



December 2007

Public Consultation

Helping people achieve their full potential:

Improving Specialist Disability Employment Services

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Ministerial Foreword



Work matters. People in work are generally better off financially and better off in terms of their health and wellbeing, their self-esteem and the future prospects for them and their families. Disabled people must get the same opportunities to benefit from work as everyone else.

Over the last ten years this Government has built a strong foundation for economic success. This foundation, combined with the biggest extension of disability civil rights this country has ever seen, our progressive employment policies, and the efforts of individual disabled people, employers and our external delivery partners has helped transform the opportunities for disabled people to gain and retain employment.

Since 1997 we have introduced a range of new provision, such as the New Deal for Disabled People and the Pathways to Work initiative, which help disabled people enter sustainable employment. We have also invested significantly in our existing specialist disability employment services, such as Access to Work which has seen its budget increase more than fourfold over the last ten years. All of this provision cannot operate successfully without the continued help and partnership of a wide range of external organisations, including employers and our delivery partners in the public, private and third sectors.

Whilst we have helped narrow the employment gap between disabled people and the overall population we still have a long way to go before we achieve our vision that: 'any disabled person who wants a job and needs support to get and keep a job anywhere in the country should, wherever possible, be able to do so.'¹ Our recently published Public Service Agreements encapsulate our desire to maximise employment opportunities for all, including a renewed emphasis on those people who are particularly disadvantaged in the labour market.

We believe that if we are to achieve our vision of helping more disabled people lead fulfilling lives, we must improve our existing specialist employment services so they better equip disabled people to get into work and get on at work.

The proposals contained in this document take account of the views expressed to us by a wide cross-section of stakeholders, particularly those of disabled people. The proposals are designed to create a more flexible, easy to use, service that is better at enabling Jobcentre Plus frontline staff and our external partners to meet the needs of individual disabled people and their employers.

I hope that you will take this opportunity to share your views with us to help shape the future of the support that is available to disabled people who need our specialist services, to enable them to find, retain and progress in work.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anne McGuire', written in a cursive style.

Anne McGuire
Minister for Disabled People

¹ See the 'Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People' report at www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/strategy

Preface

**Summary of
Proposals**

Preface – Summary of Proposals

1. This consultation outlines proposals to improve the effectiveness of some of the specialist support the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) provides to help disabled people enter and/or retain employment.
2. The proposed reforms are designed to complement our wider Welfare to Work reforms, including the national rollout of Pathways to Work, our plans to introduce a more flexible New Deal and closer working that we are continuing to develop with other government departments and external organisations.
3. The reforms focus on the following suite of support:
 - access for disabled people to all DWP employment services;
 - Job Introduction Scheme;
 - Work Preparation;
 - WORKSTEP;
 - the role of the Jobcentre Plus Disability Employment Adviser; and
 - Access to Work.
4. We are proposing:

Area of consultation	Summary of goals
A new programme to replace the Job Introduction Scheme, Work Preparation and WORKSTEP.	To provide customers, who have complex disability related barriers to work, with a more personalised and seamless service that can cover more of their employment support needs. The programme would be delivered by the public, private and voluntary sectors and cover pre-employment support right through to job retention and long-term supported employment for those who require it.
To clarify and enhance the role of Jobcentre Plus' Disability Employment Advisers in relation to our specialist disability employment programmes.	To ensure that disabled people get an employment support package that is appropriate to their individual needs and that it is delivered appropriately.
Where next for Access to Work?	Alongside an external independent evaluation we want to use responses to consultation questions on Access to Work to explore ways in which we can further improve the service – whilst retaining the successful elements of the current programme.

What disability-focused employment services are not covered by this consultation?

5. This consultation refers to, but does not directly cover:
 - Pathways to Work;
 - New Deal for Disabled People;
 - Remploy; and
 - Residential Training Colleges.
6. Please see Annex C, part B, for additional details on these services.

When would the changes be introduced?

7. Subject to the consultation responses and to allow for an external contracting process, the earliest we would look to introduce significant changes to the Job Introduction Scheme, Work Preparation and WORKSTEP is October 2009.

Equality Impact Assessment

8. This consultation is fundamental to enabling us to undertake a full Equality Impact Assessment (EIA).

We will produce this assessment covering the changes we are proposing to take forward, following our analysis of the responses to this consultation.

A copy of the 'screening' exercise will be obtainable shortly from:
www.dwp.gov.uk/resourcecentre/des-consultation.asp.

How do I respond to the consultation?

9. Details on how to respond to this consultation are provided in 'Consultation Arrangements, page 67.

Are there formal consultation questions?

10. Set questions related to this consultation are shown at the end of each relevant chapter and listed all together in Annex A. We welcome any other comments on the proposals too.