



# A FAIRER SCOTLAND FOR DISABLED PEOPLE: EMPLOYMENT ACTION PLAN

YEAR 1 – PROGRESS UPDATE



Scottish Government  
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# 1. Ministerial Foreword



**In December 2018 I launched A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People: Employment Action Plan, which outlined the action that the Scottish Government and its agencies will take to help meet our ambitious commitment to at least halve the disability employment gap in Scotland by 2038.**

At the time of publishing this update report, we are faced with an unprecedented and fast moving challenge in the form of COVID-19. This outbreak is already having a huge public health and economic impact in Scotland. How it will affect the immediate and longer term employment opportunities of disabled people in particular is not yet known.

However, I can assure you that the Scottish Government is utilising the full powers available to it to minimise the negative impact of the pandemic on our economy. We will work tirelessly to ensure workers receive as much support as possible, we strengthen our assistance for business, and continue to remain alert to inequalities in the labour market. But more than ever, we will need to be creative, working with our partners in local government, third and private sectors, maximising opportunities for collaboration to ensure we are able to pursue both our economic and social objectives.

Since 2016 (our baseline year), the labour market in Scotland performed strongly, breaking records on employment and unemployment. There has been growth in average earnings, an increase in the proportion of employees earning at least the Real Living Wage, and the employment rate of both women and disabled people has risen – the latter by almost 3 percentage points, contributing to an overall reduction in the disability employment gap by almost 2 percentage points.

However, there has been less progress in reducing inactivity in our labour market, which limits the capacity and potential of our workforce, including many disabled people, to contribute to the economy. At the end of 2018, the employment rate of disabled people remained 35.5 percentage points lower than that of non-disabled people, signalling that we need to maintain momentum in order to achieve our ambition to halve this gap.

I recognise that this is a persistent and complex issue, which requires long-term commitment and action across sectors and policy areas. This annual report outlines the key progress achieved in the first year of delivering our Action Plan. I do not underestimate the scale of the challenge, but I am pleased some progress has been achieved and I am confident that the initial activity undertaken will help to drive the incremental change necessary to ensure we meet our ambition.

Progress in year one includes the publication of the Scottish Government's Recruitment and Retention Plan for Disabled People, which sets out actions we will take as an employer to support more disabled people to enter employment and, critically, to improve their experience of work within our organisation. The plan includes a target for external recruitment that, on average over the next 7 years, 25% of successful candidates will be disabled people.

Engaging with businesses and employers continues to be a key area of focus, and during this first year we have relaunched the Scottish Business Pledge, with over 700 businesses signed up so far. We have established a Public Social Partnership, bringing together employers, government, national disability organisations, and disabled



people's organisations to identify, develop, and test solutions to the barriers employers face in attracting, recruiting and retaining disabled people. We also continue to improve the support available to business and enterprise, to enable them to achieve Fair Work objectives and more diverse and inclusive workforces.

We are working to ensure that levers available through public procurement are better utilised to help secure more employment opportunities for those facing barriers to the labour market, including disabled people. In addition, programmes are ongoing to ensure that the accessibility of transport networks, which can have a significant impact on disabled people's ability to access job opportunities, is enhanced.

That is not to say there have not been challenges. The first year of delivery of this plan has been during a time of political upheaval with the uncertainty surrounding the UK's exit from the European Union, a general election, and the subsequent delay to the UK Budget - all of which have caused financial challenges.

I have said before that realising our ambition is not something we can achieve on our own. The year ahead holds a great many uncertainties and it is likely that we will need to re-prioritise some activity. However, we will focus on action that aligns with the work of our partners in order to make the greatest impact. This includes working closely with Local Government as well as the third and private sectors, all of which provide a significant contribution in supporting disabled people to enter and remain in employment. In reviewing membership of the Strategic Labour Market Group, we will seek representation for disabled people's interests, to ensure appropriate experience and expertise is available to inform delivery of the Labour Market Strategy.

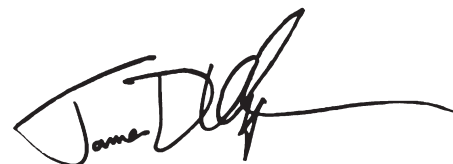
We will seek to progress further work on the Supported Employment Review, working closely with the Scottish Local Authority

Economic Development group, as well as undertaking a review of Individual and Placement Support (IPS), to ensure that we are delivering the best in-work support to those who need it most. We will ensure that our substantial investment in employability services, including Fair Start Scotland, continues to focus on supporting disabled people into work.

The Parental Employment Support Fund will be delivered in partnership with local authorities and those with lived experience, to improve pre-employment and in-work support to the six priority family groups impacted by child poverty, including disabled parents. This will help inform the further support that will be developed through the Disabled Parents Employment Support Fund.

I am delighted to announce that, in conjunction with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), we will establish an Access to Work stakeholder group for Scotland – ensuring that disabled people have a formal mechanism through which to shape and improve this vital support.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has been involved in the development and delivery of the plan so far. Halving the disability employment gap in Scotland is an ambitious task and the challenges we face in achieving it have undoubtedly increased in recent times. But we remain committed to enabling disabled people to play a full and active part in Scotland, and welcome the support and contribution of wider partners who share this ambition. It is this collective effort that truly is key to delivering the best outcomes for disabled people.



**Jamie Hepburn**  
Minister for Business, Fair Work and Skills

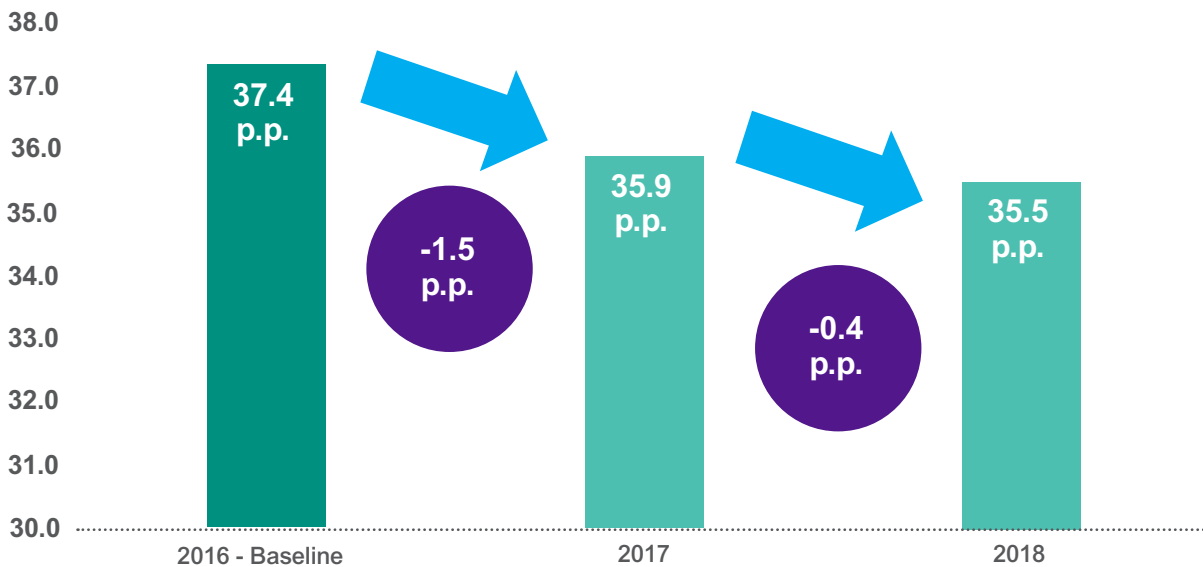


## 2. Key Progress to Date

**A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People: Employment Action Plan (2018) outlined the initial action that the Scottish Government and its agencies will take to help meet its ambition to at least halve the disability employment gap by 2038. This includes activity across a range of policy portfolios, and in this section we provide an overview of some of the key action undertaken in the first 12 months of the plan’s implementation. Updates are presented under each of the three key themes of the action plan.**

The commitment to at least halve the disability gap in Scotland was announced in 2016, and this is therefore our baseline year. Detailed information of progress in relation to agreed key indicators is provided in section 4 of the report – it should be noted that we utilise full-year data to enable comparison with the baseline, with Jan-Dec 2018 offering the most recent full data set. The figure below shows the initial progress that has been achieved in reducing the disability employment gap.

**Figure 1: Disability Employment Gap, Scotland, 2016-2018**



## 2.1 Supporting Employers to Recruit and Retain Disabled People

### Public sector consultation on the employment of disabled people

In 2018 we undertook a consultation on increasing the employment of disabled people in the public sector. A [summary of the feedback provided through this exercise, and the Scottish Government's response to the consultation](#) was published in the spring 2019.

