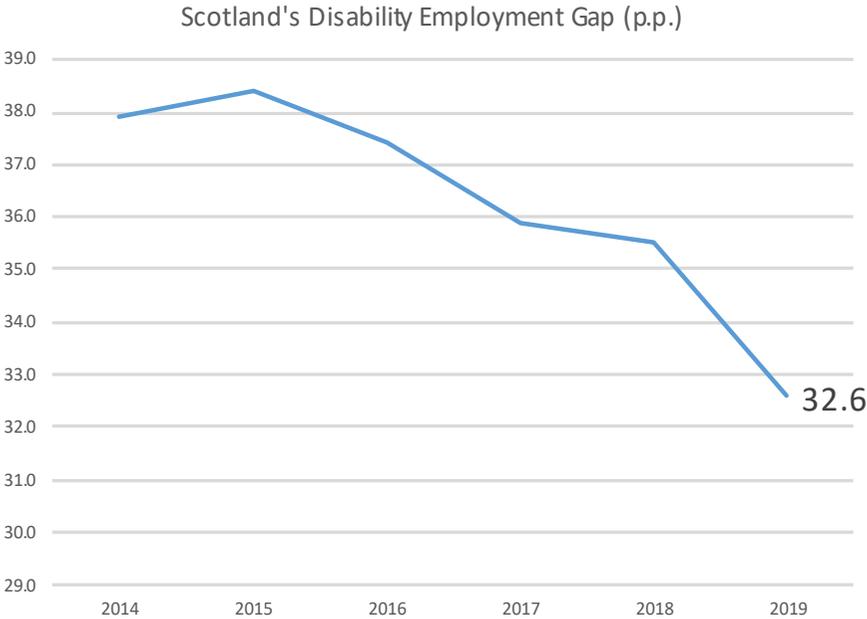
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/fairer-scotland-disabled-people-employment-action-plan/>

- Programme of analysis carried out feeding into plan & informed ambition to ½ the DEG
- Have since published (March 2020) our Progress Report for the first year of implementing the Action Plan

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/fairer-scotland-disabled-people-employment-action-plan-progress-report/pages/3/>



The gap between the employment rates of disabled and non-disabled people stood at 32.6 percentage points in 2019 - the narrowest gap in recent years.



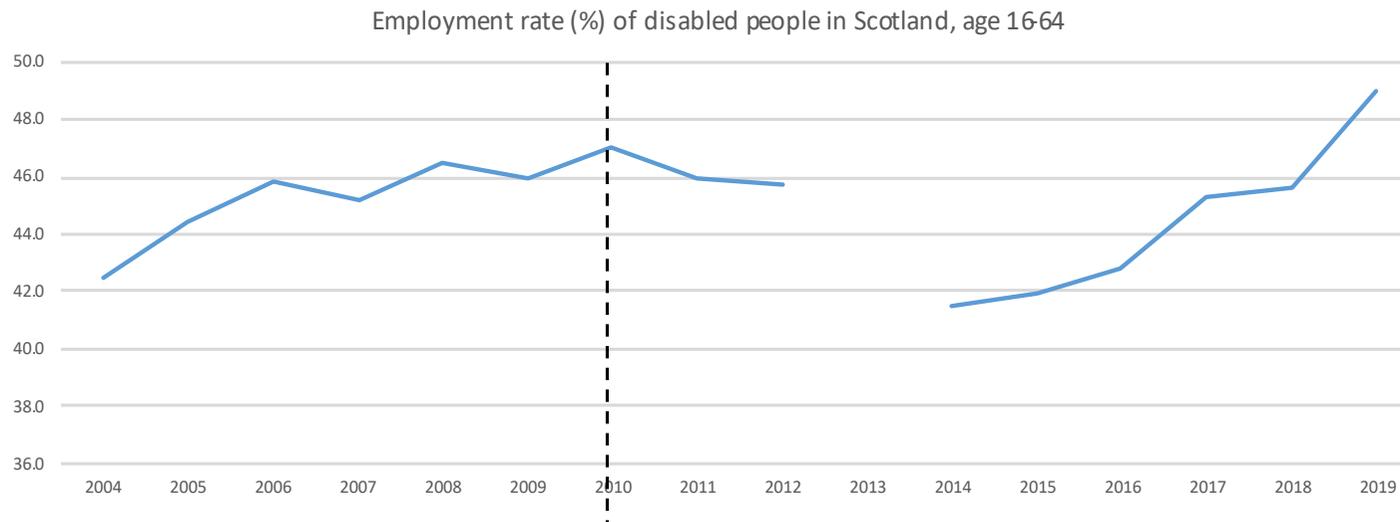
Sources: Statistics from the ONS Annual Population Survey, Jan-Dec 2014-19

