

# Through Learning to Earning

Transitions into employment for young people with SEND

Final Report of the Transitions to Employment Group Sub-Group,  
May 2016



# Through Learning to Earning

---

Transitions into employment for young people with SEND

## Contents

|                                                                             | Page Number |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| <b>Introduction</b>                                                         | 1           |
| <b>What Problems are we trying to solve?</b>                                | 4           |
| <b>The Priorities, and how they should be tackled</b>                       | 5           |
| <b>1. Greater Employer Buy-in and Commitment</b>                            | 7           |
| <b>2. Better employment outcomes from FE and training.</b>                  | 10          |
| <b>3. More seamless and coherent support</b>                                | 14          |
| <b>4. More professional, disability-aware, careers advice at school-age</b> | 17          |
| Annex A – Terms of Reference                                                | 20          |
| Annex B – Transitions Group Membership                                      | 21          |
| Annex C - Disabled People entering the Labour Market – evidence             | 22          |
| Annex D – A Demand-Led Journey                                              | 27          |

## Introduction

1. Disabled people make up nearly half of unemployed and economically inactive people in Britain. More people become disabled with age, but too many young people with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) miss out on opportunities early in life. The waste of talent, and damage to thousands of lives, are self-evident. As are the benefits of helping young people build independent lives. Equipping one young person with the skills to live in semi-independent rather than fully supported housing could reduce lifetime support costs by around £1 million.

2. All young people must navigate a complex landscape as they make their way through education and training and into work. Along the way, there are many factors which contribute to poor outcomes for young adults with SEND. In our review, some things have stood out:

- The years from 16 to 26 are crucial: 16 year olds with SEND have aspirations and confidence similar to their peers, but by the age of 26 their hopes and confidence have often taken a severe knock.
- The government has made a welcome commitment to halving the disability employment gap. It will be vital not just to focus on adults who are already out of work, but also to stem the flow of new entrants to unemployment by improving the transition of young people with SEND into adulthood and employment. Around 120,000 new entrants to the labour market each year face a prospect of unemployment that is between double and four times the average, depending on severity of their condition.
- All young people benefit from experience of the world of work. With the barriers to employment that they can face, those with SEND probably gain more than most from opportunities to demonstrate what they can do and to understand what employers need. We need better links between schools, colleges, universities and business, and greater support and reassurance to employers who can offer openings to disabled young people.
- We can do much better. We already see powerful examples of employers working in partnership with education and training providers. These show how to improve opportunities for disabled people, with benefits for

individuals and the companies. They also show that employing disabled people is good for individual businesses, as well as being good for the economy overall. The benefits can include understanding the needs of disabled customers better, different perspectives enriching an organisation, lower turnover, less sickness and absenteeism, loyal staff, and better staff engagement across all staff.

3. This is well-trodden ground, and the problems are well known. We have not sought to cover everything. But our review has clarified the challenge and helped us identify concrete and short-term actions to make a difference. We have in some cases already taken action to test our approach. We are confident that good practice can be spread. Alongside this, there are actions for government and its partners to consider, which can help level the playing field. We will know that progress is being made when we see:

a. A rapid expansion in supported internships – these are boosting the job chances of young people with moderate to severe learning difficulties, and having a positive impact on employer attitudes. We need an action plan to strengthen take-up and draw in more employers and education providers.

b. The supported internship approach extended to more students – elements of the model (such as job coaches) could also improve the poor rates of employment progression from further education of the wider group with milder impairments, and ensure that traineeships and apprenticeships are inclusive and effective for all (including through reasonable adjustments to the conventional qualification requirements, where justified).

c. A step up in employer offers of supported internships, traineeships, apprenticeships for young people with SEND. We recommend integrating Transitions into the proposed self-assessment and recognition scheme for Disability Confident, to boost employer confidence and commitment, and open up opportunities. The new Disability Confident should include commitment to: recruiting supported interns and disabled trainees/apprentices; sign-up to offering work experience opportunities on digital platform.

- d. An inclusive careers strategy – the Department for Education’s forthcoming careers strategy should address concerns about a disconnect between careers and disability advice, and lack of specialist expertise. The National Careers Service, the Careers and Enterprise Company and their partners should take steps to improve outcomes for young people with SEND.
  - e. A mainstream expectation of success for SEND young people – end acceptance of poor outcomes for young people with SEND and support them to navigate successfully through education to employment, raising parental confidence in the chances of progression and success.
  - f. Young people fully in the picture in the Government push to halve the disability employment gap - which requires: strong, joined-up working between DfE and DWP, as young people with SEND prepare to leave education and seek to enter employment; better support for disabled people in JobCentres, including a focus on new entrants ; a wider application of learning from the personalisation pilots; and simpler, more transparent government support through Access to Work, fully engaged with training schemes.
4. All of these things are possible without great cost or hardship, but opportunities are currently being missed. All we need is for more employers to do what many have already done, and for government and other agencies to smooth the way. These simple steps could be a catalyst for cultural change more widely.

## TRANSITIONS INTO EMPLOYMENT FOR DISABLED PEOPLE

### Purpose of the Group

1. The Transitions Group was set up at the initiative of the DWP-sponsored Disability Employer Engagement Group. The aim was to consider the issues relating to transition from education to employment for disabled people. The Group adopted as its aims:

- To identify issues that can obstruct progress for young disabled people from education into employment. To identify support currently or potentially available to young disabled people and consider how this might be aligned and packaged to ease disabled job-seekers' progress into and within the workplace.
- To promote and encourage best employer practices for the recruitment, retention and progression for graduates, apprentices and interns with disabilities.

2. The Group was chaired by Graeme Whippy MBE of Lloyds Banking Group and the Business Disability Forum, supported by a broad range of experts from the worlds of employment, education, policy and delivery.

### What problems are we trying to solve?

3. A summary of the evidence considered by the Group is outlined in the paper at Annex C. In summary, the issues considered were:

- a. Despite recent progress, disabled people remain more likely than their peers to achieve less well in education, and to be unemployed or under-employed. Those in employment, with the same level of qualification, had earnings 11 per cent lower than non-disabled peers .
- b. The transition from full-time education to the labour market may be particularly challenging. Levels of aspiration among disabled 16 year olds are similar to those of non-disabled peers, but by the age of 26 they are markedly less confident and nearly four times as likely to be unemployed.
- c. Young people with less severe impairments are more at risk of leaving education with low qualifications, but may receive little additional support and are more at risk of contact with the Youth Justice System, experience of homelessness, teenage pregnancy, drug and alcohol misuse and worklessness .
- d. The government has committed to halving the disability employment gap, equivalent to supporting more than a million more disabled people into work. Existing schemes to help people currently unemployed or inactive to return to work have a weak record for disabled people. Accordingly, in addition to tackling the stock of people already out of work, it will be vital to stem the flow of new entrants to unemployment by improving the transition of young people with SEND into adulthood and employment. At

present there is an estimated annual addition to the labour market of over 120,000 young people with up to four times the average chance of becoming unemployed.

e. Many businesses recognize the benefits of fair employment, and there is considerable support and guidance intended to overcome obstacles in the way of smooth progress through education and training and into work. But evidence is mixed on the impact, and there is scope for greater availability and better use of the available help, with improved coherence and transparency to employers and job seekers.

f. There is also evidence of missed opportunities. We heard frequently that schools, colleges and universities were keen to work with employers to secure work experience and other placements for young people with SEND, but often found it hard to engage suitable employers. At the same time, we have heard from employers that they are ready to provide such opportunities, but find it hard to link with the right schools, colleges or universities.