Respondents to the consultation provided a clear message that they wanted to see the Scottish Government leading by example, and then utilising the learning from development of its approach to influence the wider public sector. As the first key step in responding to this feedback, we published the Scottish Government's first Recruitment and Retention Plan for Disabled People in August 2019.

### Scottish Government Recruitment and Retention Plan for Disabled People

Our [Recruitment and Retention Plan](#) outlines how, as an employer, we will support more disabled people to enter the Scottish Government workforce, become an employer of choice, and enable existing disabled employees to thrive and succeed at all levels of our organisation.

We have set a stretching target for external recruitment that, over the next 7 years, on average 25% of successful candidates will be disabled people. This aims to ensure we are on track to deliver on our equality outcome, set in

2017, to increase the diversity of our workforce to be representative of the wider Scottish population by 2025. In effect, we are working towards disabled people representing 19% of our overall workforce, and the actions outlined in the Plan are designed to help us achieve this. We have seen initial progress towards this outcome with 16% of recruits to Scottish Government in 2018 identifying as disabled people, compared to 8% in 2016.

Disabled people were at the heart of the development of the Plan, providing input through a series of workshops. The Council of Scottish Government Unions provided significant contribution and we also drew on the knowledge and expertise of external Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs), as well as our own internal staff diversity networks. This collaborative approach will continue as we deliver the Plan.

To evaluate our work we will measure: recruitment and retention of disabled people in our workforce; changes in the number of disabled staff; and shifts in the number of people already working for us who become disabled. We will use this analysis to review and, if necessary, update the target each year.

As we work to implement the Plan, we will share learning with other Scottish Government bodies and agencies, and make it available to the wider public sector – for example, through our HR network, the Scottish Leaders Forum, and other collective leadership forums for the public sector workforce.





## CASE STUDY 1: Scottish Government Recruitment & Retention Plan

Although we are still very much in the early stages of implementing our Recruitment and Retention Action Plan for Disabled People, we are keen to demonstrate some of the action we are already taking:

### **SG Graduate Development Programme**

Scottish Government's Graduate Development Programme (GDP) is highly competitive (2,860 applicants for 21 places in 2019). We recognised the need to increase the diversity of the applicant pool and our talent pipeline. To help widen access to the 2019 programme, we:

- \* Undertook a multi-channel **communications and engagement campaign** - we drew on insights from our internal diversity networks through the creation of a reference group consisting of current GDP members and staff diversity network representatives. This group was involved in every stage of the design and delivery of the campaign. We worked with over 100 organisations spanning university career services and expert bodies such as Inclusion Scotland. We provided a toolkit of key messages to enable partners to promote the campaign on our behalf. Our team also made presentations to key representative organisations.
- \* Hosted our first ever **three-day conference** in summer 2018, to promote opportunities to apply for the 2019 intake. This was aimed at disabled graduates, as well as those from minority ethnic and socially or economically disadvantaged backgrounds. The purpose of the event was to provide 'open door' access to the Scottish Government, offer support with the application process, and develop on-going mentoring relationships with existing Scottish Government staff.

- \* Provided a **single point of contact** for additional support and adjustments throughout the selection process.

As a result of these activities, we recruited our most diverse group of graduates ever into the programme in 2019, with 8.7% of the applications received from applicants who identified as disabled people (an increase from 6.7% in 2017). Disabled candidates made up 51.8% of those invited to the assessment centre stage, and 62% of those selected for the final intake.

We are looking at how we apply the lessons learnt from the GDP 2019 campaign across other graduate and apprentice recruitment exercises.

### **Workplace Adjustments**

In our Recruitment and Retention Plan for Disabled People, we have committed to creating accessible workplaces where everyone can thrive at work. A dedicated workplace adjustment project is underway, which embraces the social model of disability.

We are developing a new system to better meet the needs of disabled employees when they wish to request a workplace adjustment and more effectively support managers when they need to arrange an adjustment for their staff. The aims are to improve user experience, deliver better efficiency in meeting the needs of the business, and optimise opportunity for performance for everyone.

### **Sight Loss**

The Scottish Government was shortlisted in November 2019 for an RNIB See Differently Award, in recognition of its efforts to recruit people with sight loss.



## Public Appointments

The Ethical Standards Commissioner set the Scottish Government a target that 15% of applications for boards of public bodies should be from disabled people. In the [most recent published figures from 2018](#), 9.4% of applications were from applicants identifying as disabled people. There is still significant work to be undertaken to achieve greater representation from disabled people on boards, and we know that increasing applications alone will not necessarily increase the number of appointees.

Therefore, Scottish Government is undertaking a range of activity to improve representation of disabled people on public body boards – initially focussing on understanding and addressing barriers rather than simply encouraging greater numbers of applications. In 2019/20 Scottish Government have:

- Provided disabled people with additional opportunities to gain board level experience – working with Inclusion Scotland to provide shadowing opportunities for disabled people and matching six people with public boards;
- Provided tailored, targeted feedback on applications from disabled people; and
- Improved signposting and statements about the provision of reasonable adjustments throughout the public appointments process.

Looking forward, in 2020/21 Scottish Government will:

- Improve disabled people's representation on recruitment panels by providing training for Independent Panel Members in 2020/21;
- Trial different sorts of application processes and recruitment exercises to test if the outcomes for disabled applicants are improved.

## Social Security Scotland – Recruitment & Charter

Social Security Scotland similarly undertook a range of actions to ensure that disabled people were actively encouraged and supported to apply for posts with the new agency:

- Workshops were delivered to around 650 potential candidates in 2019, with invitations extended through stakeholder networks. At these events, candidates were provided with application advice and information regarding the recruitment process. Workshops will continue and evolve through each recruitment campaign, with stakeholder feedback and local labour market concerns shaping the content of these workshops.
- Engagement with stakeholders such as employability partners, local communities, third sector organisations, schools, colleges, and universities is maintained on an on-going basis even when there are no live job adverts. This allows resourcing teams to gain continuous feedback on recruitment practices and maintain important connections to support future recruitment campaigns.
- The agency actively participates in the Scottish Government Inclusive Communications framework, operating on the ethos of accessible communications and diversity of approach to ensure effective engagement with those with different communication needs. Work is ongoing to ensure communications, and job adverts, are in plain English, and to ensure candidate workshops, interview guides, and working documents are fully accessible.
- The standard qualification requirement for entry level posts in the Scottish Government is 5 Standard Grades or equivalent. This requirement has been removed, and replaced with a numerical and verbal reasoning quiz. For more senior positions, Scottish Government requires a minimum qualification of 3 Higher Qualifications or equivalent. Social Security Scotland have removed this requirement, and provided opportunity for candidates to apply where they have relevant experience to the job role, instead of Higher qualifications.





In addition, the Scottish Government worked with Social Security Scotland and a broad range of stakeholders to produce [Our Charter: what you can expect from the Scottish Government and Social Security Scotland](#), published in February 2019. The Charter explains how the principles of equality and non-discrimination will work in practice, and what people are entitled to expect from the new social security system. *Our Charter* was co-produced by people with lived experience through a series of workshops held between June 2018 and December 2018. Participants included people in receipt of benefits that will be devolved, many of whom were disabled people. [A measurement framework](#) has been developed to measure progress against the commitments in Our Charter.

## Health and Work

It is well recognised that health and work are closely interlinked, with fair and sustainable employment contributing to a person's wellbeing. Equally, we know that ill health can have a negative impact on an individual's ability to secure and sustain employment, and to avail themselves of the wider benefits that can accrue, including financial and social. We also know that disabled people in the UK are almost twice as likely as non-disabled people to fall out of work, and whilst not all disabled people have a health condition, we recognise the importance of better understanding and responding to the interaction between health and work.

The **Health and Work Support pilot** is a two-year pilot running between June 2018 and June 2020 – located in Dundee and Fife. Jointly funded by the UK and Scottish Governments, it is a voluntary programme providing a single point of contact for those who have fallen out of work, or are at risk of doing so as a result of being disabled or having a health condition. Relevant advice and information is also provided to employers.

A key objective is to test different referral approaches and ways of supporting people who access the pilot. In particular, we wish to better understand how the programme supports people with mental health conditions. Of the 2,124 people enrolled into the service (from its launch to the end of December 2019), nearly a third (30%) of those with long-term health conditions or disabilities reported mental health conditions.

Two Improvement Programmes have taken place across Fife and Dundee, bringing teams together to increase enrolments into the service, with learning being gathered around the most effective referral pathways into the service. Delivery teams in both locations have also been exploring additional ways to support people with a mental health condition. This included limiting the number of people case managers work with, to enable them to deliver more clinical interventions.