What we know about labour market outcomes for disabled people in Scotland

Labour Market Data

- Statistics mainly come from the ONS Annual Population Survey.
- Individuals are categorised as ‘employed’, ‘unemployed’, or ‘inactive’.

The 2008 recession interrupted improvements to the employment rate of disabled people – but there has been a recent recovery



Source: Annual Population Survey, 2004-2019

‡ - In January-March 2010 there was a change in the reporting behaviour of survey respondents, mainly reflecting a change in the wording of the survey questionnaire, which is believed to result in more accurate estimates. Consequently data pre and post Jan-Mar 2010 are not directly comparable.

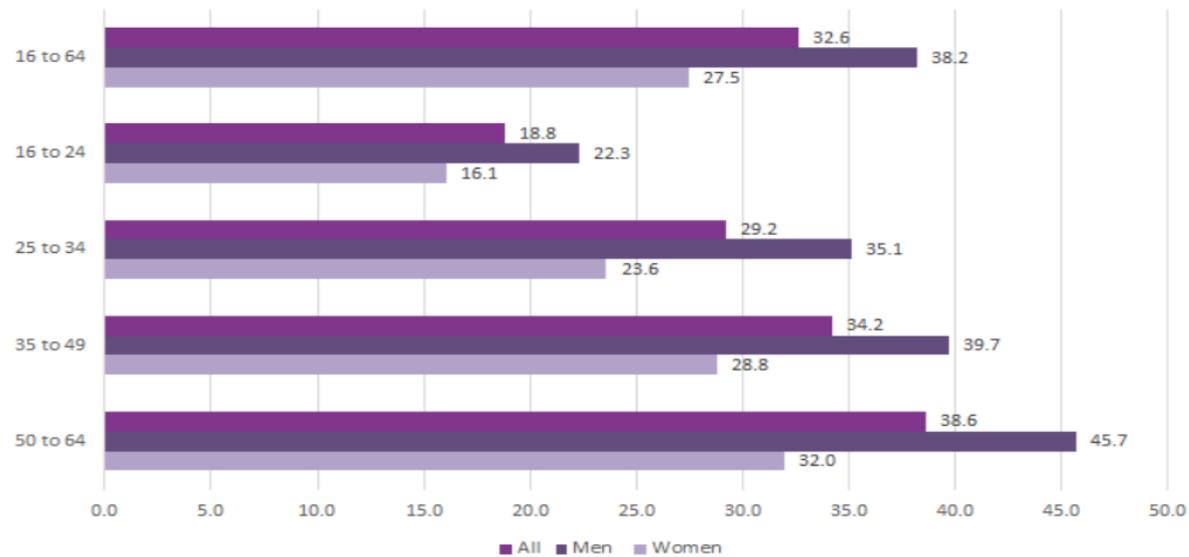
** - In Apr-Jun 2013 there were significant changes to the questions relating to disability and long-term limiting health conditions. This has led to a discontinuity in the series and no data is currently available for 2013 due to the change mid-year.

What do we know about the recent progress?

- The employment rates of both disabled and non-disabled people have risen in recent years – impact of stronger labour market.
- The gap between these rates has narrowed – in other words the employment rate of disabled people has grown at a faster pace than the employment rate of non-disabled people.
- The employment rates of both disabled men and women have risen but there has been a greater increase for women.