### **The priorities – and how they should be tackled**

4. This is well-trodden ground, with numerous reports and recommendations over the years. And significant government reforms (notably recent legislation on special educational needs and disability) have focused on the need to improve educational outcomes and support young people in navigating the journey through education and training into successful and sustained employment.

5. The Group accordingly focused on areas where there was the prospect of developing concrete proposals for action, or where it appeared that they could add weight and momentum to existing initiatives that pointed in the right direction. As far as possible, we have specified who could and should do what, and in some cases Group members have already begun to take action forward.

6. Inevitably, however, there were instances where action was needed by others, for example government or public agencies, in order to tackle significant obstacles to progress. In those cases, we have made recommendations and highlighted where we think responsibility lies.

### **A demand-led journey**

7. In the interests of clarity, we organized our thinking according to a notional “supply chain”, covering the journey from full-time education to work. Since employment would never be possible in the absence of a job and an employer willing to recruit an individual to it, we tried to consider every stage of this journey in terms of its relevance to that hoped-for outcome. This enabled us to focus on the two crucial issues:

- what might help the individual overcome barriers in the way of employment; and

- what employers would want and need in order to be able to employ more disabled people.

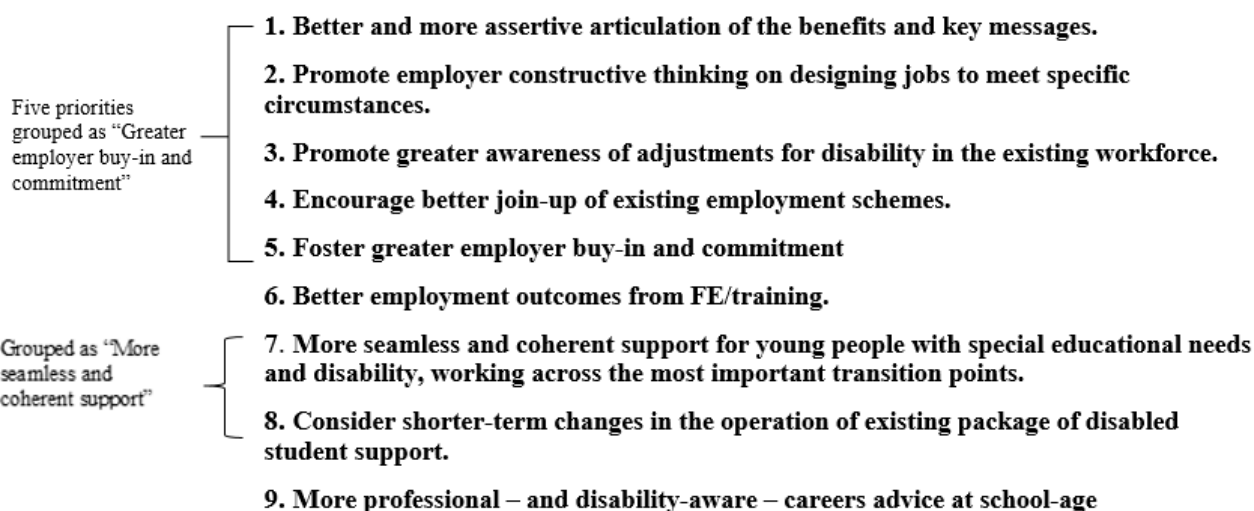
8. (The diagram at Annex D illustrates the approach.)

### **Priorities for action**

9. Of course, such a journey may not be linear. But we found that simplifying in this way helped us consider the issues that are most important at different stages. These included: factors affecting aspiration and ambition, later factors affecting skills and work experience, and connections between employers and service providers, through to issues around recruitment and retention.

10. The Group identified challenges at each point on a notional journey from education, through training and work experience, and into employment. Discussion then focused on specific actions that could have an impact on the individual (capacity and preparation); on skills and training; on provision to get people into employment; and on the workplace itself – including retention and recruitment.

11. In discussion, the Group identified nine broad priorities for action, each with specific suggestions for action. These fell naturally into four broad areas, as follows:



In the following pages, we describe the nature of the specific challenges to be faced, and outline how it should be done.

# 1. Greater employer buy-in and commitment

## What is the Problem?

12. There is a persistent and large employment gap for disabled people. First-hand experience of the world of work is important for all young people navigating the journey through education and training, into employment. It is even more important for young people with disabilities or special educational needs. They are more likely to need, and benefit from, opportunities to demonstrate their capabilities and to understand the specific needs of employers. Four out of five employers say they are ready to consider employing someone with an impairment or long-term health condition, but far fewer in fact do so. In order to tackle that, we need more employers to translate words into action and offer opportunities to young people with SEND. Alongside this, employers – especially small and medium sized employers – need reassurance and practical help to overcome anxieties about cost, complexity and burdens on managers.

## What is already being done?

13. We see powerful examples of businesses recognising the benefits that can flow from ensuring fair opportunities for disabled people. People with the most severe forms of SEND can have an employment rate as low as seven per cent. However, a government trial of supported internships led to 36 per cent of students with SEND gaining paid employment. A prominent example of this approach is the partnership of National Grid and Round Oak School, Warwick. The programme has been praised by Ofsted, and the UK chief executive of National Grid is on record as saying it is one of the best things the company has ever done.

14. A diverse workforce can strengthen business creativity, with competitive advantage. More diverse leadership can encourage recruitment and retention. There are also broader benefits, to business and to wider society, including a wider pool of high-quality applicants; better connections with the average company's estimated one in five customers likely to be disabled (with an estimated household spending power of over £200 billion a year); and reduced cost to the public purse for each young person equipped with the skills to live more independently.

15. On the other hand, there clearly remain huge obstacles. The Group was convinced that far more could be done, by a wider range of employers, to help disabled people succeed in the workplace. Many employers may regard disabled people as less productive than non-disabled counterparts. To the extent that they may be seen as adding costs, disabled people are at a labour market disadvantage.

16. Some Group members considered that standard recruitment practices did not work well for disabled people, with a focus on areas where employees cannot meet idealized job spec, rather than a focus on capability not disability.

17. Giving young people with SEND exposure to the workplace can help both potential employees and employers develop a realistic view of what it will take for them to succeed in work. Three-quarters of employers cite lack of work experience as a reason for young people being unprepared for work. Employers also rate relevant work experience as more important for recruitment than academic or vocational qualifications. Yet the proportion of employers who offer work placements is 38 per cent. Schools, colleges and universities need more than brief ‘sheep dip’ opportunities; they have a strong appetite to work better with employers to build pathways to employment.

18. There is a perception that ‘reasonable adjustments’ can be too costly, and the benefits may not accrue where the costs fall. Many employers are not well-informed and confident about Access to Work and reasonable adjustments. The cost of ‘reasonable adjustments’ – or the perception of possible costs – may hinder even well-meaning of employers in creating accessible workplaces.