Healthy Working Lives Fife and Tayside are part of the pilot, and provide tailored support to employers. This includes working with both employees and employers to make reasonable workplace adjustments. They also deliver health related training for employers. An interim evaluation detailing initial findings is due to be published in early 2020. The final report, including an economic analysis, will be published in spring 2021. This report will also consider how effective the pilot has been at supporting people with a mental health condition.



***Fair and Healthy Work for All: A review of Scottish Government's Health and Work Strategy*** was published in November 2019. It makes 23 recommendations on addressing barriers for disabled people and those with health conditions to entering into, and remaining in work, and promoting health and wellbeing in and through the workplace. These include: considering how Health and Work and Fair Work might be more closely aligned in both policy and practice terms; improving the quality of return to work advice provided to employers and employees; and maximising the role of professionals in the wider health and social care system to consider how they can actively contribute to helping people access, remain in and return to Fair and Healthy Work.

Among the five recommendations proposed by stakeholders as issues to be considered as a matter of priority was for Fair and Healthy Work to be an explicit priority across all Directorates of the Scottish Government and its national agencies. We will build on this recommendation over the coming year, to develop a cross-directorate approach to health and work and, following the establishment of a new health body – Public Health Scotland – later this year, maximise the opportunities to jointly deliver against our shared objectives to improve health, wellbeing and work.

### **Supporting Positive Mental Health**

Key to this approach will be continuing the work in progress to improve access to timely and appropriate support for those experiencing mental health issues, as they seek to enter or remain in work. This includes building upon the work of NHS Health Scotland and wider health colleagues with employers to support the development of mentally flourishing workplaces.

Provision of **training for employers, line managers, and those involved in delivering employability services** is critical. In the last year, this has included delivery by NHS Health Scotland's Health and Work Directorate of training around resilience, wellbeing and mentally healthy workplaces for over 900 people, and training through the Work Positive Programme to provide employers with an understanding of the impact of stress in the workplace. In the coming year, tailored training will also be provided to Fair Start Scotland (FSS) provider case workers to improve their knowledge, skills and ability to identify positive pathways for participants with mental health issues to enter and sustain work. The first course will take place in March and will be evaluated to determine impact on practice by case workers, as well as outcomes for FSS participants.

The first phase of the commitment to provide 300 case managers over the next five years with training based on the National Institute of Disability Management and Research (**NIDMAR**) programme is underway. The training covers positive employer engagement, as well as exploring creative approaches to supporting employees with mental health issues that impact in the workplace to stay in work. The first cohort of 54 case management students are currently undertaking the 9 month training. Trainees are from a range of services, including: Working Health Services Scotland; Individual Placement and Support; Fair Start Scotland; Health and Work Services; Local Authority Health and Social Care Partnerships, and a range of third sector supported employment programs and services. Experience has shown that through training together, staff participating in NIDMAR have developed better collaborative approaches to delivering improved work outcomes for people with mental health conditions.



Joint work through the Public Mental Health programme and Health and Work directorate has seen development of a framework of standards to promote mentally healthy workplaces. The intention is to test out the standards in 2020, with a view to launch these, together with a Charter and overarching Collaborative, in autumn 2020. This work will also inform the redevelopment of the Healthy Working Lives Award.

### Workplace Equality Fund

The Workplace Equality Fund (WEF) provides funding to collaborative projects between the private sector and third sector organisations,

with the aim of removing some of the barriers to entering and remaining in the workplace for priority groups, including disabled people.

Through our WEF 19/20 we are funding 23 projects, of which 11 are supporting disabled workers. For example, one of the projects involves Into Work Ltd working with private sector employers, focussing on upskilling staff with a remit for HR and/or hiring and managing. This includes, for example, the provision of practical evidence-based disability awareness training for staff, to help improve understanding and have a positive and long-lasting impact on their practice.



### CASE STUDY 2: Workplace Equality Fund

[Enable](#), Scotland’s largest charity for people who have learning disabilities, received funding to work with a number of private businesses to improve employment opportunities for minority ethnic people who have a learning disability or Autistic Spectrum Disorder, across the Glasgow city region.

Improvements successfully delivered included:

- \* Specialist disability awareness training was delivered to 20 businesses
- \* Best practice toolkit for intersectionality, neurodiversity and disability developed and being used by the businesses involved.
- \* Modern apprenticeship opportunity was achieved for a young person as a direct result of this project.
- \* Businesses were supported to review and improve their diversity and inclusion policies.

Project insight: Client A is a 16 year old student from a Chinese background who is dyslexic. ENABLE Scotland provided bespoke training to the employer on A’s support needs, disability awareness and diversity and inclusion best practice. A is now one of the main members of staff and has shown a real flair, enthusiasm and aptitude to the barista part of his job. He has recently been given extra responsibilities, including mentoring school work placements and training other staff.

More information about [Enable’s Workplace Equality Fund project](#) can be found online.



## Public Social Partnership

Public Social Partnerships (PSPs) are voluntary partnerships, through which the public sector links with the third sector (and sometimes also the private sector) to co-design services or interventions based on user needs. Encouraging effective partnership working across sectors, the model aims to ensure that the needs of communities and service users drive service design and delivery.

With support from Ready for Business, we have established a PSP involving employers, government, national disability organisations, and disabled people's organisations to develop solutions to address gaps in employer knowledge and expertise in recruiting and retaining disabled people. Initial activity has focussed on bringing partners together, agreeing a Memorandum of Understanding, and appointment by the partnership of a lead partner.

In spring 2020, the PSP will move to the activation phase with handover to the nominated lead partner, Scottish Union of Supported Employment (SUSE), who will support the Partnership to develop and deliver its work programme over the next two years.

## Business and Enterprise Support

The Scottish Government is working with **Scottish Enterprise (SE), and Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE)** to ensure that case managers have the skills and knowledge to promote the business benefits of the employment of disabled workers to businesses seeking to grow. This includes raising case managers' awareness of disability equality issues and good employment practice (e.g. the requirement to have a diverse workforce under the refreshed Scottish Business Pledge).

In addition, two programmes are being delivered to provide practical support to businesses: *Accessing Invisible Talent*, which raises awareness of the benefits of diverse workforces, and *Diversity Placements*, which supports placements in start-up and growth companies for those from under-represented groups or disadvantaged backgrounds. These programmes include awareness training for SE and HIE client support colleagues. Their account managers also continue to work with companies such as Barclays and Previser/Auticon to provide advice on employing disabled people.

In addition, the **Scottish Business Pledge** was relaunched on 10 October 2019, with explicit reference to disabled people now included in the Skilled and Diverse Workforce element. This redesigned element includes indicators of what businesses should be doing to create more diverse and balanced workforces, and links to guidance and support to help them progress towards achieving this. The Business Pledge team are holding monthly business-to-business learning events on the various Pledge elements. Disability equality will be incorporated into the Skilled and Diverse Workforce element at a future event.

Through our **Fair Work First** flagship policy, we are working to ensure that fair and sustainable employment practices are adopted by employers across Scotland. Fair Work First uses the government's financial powers to encourage and reward employers who adopt Fair Work by attaching criteria to grants, other funding streams, and contracts awarded by and across the public sector. As such, employers are being asked to commit to: no inappropriate use of zero hours contracts; action to tackle the gender pay gap; genuine workforce engagement (e.g. trade union recognition); and payment of the Real Living Wage. The criteria recognise particular challenges in the labour market which can be addressed to substantially improve employment outcomes for people.



Fair Work First guidance is available through the Fair Work Action Plan, explaining the benefits to individuals and organisations, and providing examples of what each of the criterion means in practice. This aims to help employers wishing to access funding and contracts to focus their delivery on practical action that will lead to fairer work practice and more diverse and inclusive workplaces, with equal opportunity for disabled people, women, older workers, those from minority ethnic backgrounds, and other under-represented groups. It will also enable public sector funders and buyers to monitor the positive change being made through the Fair Work First approach.

Employers are encouraged to build on good practice, with draft guidance including having policies and practices in place across the organisation to address the gender pay gap and ensure equal opportunities for minority ethnic groups, disabled people and older workers. This includes, for example:

- availability of flexible working from day one for those who want it (unless there is a compelling business reason preventing this);
- recruitment, retention and promotion processes to prevent bias and barriers (e.g. ensuring applications are anonymised prior to sifting, candidates are asked about any additional support/adjustments they require for interview, and interview panels reflect diversity);
- women, older workers, people from minority ethnic backgrounds and disabled people help to write job adverts to ensure the language and content is appropriate for the groups they represent;
- employers are aware of, and promote additional support available to disabled employees who may require workplace adjustments (e.g. Access to Work).

