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INFORMATION

The Work and Pensions Committee has launched an inquiry into the disability employment gap. The Committee wants to hear from as many people as possible, especially disabled people. So we've [produced the call for evidence in multiple formats](#): text, audio, British Sign Language and EasyRead.

Background

The disability employment gap is the gap between the employment rates of disabled and non-disabled people. [The most recent official data on disabled peoples' employment rates shows](#):

- 7.9 million people (aged 16-64)—19% of the working age population—said they had a disability. Of these, an estimated 4.2 million were in employment, an increase of 354,000 from a year previously;
- 53.2% of disabled people were in employment, up from 51.2% a year previously. The employment rate for non-disabled people was 81.8%, up from 81.4%. The disability employment gap is therefore 28.6 percentage points. In 2015, it was 34 percentage points.

The Government provides support programmes and funding to help disabled people and people with long-term health conditions to get into,

and stay in, work. These include Access to Work; Fit for Work; the Work and Health Programme, and access to specialist support via Jobcentre Plus.

The Government has set out [additional support measures](#) in response to the coronavirus pandemic in its Plan for Jobs (July 2020). Some of these will be available to disabled people. The Government also created a "[Disability Unit](#)" in November 2019. The Unit sits within the Cabinet Office. It is responsible for supporting the Government's National Strategy for Disabled People, due by the end of 2020.

Call for written submissions

The Committee would like to hear your views on the following questions. You don't have to answer all of the questions.

You can respond on behalf of an organisation, or as an individual.

The deadline for submissions is **Friday 18 December**.

QUESTIONS FROM THE COMMITTEE

Progress so far and impact

- What progress has been made, especially since 2015, on closing the disability employment gap? How has this progress been made?
- What is the economic impact of low employment and high economic inactivity rates for disabled people? Are some disabled people (for example, young disabled people or people with different health conditions) more at risk of unemployment or economic activity than others?

- What has been the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on disabled peoples' employment rates?

Providing support

- Where should lead responsibility for improving disabled peoples' employment rates sit (for example, DWP; Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy; Health and Social Care)?
- What international evidence is there on "what works" in supporting disabled people into, and in work, and how applicable is this to the UK?
- What is the right balance between in and out of work support, and is DWP getting the balance right? What more should the Department look to provide?
- How can DWP better support employers to take on and retain disabled employees, and to help them progress in work?
 - How effective is the *Disability Confident* scheme?
- What improvements should DWP make to the support it offers to unemployed disabled people via Jobcentre Plus?
- The coronavirus pandemic continues to make it difficult to offer in-person support. What evidence is there of "best practice" in supporting disabled people remotely—either in or out of work?
 - How can DWP put this into practice in services such as Access to Work and the Work and Health Programme?

Enforcement and next steps

- Are "reasonable adjustments" for disabled people consistently applied? How might enforcement be improved?
- What would you hope to see in the Government's National Strategy for Disabled People?
- How should DWP look to engage disabled people and the organisations that represent them in formulating the Strategy?

We want everyone's voice to be heard in Parliament. Please contact us if for any reason you find it difficult to send us your evidence online. To discuss your needs, you can email us on workpencom@parliament.uk or call us on 020 7219 8976 (Text relay: 18001 0207 219 8976).