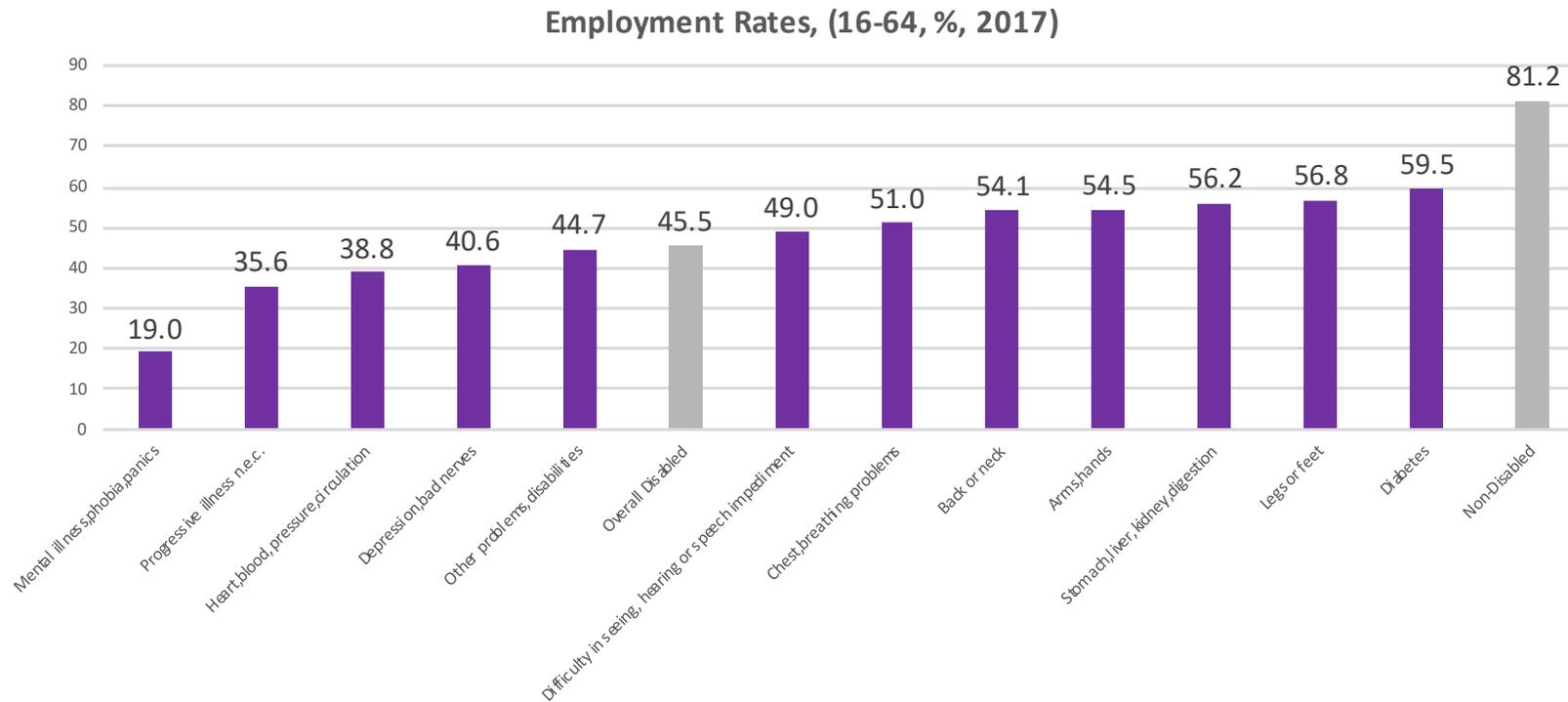
The DEG is larger for men and older age groups

Chart 8: Disability employment gap for ages 16 to 64 by gender and age, Scotland, 2019