## 2.2 Supporting Disabled People to Enter Employment

### Fair Start Scotland

In April 2018, the Scottish Government introduced its first fully devolved employability service: Fair Start Scotland (FSS). The service aims to support a minimum of 38,000 people who want help to find and stay in work, and for whom work is a reasonable objective.

Delivered across nine geographical areas – intended to align with specific local labour markets, whilst ensuring a consistent national standard of service delivery – Fair Start Scotland supports the Scottish Government's values of public services which are person-centred and delivered with dignity and respect. Since its launch, to December 2019:

- 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.

Through our continuous improvement approach with FSS providers, we are looking to improve retention and job outcomes as the service matures, and we are committed to reviewing the delivery of Individual and Placement Support.



## Procurement Tools and Guidance

We committed to develop our sustainable procurement tools and guidance to help buyers across the public sector in Scotland identify and pursue equality outcomes in procurement, and to highlight the opportunity and need to use public procurement in Scotland to achieve employment of disabled people.

The sustainable procurement tools and guidance have been updated and are now live. Buyers across the public sector in Scotland are being encouraged to consider equality systematically alongside other socio-economic and environmental factors through use of the revised tools and guidance.

As an example of the contribution to Scotland's purpose and values that can be achieved through inclusion of community benefit requirements in relevant public contracts and framework agreements, the contract for the Discovery phase for Disability Benefits has created a permanent position of employment with the contractor for a disabled person following a three month internship. We are continuing to promote awareness of disability employment as a Scottish Government priority to contractors across the procurement landscape, and to look for opportunities to identify and pursue equality outcomes in relevant procurements.

## DWP and Access to Work

Access to Work is a Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) employment support programme that aims to help more disabled people enter or stay in work. It can provide practical and financial support for disabled people or those with a long-term physical impairment or mental health condition. Support can be provided where someone needs help or adaptations beyond reasonable adjustments, and is available to both employees and self-employed people.

The Scottish Government has, on a number of occasions, asked the UK Government for Access to Work to be devolved as we believe this will allow us to use localised knowledge to improve the experience of disabled people accessing this support. The continued reservation of Access to Work when all contracted employment support for disabled people and all disability benefits are being devolved to Scotland is an anomaly that neither we nor our partner DPOs believe should continue. The UK Government have repeatedly told us (most recently in September 2019), that Access to Work will not be devolved and that DWP will continue with Access to Work provision in Scotland using its existing powers and associated funding. We will continue to press for devolution.

In the absence of it being a devolved responsibility, we are further developing our collaboration with DWP to ensure disabled people in Scotland are aware of, and able to access the support available through Access to Work. In particular this has seen us contribute to the revision of the Access to Work Staff Guide to clarify that in certain circumstances people undertaking work experience and work trials may be eligible for Access to Work. In the coming year we will work with DWP colleagues to identify opportunities to promote and raise awareness of Access to Work in Scotland.



## City Regions and Regional Growth Deals

Regional Growth Deals are agreements between the Scottish Government, UK Government and local government designed to bring about long-term strategic approaches to improving regional economies. There are 6 City Deals and 6 Growth Deals either operational or in development. These deals are underpinned by a commitment by the Scottish Government and partners to Inclusive Growth. An Equalities and Investment Lead will work across the Deals to identify and disseminate good practice, and ensure equalities underpin their respective activities.

The City Deal with the largest investment in employability and skills is Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Deal. This deal has been operational for over a year and the employability and skills programme is committed to addressing some of the long standing inequalities across the city region, including the disability employment gap. Work either in progress or proposed includes:

- facilitating opportunities for disabled people and those with long-term health conditions to move into higher skilled, higher paid employment;
- provision of an Intensive Family Support (IFS) Service for up to 100 families in areas of high need and disadvantage who require a more intensive whole family support service over a longer period to enable them to benefit from economic prosperity and inclusive growth – this will include families with disabled parents;
- improving the use of labour market analysis to support Inclusive Growth and ensure disabled people, and other groups facing barriers to the labour market, are supported to develop the necessary skills to work in growth sectors or areas experiencing skills shortages. For example:
  - Research is being undertaken into the primary skills needs of the health and social care sector;

- A refreshed labour market toolkit will enable those offering careers advice to individuals to better understand the range of opportunities which are available in key sectors;
- Commissioned research in and across key sectors will consider how they can better support disabled people through improved recruitment practice, and by providing additional opportunities through re-training and upskilling;
- A working group being led by Skills Development Scotland (SDS) has been exploring how best to increase opportunities for people who are neurodivergent in tech roles.
- Initial discussions are underway to explore how the Housing Construction and Infrastructure Skills Gateway can improve access to sectoral opportunities for disabled people.

## Improving Accessibility of Transport

Reliable, safe, and affordable transport networks are critical to enabling many of Scotland's workforce to access employment opportunities, yet we know that travel can pose a barrier to many disabled people. Tackling global climate change is an important priority for the Scottish Government, so sustainable and accessible public transport systems are central to supporting the movement of people.



Scotland's [Accessible Travel Framework: Going Further](#) was produced in 2016, after two years of partnership working with disabled people in the spirit of “nothing about us, without us”. The Framework’s vision is that *“All disabled people can travel with the same freedom, choice, dignity and opportunity as other citizens.”* It consists of 48 issues and supported by 4 outcomes as follows:

- more disabled people make successful door-to-door journeys, more often;
- disabled people are more involved in the design, development and improvement of transport policies, services and infrastructure;

- everyone involved in delivering transport information, services and infrastructure will help to enable disabled people to travel;
- disabled people feel comfortable and safe using public transport – this includes being free from hate crime, bullying and harassment when travelling.

In 2019, we moved to an annual delivery model focussing on 8 priority areas - these case studies focus on two areas provided by ScotRail and Disability Equality Scotland.





## CASE STUDY 3: Improving the Accessibility & Safety of Public Transport

### *Passenger Assistance*

All train and station operators participate in Passenger Assist as part of their licence conditions. They produce a booklet called *Making rail accessible: Helping older and disabled people*, which outlines what they do, types of assistance they offer, and how accessible services and stations are. The information helps customers to understand what help is available and what to expect when travelling by train. Passenger Assist is a free service to help disabled passengers and anyone who needs help with their journey – it is designed to build confidence in the use of rail by those who may otherwise not undertake the journey without a little help.

The assisted travel service is provided to anyone who needs assistance due to being disabled, a temporary health issue, or age and no proof is required to book the service. The service can be anything – from help with luggage, to finding a seat, to help to getting on and off the train or while moving around stations. Currently, ScotRail offer an opportunity to book assistance at least two hours in advance, with the intention to reducing this further to one hour by 2021 – this compares with 24 hours by most other operators across the UK.

In addition to staff at the station who can help, all rail operators also provide a telephone number for passengers to contact to book assistance.

Research has shown that communication is vital to delivering a successful service. Mystery shopping is regularly carried out to better understand passengers' experience of using the service and ScotRail has achieved scores of around 85% satisfaction. Results on how operators are performing, including the figures indicating usage of Passenger Assist, are published by the Office of Rail and Road in their [Measuring Up Report](#).

### *Hate Crime Charter*

Funded by Transport Scotland, Disability Equality Scotland led a working group to design, develop and pilot a Hate Crime Charter which would act as a zero-tolerance approach to hate crime on public transport. It was intended to challenge hate crime and encourage reporting, linking directly to the outcome within the Accessible Travel Framework which works towards ensuring disabled people feel comfortable and safe to travel on public transport.

This work was necessary as we recognise that from approximately 7,000 reports of Hate Crime to the Police a year in Scotland, around 97% of hate crime perpetrated against disabled people goes unreported.

Disability Equality Scotland, together with Police Scotland, SEStran and Transport Scotland consulted with disabled people on the benefits of a Hate Crime Charter and these discussions helped to inform the development of three designs, each featuring easy read images.

A pilot phase ran from October 2019 – January 2020, with the Charter displayed by Stagecoach and First Bus on buses in Leven and Stirlingshire, and ScotRail stations across Fife. The Charter reached over 1,255,666 passengers during this time.

The evaluation of the pilot is underway, and early indications are that the Charter had a positive impact on both passengers and transport staff. Disabled people suggested that the Charter made them feel more secure, as it made clear who to contact in an incident, while raising awareness of the topic of hate crime. Transport staff indicated their awareness and confidence in recognising and reporting hate crime had increased during the pilot phase.



## Specialist Employability Support

Specialist Employability Support (SES) contracts, previously operated by the UK Government's Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), concluded in December 2019, and the service has subsequently been devolved in line with the Scotland Act 2016.