19. The government offers significant support for people in work and apprenticeships, and in some training programmes (including supported internships and traineeships). But Access to Work can be seen as not easily accessible or navigable, and is not well enough known. It has also been criticised for the limits on support for individuals on the Work Choice programme. Improvements could give more confidence to employers and (potential) employees.

### **What should be done?**

20. It is self-evident that progress in employment for disabled people depends on a significant increase in the number of employers being prepared to employ them, and to offer work experience opportunities to pave the way. Numerous employers have already demonstrated what can be done. The key challenge is to build on that, advertising good practice and encouraging and supporting more employers to step up their commitment.

21. We recommend:

a. Model a sector approach to improving outcomes in the supply chain. The broadcast media sector has a handful of large broadcasters who are firmly committed to diversity in their workforce, working with much larger numbers of small production companies, for whom the workforce challenges may be more daunting. Members of the Group are already working with this sector, with the aim of demonstrating the possibilities and benefits of such a ‘supply chain’ approach to promoting employment for disabled people in small and medium sized companies. Subject to the success of this model, we will look to promote it in other sectors.

b. Promote employer action through the Disability Confident. There is a great opportunity in the proposal that employers should self-assess, and gain recognition for, their Disability Confidence. This should include commitment to key steps flowing from Transitions work, so that employers sign up to specific and practical steps to improve

progression into employment for young people with SEND. Key elements should include:

- i. Commitment to offer jobs through apprenticeships and concrete work placements, appropriately supported under the supported internship and traineeship banners. In parallel, government networks should be used to target significant public sector employers, such as the NHS, civil service.
  - ii. Agreement to offer work experience opportunities on the proposed digital platform
  - iii. Reciprocal agreements so that in return for the employer committing to take a number of students, they receive guaranteed services in return, including Access to Work support for job coaches and other help to trainees, and a premium rate of payment funded by the Apprenticeship Levy.
- c. Promote success through other channels, drawing on good practice examples, from schools, FE, HE, employers, covering a variety of disabilities. There are many examples of disabled employees operating successfully in the workplace, and impressive examples of employers working with education and training providers to build pathways to work for young people with SEND. But these successes are not well enough known, and an impression persists that employing someone with a disability can be fraught with difficulty. Case studies should include examples of simple and successful adjustments, and instances where employers benefit from external support.
- d. Drawing on those case studies, consider the scope for and usefulness of a ‘transition toolkit’ – outlining common issues and support needs when people enter a new phase of work or learning, based on common needs of disabled learners, and highlighting the support available.
- e. Promote a 1 in 5 approach to the “5% Club”. Many employers already commit to the 5% Club, to encourage recruitment of apprentices and graduates. Extending the commitment, aiming for 1 in 5 of those recruits to be young people with some form of SEND, could be a simple way of emphasising the commitment to inclusive recruitment, while retaining flexibility (for example as between graduates, apprentices).
- f. DWP build capacity through the Disability Confident website, moving from a communication to capacity-building role, with addition of sections for young people and toolkits for employers and providers.
- g. A common platform on which employers and education providers can make contact, to link young people with work experience opportunities. This might be based on the database developed by the Careers and Enterprise Company, supported and promoted by LEP enterprise coordinators.

## **2. Better employment outcomes from FE/training.**

### **The Problem**

23. The Group identified a need to identify ways to improve employment outcomes from further and higher education and training. Members consider we should not aim for anything less than most young people with SEND progressing to paid employment or higher education once they leave compulsory education. In the light of current outcomes (such as the current seven per cent employment rate for people with LDD), that is a big challenge.

### **What is already being done?**

24. There is significant potential in existing government programmes to secure better employment outcomes for disabled people. Apprenticeships are the flagship skills programme. Traineeships and supported internships offer routes to qualifications and employment for those not yet ready for an apprenticeship. In addition, all 16-19 study programmes should include work experience. The Government's SEN reforms, which support children and young people with SEND from birth up to 25 where appropriate, place a new emphasis on preparation for adulthood and the importance of employment within it.

### **What more should be done?**

25. The Group agreed that the building blocks were in place to make a big step forward in terms of job outcomes. While existing systems were not perfect, there was no need for massive changes; it was more a case of encouraging more employers and providers to follow the lead of those already showing the way. This requires better links between education providers and employers; commitment and engagement from employers; and greater flexibility from government to enable disabled people a fair chance.

#### **i Supported Internships**

26. Supported Internships offer an opportunity that should be seized. Providing employment-related support to students with moderate to severe learning difficulties appears to have a positive impact on their employment prospects, and on the attitudes of employers involved. The Government has provided money to support their growth. They are in the year of national availability, and the SEND reforms are providing a stimulus, with the focus on preparation for adulthood.

27. But internships present challenges for education providers, shifting the emphasis from preparing a student for employment (with the responsibility to find them a job falling elsewhere) to finding or developing a learning and work experience pathway that leads to paid employment. The biggest challenge for providers is engagement with employers. A bigger pool of willing employers would make a huge difference, including further large corporates but also SMEs.

28. We recommend:

- a. Promoting more strongly the success already being achieved, and the excellent local practice already in place. Build greater understanding in schools and colleges of how to run internships successfully. Produce case studies to make the case for SIs as part of a longer-term progression programme, and publish a comprehensive, high-quality toolkit of guidance on how to set up and run supported internships (including guidance for employers and for providers). Make freely available (including on Disability Confident and BDF websites). Models already exist, which could readily be made nationally available.
- b. A timeline for all colleges to offer internships. FE colleges and other post-16 providers should all consider offering supported internships for those with EHC plans, but only a third currently do. It would be reasonable to use 2016/17 as a test year, aiming for further expansion thereafter.
- c. Measures agreed by AoC, AELP, DfE and DWP to promote and strengthen employer engagement, including a targeted brokerage service to build education/employer links and remove burdens from participating employers.
- d. The Government has helpfully simplified processes associated with Access to Work, to support students over a longer period. This should be widely publicised, emphasizing the greater ease to employers. Increase access and earlier up-front commitment ‘in principle’ to Access to Work funding, to provide education and supported employment providers with greater certainty and clarity. Provide regional SI ‘how to’ master-classes to show them how to do this for themselves and what help is available.
- e. Employers in consortia, or through LEPs, work with education providers to agree skills and qualifications needed in the local labour market, so that those with SEND can tailor post-16 study programmes. Alongside schools working in consortia to develop supported work experience, share expertise and fund job coaches in schools.
- f. This approach only works with a significant step-up in employer involvement. We should encourage more employers to join in, by:
  - i. All members of the Disability Employer Engagement Steering Group commit to offering internships, giving a lead to others. Build expansion of internships into the DEESG’s work with the retail sector, and consider extending to other sectors.
  - ii. Expand public sector opportunities, to follow the lead of companies like National Grid and set an example to others
  - iii. More employers to offer work tasters and work experience at 14+, so that they can shape young people’s aspirations, and inspire them. This could include

joining a scheme such as the ‘Inspiring Young People’ work shadowing scheme developed by DWP and Volunteering Matters.

iv. Urging local authorities to promote more employer/college or school partnerships

v. encouraging the use of Work Choice (and any successor programme) to support entry to employment.

