

Written evidence from Josh Springthorpe (DEG0053)

My name is Josh Springthorpe. I am responding to your call for evidence through Scope, the disability equality charity. I want to share my experiences of the barriers I've faced in work and what can be improved to help disabled people in the future.

I've answered two questions below as part of your call for evidence.

What extra support would you benefit from in work? Or what would you change about existing support on offer?

There needs to be a free to access expert service that can tell companies exactly what is a reasonable adjustment based on their disabled staff members needs and their own company situation (size etc.) They should have the powers to enforce their recommendations, and assessments should be rapid and in person. My experience has varied so drastically with each job I've held, from no support at all and losing a job because of a disability, through to everything I could possibly need and some things that I frankly didn't!

Looking to the future, what does the Government need to improve on to help disabled people get into, stay and progress in work?

It is my belief that disabled people like myself can contribute hugely to the UK economy, but this is dependant on companies being geared up to hire disabled people from the off. We need to move away from a culture of making 'reasonable adjustments' and move towards a society where those adjustments aren't necessarily required because those employers have had accessibility in mind before even considering disabled candidates. This can include accessible buildings, flexible work patterns, automatic rights to attend appointments related to disability etc.

The disability employment gap has been stuck close to 30 percent for over a decade, and the economic impact of the coronavirus pandemic has seen disabled people falling out of work faster than non-disabled people.

Scope wants the Government to deliver on its pledge to tackle the disability employment gap. The Government must use the opportunity of the forthcoming National Strategy for Disabled People to set out plans to close the gap.

I hope that the evidence I have provided, alongside research from Scope will prove useful to the committee.

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