Whilst SES was a relatively small programme, it was designed to meet the needs of those further away from the labour market and requiring more intensive employability support. We are committed to ensuring there is no loss of support for those who would have been eligible and, in the first instance, support will be maintained through Fair Start Scotland and other employability services being delivered nationally and locally.

## 2.3 Young People and Transitions Transitions

Scottish Government's Children and Families Directorate have been working with the Disabled Children and Young People Advisory Group and the Young Disabled People's Forum to develop a program of work to improve transitions, informed by voices of disabled children and young people.

The *Getting it right for every child* policy and practice refresh is in progress and offers an opportunity to promote and support good practice around consideration of wellbeing for disabled children and young people in the context of their family, unique circumstances and whole world. This means wellbeing can be considered holistically and solutions developed in partnership with the family. Where there is a need for support across services, a lead professional can be identified to develop a child's plan and proactively support the child, young person and parent's involvement to ensure they remain central to the process.

Work is also being undertaken with the Association for Real Change (ARC) to explore how the [Seven Principles of Good Transitions](#) could be developed into practice guidance to improve the experiences of families across Scotland and provide practitioners with a framework to measure their work on Transitions. Currently in the developmental stages, local authorities who wish to pilot the resource are being identified.

Improving transitions is a complex challenge requiring a coordinated approach. The Scottish Government has recently set up a new cross-policy working group to create opportunities for more cohesive and impactful activity to affect real change in culture, systems and practice so that disabled children and young people are better supported through transitions.



## Careers Advice

[Scotland's Careers Strategy: Moving Forward](#) was published on 18 February 2020, fulfilling a commitment within the 2019-20 Programme for Government. During the development of this plan a Steering Group was established with cross-sectoral representation (e.g. SDS, Department for Work and Pensions, Education Scotland, Universities Scotland, Colleges Scotland, and external specialists in Career Services). In addition, Scottish Government policy colleagues provided advice, ensuring the strategy aligns with other key government priorities (e.g. No One Left Behind: Review of Employability Services, the Future Skills Action Plan, and the Learner Journey Review).

Reflecting the aims of the Learner Journey recommendation 3 (i.e. “We will ensure learners in schools, colleges and universities receive a joined-up approach to careers, information, advice and guidance”), a key tenet of the strategy is enhanced collaboration across partners involved in delivering careers information and guidance in school, college, university and beyond.

The Careers Strategy ambitions are high level and overarching. Following publication of the plan, next steps include establishing a group to facilitate the development of an overarching implementation plan, which will include sector-specific recommendations. It is anticipated that the implementation group will convene in March 2020, with the implementation plan to be published by the end of 2020.

Key to achieving appropriate support for young disabled people to move towards and into employment will be ensuring their involvement in development of the Careers Strategy implementation plan. We will be conducting a series of consultation events over the coming months to ensure that each service within the careers sector considers how they ensure equity of access and quality of service for all users, particularly those most vulnerable, when considering how to meet the ambitions of the strategy within their institutions.

This will help ensure appropriate consideration is given to how delivery of career services will also address issues around barriers for disabled people, gender stereotyping, and fair opportunities for all in order to deliver our commitments within *A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People: Employment Action Plan*, as well as our Fair Work, Skills, Gender Pay Gap and Race Equality action plans.

Skills Development Scotland (SDS) published their **Careers Information, Advice and Guidance (CIAG) Equality Action Plan** in December 2019. This plan was developed based on the views of customers from equality groups and through consultation with equality partners. The actions build on the ongoing delivery of CIAG service offers from the transition from Primary School to Secondary school and onwards, as well as support to customers to develop their Career Management Skills (CMS).

Within the plan, there are actions to disseminate, to customers from equality groups, information on initiatives to widen access to a range of career options. The plan also highlights engagement with parents and carers, for example through Scotland's Big Parents Evening, as a key opportunity to share this information in the interests of broadening horizons and raising aspirations of young disabled people.

A further action in the plan is to develop a set of resources to support the development of CMS for young disabled people, including building resilience and raising their aspirations. SDS will be working with the Association for Real Change (ARC) Scotland and their National Involvement Network and the Scottish Commission for Learning Disability (SCLD) to support the development of this resource. Through this collaboration, SDS will be able to identify what works in supporting young disabled people and build this into the resource.



The SDS Work-Based Learning (WBL) team publishes an equality action plan update annually, outlining the work delivered with training providers in relation to upskilling providers across equality groups including disability. Training providers are also able to access the highest levels of funding for disabled individuals up to the age of 29, in recognition of potential longer learning journeys and participation at a slightly older age.

### Future Skills Action Plan

[Scotland's Future Skills Action Plan](#) was published in September 2019, setting out the Scottish Government's vision to help learners, workers and businesses to secure Scotland's future skills needs to meet the challenges and opportunities ahead.

The accompanying [evidence and analysis paper](#) to this plan recognises that disabled people face a range of barriers to employment, and are more likely than non-disabled people to work part time. Hours-based underemployment for disabled people is consistently higher than for non-disabled people. The plan notes that increasing the skills levels of disabled people can help make a difference.

The publication of Phase One of this plan fulfils Scottish Government's commitment to respond to the four key future skills recommendations. This includes acceleration of the implementation of the Learner Journey Review.

As part of Phase Two, the Scottish Government are engaging with all of those involved in the system, including learners, businesses, and those delivering skills support. In relation to the specific work on equalities and disabled people, meetings with representatives from Glasgow Disability Alliance, Stonewall, the Commission for Racial Equality and Rights, and Close the Gap have been held to gain a deeper understanding of the barriers faced, in work and the skills system, by the communities they serve. An advisory group will be set up alongside the Programme Board, and will include disabled people to ensure their voice is

heard in the development of policy proposals. An update of the plan is expected to be published later this year.

### Developing the Young Workforce (DYW)

DYW continues to make an important contribution towards promoting inclusive growth within Scotland's economy. Through the expansion of new work-based learning opportunities, DYW helps improve the opportunities, life chances and wellbeing of all young people.

The national DYW group have also been asked by the DYW programme board to evidence what has been done to support disabled and care experienced young people. In response a Key Performance Indicator (KPI) working group was established with some of the regional leads and from April 2020 DYW groups will be measured against the equality KPI below:

**“By working collaboratively with specialist partners, local authority leads and all schools in your region, ensure that there are increased opportunities for disabled and care experienced young people to participate in a suitable and meaningful work placement or access to a mentoring opportunity.”**

The measurements of this KPI are:

- Production of a case study to evidence working with specialist partners to support disabled or care experienced young people in any work readiness activity.
- Number of employers supported by the Regional Group to offer a work placement or mentoring opportunity to disabled young people.
- Number of employers supported by the Regional Group to offer a work placement or mentoring opportunity to care experienced young people.
- Evidence of any specific activities undertaken by the Regional Group to support employers.



A DYW Conference will also be held early this year, to outline the new KPI's and the future of the programme.

### Apprenticeships

SDS administers Scottish Apprenticeships on behalf of the Scottish Government, including Foundation Apprenticeships (FAs), Modern Apprenticeships (MAs), and Graduate Apprenticeships (GAs).

A **Modern Apprenticeship (MA)** allows people to work, learn and earn at the same time – combining on-the-job experience with the opportunity to gain an accredited qualification across a range of sectors, including: healthcare; financial services; construction; and IT. With approximately 92% of MAs remaining in work once they're qualified, MAs provide an important opportunity to increase Scotland's skills base, whilst also helping to support young people to gain employment.

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.

In seeking to improve disabled people's access to the MA programme, activities undertaken by SDS have included the following.

- Working with schools, learning providers, local DYW groups and employers to ensure awareness of the programme, promote the benefits of equality and an inclusive workforce, and address the issues and challenges that contribute to under-representation of groups including disabled people.
- Increased partnership with local community groups to develop appropriate messaging and communication channels/tools to reach different audiences.
- Work with Enable and Open Doors Scotland to support disabled young people through their Modern Apprenticeships.
- Partnership with the British Deaf Association Scotland work to raise awareness of apprenticeship opportunities available to Deaf young people in Scotland.