## **ii. Traineeships and Apprenticeships**

29. Supported internships already work well for those with the most severe impairments (on EHC plans). They will on this basis help only a small minority. But the model is also promising as an approach to helping those with milder impairments (but whose employment outcomes remain poor), and ensuring that traineeships and apprenticeships are inclusive and effective for all. Apprenticeships are being expanded and reformed, with a strong government appetite to give employers greater influence over the curriculum. The proportion of apprenticeships started by individuals with self-declared learning difficulties or disability has risen, but remains lower than the proportion in education and training overall.

30. The Group endorses actions to go with the grain of the government appetite to promote apprenticeships, and strengthen the employer voice in their design and operation. There are already examples of employers with apprenticeship programmes using traineeships as a pipeline to bring young people to the starting gate for an apprenticeship. We recognize the need for increasing numbers of employers to play a strong role, and for employer commitment to opening doors to disabled people. This should go hand in hand with greater government flexibility to ease that progress.

31. Accordingly, we recommend:

a. Consider widening the scope of the current internship scheme to a larger group of students. This would need careful handling, and clear boundaries, to guard against a larger group taking up funding for those on EHC plans, and support leaking away from those most in need. But there is a strong case for testing the model with a wider group of students.

b. Providers should be encouraged to use the flexibility that already exists to build on the internship model by tailoring programmes for the wider group of students with learning difficulties or disabilities. This could include, for example, drawing on Access to Work funding to add support such as job coaches/brokers to traineeships, to ease people into jobs and tackle in-work problems for employer and employee. (We see no reason in principle why this approach should be hindered by the work to develop technical and professional training routes: sufficient flexibility should still be retained for providers and employers to put together such programmes.)

c. A campaign to persuade employers to adopt a policy of recruiting 15% of apprentices with a disability. The same employers would also offer traineeships and supported internships. One avenue for pursuing this might be to seek a commitment from organisations in the Business Disability Forum, and those who sign up to Disability Confident, to offer concrete work placements, appropriately supported under the internship or traineeship banners. Government networks should be used to target significant public sector employers, such as the NHS, civil service etc., with similar commitments sought from large private sector employers.

32. In return, it is reasonable to expect government to play its part in removing obstacles to success for disabled people. This could include:

a. Ensuring that the planned reform of technical and professional education for 16- to 19-year-olds is inclusive for young people with SEND. It is important that the Department for Education ensures that current reforms for this age group, including area-based reviews of colleges, and new routes from compulsory schooling to work, result in an increase in the proportion of young people with SEND on apprenticeships and in employment. Many young people with SEND rely on FE colleges and other training providers to improve their qualifications for work and to provide routes into work. But funding to support them in FE appears prone to uncertainty, and there is a perception that for many FE can offer a ‘revolving door’, where many students undertake training without successfully moving on to employment or higher-level study. We need a training system that is genuinely able to offer a strong employment pathway as part of preparation for adulthood.

b. Opening up apprenticeships to more young people with SEND – by considering specific provisions in the apprenticeship levy to ensure additional support is funded; by increasing the flexibility for employers to alter functional skills requirements in apprenticeships to more vocational measures (as a reasonable adjustment for some disabled apprentices). While it is important to aim for rigour in qualifications, the requirement in practice for GCSE English and maths means many young people with learning difficulties miss out or fail to complete. More flexibility here could make a huge difference to young people with milder LDD succeeding in apprenticeships. A possible vehicle could be the planned reform of functional skills qualifications in this area, to ensure suitable routes to improving literacy and numeracy for the workplace. It would also make a big difference if faster progress were made in making assessments properly accessible, including where appropriate through assistive technology.

### 3. More seamless and coherent support

#### What is the Problem?

34. The education and employment landscape is complex. There is a wide range of support – financial and other – potentially available at different phases. The responsibilities of schools, colleges, universities, local authorities, government agencies and employers are not always clear and complementary. Successful transition to work for disabled people ultimately relies on individuals and employers navigating this complex system, perhaps without relevant knowledge or experience.

What is already being done?

35. Financial, coaching and technical support is available in FE, HE and in the workplace, but it is delivered, funded and accessed in very different ways:

- Schools and local authorities have responsibility in the school years.
- In FE, learning support funding helps colleges meet the additional needs of learners with LDD, and the costs of reasonable adjustments required by the Equality Act 2010. (High needs funding is a local authority responsibility.)
- In higher education, universities have a duty to make reasonable adjustments in respect of their students, and in England students can currently get a Disabled Students' Allowance, to help with a range of costs, including specialist equipment, non-medical helpers, extra travel because of disability. Evidence suggests DSA support can have a positive impact on students' success.
- In the labour market, Access to Work grants may cover additional costs of starting or staying in work. It helped over 35,000 people in 2013/14, at a cost of £108m. The grant is not as well-known as it could be, and helps only a minority of the disabled people it might help.
- Around half the HE students who receive careers advice rate it good or better. But few appear to receive information, advice and guidance on reasonable adjustments, Access to Work, disclosing as disabled. Under the Equality Act 2010, university careers advisers have responsibility for assisting disabled students alongside everyone else, in their transition to work. Alumni support arrangements, which often provide work related opportunities, also apply equally to disabled graduates.

#### Group actions and recommendations

36. It is unlikely that anyone would start from the current complicated position. It would be preferable to have a simpler system that spanned institutional barriers and crossed educational phases. We should look for improvements in that direction wherever they can be identified, since education and employment outcomes are often not good enough. But it may be unrealistic to

hope for complete simplicity and transparency in systems designed for a range of purposes, involving thousands of people and institutions, with a vast range of circumstances.

37. A key consideration is how far each support structure or fund matches up to the outcomes that disabled young people and their families, as well as the wider society, would desire. Where programmes appear to be doing what they should (but perhaps are not sufficiently known or accessible), the priority may be to increase awareness, so that those entitled to support can get it.

38. From that perspective, the Group recommends:

a. Clarify and promote the support available from Access to Work, to ensure accessibility and ease of use for employers and individuals. This grant is vital for supporting people with specific needs in the workplace. It also plays a wider role, reassuring employers that taking on a disabled employee need not be unduly costly or complicated. This financial support is important in encouraging employers to take a positive approach to their duty to make reasonable adjustments. The grant can also support people on apprenticeships, supported internships and traineeships, and this should be made widely known.

b. DfE should develop and promote best practice case studies in the use of personal budgets, with a focus on work outcomes. The Government's SEND reforms will need time to work. The stronger focus on preparation for adulthood, with support to age 25, is very welcome. There is however a need for a stronger employment strand in such preparation. Preparation for adulthood should not be seen as primarily a question of extending support mechanisms further up the age range. Greater use of personal budgets offers the prospect of individuals and families acting for themselves to smooth progress across transitions.

c. DWP should consider how to extend more widely the approach being tested in the 'Personalisation Pathfinders'. This is promising, in that it offers help in navigating a complex support system, and tapping into help that individuals might not otherwise find.

d. A greater focus by the Office for Fair Access and careers services on access and outcomes for disabled students, with such outcomes published at institutional level. Evidence suggests that DSA has enabled disabled students to succeed where disabled students without support have done less well. Proposed reforms to the DSA will place more responsibility on universities to make reasonable adjustments to meet the needs of disabled students. Disabled students in higher education face uncertainty as the Disabled Student Allowance undergoes reform. BIS, HEFCE, and the Office for Fair Access must ensure that the change does not disadvantage them. It is important that universities properly assess student needs and provide support, and that they have incentives to do so.

