

Response ID ANON-8HXG-NY9F-5

Submitted to **Increasing the Employment of Disabled People in the Public Sector - Consultation**

Submitted on **2018-08-15 17:01:00**

Chapter 1 – Public Sector Bodies in Scotland and data

1 In your view, or the view of your organisation, how could public sector bodies better support self-reporting (self-declaration) of disabilities for members of their workforce, to improve response rates and the quality of data collected?

A change in culture is required to address barriers to employment of people with learning disabilities, including negative perceptions of employers. An awareness-raising campaign showcasing positive examples of people with learning disabilities in employment would be useful to help create more supportive working environments where those with disabilities are accepted and valued by colleagues and employers and therefore may be more likely to declare a disability without fear of negative consequences.

At Down's Syndrome Scotland we are concerned that people with learning disabilities are under-represented in the workforce to an even greater degree than disabled people generally and therefore we want to see measures that support people with learning disabilities and in particular, Down's syndrome to find work.

In order to provide a meaningful picture of the situation and any changes over time, detailed data needs to be collected about the nature of any declared disability.

2 What should be the time scale for implementing these measures?

Any measures should be aligned to target setting timelines

3 What support, if any, and from where, would public sector bodies need to implement measures, such as improving data collection?

Chapter 2 – Target Options

4 In your view, or the view of your organisation, would setting targets improve the disability employment rate in the public sector?

Yes

5 If you said yes to Question 4, please rank the following options in order of preference, where 1 is your least preferred option, and 4 is your most preferred option, and use the space provided to explain your rationale. Please only rank options you believe are viable:

5 - Option A:

2

5 - Option B:

3

5 - Option C:

1

5 - Option D:

4

Option C requires Public Sector Bodies to engage with the issue and to think carefully about the best approach for their organisation, this is more likely to foster meaningful buy-in. It also recognises the different challenges faced by each organisation.

Targets need to be accompanied by appropriate strategies and regular reporting on progress. This will differ by organisation. There is a danger that target driven initiatives may produce a desired figure without improving the employment situation for individuals. People with learning disabilities should be consulted in the development of strategies not just for recruitment but also retention, workplace support and career development.

Option A could also work with each organisation being required to find ways to meet the target. Setting one overall target could encourage a collaborative approach across organisations and reduce the risk of disparity of employment experiences and opportunities in different areas.

Option B seems unnecessarily complex and option D is too weak a measure.

6 Where appropriate, what is your view, or the view of your organisation, on how long it would take to achieve the target set out from your preferred option above?

Aiming to achieve these targets by 2030 would acknowledge that this is a long term process with review and revision along the way.

7 If you or your organisation do not think setting targets would bring about a significant change to the disability employment rate in the public sector, please tell us why.

Please tell us anything else about these options, or setting targets, that you haven't covered already, including any alternatives.

Chapter 3 – Other measures and steps that could be taken to increase disability employment rates in the public sector

8 What other measures or options do you, or your organisation, think could be put in place to:

a) **employ more disabled people in the public sector?:**

An awareness raising campaign could show the positive aspects of employing people with learning disabilities. This could showcase the skills and talents people can bring and the many benefits for organisations. It could also promote the financial and practical supports that are available for employers to improve their 'employerability' and ensure that they embed inclusive practices as well as highlighting opportunities to take part in internship schemes/Modern Apprenticeships.

Any campaign should also target parents, schools and young people themselves in order to challenge the low expectations that often exist.

Wider promotion of existing opportunities, for example:

Investment in Project Search - this model has been shown to be more effective than other initiatives (employment outcome rate 61%*) in getting young people with learning disabilities into work and at a lower cost per participant. Employers, FE providers and schools need to know about this opportunity and be able to advise pupils and parents. Supported Employment Services should be available in every local authority. Recruitment practices should be more inclusive, for example providing easy-read job adverts or more flexibility in interview process such as 'working interviews' where people can demonstrate their skills in a more informal situation.

* Mapping the Employability Landscape for People with Learning Disabilities in Scotland (SCLD)

b) support disabled people to remain in employment in the public sector?:

Having a supportive working environment for all employees with regular supervision, flexibility and support where required. A 'buddy system' could be appropriate in some settings and ensuring that all employees have a level of awareness about the nature of a person's disability as much as it affects their working relationships. Increasing awareness about employers' legal obligation to make reasonable adjustments to support disabled employees as per the Equality Act 2010* . Employers may need support from the Scottish Government to understand what reasonable adjustments might be required and the support available for example: Access to Work, providing practical and financial employment support; Open Doors providing in-work support; opportunities to take on Modern Apprentices; or be involved in Project Search.

* CSJ, Rethinking Disability at Work, Recommendations, polling data and key statistics (March 2017)

Chapter 4 – Monitoring and Reporting

9 It is the Scottish Government's intention to report regularly on its work to increase disability employment rates. Whether or not targets are set, monitoring of progress towards the ambition to increase disability employment rates in the public sector will be important. Your views on how this can be done are welcomed. Do you, or your organisation, have any views on monitoring and reporting on the actions needed to increase disability employment rates in the public sector?:

Monitoring and reporting must include information about the nature of disability being reported. Skills Development Scotland and the Scottish Funding Council do not record learning disability in their monitoring systems*.

*Mapping the Employability Landscape for People with Learning Disabilities in Scotland

About you

What is your name?

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Are you responding as an individual or an organisation?

Organisation

What is your organisation?

Organisation:

Down's Syndrome Scotland

The Scottish Government would like your permission to publish your consultation response. Please indicate your publishing preference:

Publish response with name

We will share your response internally with other Scottish Government policy teams who may be addressing the issues you discuss. They may wish to contact you again in the future, but we require your permission to do so. Are you content for Scottish Government to contact you again in relation to this consultation exercise?

Yes