As of the end of 2018/19, progress against the targets identified by the Scottish Government in Developing Scotland's Young Workforce for MAs are as follows:

**Figure 2: Progress towards targets for MA starts**

Measure	2021 target (%)	Actual achieved (%)	Actual achieved (%)	Actual achieved (%)	Actual achieved (%)
Year		2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
% of MA starts self-identified as disabled or with a health condition	12.5	3.7	8.1	11.3	14.1



The Scottish Government and SDS are committed to equality of opportunity within the Apprenticeships family, and to ensuring continuous improvement. SDS published its Apprenticeship Equality Action Plan (EAP) Year 3 update in July 2019. Work in progress includes:

- evaluation of the enhanced funding for disabled and care experienced MAs;
- evaluation of the second cohort on the Accessible Fife programme to help young disabled people and/or those with a health condition to access apprenticeships;
- publishing outcomes on strengths and improvements in MAs identified by Quality Assessors to enhance and refine equality asks of providers;
- a review of guidance and online information, ensuring learning providers have access to up-to-date information and resources for attracting and retaining diverse talent.





## CASE STUDY 4: *Inclusion Scotland Internship programme*

Inclusion Scotland are funded by Scottish Government to run, *We Can Work*, an internship programme which gives valuable paid work experience to help disabled people develop their careers. Four out of five of *We Can Work* interns gain successful employment within their chosen aspirational career field or progress to further education.

Inclusion Scotland have been highlighting the benefits of implementing the Social Model of Disability in the private sector and helping to remove the fear of getting it wrong, as well as creating safe spaces for employers to honestly discuss their experiences and understandings of disability inclusion.

One public body took part in the internship programme last year, and have used the learning to ring fence 2 posts for this year's cohort for disabled applicants, evidencing the legacy and leading on positive action from our work together. With a recognised skills gap emerging in the digital and technology sector, which companies are keen to address and reach more potential talent, Inclusion Scotland are in discussion with Skyscanner and three other global tech companies to set up *We Can Work* internships, mutual benefit partnerships and other accessible practice support.

Work is also being undertaken with the Law Society and Glasgow Science Centre as a sounding board for their respective disability inclusion developments, including signposting to other disabled people's organisations for impairment-specific training and support.

Two core training models have been developed: *The recruitment and retention of disabled people and mental health recruitment and in-work support*. These have been delivered to hotel groups and local councils in the central belt and outside in more rural locations.

Inclusion Scotland also hosted their first private sector event in December 2019: *The Future is Accessible: International Day for Disabled People*, which introduced employers to the *We Can Work* internship program, providing them with solutions and resources such as an accessible social media guide. Inclusion Scotland were supported by previous and current participants in the programme, including STV, SDS, Sopra Steria, Scottish Government, Momentum and previous and current interns. We also gained new support from Microsoft and Anderson Strathern who both took an active role at the event.

Looking to the future, Inclusion are in discussion with Diversity Awards agencies, national professional societies, higher education authorities and University Business Schools to increase awareness of the programme and opportunities to develop further resources (e.g. toolkits, industry reports, inclusion standards based on lived experience). Improvements are also being made to evaluation of the programme, in order to better capture: system and organisational change achieved; experience of employers taking part; and longer-term impact of the internship programme and wider support provided. In addition, it is proposed to create a talent bank of previous applicants for future roles and matching opportunities.



## Supporting people with learning disabilities

Whilst action needs to be taken to improve employment opportunities for all disabled people, we recognise that impairment-specific groups can be disproportionately affected by the disability employment gap, including people with learning disabilities. We also know that improved data collection can assist in understanding the scale of the challenge for particular groups.

The **Scottish Commission for Learning Disabilities** (SCLD) is the lead strategic partner to the Scottish Government in the delivery of learning disability strategy and policy. SCLD produces an annual report of data for adults with learning disabilities, obtaining directly from local authorities – with their [latest report](#) published at the end of 2019.

The report suggests that of the 23,584 adults with learning disabilities known to local authorities across Scotland, only 956 (4.1%) were known to be in employment, whilst 44.4% were known not to be in employment. The employment status of the remaining 51.5% was not recorded, highlighting the need to continue to improve data collected by employment programmes – across providers and not just at local authority level.

Nonetheless, it is certain that more needs to be done to improve the support for people with learning disabilities, including in relation to accessing and sustaining employment. In March 2019, the Scottish Government published [The Keys to Life: Unlocking futures for people with learning disabilities – priorities 2019 - 2021](#). The new framework takes a whole person and whole life approach. It considers children, young people and adults, and looks at priorities under four themes of living, learning, working and wellbeing.

As outlined in our Action Plan, and consistent with the objectives of the framework, we have committed to undertaking a review of Supported Employment provision across Scotland. Initial work was undertaken in 2019, to gain an understanding of current provision

across local authorities and within Fair Start Scotland. Further work will be commissioned in 2020 (see section 4 of this report) in order to complete this review.

## Independent Living Fund Scotland

The Independent Living Fund (ILF) Scotland Transition Fund provides grants, for up to one year, to support young disabled people aged between 16-25 years with the transition to be more independent. Co-produced with disabled young people, in the first 18 months the fund's focus has been young disabled people leaving school and accessing adult services.

Since its launch in 2017/18, the Transitions Fund has, to date, received just over 2,000 applications, with over £3.25 million in grants approved to over 1,300 young people across every local authority area in Scotland. The average grant awarded is around £2,500, demonstrating that a relatively small resource can have a significant impact on a young disabled person's life. The purpose for which grants are awarded varies, but includes equipment and services which can have a positive impact on young people's ability to access the world of work, including support for driving lessons, computer equipment, etc.

Recipient satisfaction is currently 95% (based on a response rate of 28%). The fund has also won numerous external National awards, including a Scottish Public Sector Award in 2016, an innovation award at the UK CIPFA Public Finances 2019 and Top 3 in the 2019 Guardian Public Sector Awards, and a finalist in the 2019 CIPR Pride Awards for Scotland.





### 3. MEASURING PROGRESS

In *A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People: Employment Action Plan*, we identified key indicators against which we would report on an annual basis in order to measure progress towards achieving our overall objective of at least halving the disability employment gap in Scotland by 2038. This section provides an update of these by theme.

#### 3.1 Halving the Disability Employment Gap (DEG)

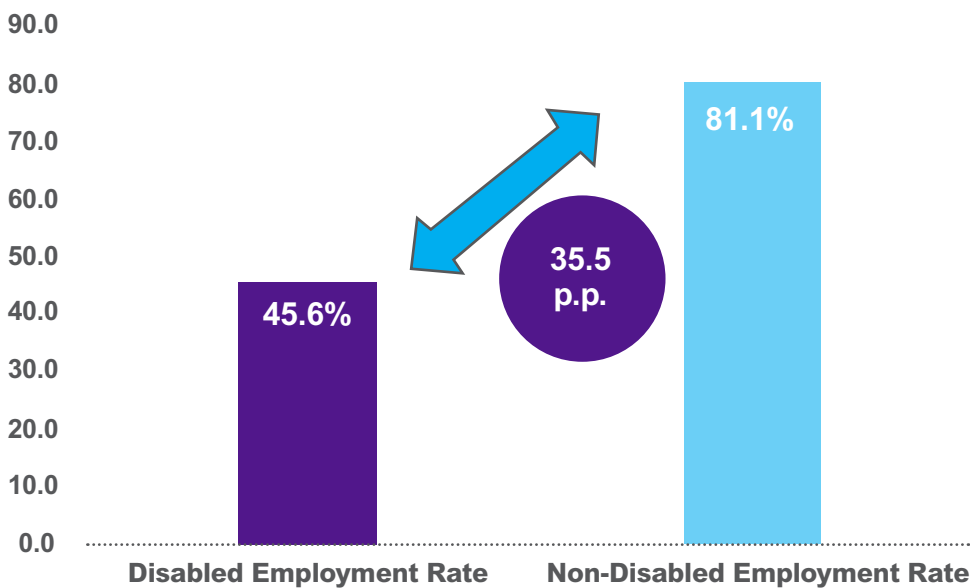
The Disability Employment Gap (DEG) is the difference between the employment rates of disabled people and non-disabled people. In 2016, when we set our aim to at least halve the DEG, this was 37.4 percentage points (p.p.). Since 2016, Scotland’s DEG has fallen: to 35.9 p.p. in 2017; and to 35.5 p.p. in 2018. The narrowing of the gap since 2016 has been driven by a rise in the employment rate of disabled people.

**Figure 3: Change in the disability employment gap (DEG) since baseline in 2016**

	2016: <i>Baseline</i>	2017	2018	2038: Aim to ½ the gap	Progress in reducing the DEG
Disability Employment Gap (DEG)	37.4 p.p.	35.9 p.p.	35.5 p.p.	18.7 p.p.	↓

*Source: ONS Annual Population Survey, Jan-Dec 2016-2018*

**Figure 4: The Disability Employment Gap in Scotland in 2018 (most recent full-year figures available)**



### 3.2 Interim Milestones

In the Action Plan we set out two interim milestones to help us track progress towards halving the DEG:

- A) to increase the employment rate of disabled people to 50% by 2023; and
- B) to 60% by 2030.