e. So far as practicable, and unless there is clear evidence to the contrary, assessments of need should be passported across transitions to a new phase (for example,

from school to university, from university to Access to Work). At present, a pupil diagnosed with dyslexia at school would be likely to be subject to both a new diagnosis assessment and needs assessment in HE, rather than the existing diagnosis transferring. The spirit of the government's own SEND reforms points to assessments continuing so far as practicable across institutional boundaries, unless there is clear evidence that a fresh assessment is needed.

f. Access to Work support should be available in any successor scheme to Work Choice, as it is in employment, and in training programmes such as traineeships. Some Group members suggested that the fact that Access to Work funding was not available for people on Work Choice placements could lead to missed opportunities. Contracts for the programmes are due for renewal soon, with significant structural changes likely.

g. Develop and widely promote a simple, graphic guide to support available at various points. One consequence of the fragmented responsibility across education, training and employment systems is the lack of clear and comprehensive guidance to the support available at each point, including the programmes and how they work, the agencies engaged, individuals' rights and the ways in which people can access help. The aim of a new guide would be to encourage aspiration, and to make more transparent and available the support that exists but which can be overlooked or not properly used. Responsibility for this would naturally fit with the DfE's 0-25 preparation for adulthood policy stewardship, in partnership with DWP.

## 4. More professional, disability-aware, careers advice at school-age

### The Problem

40. Group members identified issues including:

- A disconnect between careers and disability services and lack of ‘disability awareness’ in careers guidance (which means that young people may not get guidance on issues such as disclosing to employers, seeking reasonable adjustments, accessing support, etc.)
- Issues of aspiration, realism and ambition among academics, tutors and families
- Schools having to shoulder too big a burden of advice and information, without the necessary specialist careers or disability expertise.

### What is already being done?

41. Schools and colleges are required to secure access to independent careers guidance for pupils up to around age 19. The responsibility for careers advice for young people with SEND remains with the local authority until they are aged 25. The National Careers Service is a predominantly adult service (18+ for jobseekers and those in custody, 19+ otherwise). It has a remit to provide careers information, advice and guidance to young people aged 13 and over, online and by telephone.

42. Local authorities also have a range of duties to support young people which are set out in statutory guidance. The guidance includes reference to young people with SEND.

43. The direction of government policy and guidance chimes with the Group’s concerns. The new Careers and Enterprise Company for schools is part of an approach intended to get young people in front of employers, promoting first-hand experience of the world of work and helping them to identify routes to work and careers. A network of enterprise coordinators and advisers can potentially broker helpful links between schools and employers.

44. Post-18, the mainstream National Careers Service has a key performance indicator for supporting adults with LDD. The Skills Funding Agency (SFA) requires contractors to have qualified and competent staff, and ensures they comply with equality and diversity legislation, encouraging people from priority groups - including those with disabilities - to use the service and ensuring that they meet the needs of these customers. SFA contractors have a programme of training that includes disability awareness.

### Group actions and recommendations

45. Navigating the post-16 landscape is complicated for all young people, but those with SEND are likely to find transitions additionally troublesome. The Government’s new Careers and Enterprise Company rightly emphasises the importance of workplace experience. This can

be even more important for young people with SEND, who might miss out on realistic and worthwhile work experience.

46. The Careers and Enterprise Company, and the National Careers Service, exist to help all young people. The outcomes for young people with SEND are however a significant concern. It is accordingly vital that the disability dimension is firmly on the agenda for these organisations and their partners, and that they are able to take specific steps to make a reality of the aspirations set out in guidance.

47. In seeking to improve employment outcomes for young people, the Department for Education's forthcoming careers strategy should address concerns about the disconnect between careers and disability advice, and lack of specialist expertise. And the National Careers Service, the Careers and Enterprise Company and their partners, including Jobcentre Plus, should take steps to improve outcomes for young people with SEND. Key elements of this would include:

- a. Work with LEP enterprise coordinators and advisers, and other inspiration coordinators on the ground, ensuring they are aware of SEND careers and employment issues, and can help schools build them into their plans. Practical support should include collating and promoting 'what works' for young people with SEND, specific disability issues in toolkits.
- b. Promote positive role models and case studies and use Employer Ambassador Networks to support the work of the Careers and Enterprise Company, extending its reach and brokering links to providers and employers who can support, and expand opportunities in the workplace. The prime minister has announced a mentoring programme, to help young people fulfil their potential and improve their life chances. The Company, in leading this programme, should ensure that it has specific SEND strand, to support SEND young people into work.
- c. Raise the profile of the issues and interventions through a range of channels. The Company is developing a database to put schools, colleges and employers in touch. This needs explicitly to encourage and enable promotion of opportunities for young people with SEND, and to broker links between providers and employers. The database should be promoted widely, including through BDF, LEPs and employer, education and training networks. The database could be made more effective through a specific brokerage service to connect schools and employers for opportunities for SEND pupils. (This might, for example, be piloted in some city strategy areas, and perhaps draw on next round of ESF funds.)
- d. Improve awareness among Careers Professionals. Education, national careers CPD providers and SEND advisers working together should develop improved training and development for those providing careers education and guidance, to make sure that SEND young people receive aspirational careers provision fit for the 21st century. This

should include work with the Careers Development Institute to improve and promote the occupational standard, promote training modules, etc.

e. Improve data collection on effectiveness of careers services for those with SEND, and use it to target obstacles, and assess the impact of existing services. (For example, if the service doesn't reach target numbers with disabilities, how can it be made more accessible?)

48. For its part, the Transitions Group, through its organizations and networks, will use its influence with employers and other stakeholders to support better advice and guidance. Actions will include:

a. Encouraging input from those who can help with direction, guidance and capacity building. This would include providers, employers, schools, and sector organisations, perhaps initially through an employer-sponsored conference on the theme.

b. Bringing more like-minded employers on board, championing support – through Disability Confident and other networks - for employment and training for young people with SEND.

49. We have focused here on the issue of careers advice for younger students. There remains however a concern that advice for disabled students in higher education may not always prepare students for the transition into the workplace. Group members will explore that issue further with universities and BIS, and consider further advice.

## TRANSITION INTO EMPLOYMENT SUB GROUP

### Terms of Reference

#### 1. What is the Purpose of the Project?

- 1.1. To identify issues that can obstruct progress for disabled people from education into employment.
- 1.2. To identify support currently or potentially available to disabled people and consider how this might be aligned and packaged to ease disabled job-seekers' progress into and within the workplace.
- 1.3. To promote and encourage best employer practices for the recruitment, retention and progression for graduates, apprentices and interns with disabilities.

#### 2. What problem are we trying to solve?

Disabled people can face multiple disadvantages in the labour market and those in employment can earn significantly less than non-disabled peers who have similar qualifications. The transition from full-time education to the labour market may be particularly challenging.

There is considerable support and guidance available for disabled people to employers together with those whom work with them. There is scope for greater availability plus better use of the available help with improving coherence and transparency to employers and job seekers.

