

BASE Conference 2017

Introduction

- Thank you so much for inviting me to speak at your conference. I'm delighted to see so many of you here today and hope you have found the conference useful.
- There is a lot to do to make sure that people with disabilities have the opportunity to achieve their potential. In October 2016, we published Improving Lives; the Work, Health and Disability Green Paper, which set out the action we plan to take and consulted on proposals for wider reform. The Government remains committed to improving disabled people's employment outcomes, having set an ambition to get 1 million more disabled people into work over the next 10 years. Our publication later this year, will provide an update on the recent work we've been doing, respond to the consultation, and set out our next steps.
- Our vision is for a more personalised and tailored approach to employment and health support – where, whatever their health condition or disability, people can access the right support at the right time to move closer to work wherever this is appropriate, supported by highly-skilled work coaches in Jobcentres and having access to the wide array of support available through our Personal Support Package.
- The role that BASE members can play in offering more personalised support is critical, particularly in looking at how we can improve support to those with the most complex needs to get the right job match with appropriate support for them and their employer. My officials have been working very closely with BASE this year – Huw Davies's conversations with officials made a fundamental contribution to the Local Supported Employment initiative.

Supported Employment

- I recognise the value of the Supported Employment 'place and train' model in meeting the needs of people with more complex disabilities, in particular learning disabilities, autism and severe mental health conditions. In response and with Huw's help, DWP is now working with nine Local Authorities to deliver the Local Supported Employment initiative that tests whether DWP and Local Authorities working together can ensure continued delivery of supported employment services locally. I was really pleased to see such a high level of interest from Local Authorities in working with us on this and I am eager to see how well the test works.
- I'm really keen to drive up the quality of the Supported Employment provision available which is why we've asked BASE to develop a tool to carry out fidelity audits of the nine Local Authorities selected to run the Local Supported Employment proof of concept to drive stronger adherence to the 'place and train' model which we know can be so effective at moving people into work.

IPS Trials

- We know that the Supported Employment model delivered via Individual Placement and Support is particularly effective at supporting those with a severe and enduring mental health condition to achieve employment outcomes.
- Alongside employment advisers in IAPT, I see IPS as key to meeting this Government's goal to ensure that 29,000 more people per year living with mental health problems are able to access employment support.
- We need to build our evidence base on IPS in order to shape future services. Already up and running, are the Mental Health Trailblazers, which are testing the IPS model in NHS talking therapy services in the North East, West London and Blackpool. Results from these trailblazers are expected in 2020.
- Also on the way, are the health-led employment trials which will be testing whether the IPS model can improve health and employment outcomes for people with physical and/or mild to moderate mental health conditions. We are working with partners to design and implement two large IPS trials in West Midlands and Sheffield City Regions.

Importance of supporting people with a learning disability

- It is right that people get support whatever their health condition and we have a strong focus on people with a mental health condition but I am really keen that we do more to support people with a learning disability or autism. I'm sure you're all aware that this week is Mencap's Learning Disability Work Week. It is so important that learning disabled people have an opportunity to work. The overwhelming majority of people with learning difficulties and autism want to work, and can do so with the right preparation, opportunities and support. This is all too often not the case at present.
- The proportion of adult social care users with a learning disability in paid employment was 5.8% for 2015-16 whereas the employment rate for all people with disabilities is currently about 49%.
- Often, people with a learning disability succeed in finding a job, only to lose it and have their hopes dashed, because they were not supported properly in preparing for and learning that job. This isn't just devastating for the individual, but employers will be wary of taking on others with a learning disability which reduces future employment opportunities. This is why good quality Supported Employment Services are so important.

Young people's transitions

- Another area which is really important to me is that we support young people with a disability or health condition in their transition from education into work. I know that the overwhelming majority of young people want to work and can work with the right preparation, opportunities and support. My colleagues in the Department for Education have policies in place to support children and young people with SEND to prepare for adult life, including employment. Young people with an Education Health and Care plan must have an explicit

focus from Year 9 onwards on preparing them for adulthood, including employment.