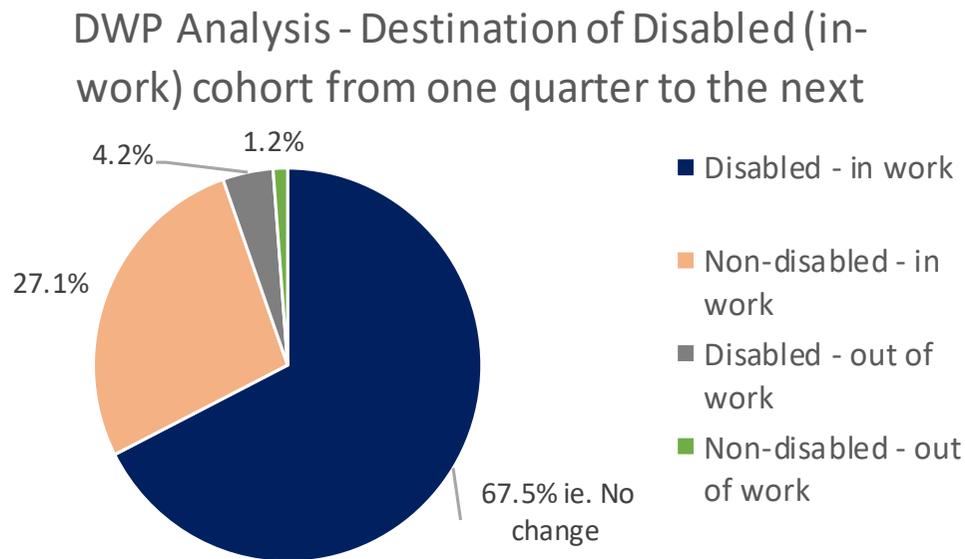
Source: Annual Population Survey, Jan-Dec, 2019

Employment Rates of Disabled People by Main Health Condition



Source: Annual Population Survey, Jan-Dec, 2017

Disability (and employment) status is fluid. More than a quarter of disabled people in work experience a change of disability status.



Source: DWP, Work, health and disability green paper: data pack

- Disabled individuals in employment were more likely to fall out of work than non-disabled individuals. 5.4% of disabled individuals in employment in the Q1 were out of work by the next, compared to 2.5% of non-disabled individuals in employment.
- SG have since published their own labour market flows analysis: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/disabled-people-labour-market-scotland-2018/>. In 2018, disabled people were almost twice as likely to move out of work compared to non-disabled people.

Halving the DEG

How can the DEG be halved?

- To achieve ½ DEG ambition by 2038, Scotland needs DEG of no larger than 18.7 p.p. (from 2016 baseline).
- Would require around an increase of 130,000 disabled people in employment.
- Retention - If the rate of labour market churn could be equalised (so disabled people are no more likely to fall out of work than non-disabled people) this could provide the entire employment increase required to ½ the DEG by 2038.
- Wider cultural change required including employer attitudes – new job opportunities for disabled people need to be created.

COVID-19

The impact of COVID-19 on labour market outcomes for disabled people

- Disabled people do not appear to be experiencing a greater effect on employment than non-disabled people, with the longer term trend of the narrowing disability employment gap unaffected to date.
- The last two Labour Force Survey releases show that the disability employment gap has narrowed. Over the year to Jan-Mar 2020 the gap is estimated to have reduced by 2.5 percentage points and over the year to Apr-Jun 2020 the gap is estimated to have reduced by 4.8 percentage points.
- However, aside from labour market data there is [evidence](#) that compared with their non-disabled peers, disabled people have faced a greater impact on their lives from COVID-19 (e.g. wellbeing, access to non-COVID related healthcare and treatment) and this has implications for employment prospects.

	Jan-Mar 2019	Jan-Mar 2020	Change	Apr-Jun 2019	Apr-Jun 2020	Change
Employment rate of disabled people	45.5%	47.7%	+2.2 p.p.	48.6%	51.7%	+3.0 p.p.
Employment rate of non-disabled people	82.1%	81.9%	-0.3 p.p.	82.7%	81.0%	-1.7 p.p.

Source: Labour Force Survey

Thanks for listening

[REDACTED]

December 2020

TITLE: Briefing - Mr Hepburn Visit Project SEARCH 8 Dec

What	Virtual event with Project SEARCH
Where	To be delivered virtually by Zoom, link to join is below [REDACTED] Meeting ID: [REDACTED] Passcode: [REDACTED]
When	8 December 2020, 10:00-10:45
Key Message(s)	To celebrate the 10 year success of Project SEARCH in Wishaw hospital with the Project SEARCH staff and participants.
Who	DFN Project SEARCH
Why	We recommend your attendance as Project SEARCH are an important stakeholder, and this is a good opportunity to advise them of the good work Scottish Government are currently doing for disabled young people.
Supporting official (incl. mobile no.)	Disability Employment Team: [REDACTED] – [REDACTED]
Media Handling	Comms Team are aware of Press Release
Social Media	I was honored to attend the Project SEARCH virtual event, celebrating 10 years success at Wishaw hospital, highlighting that the Scottish Government are focused on supporting disabled people into work, and on our work to halve the Disability Employment Gap.
Greeting Party and specific meeting point on arrival	[REDACTED] – Director and Programme Specialist for Project SEARCH in Scotland. Carmel will be on Zoom for Mr Hepburn's arrival.
Entrance for Ministerial car/parking arrangements	N/A
Briefing contents	Annex A – Agenda/Summary Annex B – Speech (Attached separately) Annex C – Disability FMQ Annex D – Biographies