A paper on the evidence relating to disability and transitions to employment will be prepared for the Group's first meeting.

#### 3. What is the scope of the work?

In order to promote improvements, the Group will:

- a) Establish an understanding of support provided to disabled learners in different stages of education and transition to employment, highlighting areas of success, gaps, and opportunities to improve outcomes.
- b) Identify the common needs of disabled learners and consider a "passport to success" which will outline their support needs when they enter the next stage of their development.
- c) Identify and promote employment-focused best practice in guidance for disabled learners, their parents, and staff in contact with them.
- d) Draw on case studies from employers to develop a 'transition toolkit' to improve training and up-skilling for the job market. This will include Apprenticeship, Internship and Graduate level information at different stages of their educational development. Promotion of relevant tools and government funding available to this group.
- e) Consider how government departments and agencies might work together more closely to encourage more seamless transitions.

The Group will keep in touch with the work of sub-groups considering recruitment and retention.

## Transitions Group: Membership

Thanks are due to the following people for their contributions, at meetings of the Group or in other ways

Graeme Whippy MBE- Senior Manager, Group Disability Programme, LBG – **Chair**

(contact: [graemew@businessdisabilityforum.org.uk](mailto:graemew@businessdisabilityforum.org.uk))

Dr Nasser Siabi OBE - CEO, Microlink PC (UK) Ltd (contact: [Nasser@microlinkpc.com](mailto:Nasser@microlinkpc.com))

Chris Barnham - Consultant, Microlink PC (UK) Ltd (contact: [chrisbarnham@hotmail.com](mailto:chrisbarnham@hotmail.com))

David Bass - Senior Policy Adviser, Equality Challenge Unit

Gareth Parry - Remploy

Sally Scott - Skanska

Kay Clements - Royal Mail

Victoria Keil - Royal Mail

Nicola Newman - BT

Tracey Abbott - Business Disability Forum

Liz Maudslay - Association of Colleges

Louise Proctor - Skills Funding Agency

Mark Allen - Association of Graduate Careers Advisor Services

Professor Nicola Martin - Division of Education, London South Bank University

Samantha Dyer - Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE)

Sarah Howls - Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE)

Chris Brill - Equality Challenge Unit

Colin Brummage - Action on Disability

Mark McGillicuddy - MORETHAN7 Social Enterprise

Anthony Murphy - Consultant

Paul Warner - Association of Employment and Learning Providers

Helen Cooke - My Plus Consulting

Louise Jordan - Department for Education

Geoff Munn - Department for Business, Innovation and Skills

Georgina Watts - Department for Business, Innovation and Skills

Steve Lismore - Head of Employer Engagement, DWP

Stuart Edwards - Disability Employment Strategy Policy Adviser, DWP

Suzette Smith - Microlink PC

## Disabled People entering the Labour Market – evidence

### Summary

This paper summarises evidence on the experience of disabled people in education and the labour market. The aim is to stimulate discussion on the main issues that affect transitions from education to work, and the areas that the Group might focus on.

Despite recent progress, disabled people remain more likely than their peers to achieve less well in education, and to be unemployed or under-employed. Many businesses recognize the benefits of fair employment, and there is a range of support intended to overcome obstacles in the way of smooth progress through education and training and into work. But evidence is mixed on the impact.

The Group is accordingly invited to consider - at section 7 below - the key issues, including obstacles to progress and possible areas for further work.

### ***1. Despite progress in the last decade, disabled people remain more likely to be unemployed or under-employed....***

- One in five of the UK adult population is estimated to have some kind of disability<sup>i</sup>. Prevalence rises with age: around 6% of children are disabled, compared to 16% of working age adults<sup>ii</sup>.
- Around 18 per cent of school pupils in England have special educational needs, of whom 2.8 per cent have a statement.<sup>iii</sup>
- Disabled people are more likely to live in poverty, less likely to have educational qualifications, and more likely to be economically inactive. Employment rates are lower than for any other disadvantaged group.<sup>iv</sup>
- Disabled people are now more likely to be employed than in 2002, but significantly less than non-disabled people.<sup>v</sup>
- Disabled young people are more likely to be not in education, employment or training (NEET), particularly from age 19 when many transfer from special school<sup>vi</sup>.

- Disabled graduates are less likely to be in full-time work. The differences vary according to impairment: graduates with a social communication/autistic spectrum condition are much more likely to be in part-time work or full-time study than non-disabled graduates, as are those with two or more impairments.<sup>vii</sup>

## ***2. ...pupils identified with special educational needs are doing better in education, but still falling short of their peers...***

- Between 2005/6 and 2010/11, achievement of 5 or more GCSEs at grades A\* to C at the end of Key Stage 4 increased:
  - from 66.3% to 88.9% for students without Special Educational Needs (SEN)
  - from 19.8% to 59.2% for students with SEN without a statement
  - from 8.7% to 24.9% for students with a statement<sup>viii</sup>
- Around 30% of all young people with statements of SEN at 16 are not in education, employment or training at 18, compared to 13% of their peers. In 2012/13, 434,700 learners (on a Skills Funding Agency-funded programme) aged 19 and over had a declared learning difficulty or disability (LDD).
- Recent reforms (from September 2014) to the system for children with SEN and disabilities (SEND) are intended to join up help across education, health and care, from birth to 25. This reflects fragmentation that has hindered the effectiveness of the over £5 billion a year local authority spending on SEND provision.
- Levels of aspiration among disabled 16 year olds are similar to those of non-disabled peers, but by the age of 26 they are markedly less confident and nearly four times as likely to be unemployed. Those in employment, with the same level of qualification, had earnings 11 per cent lower than non-disabled peers.<sup>ix</sup>
- Young people with less severe impairments are more at risk of leaving education with low qualifications, but may receive little additional support and are more at risk of contact with the Youth Justice System, experience of homelessness, teenage pregnancy, drug and alcohol misuse and worklessness.<sup>x</sup>

## ***3. ...disabled people are less likely to enter higher education, but derive significant benefit, with the right support.***

- Disabled people are around three times as likely not to hold any qualifications, and around half as likely to hold a degree-level qualification<sup>xi</sup>.
- 9.5 per cent of UK students are disabled.<sup>xii</sup> Demand for more skilled employees is increasing for disabled students as well as non-disabled students. They are almost as likely as non-disabled people to enter full-time work.
- Employment chances vary by type of impairment. Students with visual impairments, for example, had a full-time employment rate of 39 per cent. The rate for those with two or more impairments was 33 per cent. This compared with the over 58 per cent employment rate for non-disabled graduates).<sup>xiii</sup>

## ***4. Many businesses recognise the potential benefits of ensuring fair employment opportunities...***

- By hiring and supporting disabled employees, employers can extend the pool of high-quality applicants; engage with the widest consumer base; and have a workforce that reflects the diverse range of customers.
- The annual spending power of households that include a disabled person is valued at £212 billion. Employing disabled people can create better connections with the average company's estimated one in five customers likely to be disabled.<sup>xiv</sup>
- A diverse workforce can strengthen business creativity, with competitive advantage. More diverse leadership can encourage recruitment and retention.<sup>xv</sup>
- The National Audit Office estimates that supporting someone with a learning disability into employment could increase their income between 55 and 95 per cent, and reduce public costs by around £170,000. Equipping a young person with the skills to live in semi-independent rather than fully supported housing could reduce lifetime support costs by around £1 million.<sup>xvi</sup>
- Effective workplace adjustments can improve staff satisfaction, and performance<sup>xvii</sup>. On the other hand, many employers may regard disabled people as less productive than non-disabled counterparts. To the extent that they may be seen as adding costs, disabled people are at a labour market disadvantage. Disabled people are disproportionately employed in low-skill, low-waged work<sup>xviii</sup>.