To reach these milestones, and ultimately halve the gap, the employment rate of disabled people will need to increase by at least 1 percentage point every year. We are on-track with this so far. 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.

**Figure 5: Changes in the employment rate of disabled people**

	2016 - Baseline	2017	2018	2023 – 1st interim goal	2030 – 2nd interim goal	Progress towards interim milestones
Employment rate of Disabled People	42.8%	45.3%	45.6%	50.0%	60.0%	↑

*Source: ONS Annual Population Survey, Jan-Dec 2016-2018*

### 3.3 Young People and Transitions

In 2018, the employment rate of disabled 16-24 year olds was 35.8%, slightly higher than the baseline rate of 35.6%, but 7.2 percentage points lower than the rate in 2017 (43.0%). The employment rate of non-disabled 16-24 year olds also declined between 2017 and 2018.

**Figure 6: Employment rate of disabled young people (16-24 years)**

	2016 - Baseline	2017	2018	Progress over the latest year
Employment rate of disabled young people (aged 16-24 years)	35.6%	43.0%	35.8%	↓

*Source: ONS Annual Population Survey, Jan-Dec 2016-2018*

Although the employment rate for disabled 16-24 year olds has declined over the latest year, the unemployment rate for disabled 16-24 year olds has also fallen – from 20.8% in 2017, to 17.9% in 2018. The 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.

The inactivity rates of both disabled and non-disabled young people increased over the year, although the rise in inactivity for disabled young people was greater.



For 16-24 year olds as a whole, inactivity due to: being a student; long-term sickness; and looking after family/home have all increased as reasons for being inactive over the year<sup>1</sup>. The proportion of young people as a whole who are inactive due to long-term sickness has increased from 6.3% to 8.0% in the past year. So this shift towards inactivity may be partly driven by an increase in young people identifying as disabled who are already inactive rather than an increase in inactivity among young disabled people.

### 3.4 Supporting Employers to Recruit and Retain Disabled People

Whilst it is not possible to report on individual employers’ recruitment and retention levels of disabled people in this report, the disability pay gap provides a measure of equality for disabled people in employment. It represents the difference between average hourly pay of disabled and non-disabled people, as a percentage of non-disabled people’s pay.

**Figure 7: Disability Pay Gap**

	2016 - Baseline	2017	2018	Progress over the latest year
Disability Pay Gap	13.8%	13.3%	8.3%	↓

*Source: [ONS, Disability Pay Gaps in the UK: 2018](#)*

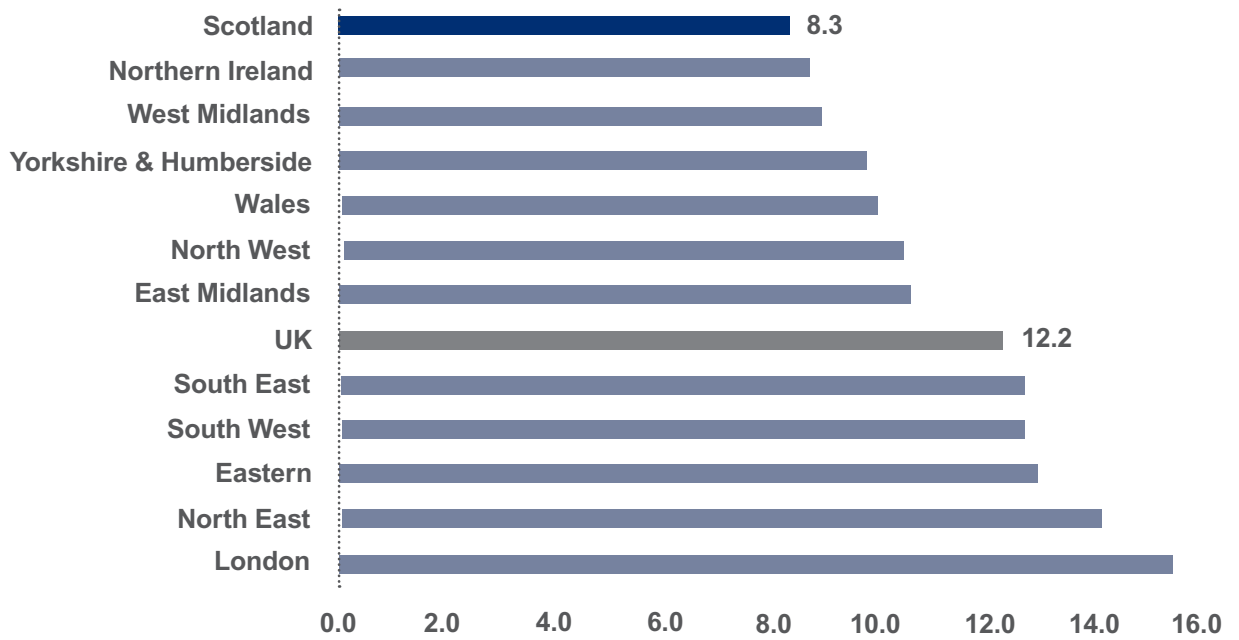
In 2018, average pay for disabled employees in Scotland was 8.3% lower than non-disabled employees. This means for every £1 that a non-disabled employee earned in 2018, a disabled employee earned £0.92.

Scotland’s Disability Pay Gap has declined since 2016, and in 2018, Scotland’s 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.

<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that it is not possible to look at the reasons for inactivity for the disabled and non-disabled cohorts separately.



**Figure 8: Percentage difference (%) in median pay between disabled and non-disabled employees, 2018**



Source: ONS, Disability Pay Gaps in the UK: 2018



### 3.5 Supporting Disabled People to Enter Employment

#### Types of occupations that people move into

Disabled people are employed across all sectors of Scotland’s economy and across all occupation types. However, disabled people are generally under-represented in the better paid occupations in our labour market and over-represented in lower paid occupations.

Progress has generally been positive over the year with a shift towards better paid occupations for disabled people. The proportion of disabled people employed as Managers, Directors and Senior Officials (on average, the highest paid occupational group) has increased – from 7.3% to 8.0% – although the proportion of disabled people employed in these roles still falls short of the proportion of non-disabled people (8.5% in 2018). And the share of employment of disabled people working in associate professional and technical occupations increased from 10.1% to 11.1% over the year, although there was a slight decline for professional occupations (19.0% to 18.6%).

For less well paid occupations, there was a fall in the share of employment of disabled people over the year for all occupation groups except elementary occupations and process, plant and machine operatives.

**Figure 9: Share (%) of total employment of disabled people, by occupation**



Source: ONS Annual Population Survey, Jan-Dec 2017, 2018



## Changes in how disabled people move in and out of employment

### Moving into work

The proportion of disabled people moving from out of work into employment has increased over the year and increased since the baseline year – from 7.0% in 2015/16 to 8.4% in 2017/18.

**Figure 10: Proportion of disabled people moving from out of work into employment**

	2015/16 - Baseline	2016/17	2017/18	Progress over the latest year
Proportion of disabled people moving from out of work into employment	7.0%	5.9%	8.4%	↑
<a href="#">Scottish Government Analysis of Labour Market Flows based on the Annual Population Survey</a>				

### Falling out of work

Labour market flows analysis shows there has been an increase in the proportion of disabled people who have fallen out of work over the latest year but a fall from the baseline year.

**Figure 11: Proportion of disabled people moving from employment to not working**

	2015/16 - Baseline	2016/17	2017/18	Progress over the latest year
Proportion of disabled people moving from employment to not working	13.5%	8.2%	10.0%	↑
<a href="#">Scottish Government Analysis of Labour Market Flows based on the Annual Population Survey</a>				

Over the last year, the proportion of disabled people in employment who have fallen out of work has increased – from 8.2% in 2016/17, to 10.0% in 2017/18 (although it also increased for non-disabled people - from 4.9% to 5.5%). Disabled people remain generally around twice as likely to fall out of work as non-disabled people (10.0% vs 5.5%).



### 3.6 Intersectionality

We recognise that disabled people can experience barriers to employment on the basis of multiple characteristics, including gender, ethnicity, sexuality, etc. In policy terms, we refer to this as intersectionality. When someone has multiple protected equality characteristics they are likely to experience greater disadvantage in the labour market.

#### Gender

Disabled women will generally face greater labour market barriers than non-disabled women and the experience of women in Scotland's labour market tells us that disabled women will face greater disadvantage than disabled men. However, although for Scotland's labour market as a whole the employment rate of men is consistently higher than women, disabled women had a higher employment rate than disabled men in 2018 (46.2% vs 44.8%).