Agenda

[REDACTED – OUT OF SCOPE]

Summary

[REDACTED – OUT OF SCOPE]

Project SEARCH

[REDACTED – OUT OF SCOPE]

Sensitivities

[REDACTED – OUT OF SCOPE]

General Information

- The one-year employability programme gives students with additional support needs the opportunity to work as interns at University Hospitals Hairmyres, Monklands or Wishaw.
- The team achieved 75% employment outcomes for the interns who completed the 2018-2019 programme.
- The first Project SEARCH Scottish site was set up in Wishaw General Hospital in September 2010.
- More than 60% of interns who completed the very first course at the Wishaw hospital are still in employment ten years later.

SPEECH

[REDACTED – OUT OF SCOPE]

DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT GAP FMQ

The disability employment gap in Scotland (the difference between the employment rates of disabled and non-disabled people) is 32.6 percentage points (APS Jan-Dec 2019).

The Scottish Government's ambition is to at least halve the disability employment gap in Scotland by 2038. This is based on the 2016 baseline of 37.4 percentage points and will mean reducing the gap to no larger than 18.7 percentage points.

On 11 December 2018 we published A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People: Employment Action Plan which outlines the initial actions we will take to halve the disability employment gap.

The gap between the employment rate for disabled and non-disabled people has decreased by 2.9 percentage points over the year to Dec 2019 and by 4.7 percentage points since our baseline year of 2016.

The employment rate for disabled people increased from 45.6 per cent in 2018 to 49.0 per cent in 2019, and was the primary reason for the reduction in the employment gap, as the employment rate for non-disabled people increased only slightly from 81.1 to 81.6 per cent over the same period.

The disability employment gap was lower for women (27.5 percentage points) than men (38.2 percentage points) for ages 16 to 64 and across all other age bands.

The disability employment gap was lower for young people and increased with age with the gap being highest for those aged 50 to 64 years, for both women and men.

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic is having a considerable impact on many areas of society – in particular health, but also on the economy and the labour market. This may cause more difficulty for those already facing barriers within the labour market, including disabled people.

(Data Source: APS, Jan-Dec 2016 -2019 datasets, 16-64 year olds, ONS)

Top Lines

- We want to ensure that **everybody who can and wants to work has the opportunity** to find fulfilling and sustainable employment suitable to their needs and skills, and that those facing barriers to employment, including many disabled people, can access any additional support they need.
- A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People: Employment Action Plan was published in December 2018, and sets out the initial actions, working with partners – including disabled people themselves – **to deliver the ambition to at least halve the disability employment gap by 2038.**

- Our [Annual Progress Report](#) published in March 2020 highlights the work undertaken to date in support of delivering our ambition, as well as outlining work we propose to take forward in 2020/21. **It is recognised some of this work may need to be reprioritised in light of COVID-19.**
- Latest figures show that the disability employment gap in 2019 (i.e. 32.6 percentage points) was the lowest recorded in recent years. However, it is anticipated this **steady progress in reducing the gap may be negatively impacted by COVID-19.**

8. We understand the ongoing Covid-19 outbreak could have a considerable impact on employment opportunities for disabled people

- We recognise that COVID-19 is having a huge public health and economic impact in Scotland.
- The Scottish Government continues to reassess all planned work programmes in light of COVID-19, and is reprioritising activity where necessary.
- This includes planned activity for the coming year as part of A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People: Employment Action Plan.
- We remain committed to addressing inequalities in the labour market and continue to take action to try to minimise any negative impact of COVID-19 on disabled people in economic responses to the pandemic.