## 5. *...and a range of support is intended to help overcome obstacles in the way of smooth progress through education and training and into work...*

- The government's approach in training is to prioritise funding on individuals (regardless of disability) who would not otherwise have undertaken the training, and where market failures are strongest. This drives an emphasis on English and maths. Full funding is also focused on young adults and unemployed people where skills training will help them to enter sustainable employment.
- Colleges and other post-16 providers must offer students study programmes which are coherent, appropriately challenging, and supports progression. This covers 16-25 year olds with an SEN statement, or Education, Health and Care plan.
- Current study programmes with a strong employment focus include:
  - **Supported internships** – unpaid, structured study based primarily at an employer. The aim is for 16-25 year olds with SEND to achieve sustainable paid employment, through work skills learned in the workplace. Trialled in 2012/13 in 15 colleges. December 2013 evaluation found that 36 per cent resulted in paid employment<sup>xix</sup>.
  - **Traineeships** – lasting up to six months, aim to help young people who want to get an Apprenticeship or job but lack appropriate skills or experience. A mainstream education and training programme, with a core of work preparation training, English and maths for those that need it, and a high quality work experience placement.
- **Apprenticeships** allow young people or adult learners to earn while they learn in a real job, while also gaining a qualification. The Government is committed to making Apprenticeships inclusive and accessible. In 2013/14, 8.7 per cent of apprenticeship starts had a declared learning difficulty or disability.
- In FE, **Learning Support funding** helps meet the additional needs of learners with LDD, and the costs of reasonable adjustments required by the Equality Act 2010. Funding can cover a range of

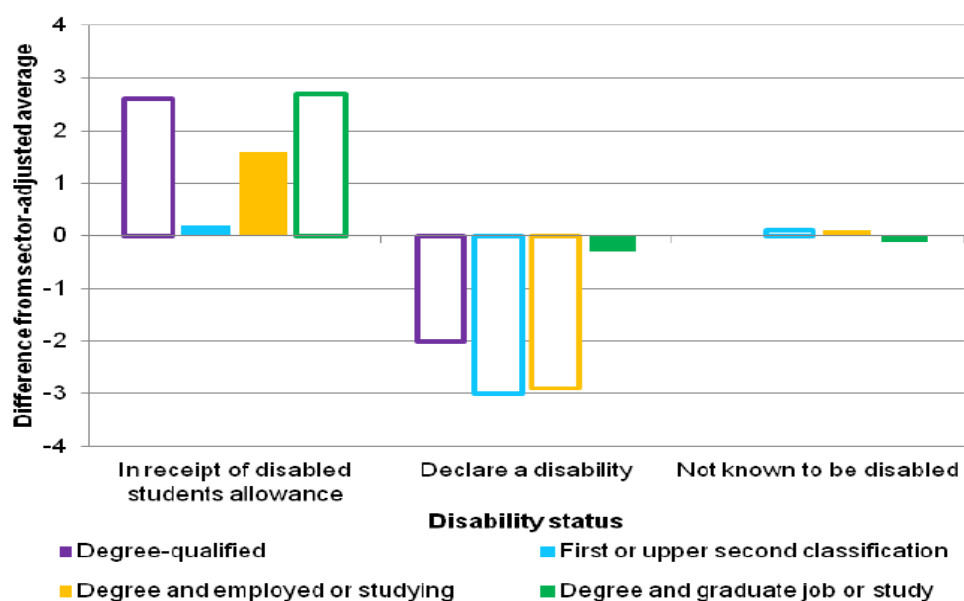
needs including assessment for dyslexia, funding for specialist equipment or helpers; and arranging signers or note takers.

- UK Higher education students in England can get a **Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA)**<sup>xx</sup>, to help with a range of costs, including specialist equipment, non-medical helpers, extra travel because of disability.
- Many disabled students receive **information, advice and guidance** on employment/career choice, writing a CV and volunteering opportunities.
- A number of labour market programmes exist to offer help to people with learning difficulties and disabilities, including:
  - **Work Choice:** a voluntary programme offering disabled people a range of help to find, get and thrive in a job. Over a quarter of Work Choice referrals (27 per cent) have a learning disability recorded as their primary disability.
  - **Access to work:** grants to cover additional costs of starting or staying in work (including traineeships and supported internships). This can include special equipment, transport costs, support or job coaching in the workplace, disability awareness training for work colleagues, etc. 35,400 people were helped by Access to Work in 2013/14.
  - A network of around 400 **Disability Employment Advisers** in Jobcentres.
  - **Disability Confident**, through which the government works with employers to give them more confidence in employing disabled people through signposting available support and showcasing success stories.
  - Programmes such as Calibre, focussing on leadership of disabled people

## **6. ..evidence is mixed on the impact and effectiveness of the help currently available.**

- In higher education, students receiving Disabled Students' Allowance performed better than those who identify as disabled but who did not get that support.<sup>xxi</sup> They were more likely to gain a degree, to get a first or upper second, and to be employed after graduation.
- This difference was even clearer when taking into account students' entry qualifications, subject area of study, sex and ethnicity, as Figure 1 illustrates.

Figure 1 Percentage point difference of the outcome from the sector-adjusted average for the four outcomes, by disability status<sup>xxii</sup>

