

Written evidence from Jurgen Donaldson (DEG0004)

I submit this testimony as a private individual with disability. I lost my eyesight to a brain tumour in 2019, I am registered as severely site impaired.

Whilst Dwp and the access to work program to provide significant support to the disabled community, there are inherent challenges with the delivery methods, and the application processes which create barriers to employment.

Starting with the application process, individuals upon getting into employment, or having developed a disability whilst in employment, can expect to wait around seven weeks from the point of contacting the DWP access to work team, to receiving an answer as to whether their grant has been successful. For anyone trying to get into a new job, this creates a clear challenge. Particularly, as we enter a period of economic uncertainty, it is increasingly probable that many people will be applying for positions which may be only available for a short period of time. Process means that in many instances people with a disability are being excluded from short or medium term contract opportunities.

As a recruitment manager for 15 years of experience I would propose the following, F, rather than access to work grant being made in essence to the employer, to fund reasonable adjustments, if an individual was able to gain an annual grant to provide the adjustments that they require, they could then take their adjustments with them as they move from job to job. For example different pieces of technology, whether that be hardware or software eliminating a number of potential barriers to employment.

The process whereby access to work required the employer to acquire the technology adjustments for the employee and then claim the money back from the DWP, makes no sense, DWP access to work have the relationships with the consultancy businesses who deliver the assessment as to the requirements. If this was then delivered directly, again would lower the barrier to employment. Many employers particularly in this economic crisis might not feel able to pay for the adjustments upfront.

moving on, the disability confident scheme is not fit for purpose. It's as simple as that. It does not do or provide any meaningful support to potential employees. Particularly in my experience of applying for roles within the civil service, I applied for positions as a recruitment manager, which I have done for 15 years, I applied under the disability confident program, but still did not get an interview? I do not mean to be better about it, but subjectively, I was overqualified. I tickly given that pay rates in the public sector are far below the equivalent positions in the private sector. Whilst, the previous system of guaranteeing interviews to individuals with a disability was in perfect, I believe reforming that program would be preferential to the continuation of the disability confident scheme which has field.

I have worked in recruitment for the last 15 years, having worked for international finance houses such as JP Morgan, Legal and general and others. I apologise up front for inaccuracies or errors within my submission, this is as a result of my speech to text technology not being the best. I would welcome the opportunity to refine my testimony with a member of your team should that be required.

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