- Forward looking FE and independent specialist colleges, such as Foxes Academy, already have a strong track record in successfully helping young people with learning disabilities into employment. The Preparing for Adulthood framework established through the SEND reforms is raising the priority of employment outcomes. This government wants to ensure that all young people with Education, Health and Care plans have the opportunity to undertake a supported internship where this is the right route for them. You heard yesterday from Louise Wright about the positive work DfE are doing to make Apprenticeships more accessible.
- Alongside good quality careers advice, time in the workplace is critical. We know that work experience results in young people developing a more positive attitude to learning and the world of work. However, frequently young people with a health condition or disability lack confidence and have had limited opportunities for good quality work experience. This is why we have developed two tests to see what we might do to offer more young people a good quality work experience placement.
- Tri-work is a new supported work experience programme for pupils in Year 10 or 11 who have Special Educational Needs. It will be tested in three districts later this academic year and will provide a supported work experience placement of up to two weeks involving a three way partnership between the young person, a specialist job coach and the host employer which will enable the young person to get the most from their opportunity in the workplace.
- And in August we launched The Young Persons Supported Work Experience proof of concept aimed at 18-24 year olds with a disability or health condition who flow onto benefits. The proof of concept is running in five districts and will offer a Supported Work experience placement of up to 8 weeks.
- In addition DfE are funding Mencap to create a bank of work placements for young people with SEND on study programmes.

Supported Businesses/Protected Places

- I see Supported Businesses and other Social Enterprises as key players in helping to increase disability employment. As part of the wider strategy for employment support, I want to develop a new strategic relationship with disability focussed social enterprises including helping and supporting new organisations to start up and existing ones to grow and prosper.
- My officials have started discussions to look at how social enterprises can engage with social finance, how we can develop a kite mark to act as a quality standard and how to promote social value from organisations e.g. in procurement supply chains.

- I also want to help successful organisations engage with our employment support offer by engaging with local Job Centres through use of the Flexible Support Fund/Dynamic Purchasing, engaging with Work and Health Programme providers and considering how they can link with Specialist Employability Support and any successor programmes.
- I want to work with Supported Businesses to look at those groups with particularly low employment rates, such as those individuals known to Adult Social Care and secondary mental health users, to help them move into work.
- As we move towards the end of Work Choice and Protected Place funding, we will commit to extending the same level of financial support for those individuals and businesses, until the end of March 2019 across the whole of the UK.
- My officials are exploring whether Access to Work can be developed in order to complement the high level of support offered within Supported Businesses to those in long-term Protected Places. I expect this work to be completed by March 2018. During 2018/9 all individuals in Protected Places will be offered an Access to Work assessment which might result in a support worker award or a new element being offered.

Improving our employment support offer

- This and every other working day Jobcentre work coaches will be working with claimants with disabilities and health conditions to support them towards and into employment. Many work coaches themselves have lived experience of disability or health issues, and indeed formed the cadre from which the 500 Disability Employment Advisers were recruited. So we are building on an environment where there is some awareness of disability and health issues in Jobcentres, and where some work coaches have considerable experience.
- We are doing more to improve the overall employment support we offer in Jobcentres. It is crucial that we not only have the right support in place, but the right network of support in our Jobcentres to ensure people can access and engage with it. We are continuing to build the capability of our work coaches throughout our Jobcentres, while bringing in new expertise and specialist knowledge to ensure that people are guided to the best help on offer.
- We have already invested heavily in the training and capability of our work coaches as we move to Universal Credit, with work coaches undertaking a three week learning process with a focus on health conditions and disabilities, and how to tailor service delivery according to needs of the individual.

Health and Work Conversation

- To ensure that people are able to begin building a positive relationship with their work coaches at the earliest opportunity, we have rolled out the Health and Work Conversation for Employment and Support Allowance claimants nationally and are now embedding it in Universal Credit. This conversation

has been developed using behavioural insight techniques. It focuses on what people can do to move closer to work while managing their health condition.

Specialist Advice

- We are also testing bringing specialist advice into a Jobcentre environment, with a proof of concept launching this week to test a three-way conversation between a claimant, their work coach, and a Healthcare Professional. This will enable work coaches to build on the occupational health expertise of Healthcare Professionals, providing personalised advice to claimants on how to manage their health condition.