Rates of economic inactivity can help explain this. Whereas for non-disabled people, women are around twice as likely to be inactive than men - driven by women being much more likely to be looking after the family/home than men - for disabled people, rates of inactivity are similar by gender. This is because 'sickness' is overwhelmingly the most common reason given for inactivity by both disabled men (74.5%) and women (56.5%). (ONS, Annual Population Survey, Jan-Dec 2018)

#### Race

The employment rate of people from minority ethnic groups in Scotland is consistently lower than the employment rate of white people. And for people from minority ethnic groups who are disabled, multiple disadvantage and labour market barriers are reflected in a lower employment rate (37.9%) than people from minority ethnic groups who are not disabled (57.8%). A non-disabled white person is more than twice as likely to be in employment (82.4% employment rate) than a disabled person from a minority ethnic group (37.9% employment rate).

However, the minority ethnic employment gap – the difference between the employment rates of white people and people from minority ethnic groups – is much smaller for disabled people (8 percentage points) than non-disabled people (24.6 percentage points). This is primarily because disability has such a big impact on employment rates, that rates for disabled people are low – regardless of race. (ONS, Annual Population Survey, Jan-Dec 2018)

#### Qualifications

The disadvantage faced by disabled people with lower qualifications is evident in the particularly low employment rate (40.2%) for disabled people with below degree level or no qualifications. But even with a degree or higher qualification, disabled people are still less likely (67.2% employment rate) to be employed than non-disabled people without one (78.3% employment rate). Non-disabled people with a degree had an employment rate of 86.6% in 2018, almost 20 percentage points higher than equally qualified disabled people.

However, there are indications that obtaining a degree improves the employment prospects of disabled people more than non-disabled people, and can act to reduce the disability employment gap. Having a degree boosts the employment rate of disabled people by 27 percentage points compared with 8.3 percentage points for non-disabled people. (ONS, Annual Population Survey, Jan-Dec 2018)

#### Further information

The Scottish Government publishes analysis of a range of labour market data on its website. You can find additional information and data tables about disabled people in the labour market from the Annual Population Survey Jan – Dec 2018 [here](#).



## 4. LOOKING FORWARD NEXT STEPS

### 4.1 Next Steps

**Whilst still in the early stages of the substantial work required to meet the commitment to at least halve the disability employment gap, we hope you will agree that good progress is already being made.**

There is, however, no room for complacency and we are clear that we need to ensure the Scottish Government extends its influence and continues to enhance our work with wider partners, who we know share our vision for an inclusive Scotland and one in which disabled people thrive.

We will build on the initial momentum achieved in the first year of implementing *A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People: Employment Action Plan*, with some of the key activity planned for the forthcoming year outlined below:

**Stakeholder Engagement:** We are delighted to announce that, working with DWP, we will establish a Scottish Access to Work Stakeholder Forum, ensuring that, for the first time, disabled people in Scotland have a formal mechanism through which to help shape the programme's delivery. We anticipate that the Forum, which will include disabled people's organisations, will meet for the first time in summer 2020. Its purpose will be to represent the views of service users and offer advice to DWP on how Access to Work could be enhanced to improve customer experience. It will also consider ideas and suggestions to enhance policy development.

In addition, we are reviewing membership of the Strategic Labour Market Group, which helps to ensure the Scottish Government's Labour Market Strategy remains responsive, adaptable and delivers a fair, inclusive and successful labour market. The Group makes

recommendations on how to drive progressive change in the labour market, and in reviewing its membership we will seek representation for disabled people's interests, to ensure appropriate experience and expertise is available to inform delivery of the strategy.

#### **Review of Supported Employment:**

Supported employment is based on a model of "place and train" where participants learn on the job with support from work colleagues, backed up by the skills of a job coach who provides flexible support to both the individual and potential employer. Originally developed to support people with learning disabilities to access employment, the approach has since been extended to support other excluded groups. 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*.

**Individual Placement and Support (IPS):** Is a form of supported employment that assists those with severe and enduring mental health conditions. A key principle of IPS is that employment specialists and clinical teams work together to support people to gain employment. We have committed to review the provision of IPS within Fair Start Scotland, considering wider delivery approaches in order to understand how best IPS can be delivered in partnership with key agencies. The findings of this will feed into the overall review of supported employment, with a view to making recommendations to support current and future delivery.





**Parental Employment Support Fund (PESF):**

In the years 2019-22, £12 million from the Tackling Child Poverty Fund will be invested to implement new Parental Employability Support. Delivered through local authorities, this will help parents on low incomes, including disabled people, to secure fair work and an increase in their earnings. A further boost of £4 million is being invested to enhance the alignment of early learning and childcare provision with employability support.

Third sector partners and those with lived experience will help design the new and enhanced services, which will provide parents with tailored holistic employability support. 35% of funding will extend pre-employment support to parents not yet in work to address barriers and progress towards employment, with the remaining 65% focussing on supporting those parents on low incomes to tackle in-work poverty.

In recognition of the significant impact of child poverty on households with a disabled family member, we will draw on the lessons from the first phase of investment in 2020/21, and work with disabled people, their representative organisations, and local authorities to inform the development of additional targeted support for disabled parents through the Disabled Parents Employment Support Fund.

**Public Social Partnership (PSP):** As indicated, the PSP will move to its activation stage, which will see the partnership develop and implement its work programme to address gaps in employer knowledge and expertise in recruiting and retaining disabled people. The aims of the partnership include to:

- reduce prejudice towards employing disabled people by conveying the benefits of employing disabled people;
- improve the knowledge and understanding of employers of the barriers to employment faced by disabled people and solutions for addressing these;

- provide employers with the tools to better understand how to attract disabled people to apply to their organisations (e.g. through redesign of recruitment practices);
- enable employers to quickly get the information they need to support employees who are disabled or who have recently become disabled;
- share success and learning from good/poor practice (e.g. linking to evidence-based solutions and considering international research / comparators).

As lead partner, SUSE will provide support to ensure the partnership is able to have a meaningful impact on employer practice.

**Employer-led campaign:** 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.

**Young People and Transitions:** We will focus greater attention on transitions in the coming year, and will work with colleagues across the Scottish Government, to push this agenda forward. This will include playing an active role in contributing to the new cross-policy working group.



**Rights and Redress:** Initial work has commenced to explore the information and advice available to disabled people about their legislative rights in relation to employment. It is apparent there is already a wealth of information available on employment rights, but we will engage with disabled people, including those yet to enter the labour market, to obtain a better understanding of how access to this information can be improved. In addition, we will continue to work with relevant bodies such as the Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC) and the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) to explore opportunities to strengthen enforcement.

**Developing Scottish Government staff knowledge and expertise:** To build the expertise of our own staff in considering intersectionality in their approach, we will work with Scottish Government colleagues and key external stakeholders to deliver a capacity-building workshop for policy officers within Scottish Government’s Fair Work, Employability & Skills Directorate.

**Enhanced collaboration across SG:** We know that employability is affected by, and impacts on a range of policy agendas (e.g. transport, health, education, access to childcare, etc.), and in order to achieve the level of change required to meet our ambition to at least halve the disability employment gap, it is imperative that we align our work more closely with that of other Scottish Government portfolios. This will assist in ensuring best use of resources in a tight fiscal environment, but also enables a more coherent message on national policy priorities to be presented to employers.

To this end, we will work closely with colleagues to join up work across the Fair Work, Gender Pay Gap and Race Equality action plans, where appropriate, whilst still giving cognisance to discreet issues that impact on disabled people. Similarly, there is a need to improve our collaboration with health colleagues, amongst others, particularly given the opportunities presented by the establishment of the new Public Health Scotland body from April 2020 – one of the strategic priorities of which is to support a Scotland where we achieve “a sustainable inclusive economy with equality of outcomes for all”.

## 4.2 Closing Statement

*Whilst A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People: Employment Action Plan* focuses on the action that Scottish Government and its agencies will take, our work on this agenda will continue to evolve as we seek to collaborate with and influence wider partners to play their part in reducing the disability employment gap. As noted in the Minister’s introduction to this report, achieving this ambition is likely to be even more challenging as we respond to the impact of COVID-19 going forward.

We remain committed to ensuring disabled people have the opportunity to help shape priority action, and will work with disabled people’s organisations to ensure the voice of lived experience is heard. Building on the partnership agreement for employability between Scottish and Local Government, we will also ensure we help optimise the contribution of public sector partners – both as employers and service providers. Equally, we will further develop our work with employers to support them to recruit and retain disabled people within their workforce.

Now more than ever, it remains a core aim for Scottish Government to ensure that all disabled people are enabled to find fair and sustainable work, commensurate with their skills, qualifications and experience.





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