2. We are taking a range of actions to reduce the disability employment gap

- Our Fair Work approach encourages all employers to adopt fair and flexible work practices, supported by our Fair Work Action Plan, and wider action to tackle the gender pay gap, disability employment gap and race equality issues within the labour market.
- We are working with stakeholders and Disabled People's Organisations to support disabled parents to move closer to the labour market, with a view to them securing sustainable employment.
- We have established Public Social Partnership to improve the recruitment, retention and support for employers.
- This year, we are also investing £7.35 million in the Parental Employability Support Fund which is delivered across all 32 Local Authorities to support low-income parents, including disabled parents, to access or progress in work. This includes £1M specifically focused on unemployed disabled parents to support them to progress towards and into employment, helping to lift them and their families out of poverty.

- We have funded the Workplace Equality Fund to continue to support equality in the workplace. Through the fund we will address long-standing barriers faced by particular groups on entering and progressing in employment. These groups include (but not limited to) women, disabled people, older workers and minority ethnic workers. Through this fund, employers will build their capacity to address equality issues and develop further their efforts to create diverse and inclusive workplaces.
- The next phase of the Supported Employment review will commence in the autumn. We commit to liaise with a wide spectrum of stakeholders for their input. The review will consider delivery within Fair Start Scotland, as well as wider models of delivery and will make recommendations to Ministers on future delivery, including identifying any resource implications.
- We are undertaking a review of Individual Placement and Support, an employment model available to those with severe/enduring mental health challenges to find sustainable, competitive jobs that fit their needs and interests.
- We are working on an ongoing basis with third sector partners to understand the impact of COVID-19 on disabled people, and what actions would help mitigate this impact for those seeking to enter or sustain employment.
- We are working with the Office for the Chief Economic Advisor (OCEA) to analyse labour market statistics which will allow us to monitor any changes to protected groups' position in the labour market, including: disabled people; women; young people; and people from minority ethnic groups.
- We have worked with the DWP to establish the first Access to Work Stakeholder Forum in Scotland. The forum will represent the views of service users and offer advice to DWP on how Access to Work could be enhanced to improve customer experience in Scotland; and consider ideas and suggestions to enhance policy development.

3. We are undertaking additional measures in light of the ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic to ensure disabled people are not disproportionately impacted

- We are clear that no one should be left behind as a result of Covid-19, and we will take every opportunity we can to create and protect jobs.
- We published our responses to the Advisory Group on Economic Recovery report and the Enterprise and Skills Strategic Board report which outlines key actions to generate significant economic growth, combined with a focus on supporting jobs, skills and training.
- We are investing £60 million to develop a Young Person's Guarantee to give all young people in Scotland access to work, training or education and help mitigate against the worst of the impact on young people as a result of the pandemic.

- The implementation plan for the Young Person's Guarantee is currently being developed by Sandy Begbie, Chief Transformation Officer at Tesco Bank.
- We are fully engaged with third sector organisations to ensure that the appropriate support is provided through the young person's guarantee. This will be driven through the Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) equalities delivery group, under the principles of No one left behind, to ensure that all young people have equal access to all opportunities.
- Fair Start Scotland, our employment support service, has been extended by a further two years to March 2023.

[REDACTED – OUT OF SCOPE]

JANUARY 2021

TITLE: SAtWSF - Engagement Briefing - Virtual Meeting of the Scottish Access to Work Stakeholder Forum