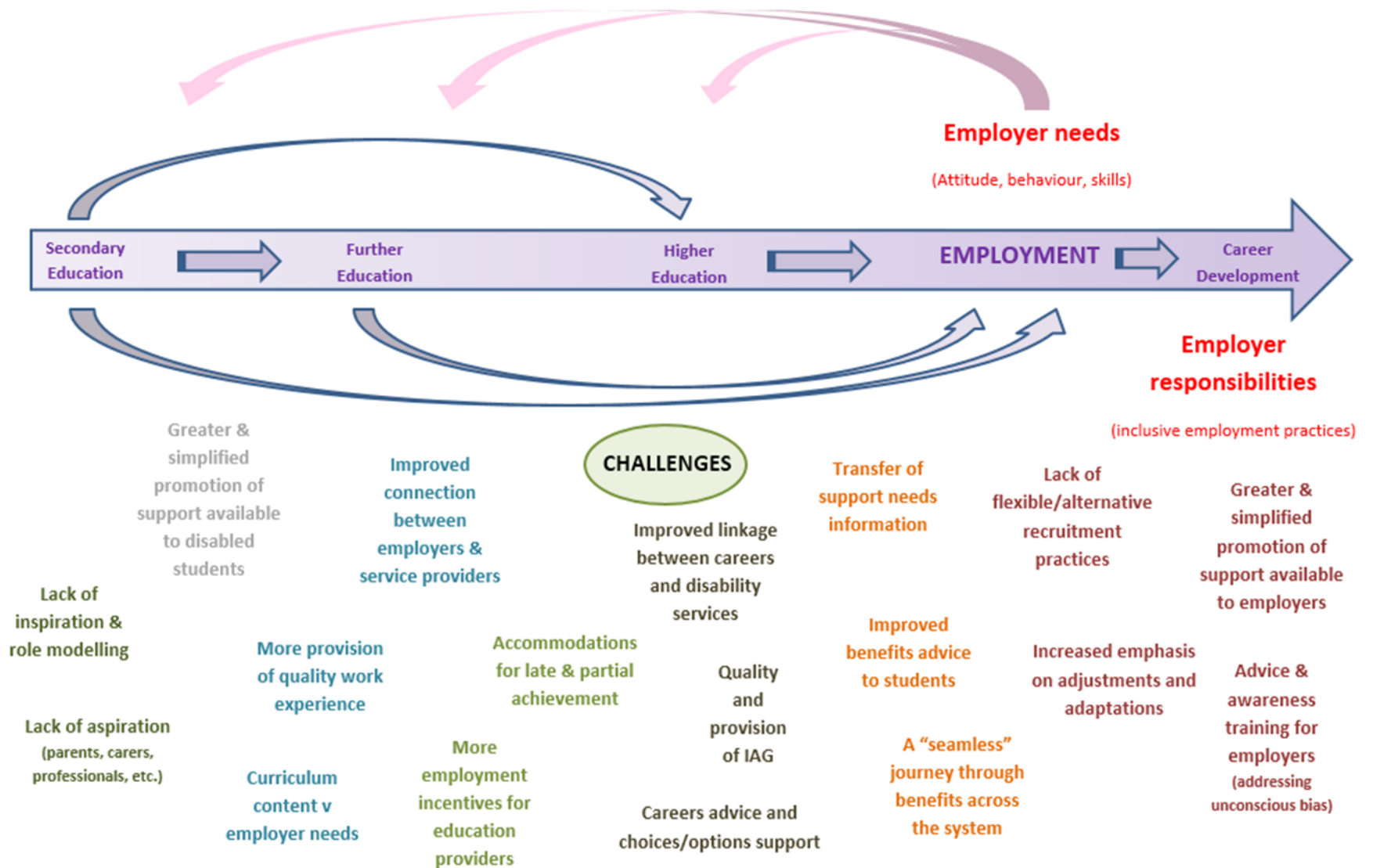


- Around half the HE students who receive careers advice rate it good or better. But few appear to receive **information, advice and guidance** on reasonable adjustments in the workplace, Access to Work, disclosing as disabled or the Two Ticks scheme.<sup>xxiii</sup>
- **Access to Work:** A DWP employer survey in 2006/07 showed only 37 per cent of employers recognised Access to Work, as a service offered by JobCentre Plus. Larger employers were more aware of it.
- **Employer practices:** The Government's Disability Campaign has helped bring more than 78,000 people into the work place since its launch in 2011. Five hundred disabled people a week start new jobs<sup>xxiv</sup>.
- While 79 per cent of employers said they 'would consider in principle' employing an individual with an impairment or long-term health condition, only 22 per cent had actually recruited from this demographic within the preceding 12 months.<sup>xxv</sup>
- The gap between disabled and non-disabled employment rates varies widely by locality. Across the UK it is 38 per cent. In Cumbria it is 48 per cent, while in Hertfordshire it is 25 per cent.<sup>xxvi</sup>



# A Demand-Led Journey

Annex D





- 
- <sup>i</sup> Improving the life chances of disabled people, Prime Minister's Strategy Unit, 2005
- <sup>ii</sup> Family Resources Survey 2010/11
- <sup>iii</sup> Department for Education, Statistical First Release, Special Educational Needs in England: January 2014
- <sup>iv</sup> PM Strategy Unit, 2005. Examples of multiple disadvantage cited, drawing on the Labour Force Survey, include more than 40% of disabled people being low-skilled; around 25% of disabled people of working age over-50yrs; around 10% from black and ethnic minority ethnic groups
- <sup>v</sup> Office for Disability Issues, DWP, 2014. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/disability-facts-and-figures#gd>  
In 2012, 46.3% of working-age disabled people were in employment compared to 76.4% of working-age non-disabled people - a 30.1 percentage point gap between disabled and non-disabled people, representing over 2 million people. The gap reduced by 10 percentage points over the previous 14 years
- <sup>vi</sup> PMSU 2005 – citing Youth Cohort Study 2003
- <sup>vii</sup> Supporting disabled students' transitions from higher education into employment: what works? Equality Challenge Unit, 2014. 58% of non-disabled graduates are in full-time employment approximately six months after graduation, with 12% in part-time work, 13% in full or part-time study, and 7% in work and further study. For graduates with a social communication/autistic spectrum disorder the figures are 30% in full-time employment, 18% in part-time work, 22% in full or part-time study, and 4% in work and further study.
- <sup>viii</sup> National Pupil Database academic years 2005/06 to 2010/11
- <sup>ix</sup> Fulfilling Potential, DWP 2013, citing Burchardt T (2005) 'The education and employment of disabled young people: Frustrated ambition'.
- <sup>x</sup> PMSU 2005
- <sup>xi</sup> Office for Disability Issues, DWP, 2014. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/disability-facts-and-figures#gd> 14.9% of working age disabled people hold degree-level qualifications compared to 28.1% of working age non-disabled people
- <sup>xii</sup> ECU, 2014, Equality in higher education: statistical report
- <sup>xiii</sup> ECU, 2014, Equality in higher education: statistical report
- <sup>xiv</sup> DWP, 2014 Disability Confident Britain: The Disability and Health Employment Strategy - One year on
- <sup>xv</sup> <http://www.cipr.co.uk/content/news-opinion/features/industry-issues/668/diversity-and-its-benefits-to-business>
- <sup>xvi</sup> National Audit Office (2011), Department for Education: Oversight of special education for young people aged 16–25
- <sup>xvii</sup> Moving from Ad Hoc to Streamlined Efficiency: Lloyds Banking Group Case Study, Business Disability Forum, 2014
- <sup>xviii</sup> Warwick Institute for Employment Research, The equality impacts of the current recession, 2009 (EHRC Research report 47)
- <sup>xix</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/learning-difficulties-disabilities-supported-internship-evaluation>
- <sup>xx</sup> In 2015/16 the maximum DSA allowances for full-time students are £5,212 for specialist equipment, £20,725 allowance for a non-medical help, and a general allowance of up to £1,741 a year
- <sup>xxi</sup> Higher education and beyond: Outcomes from full-time first degree study, HEFCE, 2013
- <sup>xxii</sup> Source: Higher education and beyond: Outcomes from full-time first degree study, HEFCE, 2013, page 22
- <sup>xxiii</sup> Supporting disabled students' transitions from higher education into employment: what works? Equality Challenge Unit, November 2014
- <sup>xxiv</sup> Mail Online – 16th September 2014
- <sup>xxv</sup> Bunt, K., McAndrew, F. and Kuechel, A. (2007) Jobcentre Plus Annual Employer (Market View) Survey 2006–07. DWP Research Report 437. London: Department for Work and Pensions.
- <sup>xxvi</sup> ONS Annual Population Survey, Jan-Dec 2012