



Department
for Work &
Pensions

RT HON MEL STRIDE MP
Secretary of State for Work and Pensions

Department for Work and Pensions
Caxton House
Tothill Street
London
SW1H 9NA

Lord Bridges of Headley MBE
Chair of the Economic Affairs Committee
House of Lords
London
SW1A 0PW

26 May 2023

Dear Lord Bridges,

Thank you for your letter, and for your committee's recent inquiry on workforce participation and 'Where have all the workers gone?' report. In the government's response to the report's recommendations, we outlined the significant steps we are taking to increase workforce participation, focusing in particular on some of the key cohorts the committee's inquiry identified.

As referenced in your letter, at the Autumn Statement I was tasked by the Prime Minister and the Chancellor with leading work across government on workforce participation. As part of this work, we have looked carefully at the cohorts that make up the 8.7 million inactive people in the economy and the nature of the barriers these groups face, thinking innovatively about how we can help many of them into, or closer to, employment.

The comprehensive package of cross government measures announced at Budget represents the conclusion of my review. Government is continuing to consider how we can increase workforce participation. As detailed in the government's response to the committee's report, this package of measures is designed to support people to enter work, increase their working hours and extend their working lives, focusing on key groups who we know face additional barriers to work, including disabled people and those with health conditions, the over-50s and parents.

The government remains wholly committed to driving down economic inactivity and breaking down the barriers people face to work. We are now focused on delivering this substantial package in addition to the wide range of support already available to help people to start, stay and succeed in work.

I would again like to thank the committee for all the work they have done throughout the inquiry and for the recommendations in the recent report.

Yours sincerely,

Rt Hon Mel Stride MP
Secretary of State for Work and Pensions