



## Joint briefing: Securing targeted support for disabled young people within the Plan for Jobs

October 2020

### Background:

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the consequences of lockdown, economists expect there to be a significant recession and a large increase in unemployment. Young people are expected to be hit hard, with estimates of an additional 640,000 18-24 year olds finding themselves unemployed this year alone<sup>1</sup>.

Research has shown that the impact of previous recessions on those who have recently left full-time education has been more severe compared to others. Unemployment can put a young person's health, well-being and security at risk. It can also scar their employment and pay for years ahead.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/publications/class-of-2020/>

Disabled people experience significantly higher rates of unemployment and economic inactivity compared to non-disabled people. In 2019 there was a 29 percentage point gap between the employment rates of disabled and non-disabled people<sup>2</sup>. In a challenging job market, there is evidence to suggest that disabled people are more likely to be adversely affected<sup>3</sup>. Recent analysis by the Institute for Employment Studies has found that 40% of disabled employees were either furloughed or had their hours reduced during lockdown, compared with only 30% for non-disabled employees.

Disabled young people are not helped by poor quality careers support in schools and colleges. Research such as that by the National Deaf Children's Society's Young People Advisory board has found careers advice is not specialist enough and there is a lack of support to enter the workforce. <sup>4</sup> In normal times, young disabled people can struggle to make a successful transition from education to work and are more likely to 'churn' in further education.

Disabled young people now face a double barrier of much greater competition for jobs and ongoing disability discrimination. This could undermine the progress of the last few years towards narrowing the disability employment gap and the aims of the Government's Disability Strategy.

### **A Plan for Jobs 2020:**

On 8 July 2020 the Chancellor unveiled a Plan for Jobs which included a number of initiatives to deliver support to young job seekers which we welcome. However, we fear that without interventions that are specifically targeted towards disabled young people, the Plan for Jobs will not benefit a group that is particularly at risk of long-term unemployment. We also fear that employers may be less likely to offer supported internships due to the demand to offer Kickstart placements.

We wrote to the Chancellor in late July with 8 recommendations. However, as of yet no specific policies for disabled young people have been announced. This briefing updates our recommendations and separates them between the Department for Work and Pensions and the Department and Education.

### **For the Department for Work and Pensions:**

1. Publish an Equality Impact Assessment of the Kickstart scheme and ensure that the initial evaluation of the scheme considers the experiences of disabled participants.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-7540/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.disabilityatwork.co.uk/research-areas/in-work-disability-gaps/all-in-it-together-the-impact-of-the-recession-on-disabled-people/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.ndcs.org.uk/media/5665/dwe-yab-report.pdf>

2. Work with our coalition to produce a framework that sets out the targeted support disabled young people accessing the Kickstart scheme should have from Gateway organisations.
3. Work with DfE to enable employers currently providing supported internships to offer Kickstart placements to their interns.
4. Promote the Disability Confident scheme and supported internships to employers who are providing Kickstart placements.
5. The Kickstart scheme is made open to a wider group than just those claiming Universal Credit (e.g. those with Education, Health and Care plans and on Employment Support Allowance).
6. Doubling the number of Disability Employment Advisors in line with the doubling of work coaches to ensure sufficient capacity to provide effective support.
7. Ensure that disabled young people on Kickstart placements who require support or technology funded through Access to Work have their support packages agreed by the time their placement starts.
8. Ensuring that online job-finding support services are accessible and relevant to disabled job-seekers through consulting with organisations representing disabled young people. Our coalition would be happy to support.

**For the Department for Education:**

1. Provide £2,000 incentive payments to employers that offer supported internships in order to provide parity with apprenticeships.
2. Work with the DWP to enable supported internship employers to offer Kickstart placements to young people completing their supported internships.
3. New careers advisors within the National Careers Service to receive disability awareness training to enable them to provide improved support for disabled people.

**To discuss these recommendations further please contact:**

Martin McLean, Post-14 Policy Lead at the National Deaf Children's Society.  
[martin.mclean@ndcs.org.uk](mailto:martin.mclean@ndcs.org.uk)