



Department
for Work &
Pensions



Department for
Business & Trade

The Rt Hon Pat McFadden MP
Secretary of State for Work & Pensions
Caxton House
Tothill Street
London, SW1H 9NA

The Rt Hon Liam Byrne MP
Chair, Business and Trade Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

5 November 2025

Dear Liam,

Government response to Keep Britain Working Review

We are writing to inform the Committee of the publication of the Government's response to the 'Keep Britain Working' Review, via a Written Ministerial Statement.

With ill-health being one of the biggest drivers of economic inactivity in the UK – where 800,000 more people are out of work now than in 2019 due to health problems – the Government commissioned Sir Charlie Mayfield to investigate the factors behind this and look at how government and businesses can work together to turn this around.

Today, we are publishing a Written Ministerial Statement alongside the final report of the Keep Britain Working Review. The Review sets out a fundamental shift from a model where health at work is largely left to the individual and the NHS, to one where it becomes a shared responsibility between employers, employees and health services.

Our response welcomes Sir Charlie Mayfield's extensive work with business, disabled people or health issues/conditions/concerns, health professionals and other key voices across the UK, which we will seek to continue.

To keep the momentum from employers, we are announcing that we will be taking forward the recommendation set out in the Keep Britain Working Review to set up a Vanguard phase. We will work with the businesses who have already stepped up to become a Vanguard to test different approaches and build evidence for a better workplace. All employers taking part in this phase will be doing so voluntarily. The Vanguard phase needs to continue the spirit of collaboration with business and disabled people.

We are also pleased to be announcing that we will be appointing Sir Charlie Mayfield to co-Chair a Vanguard Taskforce alongside Ministers to lead this Vanguard phase in partnership with Government.

The Taskforce will also bring together representatives from business, disabled people, workers' representatives and health experts to shape and deliver this work. We will bring forward more detail in due course.

We are asking Sir Charlie and the Taskforce to oversee the rapid set up of a Workplace Health Intelligence Unit to work closely with business to systematically provide the data and insight that both businesses and Government need to support the Vanguard and inform wider reform. Through the Vanguard, we intend to work with businesses and disabled people to pilot and develop improvements and reform.

The Keep Britain Working agenda aligns directly with our broader mission of renewing the social contract - spreading opportunity, growing the economy and reducing poverty.

The Vanguard phase will test stronger standards and practical support, helping employers recruit, retain, and develop disabled staff, and making Disability Confident a mark of genuine inclusion. This Review gives us a clear roadmap for reform. We look forward to working with Sir Charlie Mayfield, with business, and with disabled people and people with health conditions to 'Keep Britain Working'.

The Review also brings opportunities to continue to build momentum and drive forward the vision set out in the 10 Year Health Plan on work and health. We know that being unemployed is associated with an increased risk of mortality, limiting long-term illness, cardiovascular disease, and poor mental health. The Plan builds on existing work to better integrate health with employment support and incentivise greater cross-system collaboration, recognising good work is good for health. The Plan also states our intention to break down barriers to opportunity by delivering the holistic support that people need to access and thrive in employment.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Pat McFadden". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Pat" being more prominent.

Pat McFadden MP Secretary of State DWP

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Peter Kyle". The signature is more stylized and less legible than the one on the left, with a large initial "P" and "K".

Peter Kyle MP Secretary of State DBT