Community Partners

- Community Partners provide a valuable insight into disability and how it can affect an individual's employment outcome, this is often based on lived experience. Community Partners will increase knowledge of local provision and will actively build relationships with local employers. We have Community Partners in place already across the country and further recruitment is planned.

J2E

- The Green Paper introduced our new Personal Support Package, bringing in a wide array of support which can be accessed on a voluntary basis depending on the needs of each individual.
- As part of this package, in the last year we have introduced Journey to Employment (J2E) job clubs which provide a package of peer support. They are delivered by 71 local Disabled People's User Led Organisations (DPULOs) and local Voluntary Sector Organisations (VSOs).

Small Employer Offer

- The Small Employer Offer will enable Jobcentres to increase engagement with small local employers via Small Employer Advisers in Jobcentres.

Nationally contracted provision

- Implementation of the Work and Health Programme is starting this month. The successful providers, some of whom are BASE members, will deliver innovative support for around 200,000 disabled people over the course of the programme. Recognising the importance of tailoring support to meet the needs of individuals, we have given Work and Health Programme providers considerable freedom in how they support participants to move into work.
- Providers will take a holistic approach to the individual and provide targeted support which will be distinct and additional to that available through Jobcentre Plus.
- We have allocated funding to London and Manchester to deliver localised versions of the Programme to fit the needs of individuals in their areas.

- For those who face more complex barriers to work we are currently exploring the best policy options for future support once Specialist Employability Support (SES) contracts come to an end.

Flexible Support Fund/Dynamic Purchasing

- As well as our nationally contracted programmes our Flexible Support Fund Dynamic Purchasing System has been up and running for over a year now and offers a new way of procuring local employment services. With over 1000 suppliers engaged, I am confident that local demand for training and employment support can be put in place more quickly and from a greater range of innovative solutions than ever before. Over £9m has now been awarded through 220 call offs, all but one being awarded to SMEs/VCSOs. We are still learning and, in conjunction with ERSA, we are holding a 1 year review meeting with over 60 suppliers on ways in which to improve how these services are identified and put into place.

Engaging Employers - Disability Confident

- Alongside the wide array of support available through Jobcentres and providers, the obvious key to getting and keeping more disabled people in work is employers recruiting and retaining more of them. That is at the heart of the Disability Confident scheme.
- When employers sign up as Disability Confident they are also asked to make specific meaningful offers of opportunities for disabled people such as jobs, apprenticeships, internships, and work experience opportunities.
- Over 5,000 employers have signed up to Disability Confident, across a wide range of sizes, industries and locations, with this number continuing to grow rapidly. If any of you in the audience are employers who have not yet signed up to Disability Confident then I strongly encourage you to go onto Gov.UK and sign up today.
- And of course we want the public sector to lead the way in ensuring that disabled people and people with health conditions are able to flourish. As part of this, all of the main ministerial departments have achieved Disability Confident leader (level 3) status.

Access to Work

- Access to Work is one of our most high profile and flexible tools and we are constantly seeking to improve it, we have introduced online applications and have listened to customers who said support sometimes wasn't in place in time for a job start or not portable between employers. For example we are going to start taking applications up to 12 weeks in advance rather than the current 6 weeks and ask employers to sign declarations that will allow equipment to move with the person it was purchased for.
- Your input is critical to helping us further improve the experience and outcomes for customers as we develop Access to Work – particularly

reaching out to customers with learning disabilities, mental health conditions and young disabled people entering the workforce. I am grateful for the close working that BASE members have had with my officials whom I know value that relationship greatly.

Conclusion

- Achieving our ambition of getting 1 million more disabled people into work over the next 10 years requires all the key players to work together - Government, employers, health services, local authorities, charities and voluntary sector, social enterprise, families and carers.
- So to finish I would just like to say a big thanks to all of you for the part you play making a big difference to people's lives. The work you do is so important to help us achieve our ambition of getting 1 million more disabled people into work over the next 10 years.