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BRIEFING OVERVIEW

What	Scottish Access to Work Stakeholder Forum Meeting
Where	Online – [REDACTED]
When	Tuesday, 26 January 2021; 11.00-11.15
Key Message(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is the aim of the Scottish Government to at least halve the disability employment gap in Scotland by 2038. • Our work on halving the disability employment gap currently focuses on three strands: supporting employers to recruit and retain disabled people; helping disabled people to enter employment; and helping disabled young people transition into employment. • Our preferred option for Access to Work is for it to be devolved to Scotland, but whilst it remains reserved we will work with the DWP to improve it for disabled people in Scotland. • Access to Work must be improved by listening to lived experience. • We encourage the Forum to not only consider ways to improve the programme’s delivery in Scotland, but also how to raise awareness of it amongst disabled people and employers in Scotland
Who	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to Work Stakeholder Forum – see Appendix B for full membership. • [REDACTED – OUT OF SCOPE]
Why	To provide a welcome address at the first full member-led meeting of the Scottish Access to Work Stakeholder Forum.
Supporting official	[REDACTED] – [REDACTED]
Social Media	Tweet – “Delighted to open the first member-led meeting of the Scottish Access to Work Stakeholder Forum this morning. Thank you to all partners who are helping to improve Access to Work and raise awareness in Scotland of this important support for disabled people in employment.”
Greeting Party and specific meeting point on arrival	Join the Teams meeting at 11am. The Chair has been briefed that you will leave the meeting following your welcome address.
Briefing contents	<p>Annex A – Summary</p> <p>Annex B – Disability Employment Gap statistics</p> <p>Annex C – Forum Membership List</p> <p>Annex D – Meeting Agenda</p> <p>Annex E – Role Profile of Justin Tomlinson, Minister for Disabled People</p> <p>Annex F – Speech 1 – Main speech</p> <p>Annex G – Speech 2 – To be used only if UKG minister attends</p>

SUMMARY

- The Chair of the meeting is [REDACTED], at Glasgow Centre for Inclusive Living Equality Academy.
- The Forum first met and was formed in October 2020. It will meet quarterly from 2021.
- The Forum was established following a commitment in the first progress report of A Fairer Scotland For Disabled People: Employment Action Plan and helps meet the Scottish Government's commitment to support disabled people to stay in work. A Forum already exists in England and a Welsh one is at the same stage as this one.
- The Forum means that, for the first time, disabled people in Scotland have a formal mechanism through which to help shape the delivery of Access to Work. It provides a platform for representative organisations of disabled people to feedback directly on specific barriers to accessing the programme. The Forum: represents the views of service users in Scotland; offers advice to DWP on how Access to Work could be enhanced to improve customer experience; and advises the DWP on how Access to Work can be better publicised to disabled people and employers in Scotland.
- The purpose of the Forum is for DWP and Stakeholders to work together to improve Access to Work service delivery. The main aims of the Forum are:
 - to build awareness and understanding about Access to Work by providing updates on development and providing an opportunity for questions;
 - to understand and hear first-hand disability and support organisations' perspectives and issues relating to Access to Work; and
 - to seek input and views on policy development and specific delivery issues so that DWP can continuously improve the service it provides.
- A request for the devolution of Access to Work was made to Kelly Tolhurst MP (then Minister for Small Business, Consumers & Corporate Responsibility) in April 2019. This request was declined in September 2019 with the reasoning that "[the] Access to Work scheme operates effectively delivering a consistent service to those who apply no matter where they are based in Great Britain".
- The desired main outcomes from your welcome address are to encourage Forum members to:
 - positively engage with the DWP; and
 - consider ways to raise the profile of Access to Work in Scotland.
- There is a possibility that one of your UKG counterparts, the Minister for Disabled People will also be in attendance. If that is the case we have also prepared a biography and slightly altered speech. At this stage it is unlikely to be needed, but we will advise you should the Minister be confirmed as attending closer to the meeting date.

DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT GAP STATISTICS

- The disability employment gap in Scotland is the difference between the employment rates of disabled and non-disabled people.
- The 2019 Annual Population Survey (APS), the statistics we use to measure the Disability Employment Gap, shows that the employment rate of disabled people in Scotland stood at 49% compared to 81.6% for non-disabled people.
- According to the most recent APS statistics (January-December 2019) the Disability Employment Gap is therefore 32.6 percentage points.
- Figures show that the disability employment gap in 2019 was the lowest recorded in recent years. However, it is anticipated this steady progress in reducing the gap may be negatively impacted by COVID-19.
- APS data for the Disability Employment Gap does not take into account the impact of COVID-19. The APS Jan-Dec 2020 figure will come in early 2021.

SCOTTISH ACCESS TO WORK STAKEHOLDER FORUM MEMBERSHIP LIST

The membership of the Stakeholder Forum comprises representatives from the following organisations:

- British Association of Supported Employment (BASE) Scotland
- Deaf Action
- Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)
- Dyslexia Scotland
- ENABLE Scotland
- Falkirk Council (FSS provider / SLAED representative)
- Glasgow Centre for Inclusive Living (GCIL) – Secretariat and Chair
- Glasgow City Council (FSS provider / SLAED representative)
- Glasgow Disability Alliance (GDA)
- Inclusion Scotland
- National Autistic Society
- Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) Scotland
- Scottish Association for Mental Health (SAMH)
- Scottish Commission for Learning Disabilities (SCLD)
- Scottish Government
- Scottish Union of Supported Employment (SUSE)
- Skills Development Scotland
- Start Scotland (FSS provider)
- Versus Arthritis

Total number of members: 19

MEETING AGENDA

The outline agenda for the whole meeting is below. It is scheduled for an hour, with additional time built in to allow for overrun. You are only required to attend for the first 10-15 minutes.

AGENDA

1. Welcome & Introductions (*GCIL and DWP*) 11.00-11.05
2. Welcome from Jamie Hepburn MSP – Minister for Business, Fair work and Skills – 11.05-11.10
3. Forum purpose & Terms of Reference 11.10-11.20
4. Forum questions / comments (*All*) 11.20-11.30
5. Stakeholder open floor 11.30-11.55
6. Any other business (*All*) 11.55-12.00

ROLE PROFILE – MINISTER OF STATE FOR DISABLED PEOPLE, WORK AND HEALTH

Name: Mr. Justin Tomlinson MP

Age: 44

Appointed to role: 4 April 2019 (1 year and 9 months' ago) by Prime Minister Theresa May.



Political history

- Conservative MP (North Swindon) – May 2010-current
- Minister of State for Disabled People, Work and Health – April 2019-current
- Parliamentary Undersecretary of State for Family Support, Housing & Child Maintenance – July 2018-April 2019
- Parliamentary Undersecretary of State for Disabled People – May 2015-July 2016
- Swindon Borough Councillor – 2000-2010

Responsibilities of the Minister for Disabled People, Work and Health

- Access to Work
- Departmental strategy on disability and disability employment
- Cross-government responsibility for disabled people
- Employment and Support Allowance, Personal Independence Payment, Disability Living Allowance and elements of Universal Credit that relate to disabled people including the severe disability premium
- EU Exit oversight
- Work and health strategy including sponsorship of the joint Department for Work and Pensions / Department for Health and Social Care Work and Health Unit
- Disability benefit reform
- Devolution framework
- Carer's Allowance
- Motability and arms-length compensation schemes

Education

- State Comprehensive High School
- Oxford Brookes University, Business Degree

Points to note

- In May 2015, it was [reported by The Huffington Post](#) that his appointment as Minister for Disabled People was controversial as he had previously voted against protecting the benefits of disabled children and those undergoing cancer treatment.
- Justin voted to leave the EU.

Personal information

- Justin lives with his wife and child and previously owned a local marketing business in Swindon for 10 years, which he sold when he was elected an MP.

SPEECH 1 – MAIN SPEECH

[REDACTED – OUT OF SCOPE]

SPEECH 2 – TO BE USED ONLY IF UKG MINISTER ATTENDS

[REDACTED – OUT OF SCOPE]

Title: Extract from Media Query – disabled employment – Tory NR – Midlothian advertiser

Background

[Report by the Enterprise and Skills Strategic Board sub-group on measures to mitigate the labour market impacts from COVID-19](#)

A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People: Employment Action Plan was published in December 2018 and sets out the steps the Scottish Government will take to reduce the employment gap between disabled people and the rest of the working age population by at least half by 2038.

Most recent statistics indicate the gap had reduced to 32.6 percentage points (pp) in 2019. We continue to reassess all planned work programmes in light of COVID-19, including planned activity for the coming year as part of A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People: Employment Action Plan:

Of the four UK nations, Scotland's disabled employment rate has increased the most since 2014. Scotland's disabled employment rate increased by 7.5 percentage points between 2014 and 2019 compared to an increase of 7.3 percentage points in England; 5.8 percentage points in Wales; and 3.9 percentage points in Northern Ireland. In 2019 (latest data), Scotland's employment rate of disabled people was the second highest of the four UK nations at 49.0%. While England's rate was higher (54.4%) than Scotland's, Scotland outperformed Wales (48.9%) and Northern Ireland (37.3%). [Source: Annual Population Survey, Jan-Dec dataset].